

**October 8, 2025, Agenda Review Committee Meeting Written Comments
Received between Monday, October 6th and Thursday, October 9th Submitted via
Written Comments Form**

1	I ask that the Board consider a temporary waiver of absence reporting requirements in order to meet needs of those who are afraid to leave their homes. I ask that the requirement of a doctor's note and that a student be "sick" be waived during this time. I ask that the Board temporarily suspends the sharing of attendance information with the state of Illinois. I ask that the Board consider a reallocation of resources in order to support those households and their needs to continue education at home. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.
2	Subject: Urgent Appeal to Preserve ChiArts for Our Children and Chicago's Future Dear Members of the Board, I am writing as a deeply concerned parent of a student at the Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts). The possibility of this extraordinary school closing if CPS does not assume management is alarming, not only for my child, but for hundreds of students and families who depend on ChiArts for an education that is both rigorous and transformative. ChiArts is Chicago's only public, tuition free, pre-professional arts high school, serving 550 students from diverse neighborhoods, including many from poverty stricken and under resource communities. It provides unparalleled access to conservatory level training in music, dance, theater, visual arts, and creative writing opportunities that would otherwise cost thousands of dollars and be out of reach for most families. The impact of closure would be devastating: • Academic and artistic disruption for current students who have built their futures around ChiArts' unique model. My child is currently a sophomore at ChiArts, maintaining a perfect 4.0 GPA while enrolled in two Advanced Placement courses. She is also preparing to perform in the upcoming production of The Laramie Project this November, a testament to the exceptional training she receives through ChiArts' Theater and Voice Conservatory. • Loss of an institution that fosters equity and inclusion, ensuring that talented young artists from all backgrounds can thrive. • Beyond academics and arts training, ChiArts has given my child something priceless: a community of peers and mentors who share her passion and inspire her daily. The friendships formed here are rooted in collaboration, respect, and shared artistic goals. Students learn to support one another, celebrate diversity, and work as a team, skills that will serve them for life. Closing ChiArts would shatter these bonds and dismantle a safe, nurturing environment that fosters both personal and artistic growth. While we understand the financial challenges, the solution cannot be to dismantle a program that has proven its value year after year. We urge CPS and the Board to: • Commit to preserving ChiArts' dual model of arts and academics. • Establish a sustainable funding plan that secures the school's future without compromising its mission. • Ensure transparent decision making and meaningful parent and community involvement throughout this process. Our children deserve stability, opportunity, and the chance to continue their artistic and academic journeys without interruption. Closing ChiArts would not only break their dreams it would diminish Chicago's cultural fabric. Please act decisively to keep ChiArts open and thriving. The stakes are too high for our students, our families, and our city. Respectfully, Parent of ChiArts Scholar-Artists

3	I am the parent of a ChiArts freshman student. I'm writing today out of deep concern, but also deep pride - pride in what ChiArts represents, and concern for what Chicago stands to lose if it's not protected. ChiArts is so much more than a high school. It's a cultural institution, a public treasure, and a lifeline for hundreds of young artists who might never otherwise have access to high-level arts training. In other cities, students can only dream of a place like ChiArts - a school where the arts are not an elective, but a core part of who students are and how they learn. I know that because I dreamed of a school like ChiArts when I was a kid. It's a place where students who don't fit neatly into traditional molds finally find belonging, purpose, and a voice. My child, in the short amount of time he has been there, and so many others, have discovered who they are within those studios, practice rooms, and classrooms. For fifteen years, ChiArts has stood as Chicago's only public pre-professional arts school. Students receive both a rigorous academic education and world-class artistic training - all tuition-free. That combination makes ChiArts not just unique and special - but essential. In a city with so much artistic history and talent, it's unthinkable that we could lose one of the only public schools dedicated to developing the next generation of artists, performers, musicians, and creatives. While I understand the financial and administrative challenges that have led us here, I believe the conversation must be bigger than budgets. This is about equity, opportunity, and identity. When arts education is limited to those who can afford private lessons or specialized schools, we send a dangerous message about whose creativity matters. ChiArts was founded to challenge that - to make sure every young person with passion and potential had a place to grow, regardless of previous training, income or zip code. The Board now has an opportunity to ensure that mission continues. I urge CPS to take over management of ChiArts and to protect not just the school's name, but its conservatory structure - the double curriculum, the artist-educator faculty, and the culture of creativity that has made this school a model across the country. Please don't let this be the generation that loses one of the only public fine arts school in Chicago. Let it be the one that reaffirmed our city's commitment to creativity, access, and public education that truly nurtures the whole child. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Chicago's students. -Parent, ChiArts Class of 2029
4	Simply, just unacceptable. This is a school for the most talented children that CPS has in such a superb class taking that away from them would be absolutely devastating. They may not be the most academic, but they have that other beautiful side that they can share with the world that many of us don't. It would be a complete loss to not allow them to express their creativity and grow having a school such as this, that can encompass their special talents! I envy all of these kids! I only wish I had what they have to offer to this very unsettling world.
5	Please save ChiArts by bringing it under CPS management and protecting its conservatory model. Chicago's students deserve continued access to free, high-quality arts education.
6	Please save ChiArts! Students deserve access to quality art education
7	Please save ChiArts by bringing it under CPS management and protecting its conservatory model. Chicago's students deserve continued access to free, high-quality arts education. As a student at a different cps high school I would be distraught to learn of my school being possibly defunded or shut down. ChiArts is a valuable place not just because of its unique conservatory model but also because of the comfort and community its students find there. Many students found a community somewhere at chi arts despite never "fitting in" in the past. Please help save ChiArts.

