

**September 28, 2022 Board Meeting Written Comments**  
**Received between Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>**  
**Submitted via Written Comments Form**

1	I moved to Bridgeport 2 years ago. We have a small childy and one of our big concerns was the commute that she would have to take to get to high school. This new proposal would alleviate these concerns and I'm hoping that the school project moves forward.
2	Hello my name is Mary Long. I live 346 East 89th pl Chicago, Il. 60619. My concern is regarding the registration to speak at a board meeting. The link never opens up on time and once it opens, it's already full. This is not fair. I think that each network should have an opportunity to speak and be allowed to register on their specific slot dates and time to support their school, even if they don't speak, then, open it up and fill the slots, cause some of us never gets in to speak.
3	<p>Regarding Interim Principal Abdul Muhammad of Lindblom.</p> <p>As a parent I have many concerns about the future of Lindblom under Mr. Muhammad and the administration he's brought to the school. Communication from the school is scattered, disorganized, and delayed. Additionally, riddled with improper word usage, misspellings and grammatical errors. Lindblom students recognize this and are finding it harder and harder to take admin seriously. To quote my son, "they're a joke, but the pep rallies are fun." That's the best the students can come up with. It's so very sad. The kids never see anybody from admin, which is contrary to what Muhammad claims, and leaves the students feeling unsupported.</p> <p>Muhammad has closed a Science teaching position at Lindblom Math and SCIENCE Academy in order to open a business manager position. A position that is nearly nonexistent in Chicago HS as multiple APs and the Principal should be able to cover those responsibilities. Closing a core subject teaching position is absurd to say the least.</p> <p>The beloved wrestling coach Mr. Ostrozovich (coached multiple sports, knew LMSA athletics, and had a good working relationship with the athletic director) was forced to leave the school when Muhammad removed him from the position he was in in and had been promised only to bring Ahmad Shareef from his former school (with a school wide enrollment lower than Linblom's boys' soccer team roster .) There is no indication Shareef is remotely capable or qualified for the job of Linblom's athletic coordinator. So much so that a "mentor" is being brought in to teach him how to to do his new job! Money that could be directed to the students, is slated to be used to teach a new hire how to do his job. Maddening.</p> <p>These are major moves for an Interim, all by week 4 of the school year. These moves reek to high heaven of Nepotism, give no indication they will be beneficial to the Lindblom. And by all accounts are wasting precious funds that could benefit students. There is no pause to acclimate or learn the climate and culture of the Lindblom community. Everything seems very geared toward benefiting Abdul Muhammad and nobody else.</p> <p>The ALSC seems very committed to keeping Muhammad, but will never answer what they base that on. The school community has asked the ALSC to tell us what they believe makes Mr, Muhammad a good fit, but they won't answer.</p>
4	If a Near South High School is not built by summer of 2025, I will be moving out of the city. My child deserves a quality neighborhood high school and if one is not built near the South Loop, I will take my tax dollars to a suburb where he can attend a neighborhood high school.
5	I am a parent of a student at South Loop Elementary. My daughter is mixed-race (asian/white). We are strong supporters of the proposed near south high school. There is a very good chance that our daughter will attend if it is approved and built according to the proposed schedule. Our neighborhood has a terrific elementary school at South Loop Elementary. All that his needed is a similarly strong and available high school. This will help keep families in our neighborhood, who right now either have to move or be wealthy enough to attend private school. Schools such as this are foundational anchors for communities and I look forward to seeing how a strong new high school will help our community.
6	I am writing in support of the Near South Community High School proposal. As a 14-year resident of the South Loop (Printers Row) with two children at SLES, I am writing both as a community

