

**June 26, 2025, Board Meeting Written Comments
Received between Tuesday, June 24th and Friday, June 27th Submitted via
Written Comments Form**

1	<p>Good afternoon, Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to speak with this board. My name is Shamim Zafar, I am a parent of CPS Senn HS student, as well as a parent mentor coordinator at Kilmer Elementary school, my three children graduated from Kilmer elementary school. I was also involved in this school over a decade, first serving on LSC for six years followed by being a parent mentor, and recess coach, now I am working as a parent mentor coordinator for three years.</p> <p>At Kilmer, we have seen a need for better water filtration systems, cleaner air, a better playground in the school, and the lockers are also in need of improvements, they are extremely rusted which is a large health concern. In the time I served on the LSC, there was a lack of money for the resources that would be needed to make the school environment better.</p> <p>At Senn, my daughter mentioned that many problems can be distracting at the school. For example, the heating and cooling is outdated and it makes it hard to focus when it is way too hot or too cold. She told me that they need better air filters in the classrooms and hallways, and sometimes the smell from the bathrooms can carry through the school. She also said that she and her classmates avoid water fountains because it can be dirty and discolored. As a parent, it is concerning to hear this, and seeing the school clean and taken care of would be great for students' learning environment.</p> <p>Students deserve better resources at their schools. With the Green Schools Resolution, the section that is most important to me as a parent is using energy savings to have healthy school improvements that can improve the safety and security of students.</p> <p>Please vote yes on the Green Schools Resolution to support school communities like Kilmer and Senn in Rogers Park.</p>
2	<p>I am submitting this comment to report incidents of harassment happening at my child's school (Helen C. Peirce). Staff members have been harassed for using the term genocide in relation to Gaza, causing undue stress on them and violating their rights to free speech and academic freedom.</p> <p>As a concerned parent and an advocate for academic freedom, I would greatly appreciate the Board's investigation and follow up on this issue.</p>
3	<p>As a long-time supporter of the American Civil Liberties Union and human rights advocate, I am very concerned to hear about efforts within the Chicago school system to stifle discussion of Palestine and Palestinian human rights. The best way to develop critical thinking, one of the primary goals of education, is to allow students access to different perspectives and sources of information and encourage them to reason independently. Attempts to prevent discussion represent attacks on our most fundamental First Amendment rights.</p>
4	<p>It's important to note that Herzl's choice of Palestine for Jewish colonization was more about strategy than any personal connection to the region he might have held. While he was also considering Argentina and East Africa, he knew that since there were already Jewish people in Palestine and Palestine held religious importance, the work of mass emigration would likely be easier: "The very name of Palestine would attract our people with a force of marvelous potency."</p> <p>Even before the establishment of the state of Israel, it was clear that this collision of Jewish Supremacy and capitalism would be deadly for Palestinians and that deadly violence, dispossession, and occupation is the central horrors of the Zionist state. For this reason, many Jewish people were against colonizing Palestine and connected these worries with the horrific implications for Jewish people, as well as Palestinians.</p> <p>https://www.sott.net/article/500302-The-Jewish-supremacy-at-the-heart-of-the-Zionist-project</p>