8	I write today with a strong sense of pride in what ChiArts represents and deep concern for its future. ChiArts is more than just a high school; it is a cultural institution, a vital public resource, and an essential foundation for hundreds of young artists who might otherwise never have access to high-quality arts education. In many other cities, a school like ChiArts is merely a dream – a place where the arts are not treated as electives, but integrated into the core of the educational experience. For fifteen years, ChiArts has been Chicago's only public pre-professional arts conservatory, offering students a rigorous academic curriculum alongside world-class artistic training – all at no cost. This unique combination not only sets ChiArts apart but makes it a critical asset to the city. In a community rich with artistic history and talent, it would be inconceivable to lose the only public institution dedicated to developing the next generation of artists, performers, musicians, and creatives. While it's clear that there are financial and administrative challenges to address, the conversation should extend beyond mere budgets. This is an issue of equity, opportunity, and identity. When access to arts education is reserved for those who can afford private lessons or specialized institutions, it sends a damaging message about whose creativity is valued. ChiArts was established to counter this inequality, ensuring that every student with talent and passion has the chance to thrive, regardless of their socioeconomic status or background. The current Board now has the opportunity to preserve this mission and ensure its continuation. I strongly urge CPS to take over management of ChiArts and to protect the conservatory model that has made this school a nationwide example of excellence in arts education. This includes maintaining the dual curriculum, the artist-educator faculty, and the culture of creativity that has set ChiArts apart. Let us not be the generation that allows Chicago's only public fine arts conservatory to disappear. Let us be the generation that reaffirms the city's commitment to creativity, equity, and a public education system that nurtures every student, in all their potential. Thank you for your time and dedication to the future of Chicago's students.
9	I am writing to show support for saving ChiArts and protecting its unique conservatory model as Chicago's only public fine arts high school. I am appalled at the suggestion that an institution that provides such a unique education and culture to this great city and the many students with dreams that can't be nurtured through traditional institutions could be allowed to cease existence. Please save ChiArts by bringing it under CPS management and protecting its conservatory model. Chicago's students deserve continued access to free, high-quality arts education.
10	ChiArts needs to be saved, and its conservatory model protected! It's crucial to give Chicago students access to arts education. Please please bring it under CPS management.
11	I would like the board to add saving ChiArts to the agenda. It's very important we get this matter settled. There are hundreds of students in limbo and it's our duty to make sure they are in a safe and secure school environment.
12	I am asking the Board to please address the concerns about the ChiArts School contract beyond 2026 at its upcoming meeting. I'm a parent of a sophomore currently at ChiArts. It's a very unique and special place for my son who is eager to explore the arts in an intensive environment. The school has also been a wonderful placement for him as a diverse learner. ChiArts is a real gem in Chicago and I hope CPS will continue its legacy. Thank you!
13	ChiArts needs to be saved and remain open as an ARTs High School. 2258
14	We're a new ChiArts family, starting in the Visual Arts conservatory this August. We were drawn to ChiArts for its strong arts focus, obviously, but more importantly, for its reputation as a welcoming and inclusive place. When you have a child who is both on the spectrum and non-binary, you will do EVERYTHING in your power to find places and spaces that welcome your family. In a time when the world around us feels uncertain and unstable, ChiArts has provided a sense of safety and belonging.

	I recognize the need for reworking our current model, especially when it comes to financial transparency. Similarly, I realize the importance of preserving programs like ChiArts. I'm hopeful that a solution to this problem exists, and I appreciate your time and consideration. Thank you.
15	Please include the funding situation of the Chicago High School for the Arts in the agenda for this board meeting. Due to an inability to meet the district's financial metrics the ChiArts board has elected not to apply for contract renewal. The school community is asking that CPS agree to assume management of the Chicago High School for the Arts, while preserving the unique and successful conservatory model that has been funded and administrated by the ChiArts Foundation.
16	Please save ChiArts! The school model is unique to Chicago and the school itself has become a safe haven for the children! Every child that is in the school worked hard to get in; they created a portfolio, went through an audition, defended their work and declined other schools to get into their dream school that would foster their creativity and give them thousands of pre- professional training hours in their craft. The children actually work harder in their academic studies, because they know that if they work hard, they can get their creative training at the same time!
17	Please ensure that Chiarts High School is included in the agenda for the next meetings. Families are extremely anxious to know whether the school will be open next year or if, instead, we will need to find new schools for our children. Those of us whose children are juniors, such as myself, are especially anxious since it is incredible sad and unfair for our children to have to complete their senior year of high school at another school. For these reasons, please ensure you address the needs of Chiarts Families with your agenda for the next meeting.
18	The ChiArts community is asking that the Board puts ChiArts on the agenda. After last week's announcement, everyone is frustrated, upset, and distraught. We realize in order for ChiArts to remain open, CPS needs to step in and we would like this issue to be taken up. This school is a home and sanctuary for these scholar-artists. For many, it is the only place they have ever felt truly seen and heard. It is crucial to the well-being of these students (and future scholar-artists) that ChiArts remain open. Please show your support for our students during this trying time, they are counting on you.
19	Please save ChiArts by bringing it under CPS management and protecting its conservatory model. Chicago's students deserve continued access to free, high-quality arts education. As a current CPS parent, former art student and teacher, I cannot emphasize enough the value of this institution -- especially in today's climate where art programs for kids are dwindling, and funding for the arts is miniscule. Art saves lives and colors our culture. We need schools like ChiArts to provide our city kids a safe, enriching place to learn where they can grow not only their unique talents and hone their skills, but also foster a connective community. When I hear criticism of CPS from folks who either send their kids to private schools or live outside of Chicago, ChiArts is one of the schools I cite coming to CPS' defense. Please don't miss this opportunity to lift up, take pride in, and protect the absolute gem that is ChiArts - and its student & staff.
20	Chiarts is a unique offering that fulfills a needed niche within the High School community for allowing kids to focus on the arts. Without this option there will be a void and for a city as big as the city of Chicago to NOT have this type of offering is beyond comprehension.
21	I have a freshman at ChiArts, conservatory is theater. I come to you as a parent of an artist who never really fit in. Who was never able to be herself, she was diagnosed with depression she was always so mad and unhappy. When we got an acceptance letter to ChiArts, she gave up on all other schools to be able to dedicate herself to ChiArts theater. She found her home, friends that have the same passion. ChiArts did not only accept our her as she is, but they returned her. Her smile is genuine, her daily experience are fun and different and natural. Her teachers are caring, and fun. These teachers are not only teaching, they are making connections with our kids. They are building a community were kids not only learn but thrive in their environment. These kids feel loved, safe and understood. They have a passion a goal in life. Taking ChiArts is taking away their safety, silencing their voices. This school embodies everything an education sysytem stand for, equity, diversity, compassion, uniqueness, community, empathy, work ethic, problem solving skills, Instilling confidence in kids who once were silenced because their identities weren't understood. Please consider the kid who felt alone, misunderstood, judged, excluded and bullied, who is now thriving, happy ,confident and making positive impacts in the community. Don't take