	<p>member and a parent. From the numbers presented at a recent meeting, it is clear that SLES students are by and large not attending our neighborhood high school (Wendell Phillips Academy), which in and of itself suggests a need for what parents perceive to be a viable alternative to private schools, even if it would not be a particularly strong draw away from selective enrollment schools. As a member of the community who intends to stay long after my own children graduate, I am encouraged by the idea that there would be a high school much closer in proximity to many of the students' residences that would, from all accounts, be the most diverse neighborhood high school in the history of Chicago. I am grateful to representatives from both CHA and CPS for addressing the very valid and important concerns raised by advocates of public housing, which I consider myself to be. The proposed site within the footprint of the former Ickes housing, including sports facilities nearby, seems appropriate for a high school, and the land swap arrangement for the plots on South Wabash should make the previous promises "whole." I am strongly supportive of the proposal as I understand it at this point in time.</p>
7	<p>I would like to express my support for the Near south high school. Our children need this opportunity. Especially African American and Foster children from the Smyth community.</p>
8	<p>I strongly support the establishment of a new Near South High School. I will admit that my primary motivation is selfish--I have a son who is in 6th Grade at South Loop Elementary School, and I very much wish for him to be able to attend a high-quality public school that reflects the diversity and integrity of our immediate neighborhood and the surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <p>My wife and I have lived in the South Loop since we got married in 2001. (She lived there for two years before that.) We have seen it grow into what many people view as the best place to live in the city. (We wholeheartedly agree with that view!) The one thing that has been lacking, however, is a top-notch neighborhood school that serves all of our community's residents. We are committed to public education, but more than that, we are committed to providing our children with the best-possible education. We have seen innumerable friends and acquaintances move their families out of the South Loop in recent years because the public education options available to their children were not acceptable. We are prepared to make the move to the suburbs ourselves if a Near South High School is not available to our son. Having to take this step would pain me greatly, but I see no other option.</p> <p>While my primary interest in this is for the education of my son, I also submit that the establishment of a new Near South High School would tremendously benefit the greater South Loop and surrounding communities and the City of Chicago as a whole. As great as it has been to see the explosion of development in the South Loop over the past two-plus decades, we need and want for it to continue to grow so that its residents may continue to thrive and, frankly, so the city's tax base may continue to expand. Too many people are leaving the city; an excellent neighborhood public high school option in or near the South Loop will both stop that exodus and draw new residents in.</p> <p>I truly believe that the establishment of a new Near South High School would benefit our city as a whole, the near-south community, and my family's and our friends' children for years to come. I sincerely hope to never have to leave Chicago, but if there is no Near South High School by Fall 2025, the grim reality is that I will have no choice.</p> <p>Please take this tremendous step toward making the best city in the world even better!</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
9	<p>Can take 1 or 2 CTA from Bridgeport to New High School, less than 30 minutes one way. Swimming pool in 1st Floor and Chemistry lab at top Floor for safety. ESL class for Chinese and Spanish and others.</p>
10	<p>Can someone please address the failure of CPS student bus transportation? There is no accountability nor transparency. After submitting my child's bus application in June 2022, two months into the school year, my child has yet to be added to an existing bus route, with capacity for additional riders. CPS promises to transport students enrolled in selective enrollment/magnet schools, parents enroll students due to the promise of transportation, then CPS, without warning,</p>

	<p>fails to provide transportation. CPS should be transparent during the application process and let parents know transportation is unlikely, prior to parents uprooting their children from their current school. Bad enough students have scramble and stress to test and be bussed outside their communities for quality education in this city, even worse when CPS fail to hold up their end of the "bargain" even then. There is no transparency as to how students are prioritized to receive transportation, again, my child was previously receiving transportation and I submitted a bus application in June, upon her acceptance to Lindblom 7th/8th grade academic center. There are other general education students currently receiving transportation, how and why is my child not receiving the same transportation services? Her application date has been pushed back to September 7th, after CPS removed her name from the transportation waiting list and added her to the Ventra program, which I never requested nor agreed. The blanket statement being given to parents about the school bus shortage, is nothing more than a cover-up and excuse the failure of CPS' transportation department. The routing process appears to be random, as no one I've spoken with can tell me the process, other than Special Ed/Diverse Learners are prioritized for transportation, ahead of all other students. Not sure how and who decided it was ok to prioritize any student's education ahead of another's, but that's another topic. Please provide parents with answers, about when, if ever, students will receive transportation.</p>
11	<p>I am a CPS parent and strongly oppose the proposal to build a new high school on the south loop. CPS's own assessment showed that this proposed school will harm 18 neighboring high school, the majority of which serve primarily Black students. It recommended CPS do a racial impact assessment--where is that? Why is the district so committed to ramming through this proposal instead of looking into the real needs of the community and how to equitably invest? In addition, CHA has not provided the housing it promised a decade ago to Ickes Home residents, yet is doing a land swap for an unnecessary high school? The city needs to stick to its commitments to the community and not manufacture new projects that ignore what already exists. CPS has plenty of high schools that are desperate for investment. A new school is absolutely unnecessary, racist, and unfair.</p>
12	<p>As a parent of 3 children who lives in the South Loop for 17 years, I would like to express my support for the new Near South High School. We are in desperate need of a high-quality local high school to serve our community.</p>
13	<p>I have lived in the South Loop for over 15 years and have a child attending South Loop Elementary School. We love the neighborhood, community and school. I have attended informational meetings regarding the plans and I just want to say that I am in full support of opening up the Near South High School and all the steps necessary to make it happen. While I understand I can only speak for myself, I know many of my fellow South Loop parents are in agreement.</p>
14	<p>I'm the proud parent of several Lindblom students, current and former (an 8th grader in the Academic Center, an 11th grader, and a 2021 graduate), and until the beginning of this school year, I've had nothing but rave reviews for the administration, between their engagement with parents and students alike, their frequent and informative direct communication, and the manner in which they've endeared themselves to the Lindblom community. Even during the 2021/2022 school year when the principal position was vacant, the assistant principals did a wonderful job keeping their finger on the pulse of the student body, making sure parents were well informed, and providing a welcoming environment. This summer, that changed. Mr. Muhammad's hiring was announced to the Lindblom community on 7/18/2022 via e-mail. He did not send the communication himself, rather it came from one of the school clerk with an attached letter written by him. I can understand the initial announcement coming from the clerk, and I really didn't think anything of it at the time, but as the new leader of the school, I did expect to hear directly from him now and again to learn about his vision for the school, what his expectations were for the coming school year, any plans he had for change, etc. To me, regular, open communication is a basic tenet of leadership, particularly school leadership. Since then, however, the communication has been very limited, lackluster, and it's a cause for stress and concern. • Zero e-mails sent directly from Mr. Muhammad to the Lindblom community since the announcement of his hiring on July 18th. He seems to use the clerks as his personal. Secretaries. As a parent, I want to hear from the leader of the school, not receive an attached letter from him, sent by someone else. • Despite not taking the time to personally send any sort of communication aimed at engaging</p>