5	<p>"White supremacy and Zionism are two of a kind, with both modelled on ethnic exclusion. Therefore, if one opposes exclusion, and the desire for a racially or religiously 'pure' nation, one must oppose Zionism"</p> <p>https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/birds-feather-white-supremacy-and-zionism</p>
6	<p>Zionism is a racist and settler colonialist movement, which opportunistically coopts aspects of Judaism in an attempt to justify its criminal practices of apartheid and genocide of indigenous Palestinians. White supremacy is dominant within Israeli society, which privileges white-skinned Ashkenazi Jews at the expense of dark-skinned African Jews, Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews as well as African refugees. African/black Jewish communities are often denied recognition by Israeli authorities with some members even deported.</p>
7	<p>As a former CPS graduate, a current CPS parent, and an elected LSC parent rep, I'm deeply disappointed in CPS' lack of commitment to its own Equity Framework. I'm particularly concerned about CPS' efforts to achieve objective 4 of the Targeted Universalism checklist which is to create fair policies. The key issue here is discrimination. Since CPS does NOT have universal policies on bulletin boards that helped address the issue experienced at Peirce, the library worker and principal were forced to field the backlash and then tasked with the shore of creating a unequitable policies (pertaining to a bulletin board about Arab American Heritage Month that featured photos of CPS students standing up against a genocide and photos of photos of libraries and schools destroyed in Palestine by Israel) that catered to a select group of voices that were stifling free speech, including thousands who were outside of the Peirce community and outside of Illinois - the majority of which were external parties trying to disturb the peace in a school community that has an established anti-racism policy. CPS needs to have a firm stance to promptly address the needs of educational stakeholders in times of crisis in a just and equitable manner -- not promoting harm through indecision, lack of clarity in policies, and targeting individual school leaders and employees.</p>
8	<p>children in Palestine is attacked, ridiculed, minimized, and brushed away. Israel is treated like God's Gift in our schools, despite an obvious extermination campaign of genocide. Our children here try to have discussions about it, and their teachers either bully them into silence or are so completely terrified of criticizing Israel or even being adjacent to it that they treat the student like a Leper, quarantining them just like they want to quarantine the whole issue.</p> <p>Children who want to show support to other children should be allowed to do so. Teachers should not tremble at the merest mention of Israel and Zionism. Our teachers are more afraid of criticizing Israel or supporting Palestine than they are of criticizing our own President!</p> <p>Being Palestinian is not a crime, supporting Palestinians is not a crime, being loving and caring towards a group does not automatically make you an Anti-Semite.</p> <p>What the Zionist influence in our schools is doing is it is corrupting all of the important diversity and education issues because it makes everyone afraid to talk about anything because deep inside they know they are being hypocritical, so they would rather just not say anything.</p> <p>Prima facie it is ridiculous to allow bullying and negligence of students that is 100 times worse than anything any Israel supporter ever experiences, but somehow if the Israel supporter is a little uncomfortable they can shut down debate for an entire school, while those who support Palestine or just even want to learn about it are mercilessly crushed.</p>
9	<p>I am concerned about Zionist groups such as CJA (Chicago Jewish Alliance) having a disproportionate affect on CPS and it's policies. Palestinian, Arab and Muslim student are actively being suppressed and silenced and CPS is not protecting them.</p>
10	<p>There is a strong Zionist hold in CPS. They are repressing a voice.</p>
11	<p>Many CPS teachers are in fear of retaliation when they speak out about the genocide.</p>
12	<p>Back on Valentine's Day in 2024 I spoke at a board meeting regarding the difficult situation that Palestinian students and staff were experiencing in CPS. The concerns that I had got bounced around from Office to office and landed in the office of teaching and learning with Nicole Milberg</p>