	that from them, don't change that on them. Allow them the opportunity to continue to make a positive impact in the world with a serving heart and life of true pure joy.
22	Calling on CPS to make a commitment to our youth: please - invest in ChiArts as a state-of-art model for arts education and demonstrate a true investment in Chicago's creative youth.
23	I write today on behalf of my freshman daughter who currently attends ChiArts. After the election in 2024, our family decided that Texas was no longer a safe place to raise a family due to its extreme laws. We started looking for alternatives where our family could thrive. One of the main criteria for us was finding a public arts education for our daughter who dreams of becoming an actor. After a lot of research, we found ChiArts and signed her up for an audition. The moment that we walked into the school last year in 2024, I knew immediately that we had found her high school. Seeing the murals painted on the walls about diversity, equity and inclusion, along with the known talents of the student body, we decided that we were all in on her attending the school. After her first audition, she felt it didn't go well. So we immediately planned a trip back to Chicago from Texas so that she could audition for the musical theater conservatory. She practiced for hours perfecting her song and monologue. She filmed it all by herself and successfully submitted it to the school. Then we waited - from January to March to see if our family would be making the big move from Texas to Chicago so that she could follow her dreams. Once she was accepted, we started moving quickly to get her here. We sold our home and moved across the country - and this school was a big part of the reason. Without finding a public school with the unique conservatory model, we most likely would not have left Texas to come to this wonderful city we know love. If CPS does not take on ChiArts and keep it as a fine arts school, we are essentially lost. There is no other public school like ChiArts in all of Chicago. As the 3rd largest city in the nation, Chicago should be offering top notch fine arts education to students. Students who can't afford private schools or out of school lessons. Chicago is known for its vibrant culture and art scene - we can't take this extremely unique opportunity from the students in CPS who don't have alternatives. Please consider investing in the future artists of tomorrow - our nation needs them more now than ever before.
24	We call on CPS to make a powerful commitment: invest in ChiArts as a state-of-art model for arts education and demonstrate a true investment in Chicago's creative youth.
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26	Consider saving ChiArts by moving it to be under CPS management. Please don't take the arts away from Chicago students!
27	We call on CPS to make a powerful commitment: invest in ChiArts as a state-of-art model for arts education and demonstrate a true investment in Chicago's creative youth.
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30	The ChiArts chapter of our Awesome Journey by Anonymous Sophomore Dad The three of us Silly-Nillies up-rooted from the melancholy-quiet suburbs and settled en esta hermoso Boriqua to attend a progressive concept designed collegiate-style High School for Arts-focused teenagers. My daughter researched the school and felt, "passionately", that this school would be in her best interests, although, if accepted, would require that we sell our awesome home in our safe little town and purge nearly that we've accumulated over thirty years to fit into a near-by condo, and we agreed. Journey on!

	After all, nightclass after nightclass after nightclass for years, of vocal lessons and acting, and theater lessons, dance and improve, over here and way over there and then to discover that all of it was in one place like an Oasis for Artists. This very cool school of young missionfull teachers also provides a super unique environment of Professional Artists coaching and training the next generation with the same passion as the Padawan . We not only hoped for something like this school but we found it on another level and we've experienced the results of motivated teenagers. We have met teachers and faculty and Directors and Instructors that we are truly grateful to have in this one facility. We came to ChiArts for a rare and special opportunity; to explore and accelerate my daughters passion for the arts and that opportunity has come to fruition and more.
31	Thank you for taking the time to hear about the importance of continuing public arts education in Chicago. My daughter is a first year, musical theater student at Chi Arts. In the 7 weeks she has been a Scholar-Artist at Chi Arts, she is thriving in ways we couldn't have imagined. Her educational path has not been easy. The first elementary school Madilin attended no longer became an option because they did not support her gender identity. She was bullied and not allowed to be her authentic self. Thankfully we found a CPS school for her to attend the final two years of her elementary years, but we knew high school was quickly approaching and the need to find a safe, inclusive space was our top priority. We went through the rigorous high school search process. But always came back to Chi Arts. We heard from Scholar-Artists who shared how they had finally found a safe space to be their authentic self. Many of these kids had challenging elementary school experiences – bullying, lack of support, etc. Madilin lit up knowing she could attend a high school as her authentic self and explore her creative outlets. Her Dad & I knew she would be safe, supported and challenged in this environment. We had made the commitment to remain in the City of Chicago and raise our family. And now we knew we had found a safe space for her to learn and grow. Additionally, I have worked in college admissions for nearly 17 years. These Scholar-Artists are experiencing a unique pre-professional opportunity in the conservatory model. They are being set up for success beyond what their peers are experiencing in other arts programs. It is truly unique and sets both the student & school up for college-going successful outcomes! Our students come from across all Chicago zip codes and socioeconomic backgrounds seeking a public arts education. This school makes our communities and our city better. Many of our students identify as LGBTQIA+, come from historically underrepresented communities, and/or are neurodivergent. Every day these students come under attack from powerful people in our government – Chi Arts is a safe haven for these students free from judgment and attack. We must continue to provide public arts education for our current & future Scholar-Artists! Please let our kids continue to thrive – Please save Chi Arts! Proud Chi Arts Parent PSO Board Member
32	Please make a powerful commitment CPS - invest in ChiArts as a state-of-art model for arts education and demonstrate a true investment in Chicago's creative youth.
33	My family has made tremendous sacrifices to allow my daughter to attend Chi Arts. Myself and other dedicated parents pay a bus fee so that our students can get to school daily. This requires that our days start extremely early. The amount of growth my daughter has had in these three years would not have occurred without the one of a kind Chi Arts experience given by the conservatories teachers. Chi Arts is a safe space for creative students to fully immerse themselves in their conservatories.
34	Our children are afraid to go to school because they are afraid of being taken away from their parents. I ask CPS to return to virtual classes for this time.
35	ChiArts must not close. Please fight to keep it open as it is home to an incredibly important community of young artists that would not be able to grow as completely in other institutions.2283