LMSA students and parents, Mr. Muhammad did take to social media to post a Facebook message that labeled those whom he angered with the firing of a long-serving and beloved AP as the “opposition,” and rather than seek support from current LMSA students, faculty, staff, and parents, he sought support from his former students at other schools. This was a very, very poor way to set the tone for a successful, productive relationship with the LMSA community. This posting, along with the termination of the afore-mentioned AP, led to a student walk-out on the very first day of school. • While I understand that principals have the right to bring in the APs they choose, the immediate removal of a 25-year staff member who essentially ran the school the prior year, without getting to know and understand her and the role she plays in the school, was short-sighted. A good leader knows that when you take a new job and enter a new environment, you don’t make immediate change because you have no idea what’s working and should remain versus what’s not working and does need change. This is a Management 101 principle. • The September 6th date for the annual beginning-of-the-year open house was announced before checking with staff about availability. The event was postponed because not enough staff could attend. • Zero communication directly from Mr. Muhammad to parents when a change in bus routes from September 6th through September 13th caused roughly 20% of the academic center to get dropped off at Lindblom 30 minutes after the start of the school day (following a direct request for his intervention, I specifically asked Mr. Muhammad, as Principal, to communicate directly with all of the affected families as it was causing anxiety for more than a few, which he did not oblige). Coincidentally, my wife also e-mailed him about the same issue on the same day, hours before me – she received no answer. • Student morale is low. He’s made no effort to engage with students to get to know them, or to let them get to know him. • Staff morale is low. I’ve personally communicated with several teachers, and they are concerned with the staffing moves. One coach resigned because of how he was treated by Mr. Muhammad (during an ALSC meeting, no less), the Case Manager left after interviewing with Mr. Muhammad for an AP position for which there was never a budget (leaving LMSA with no Case Manager), and I’ve done my best to delay forming judgements on the performance of Mr. Muhammad because change and transition is challenging, and I wanted to give him time to get acclimated with the school and his role. However, as a parent whose children attended other schools that underwent administrative changes, I speak from experience when I say that the transition at Lindblom, to date, has gone very poorly by comparison. At this point, in the sixth week of classes, I’ve not seen any efforts made to improve anything, nor have my students. His communication is poor, at best, his leadership is severely lacking, and as a parent, there doesn’t appear to be a lot of organization within the administration to handle any scheduling of school events, transportation, etc.. His prior experience as principal was at a very small school a fraction of the size of Lindblom, and it was not a selective enrollment school. He’s in over his head, and if Mr. Muhammad remains a permanent fixture at Lindblom Math and Science Academy, I fear that the next several years will see a large amount of teacher/staff turnover and a reduction in enrollment of top-performing students,