	<p>the issue remained unresolved as Palestinian lives just don't seem to matter. I'm not saying this to by your sympathy, but more as a matter of fact, that organizations and communities with the loudest voices and the biggest threat tend to be heard, and those are from the Zionist community that seek to destroy an ethnically cleanse Palestinians. CPS has made minimal effort to acknowledge the difficulties that students have endured due to the CPS stance that seems to allow freedom of expression and speech to this one entitled party. I am horrified as a 27 year veteran of the district and an alumni of Von Steuben Metropolitan science center that Chicago public schools blatantly has taken aside against Palestinian students and the services that pro Palestine new students need in multiple hostile situations. Cps also allows or organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League also known as ADL to conduct DEI work when they themselves stifle Palestinian voices that oppose the propaganda and rhetoric that all Palestinians are problematic and terrorist. When Will the policy change?</p>
13	<p>My son had 3 safety plans put on him because Jewish families felt he was unsafe. His voice was repressed and I as a CPS employee was retaliated.</p>
14	<p>Suppressing the ability of teachers to instruct and students to learn about Palestine is a first amendment violation. Our children deserve the opportunity to learn facts and decide their own opinions. As a long time citizen of this city, and a Christian who has long advocated for peace, and studied the history of Palestine from before Israel was founded to the present day, and spent much time listening to Israeli/ Jews and Palestinian, I am concerned that these identities are being weaponized to silence the ability to learn and speak about Palestine, it's rich and diverse history and what is now an ongoing genocide. Silencing voices teaching about Palestine is as egregious as those anti-education folks who want to silence teachers from teaching about the Holocaust and the deep and varied Jewish history before and after WWII.</p>
15	<p>In a world shaped by global events, elementary and high school students deserve an honest and age-appropriate understanding of the Israel Palestine struggle – not only as a political issue but as an ongoing human rights issue . Palestinians have been living under Israeli occupation since 1967, which has caused human rights violations, including unlawful killings, forced displacement, home demolitions, severe restrictions on movement and access to basic needs, collective punishment, arbitrary detention and systematic discrimination – all violations of international law.</p> <p>While Illinois and 22 other states in the US require the teaching of the Holocaust in elementary and high schools, no such mandate exists for teaching the Nakba and its 77 years of Palestinian displacement, dispossession, and denial of human rights under Israeli rule. It is vitally important that the identities and histories of all students be reflected and respected in the classroom. Learning about Palestine is a first amendment right. Our children deserve the opportunity to recognize injustice, develop empathy, and make informed opinions as they learn critical literacy skills to engage with text identifying misinformation, disinformation, and bias.</p>
16	<p>Good afternoon, My name is John Paul Jones, President of Sustainable Englewood Initiatives (SEI), Nature Trail Steward Consultant with Grow Greater Englewood and Founder of Emmett Till Commemoration Initiatives. Today, I'm writing to support today's resolution on Green Schools. The resolution is a wonderful response to the State Board of Education recommendations to CPS to create Green Schools. The recommendations were developed during the 2024 debate on the scheduled 2026 School Closing Moratorium policy. As of 2023, New York City introduced over 60 Green Schools centered on STEM learnings like urban agriculture and botanical gardens. Today's resolution is focused on Green buildings, this too is important and will help direct Green buildings standards in Chicago utilizing Federal dollars received in the region through the Metropolitan Area Planning agency, CMAP. The Resolution includes a call for a steering committee to help advance the concepts, measure green programs and select school sites. It's our hope the board will advance the resolution and would consider Green Buildings sites in Greater Englewood and along its scheduled Englewood Nature Trail and the repurposing of vacant schools including the Earle School annex built in 1973. The Earle School annex can serve as a STEM learning center alongside scheduled housing units at Earle School in West Englewood. City Council Committee Chair Alderman Taylor led a wonderful school Repurposing tour of six (6) schools in the 20 th ward. The Green School Resolution provides an opportunity to both improve learning facilities and advance STEM classes in low income districts, that still hope to build upon Black Students Success. The Sustainable Englewood Initiatives is urging the Board to support the resolution.</p>

17	<p>I am a 3-5 grade cluster teacher. Back in October, I was struck by the new cluster support policy and one of my SECAs was pulled from my class. 13 students may seem like a small number but we are not talking about a typical 3rd, 4th or 5th grade class. Of my 13 students, I have students who are nonverbal, students with behavior and safety plans, students in diapers and several with such needs that require them to have dedicated support all day. Losing supports has been detrimental to our classroom environment.</p> <p>At the time of this change, I had 2 program SECAs and 1 dedicated SECA. Losing a program SECA left us feeling perplexed and frustrated. When I reached out to the district for clarity and support, I was told that my dedicated SECA was now to be used as a shared SECA. This is clearly illegal. At this time, we had a new student who is deaf and had a difficult time adjusting. He would have severe breakdowns that included violence, aggression and elopement. At times, I would be kept from the room to deal with this for 1,2 and sometimes 3 hours at a time. With me being out of the room at these times, physical and emotional turmoil was caused for both students and staff.</p> <p>This loss of supports also led to safety concerns as well. One of our students eloped from the playground during recess and was caught by my SECA just before crossing the busy street and leaving the rest of the class with even less supervision.</p> <p>Due to ongoing challenges, what should be a simple and enjoyable recess experience has become increasingly stressful and unsafe. As a result, we made the difficult decision to keep the class indoors for recess and outdoor gym, even during favorable weather conditions—as a precautionary measure. However, it is important to acknowledge that this decision significantly impacts and infringes on our students access to LRE.</p> <p>Overall, I struggled to balance the academic and behavioral needs of each of my students. I began to give up my lunch and prep time to give my class extra adult support. As a result, myself and the classroom SECAs had suffered fatigue and burnout in ways that I have never experienced before!</p> <p>In closing, I love my job and I refuse to throw in the towel and give up on our most vulnerable students. This policy is doing just that! Cluster staff and students are often isolated from the rest of the school and even society. Please do not continue to isolate us further by enforcing this policy into the 25/26 school year.</p>
18	<p>As the mother of a CPS student, and a Jew, I feel it is vital that educators at CPS be allowed to acknowledge painful events in history and today. We cannot in good conscience shy away from the treatment of Native Americans, of Black Americans, of Japanese Americans. And, as we must acknowledge the holocaust and antisemitism at home, we must face uncomfortable truths about the wars in the middle east and the genocide in Gaza (and elsewhere) and anti-muslim anti Palestinian movements here at home. Ignorance does NOT shield our children. Silence does not protect them. Censorship does not build strong communities. Please allow true learning and leadership to flourish at CPS.</p>
19	<p>The suppression of accurate educational programming about Palestine is gravely concerning, not to mention a First Amendment violation. CPS students deserve the truth about world affairs, and censorship of Palestinian geography and history does students a huge disservice. As a Jewish Chicagoan and a CPS substitute, I demand that my identity stop being weaponized to coddle far-right political agendas. There is a genocide going on in Palestine, and hiding these facts sets a dangerous precedent.</p>
20	<p>I am the library worker who created the Arab American bulletin board at Peirce Elementary.</p> <p>I came of age in American suburbs in the 1990s, and I took to heart the lessons of the Holocaust that were centered in our curriculum. Don't be a "good German," Never Again! During the '90s, the AIDS epidemic was allowed to decimate the American gay population, with many activists</p>