- 36 The closing of ChiArts High School plays a negative crucial role in taking away from nurturing the next generation of Chicago's artistic talent. As a city known globally for its vibrant arts, music, theater, and cultural expression, shutting down ChiArts would be a direct blow to that identity. This school provides a unique, tuition-free opportunity for students—especially from underrepresented communities—to receive professional-level arts training alongside strong academics.
- Closing ChiArts would strip away opportunities from passionate young artists and take away a key pipeline of talent that feeds into the city's creative industries. It would silence future voices that would otherwise contribute to Chicago's legacy as a hub of innovation, culture, and expression. For our students, our neighborhoods, and the soul of the city—ChiArts must stay open.
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- 37 A ChiArts student receives a minimum of 2,220 hours of pre-professional arts training out of approximately 5,920 total instructional hours during their four years at the school. That's 420 more hours than the average college student spends in class and only part of those college hours focus on their major. ChiArts students dedicate this time exclusively to intensive arts study, and that number doesn't even include the countless evenings and weekends spent rehearsing, performing, or developing their craft outside the school day.
- To understand what makes ChiArts unique, it helps to compare it with the experience of a typical Chicago Public Schools (CPS) high school student. Most CPS students complete just the two arts credits required for graduation, which equals roughly 200–240 total hours of arts instruction across four years, less than what a ChiArts student completes in one semester. Many CPS schools can only offer one or two arts disciplines, often taught by a single teacher serving hundreds of students.
- While CPS has made efforts to expand arts access, inequities remain. As of 2024, about 73% of CPS schools meet the district's goal of one certified arts teacher per 350 students, leaving over a quarter of schools still below that benchmark. Dance and music programs, in particular, are among the hardest to staff. The result is that while some students receive high-quality arts instruction, many receive little to none.
- ChiArts fills that gap by offering a conservatory model of education that integrates rigorous academics with daily, high-level arts training. Students spend six hours in academic courses followed by three additional hours each day in specialized arts instruction led by working professionals in fields such as performance, design, and creative writing. This schedule mirrors the intensity and structure of a top-tier athletic program with coaching, practice, and discipline at its core.
- The comparison to athletics is meaningful. Across CPS, athletic programs often receive district funding for facilities, equipment, uniforms, and coaching staff. Student-athletes practice before and after school, sometimes year-round, with dedicated resources to support their development. ChiArts students do the same for their art, training for careers in performance, design, choreography, writing, and more. Yet, despite the comparable commitment and professional outcomes, ChiArts must rely heavily on private fundraising to sustain its programs and maintain staffing levels that make this model possible.
- The return on that investment is profound. ChiArts graduates are accepted into some of the most competitive colleges, conservatories, and arts programs in the country. They leave with professional portfolios, audition experience, and thousands of hours of focused training that no other public high school in Chicago can match. The dedication, stamina, and work ethic required to succeed at ChiArts rival those of elite athletes, and the outcomes demonstrate what happens when young people are given the tools, mentorship, and environment to pursue excellence.
- Funding arts education at this level is not an extravagance, it's an investment in Chicago's creative future. The students of ChiArts represent what is possible when talent meets opportunity and when public education dares to go beyond minimum requirements. If CPS can support athletic programs that nurture physical excellence, it should also sustain and expand institutions like ChiArts that cultivate artistic mastery, innovation, and leadership.
- ChiArts students have shown that they are capable of extraordinary work, not just in their art forms, but as scholars, collaborators, and citizens. Their education reflects a model that works: one that combines the discipline of an athlete, the curiosity of a scholar, and the imagination of an

	artist. It is time for CPS to recognize and invest in that model, ensuring that the next generation of creative leaders can thrive right here in Chicago.
38	As a Chicago firefighter and lifelong city resident, I've seen firsthand how strong communities are built — through service, opportunity, and pride in what makes our city unique. ChiArts represents that spirit. It gives students a place to discover their voice, their discipline, and their connection to Chicago's cultural heartbeat. If we stop investing in the arts, we lose part of what makes this city worth protecting. Please bring ChiArts under CPS management and preserve its conservatory model. 2288
39	As a parent and Chicago resident, I'm asking CPS to protect ChiArts and its conservatory model. This school doesn't just shape young artists — it shapes confident, thoughtful citizens who add to the fabric of our city. When Chicago invests in the arts, it invests in its own identity as a creative, world-class city. If we tell our kids that art doesn't matter, what message are we really sending about who we are? Please bring ChiArts under CPS management and preserve what makes it so special.
40	As an educator, I know how rare and valuable ChiArts is. It blends rigorous academics with the kind of creative discipline that transforms students' confidence and potential. Bringing ChiArts under CPS and protecting its conservatory model would show that Chicago truly values the whole student — mind, body, and spirit. Our city's future depends on both intellect and imagination.
41	A world-class city invests in both infrastructure and imagination. Chicago has long led in architecture, theater, and design — all rooted in strong arts education. Protecting ChiArts and its conservatory model isn't just about one school; it's about preserving Chicago's identity as a city that develops the whole person. Let's make policy decisions that keep us culturally competitive and globally respected.
42	We built this city on music, murals, and movement — not just concrete and contracts. ChiArts is one of the last places keeping that spirit alive. You can't call Chicago a cultural capital while closing its only public arts conservatory. That's a contradiction. Chicago gave the world improv, jazz, gospel, modern architecture — and now it's considering turning its back on the next generation of creators? The irony is painful. Great cities protect their culture. Mediocre ones sell it off. ChiArts is proof that public education can produce excellence. It's not an expense — it's an example. If we can't protect something that good, what message does that send about our priorities?
43	To the CPS Board, My name is Deobrah S*****, and I am long-time Chicago resident, public schooling advocate, and a parent of a sophomore at Chicago High School for the Arts. I am writing to you to express my concern regarding the Chicago High School for the Arts, known as ChiArts, and the recent decision of the ChiArts board to not apply for contract renewal. I understand that puts the CPS board in a tough position, and I ask that you strongly consider keeping it open past June 2026, under its current conservatory model until a permanent management solution can be found. A solution where all concerned parties (CPS, teachers, parents, students, etc.) are involved in the process – something that was lacking in the recent ChiArts board decision. ChiArts is a unique school that serves a similarly unique community within our city. It provides both academic and conservatory classes to students who have a passion for the arts – who want to make a living in the arts. These scholar-artists are challenged academically and artistically, to grow and learn as much as possible in their 4 years in this environment. These are students who audition and compete to get into this school. Students who attend longer than normal school days to get that extra training. Students who compete (and are recognized) in national arts competitions. And these students would not get that same experience or exposure without the working artist conservatory teachers who help them thrive and push them to be the best they can be.

	ChiArts draws from every single neighborhood across the city. It creates a truly unified Chicago community, where every person is seen and heard and celebrated for who they are. Minority voices are celebrated in showcases throughout the year. Students who would be wary of being themselves in a traditional high school experience have the freedom to be their full, authentic selves in this safe space. Personally, my trans child is not just “surviving” high school, he is thriving at ChiArts – something I do not think would be possible at a traditional high school. The ChiArts community and learning experience is invaluable to its scholar-artists and their families. Students and families choose this school over closer arts programs specifically for the unique opportunity it provides. Many families make daily sacrifices of time and energy to get their students to school – driving or bussing past other high schools in the process - because they feel, rightly so, that ChiArts is worth it. ChiArts has a proven history of graduating working artists – some who enrich Chicago’s art scene today; and some who have chosen to come back to ChiArts to teach as well as create. These alumni provide great examples to our scholar-artists that a viable life working in the arts is possible and obtainable. Please, strongly consider keeping ChiArts open with its conservatory model in place until a viable, permanent management solution is found. Thank you for your time and consideration, Deborah S***** 2294
44	Hello, good morning, I am writing by this means to let you know my concern like many other mothers and ask you for a favor for virtual classes for at least a while in which this situation in which we Latinos are living calms down
45	I am a parent of a Senior at ChiArts and my daughter has benefited greatly from the academic and arts programs at ChiArts. I would hate if other students and families are not able to have the same opportunity to attend ChiArts. CPS should absorb ChiArts and save the school from being closed. Please do not hesitate and vote immediately to absorb ChiArts and save the school.
46	Please let's keep our babies safe. Lets keep them at home virtually in clases until this is over. Specially with the military in the city. If this gets very dangerous I will not be sending my kids to school. We are worried since agents have not been respecting our rights, they have been targeting schools.
47	My daughter has dreamt of going to ChiArts since she was in 3rd grade. She loves fine arts but is not academically inclined. ChiArts is her chance at an education that keeps her interested in the academic side, while supporting and refining her artistic skills. Thus giving her a concrete chance at a real future doing what she loves.
48	ChiArts is one of the most special and unique schools in Chicago. ChiArts provides preprofessional arts training for students who otherwise would not receive such resources. ChiArts helps students explore their creative identities, learn from working artists in the city, and further integrate themselves into the city of Chicago, a city that is creative at heart. Please absorb our school and keep the unique conservatory structure that is so important to our students, families, teachers, and the city at large.
49	As a recent winning candidate for the LSC, I have three concerns. First, our selective enrollment school has issues regarding its community boundary. We received a new building in 2021, but never established an LSC community area. Therefore, in the last election our boundary was city-wide. There are several schools in this situation and going through this process now or in the near future. We must be thoughtful and set proper precedent for this process now. We have been presented with two boundary maps. However, a FOIA request for our LSC community area options produced two maps that are different from the maps presented to our LSC. The maps produced by FOIA made logical sense. One option seemed to reflect the regional service area of our CTE programs. This would align with where the overwhelming majority of our students live. It would make perfect sense to be our LSC community area. The other map was a much smaller area, excluding most of the families we serve. This might not be terrible if community members only voted for community members in LSC elections. This brings me to problem number two. In

LSC elections, community members and parents are given the same ballots and told to vote for five people. For example, if I live in a school's community area and there are only two candidates for the two community seats, but there are nine candidates for the six parent seats, I could cast all five of my votes in the parent election despite not being a parent. If the boundary is citywide, any special interest group could back a slate of five candidates and disrupt a hyperlocal LSC election. However, if the boundary for a regionally focused school like Hancock is too small, parents and community members from a particular neighborhood or feeder school would have an extraordinary outsized influence on LSC elections. We need to guarantee fair maps and fair representation on our Local School Councils. There are similar issues with the teaching and non-teaching staff ballot. Unless you have a clear and decisive victory, as I recently did, there is a high likelihood of unnecessary drama in the community. Why are we setting ourselves up for this? The dual balloting should come to an end. People should only be able to vote for their specific representatives. While we are at it, we should loosen up the ballot marking requirements or have policies that make the expectation undeniable. There are far too many spoiled ballots resulting from check marks versus x-marks debates. We need to stop focusing on ways to take away people's rights to proper representation and turn our attention to why a majority of the LSC seats across the city were vacant following the last election and most of those who were elected were unopposed or elected with single digit percentages of voter turnout. If the system seems too oppressive or too corrupt, people will not participate. Lastly, we need to prevent people in authority from weaponizing discipline and evaluation policies against PPLCs and LSCs.

50 BOE 10/8/25

Good morning. I'm here to speak on behalf of all the CPS students & families who fear being targeted by ICE. These families are afraid to leave their homes, afraid to send their children to school, and afraid to go to work. They're listening to drones over their homes at night and watching for Texas license plates on cars during the day. Yesterday at 11am, a photo was posted by a Spanish-speaking driver Chicago driver at 24th and Ridgeland of an ICE agent with a face covering who stopped a young girl walking alone to school. Our children are not safe. Their families aren't safe.

One parent says, where my son goes to school, they don't open the door even a minute early before school starts... and the anxiety is terrible. Another parent says at school pick up, parents are at risk if they have children in different schools and have to wait several minutes outside each of them to come out.

I will share a formal letter written by our school's parent-lead Sanctuary Team, which I will also submit to you by email.

"Dear Chief King and members of the Board of Education,

Our immigrant communities are being terrorized and harassed by the heightened enforcement efforts of US Immigration and Customs agents. Parents are afraid of stepping out of their homes and are opting to keep their children home out of fear of being separated from their children, detained, and deported.

We are reaching out to you today because we need an emergency policy for excused absences. As we understand the current CPS attendance policies, children who miss school as too many unexcused may be reported to DCFS. We would like to see schools instead ensuring absent students are getting their assignments and any support they may need not to fall behind. We request the district explore ways they can make the virtual academy and remote tutoring available.