describing this event as genocide. These histories shaped who I am as a person: we must always act up, speak up, and take direct action when we witness the rise of fascism and genocide.

American public schools did not prepare me to speak up against settler colonialism, the foundation of our United States as well as Israel. I didn't learn to value the lives of people of color. I was taught that their lands and labor exist for people like me, and governments like mine, to occupy and control. I didn't truly learn about antisemitism, that the Nazis were inspired by America's racist systems, as well as Europe's imperialist atrocities around the world. I didn't learn that Jewish people in Europe had much in common with the global majority that Europe was fighting to regain control over. I didn't learn that at times, Jewish communities and Communist groups fought back by militant, armed means - by any means necessary. I learned a distorted, limited history and left me unprepared to understand the global events of the 21st century, including the ongoing white supremacy in American cities and towns.

I am white, but this white-washed education failed me. It failed to support me in developing an empathetic, curious, intellectually rigorous mindset. I had to develop those skills elsewhere. I would hope that CPS doesn't perpetuate the same failures today.

It is easy for Americans to perpetuate racism in education, as it is what so many of us were raised on. The harm this does to people around the world, to our communities at home, is devastating. For the last 21 months we've watched, in great detail, the genocide in Gaza. We've seen how disinformation is disseminated by mainstream news sources to stigmatize resistance to empire and genocide. And for years, we've witnessed American police train with the Israeli military and then use those tactics on Black, Native, and immigrant communities in the US. Our community services (including education) have been drained as we send billions per year to prop up the Israeli military as it surveils, incarcerates and burns alive Palestinians, as well as attacking neighboring countries. We've watched the demands of the Black Lives Matter uprisings be undermined, Healthcare For All become a distant fantasy, union power be continually broken, and funding for ICE and border violence expand with every administration.

CPS must not cave in to attacks on accurate, empathetic, relevant, culturally responsive education - whether these attacks are explicit, as was the anti-Palestinian email campaign, or carried out through expressions of "concern" about "appropriateness" and a request for policies to micromanage information in CPS schools, even after that information has been Oked by a school's administration and CPS' offices of EOCO, OSP, and Legal.

The Peirce Elementary school community deliberately carried on with education as our own government and industries helped carry out a genocide. Not only that, but a genocide directly impacting the largest Arab American constituency in Illinois (Palestinian Americans). We even chose to be brave and celebrate our LGBTQIA students with the first Peirce Pride, as our tax dollars fund the genocide of queer, trans, straight and cis children and adults in Gaza. As a transgender person, being celebrated as Palestinian children burn alive leaves my heart empty and broken.