We request clear written guidance for school administrations for absences when students must remain home due to safety concerns related to immigration enforcement activities in their neighborhood or community.

According to the Chicago Public Schools Board Policy 703.1 – Student Attendance and Truancy, an absence should be excused when: “There are circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the student’s safety or health, or other situations beyond the control of the student.” (CPS Policy 703.1, Section II(B)(6)). Fear of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity directed toward immigrant families clearly constitutes a circumstance of reasonable concern and a situation beyond the control of the student.

Furthermore, the same CPS policy specifies that: “Schools must develop a make-up work policy and make reasonable accommodations so students can recover missed work, especially for hardship or trauma-related absences.” (CPS Policy 703.1, Section II(E))

In light of this, I am requesting that CPS:

1. Affirm in writing that absences due to credible safety concerns related to immigration enforcement will be recorded as excused under Policy 703.1 §II(B)(6);
2. Provide clear guidelines to families explaining how students can receive and complete make-up work when such absences occur, in accordance with Policy 703.1 §II(E);
3. Ensure that students are not penalized academically or through attendance reporting for missing school during these periods of fear or disruption; and
4. Establish a process that does not require families to disclose or identify themselves as fearful of ICE or immigration enforcement, in order to protect family privacy and safety. This approach is consistent with CPS’s Safe Haven commitments and the Welcoming City Ordinance.

This clarity and sensitivity will reassure families that the school is committed to equity, inclusion, and safety, and that no family will face additional risk when acting to protect their children.

Sincerely,

The Inter-American Sanctuary Team

Thank you

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- | | |
|----|---|
| 51 | We call on CPS to make a powerful commitment: invest in ChiArts as a state-of-art model for arts education and demonstrate a true investment in Chicago’s creative youth. |
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As a former educator and a human who was blessed, challenged, and grown through art and humanities experiences during my formative years, I advocate for the youth of this school’s community to have access to the unique programming, format, and community that ChiArts offers.

This conservatory model is in place in sister cities across the Midwest like Indianapolis and Cincinnati and CPS has an opportunity to continue to lead the way in this space. Most importantly, CPS has a duty to honor their commitment to the families and students who thrive at ChiArts.

****ATTACHMENTS****

University of Illinois, Chicago
October 7, 2025

Dear CPS,

I would like to voice my opinion that the Chicago High School for the Arts be kept open, its programs maintained intact, and to the greatest extent possible, its faculty retained in their current positions.

As a teacher myself, I know the value of an educational system that is able to foster the talent and innate abilities of the broadest spectrum of students. Educational curricula often downplay or outright disregard the creative mind, but some of the hallmarks of genius is creativity, originality, and invention. Chicago High School for the Arts is unique, in our city, in that it is a public school directed at fostering those rare creative talents that spring up in our neighborhoods - as children grow up with boxes of markers, drawing in front of the television, as they endlessly rehearse their own hip hop verses on the train platform, as they scribble fantasy narratives in notebooks on the bus, and as they practice synchronous dance moves in their garages. These talents spring up native within the minds of our children, but they need instruction and cultivation to develop into mature, skilled art. For decades, Chi Arts has done this, for generations of Chicagoans.

At the risk of stating the obvious here – creativity is important, creativity makes students employable, and creativity is good for the economy. Art gives Chicago a sense of place – and this sense of place causes people to visit, spend money here, and move here with great ideas of their own. Not all Chi Arts alumni go on to be great musicians and artists, but they all go on to be creative people that contribute their talents to their communities. We should not underestimate art education, and for those especially talented in the creative arts, there must be a place for them.

In the faculty of a university professor at UIC, I have taught very large classes of students for nearly three decades. Many of my students have been alumni of various Chicago public schools. What I have learned to see as the greatest asset of our public school system is the diversity of educational experiences it can provide. A good school is not measured only by the number of AP classes it can offer. A good school is able to offer opportunities for all of its students and bring out the best in everyone who walks through its doors wanting to learn.

Chicago High School for the Arts is a remarkable institution. Having attended many parent-teacher conferences, had numerous conversations with the students, and gone to some of the

events, I have seen, firsthand, the sense of community it fosters in the young people who attend its classes. A sense of community, with the institution and its members, has been demonstrated numerous times to be a crucial factor in academic retainment and success.

I have been told, by email, that the current administration of Chi Arts has decided not to renew its application because of financial issues. I cannot speak on this – but I can definitely offer my opinion that the school, its programs, and its faculty, are intact and functioning well. Its academic courses are excellent – from what I have seen of the lessons and methods of instruction, they are at least the equal of any Chicago magnet school. That last point is worth repeating – the NO ART classes at Chi Arts are every bit as good as the academic classes at other prestigious high schools. Of course, the art conservatories are excellent, but everyone knows that – the creative writing program alone offers an education comparable to a few good years in the Iowa Writers Workshop.

I think it is absolutely essential, to Chicago and its citizens, that this school be kept open, its programs maintained, and to the greatest extent possible, its faculty retained.

Very Truly Yours

Dr A. M.
Clinical Associate Professor, UIC



October 8, 2025

Dear Superintendent King, President Harden and Board Members:

We are writing to you with respect to a time-sensitive contract renewal between the Chicago Board of Education and Hazel Health, a for-profit service provider of telehealth medical services. The Board approved an agreement with Hazel Health, which expires on December 31, 2025, and will renew automatically at that time for a period of two years unless the district notifies Hazel Health before December 1, 2025.

In recent months, certain information has come to light that calls Hazel Health's commitment to preserving student privacy and compliance with state law into question. Given these issues, we urge you either to end this contract or to negotiate relatively straightforward, privacy-focused amendments to it as well as the parental consent form Hazel is using for Chicago Public Schools' students.

The terms of the current agreement and the consent form appear to facilitate violations of Illinois' Student Online Personal Protection Act (SOPPA), implicating the use of highly sensitive personal data in ways that threaten students' privacy:

- SOPPA requires that the written agreement between a district and an operator provide a complete list of all personal student data elements that can be accessed by the operator, including those provided by the student, their parents, school employees, or the operator itself. Yet the current CPS agreement¹ with Hazel fails to disclose any of the personal student medical and mental health information that Hazel Health and its subcontractors can access, process and hold, whether in writing, audio or video form.² Hazel has provided these disclosures to other school districts, where it has shared that it collects data on students' attendance, courses, "low income status," "disability information," "medical alerts/health data" and whether they are homeless or in foster care. (See Bunker Hill CUSD 8 Agreement, at Exhibit B³).

¹ CPS amendment https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/procuredocuments/pdfs/contracts/2025_06/25-0604-MISC02-1.pdf and original contract with Hazel Health

https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/procuredocuments/pdfs/contracts/2025_06/25-0610-MISC03-1.pdf

² CPS's letter on 6/12/2025 to Illinois Families for Public Schools states that: "Voluntary, elective enrollment in [Hazel Health's] services requires parental consent, and therefore, any data collected by Hazel Health pursuant to parental consent is not itemized in the agreement." However, there is **no** exception in SOPPA for requiring vendors to disclose the categories of data collected, whether or not parent consent is provided.

³ https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1455060/hazel_health.pdf

- Under SOPPA, “[a] student’s covered information shall be collected only for K through 12 school purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes,”⁴ and SOPPA permits operators to use only de-identified data for product development.⁵ However, Hazel’s consent form⁶ explicitly says that the company may use personally-identifiable information for such illegal purposes: *“You also authorize Hazel Health or Hazel Health Services to use personally-identifiable information for the development and improvement of software, hardware, and related tools designed to improve services provided by medical professionals, administrative staff, contractors and employees of Hazel Health and Hazel Health Services.”*
- SOPPA requires operators to protect against breaches and to “[i]mplement and maintain reasonable security procedures and practices that otherwise meet or exceed industry standards designed to protect covered information from unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification, or disclosure.”⁷ Instead, Hazel’s consent form says that *“the transmission of personal health and/or personally identifiable information may not be secure and may be illegally accessed by a third party.”*
- In addition, SOPPA prohibits targeted advertising based on a student or their parents’ use of a site or service⁸. However, the Hazel Health landing page for CPS families to register for services,⁹ along with Hazel Health’s Terms of Service and Privacy Policy pages, appear to be sharing tracking information¹⁰ with both Amazon and Alphabet (Google’s parent company) with the potential to track users’ activity across the internet and aid in developing targeted marketing materials. The Amazon tracking is not even disclosed in the company’s online Privacy Policy, though three others are, two via Google and one via Facebook—further raising the stakes for parents who visit Hazel’s website.

The risk of Hazel Health using student PII for product development and targeted advertising, allowing third-party companies to collect online data through its website, and failing to provide sufficient guarantees against breaches is unacceptable. Hazel is a for-profit, privately held corporation, with its largest individual shareholder a consortium of investors led by Bain Capital. Its services to CPS are in part subsidized by the for-profit health conglomerate United Healthcare, which has a clear incentive to try to gain access to CPS personal student data.¹¹

While Hazel and United Healthcare are not officially charging CPS for their services, there is a substantial risk that these services are not really “free” at all. As the saying goes in the Internet age, “if the product is free, *you’re* the product.” Our concern is that CPS is, in effect, paying for this service by allowing the company the ability to use student and parent data for profit and in ways that violate state law and basic ethical standards.

⁴ 105 ILCS 85/33

⁵ 105 ILCS 85/25

⁶ Consent form as of June 19, 2025:

https://assets.nationbuilder.com/ilfps/pages/1772/attachments/original/1758739806/6.19.2025_Hazel_Health_Services_School_Health_Center_Authorization.pdf

⁷ 105 ILCS 85/15

⁸ 105 ILCS 85/10

⁹ <https://getstarted.hazel.co/district/cps>

¹⁰ According to *The Markup’s* Blacklight tool: <https://themarkup.org/blacklight>

¹¹ <https://www.hazel.co/press/chicago-public-schools-partners-with-hazel-health>

Again, we urge that this contract not be renewed unless it clearly lists the personal data elements that Hazel Health and its other funders, board members, affiliates, contractors and subcontractors will have access to; prohibits them from using any data collected for commercial or marketing purposes or product development; and provides rigorous safeguards to guard against data breaches and cyberattacks. CPS students and their families deserve no less.

Sincerely,

Illinois Families for Public Schools
Legal Action Chicago
Legal Council for Health Justice
NAMI Chicago
NASW-Illinois Chapter
Parent Coalition for Student Privacy

October 7, 2025

Dear Chicago Board of Education members,

I am a parent of a freshman student at The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts). Recently, to my surprise, we have been made aware that the ChiArts school board will not be submitting renewal of their contract due to a lack of financial feasibility to continue as a contract school.

I am writing to urge the Board of Education to vote to absorb the school and maintain the current arts conservatory model, or at least keep an arts model of some type at ChiArts.

As background, ChiArts operates a 'conservatory model' which in summary means that the children attend school from 8am-2pm attending academic classes in a typical block schedule. Then, from 2pm-5pm they break out and focus on their conservatory, being led by working artists as their instructors with hyper focus on honing their craft and preparing them for a career in the arts or higher education in the arts. This is their regular school day, 8am-5pm, not extracurricular. The conservatories include:

- Creative Writing
- Dance
- Music
- Theater
- Visual Arts

Admittance into ChiArts is by a competitive audition process, via the GoCPS system. Current enrollment is ~550 students and children from every Chicago Ward attend ChiArts, coming from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

My family has only been part of the community for 3 months, and we are already in love with the model and what it has done for our child.

Our child is motivated to go to school for the arts and the academics alike. In order to attend, she wakes daily at 5:45am to make a 6:45 bus that drives her up Western Avenue directly to school. She then takes a bus back down Western Avenue and arrives back home at 6:15pm (many days later because she also made the school play, extracurricular), just to do it all again the next day.

My daughter is fully committed to ChiArts. The school's focus on the arts is key to her commitment and also feeling of belonging. My child feels she can be herself at ChiArts- something that is encouraged there. She is thriving amongst her peers who are like-minded in their passion and pursuit for the arts and expression through art.

More, the ChiArts teachers and staff understand the children in a special way. They use their understanding of the children's love of the arts in their approach to academics too- regularly pulling on their artistic mind and passion for traditional academic assignments and discussion. In fact, at ChiArts, the students are referred to as "scholar-artists".

ChiArts organizes arts-focused college fairs and industry events relating to the arts to expose the children of their future possibilities and to support them in their future careers.