What does our silence teach our students of Palestinian descent? What does it teach our students whose legacies share so much with Palestinians: indigenous, Black, Arab American students? What does this silence do to all of us?

21 As an educator, teaching truth to power is our moral obligation. Suppressing the ability of teachers and students to learn about Palestine is a first amendment violation. Our children deserve the opportunity to learn facts and decide their own opinions. As an ally of Chicago Jewish and Arab communities, I am concerned that these identities are being weaponized to silence the ability to learn and speak about an ongoing genocide. If our communities are old enough to be affected by something across the globe, they are old enough to learn about it.

22 Suppressing the ability of teachers to inform and students to learn about Palestine is a first amendment violation. Our children deserve the opportunity to learn facts and decide their own opinions about this population that has contributed so much to humanity. As a ally of the Chicago

Jewish and Arab communities, I am deeply troubled that these two identities are being weaponized to silence outspoken advocacy about the ongoing genocide in Gaza and forced displacement and violence in the West Bank. By impeding the ability to teach and learn about Palestinian heritage is erasure, pure and simple.

23 Suppressing the ability of teachers and students to learn about Palestine is a first amendment violation. Our children deserve the opportunity to learn facts and decide their own opinions. As a Jewish Chicagoan I am concerned that my identity is being weaponized to silence the ability to learn and speak about an ongoing genocide.

ATTACHMENTS



Emmanuel Jackson
Resident of Chicago Public Schools District 10
Distinguished Teacher
Muchin College Prep, a Noble School

Hello President Harden, members of the Chicago Public Schools Board, and a warm welcome to our new Interim Superintendent King.

My name is Emmanuel Jackson. I am a proud Chicago resident of the past 10 years and have served as a teacher and college counselor for the last nine at Noble. In 2022, I was honored to be named a Distinguished Teacher at Noble Schools. In 2024, I was selected to join Noble's Board of Directors as a representative of teacher voice, a role I continue to hold with great pride and responsibility.

We ground our work at Noble with a clear theory of change—one that recognizes that a college degree can create multi generational change, which is why I chose to work at Noble. I've seen this firsthand in my own family. I'm one of three siblings, and watching the differences in our paths—especially for those who didn't complete college—reinforced for me how transformative a college education can be. I'm committed to doing everything in my power to help our students achieve their goals and build the futures they dream of.

I was surprised and concerned to learn about the resolution that passed last month regarding charter schools. Specifically, the requirement for a parent to serve on a charter school board—stood out, as Noble has long embraced this practice. In fact, we currently have two parents, a Noble Alumni and a Noble alumni parent serving on our board, a commitment we've upheld since before it became part of state law in 2019.

I am proud to serve as a member of the Board at Noble. I know the power that I have to provide our board members insight from the teacher perspective, often giving them the information that they cannot find within the quantitative data. It's been exciting to know that every single member of our Board is passionate about serving the students and families of this city. Board members push Noble leadership and hold us all accountable for achieving the outcomes necessary for our students to lead choice-filled lives.

We are doing meaningful, impactful work, and we share the same goals as this CPS Board—ensuring students succeed in college, careers, and as engaged citizens of Chicago. When actions are taken that harm our schools, it's ultimately our students who are affected. In the future, I urge you to engage charter school stakeholders when considering resolutions or policies that impact our community. Inclusive dialogue leads to more informed and effective decisions. If you have any additional questions about who is on our Board and want to learn more about our role at Noble, don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you for your time.

6) Please include a description of the mentoring and instructional coaching the individual will receive while working on this approval. Note that instructional coaching must occur on an ongoing basis. Coaches must schedule at least one meeting per week with the applicant and document those meetings with the hiring district and evidence of weekly meetings must be filed with your ROE/ISC on an annual basis.

7) Please provide a description of the vacant position, including the subject area, grade level, and a description of the entity's inability to fill the position with a fully qualified individual.

I verify that the above information is true and accurate.

Name

Digital or Original Signature

Title

Date

SECTION III: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION (CPS Talent Office for Chicago applicants)

As administrator of this entity

- I have verified this form is completed in its entirety, was submitted directly by the hiring district.
- I have verified that the mentor/instructional coach and supervisor listed in Section II, items 3 and 4, hold the required licensure and endorsements.

Name

Digital or Original Signature

Title

Date