It would be a horrible shame if the school were to close.

We worked so hard as a family last fall navigating the CPS system, that doing it again feels daunting. In a worst-case scenario where the school must close, I'd also ask that the Board of Education help families know next steps -- and even proactively now-- for the 2026/27 school year. Also, if needed, I ask that exceptions be made for transfers from ChiArts, in the case where they have no more school.

ChiArts is a gem, a model, a flagship, a school that our wonderful city can be proud of! Please help us save this gem! Thank you so much for your careful review of proposed scenarios and for your consideration.

Signed with great respect and gratitude,

(19th Ward Resident)

Dear Members of the Chicago Board of Education,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit a petition on behalf of the Chicago High School of the Arts (ChiArts).

My daughter [REDACTED] is a ninth grader at ChiArts, and entered the Musical Theatre program this past August.

[REDACTED] like many children at ChiArts, possesses a level of passion and commitment to her art that I find practically unfathomable. Days and days of her modest years have been spent consuming theater experiences and living and breathing music and the stage. Hours on hours have been dedicated to learning her discipline and getting better and better at her craft. Theatre, and specifically musical theatre, are everything to [REDACTED]

Certainly, many other 14-year-olds share [REDACTED] level of passion and commitment. They work hard and spend long hours developing volleyball or hockey or math skills and focus continually on excelling. Thankfully, many avenues exist for those students to slake their desire to participate in athletic and academic programs.

Certainly, however, there is no other place like ChiArts. The school and its conservatory method are unique. It is a sole and singular idea, a unique and deeply meaningful way [REDACTED] and students in the Chicago Public Schools system can dedicate themselves to art.

Closing such a special institution would be devastating, and a loss that would be impossible to replace.

For my daughter, ChiArts is a culmination. It allows her to realize who she is and fully pursue what she loves. It has been an intersection of who she is and who she wants to be. It is the process of her actualizing—both as a person and an artist.

I join other ChiArts parents in respectfully and appreciatively requesting that CPS consider supporting ChiArts on an ongoing basis. To ensure that [REDACTED] and the hundreds of passionate children-artists at ChiArts have a special place to learn, grow and live and share their extraordinary gifts.

Thank you!

Student Father

ChiArts Class of 2029

Dear Chicago Board of Education,

My name is Chris Lin Dao-Heng and I'm the Head of the Visual Arts Department at The Chicago High School for the Arts. I'm writing to provide some personal observations about the positive impacts our program made for our stakeholders, and I hope to advocate for the school to continue its current structure so that we could continue our meaningful work in the future.

Just this week, the Visual Arts Conservatory held its 13th annual Portfolio Day, an event where we invite college representatives from all over the United States and Canada to review Visual Arts students' portfolios and learn more about their schools' post-secondary programs. This year, all of the 12th grade Visual Artists had the opportunity to participate in this event, and for many, get closer to accessing the funding for their post-secondary education. It was an opportunity given to all, not a selected few, not only our best students. This is a reflection of all the work that we do in the Arts Conservatories at ChiArts - We believe everyone deserves a chance.

Most of the students in the Visual Arts Conservatory start out with little or no prior arts training. They come in with pure passion and curiosity as they go through two years of balanced foundational training in art history, drawing, graphic design, painting, photography, and sculpture. At no cost to them, all students get to experiment and practice a variety of art media in dedicated art studios, 3 hours each day, and under the tutelage of professional teaching artists who also want what's best for their students. Not just for some, but for all.

When Visual Artists reach their third year of high school, they get to choose between 2-D Art and Design, 3-D Art and Design, or Drawing and Painting as their major for the next two years. During those two years, students build upon their foundational practices to create artworks of their own design. This is a time where all Visual Artists develop their voice in their practice and receive invaluable peer and faculty feedback all over 3 hours of studio time each day. Not just for some, but for all.

Having been a teaching artist at ChiArts since 2012, the thing that kept me here is seeing the students' growth, which has been consistently evident year after year. I have been here to celebrate all of their highs and I have been here to help them navigate their lows. I truly believe that, after all the hours of art training and studio time, students walk across the graduation stage carrying all the things they learned and practiced along the way - care, kindness, joy, criticality, creative problem-solving skills, leadership qualities, and more.

I am advocating on behalf of all of my students, past, present and future, to keep ChiArts in its current form. Because the quality of our students is hard to quantify - no test scores or enrollment data can tell the whole story of the school. All I have are my observations from the past 13 years I've been with ChiArts and hope they paint a better picture of how special and important this place has been for not just some, but for all students.

Sincerely,

Chris Lin Dao-Heng

I am a teacher at Rufino Tamayo School. As many of you know, Tamayo is one of the Acero Charter Schools that is transitioning to Chicago Public Schools next year. As part of that process, my school community has spent some time thinking about what makes our school special and what makes Tamayo, Tamayo.

For me, one of the most important factors is the knowledge, the knowing. As part of my role, I work with the same students for 4- 6 years in a row. I get to know the students and their needs so well. I get to know which students need help with writing or who needs a little extra time to complete their work. When we do a project about animals, I know which student will pick a cheetah or an axolotl every time.

And I get to know their families. I get to ask my students about their siblings and cousins that are now in high school and college. Do they still like science? Are they doing well? Are they going to come to family night so I can say hi?

But there is a lot we don't know.... We don't know what our schools will look like next year. I don't know if I will have a job at Tamayo next year. I don't know if I will be here next year to lead these interactive science activities. I don't know if our Academic Interventionist will be here to support struggling readers. I don't know if our Spanish teacher will be here to support bilingual learning. I just don't know.

Last February I spoke to the board about being exhausted. About being so tired of not knowing. And now my school community is in the 2nd year of just not knowing. I want to be making plans for next year- for my classes, field trips, projects and clubs. But I still don't know. I want to continue being a part of this amazing, supportive community but I just don't know.

Last year, the board made a resolution stating that transitioning schools should "maximise student and staff retention", but we have not received that commitment from our future employer. We don't know whether or not we will have jobs next year. We don't know what classes, programs, supports and field trips our students will be part of next year. We just don't know.

Please give us the guarantee. Let us know we will have our jobs next year so that we can focus on what we do best- planning and preparing for our students.