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| 15 | Good morning! I still think that it’s a great idea for the new school! It will be very convenient for our students and others to have the opportunity to have selected schools to choose from!   |
| 16 | I want to record my support for a public option high school in the near south side. I live in Bridgeport and we are in the Armour attendance boundary. Our current 'home' school is Tilden. As a high school teacher, I understand what a larger school can provide. Athletics, activities and advanced classes are all easier to support when you have 1,000+ students. Parent and family involvement is paramount in a well functioning school and it's easier to get involved when you live near the school. It would be wonderful to be able to stay in Chicago and know that my children have a public option that isn't miles away from our neighborhood. Thank you! |
| 17 | This neighborhood has changed dramatically in the last 25 years and school facilities are lacking to meet the needs of this evolving neighborhood. While many residential high rises and single family homes have been built, school facilities have not been part of the plan. Our neighborhood needs a high school where our children can attend without a time consuming commute.   |
| 18 | I am a parent and local school council representative at Holden Elementary and recently attended a FACE meeting on NSHS. I recognize there are benefits and drawbacks of the NSHS plan and that its fate is probably already sealed. I have two requests: 1) Please ensure the public housing around the land swap is actually built by the time NSHS has opened. I fear that the housing not  |

	<p>yet being built would make for an ugly backdrop for the new school. The community will be much more proud of the new school if the new housing has been built with it. I know this is CHA's domain, but CPS has a role to play to ensure that it actually happens, I would be grateful if it does. 2) CPS's good faith effort to draw NSHS boundaries that do not siphon enrollment from struggling schools also draws darker those lines of division between richer and poorer south side neighborhoods. This saddens me. NSHS offers a compelling vision for high school education in my more fortunate neighborhood. I would like CPS to provide a similarly compelling vision in the neighborhoods drawn to be outside the boundaries, and respectfully feel that it has not yet come close to doing so.</p>
19	<p>I am very much in support of a new Near South Highschool at the proposed location. I have three elementary school aged children, and a neighborhood Highschool in a realistic distance with a diverse student population would solve a lot problems for my family. As a Southloop resident and homeowner I do not have a public highschool that would support my children's learning needs beyond elementary age.</p>
20	<p>One of the very best ways to ensure the health and future of a public school system is to attract more families into it. The revival of the Near South Side as a residential district during the past 30 years has been a positive development for the city as a whole; and what is now called the South Loop was not previously a residential district meaning that no populations were displaced by its recent development. The more of those new taxpaying families that can be brought into CPS the better for everyone. Right now the lack of a local neighborhood high school is a huge gap which inspires many families to either opt out of CPS as children graduate 8th grade, or move out of the area altogether. Many of those families, of all races, who already love living in the city or we wouldn't be there in the first place, would gladly stay if there was a practical nearby public-high school option. Failing to respond to enthusiastic on-the-ground demand would be a crazy choice for any large public school system to make. An additional positive is that the new Near South High School as currently proposed would be very diverse. Of all the elementary schools that would feed it, the _highest_ percentage of white pupils is South Loop Elementary at 26 percent. The new high school would have no single majority racial or ethnic group and would be no more than 10 percent white students; it would be representative of the wonderful diversity of our city.</p>
21	<p>The Near South High School has been a need for over 20 years. Within its boundaries are some of the only growing neighborhoods in Chicago, neighborhoods without a viable neighborhood high school. We have seen families with talented, wonderful children leave the city due to the immense strain and pressure of high school, families who otherwise would remain in the city (and support the city and its schools with valuable tax dollars and volunteer efforts. This high school would become one of the most diverse schools in the city, and that diversity is one of the major draws to the neighborhoods within its boundaries.</p>
22	<p>Greetings,  As a CPS graduate and parent of a CPS alumni and current Local School Council member, I have an appreciation and value of what public education has brought into our lives - Not only the education it provides but the guidance given from the school's family to the relationship and camaraderie developed with fellow students. My 22yo daughter graduated from John C. Haines neighborhood Elementary School, located in the heart of Chinatown, in 2014. I am a CPS graduate who attended my neighborhood elementary school on the northside and graduated from Lane Tech High School (that is what it was called then) many moons ago. I had a minimal 45-minute commute on public transportation from my home approximately 5 miles away to attend high school. By the time my daughter completed 7th grade, she received all C's and scores were average. Unfortunately, this would limit her in applying to select enrollment or IB high schools. To aid in the decision of a high school, we attended 22 open houses (fyi, we only attended 4 open houses for college. CRAZY, right?) but we needed to be sure we had options for quality education as well as accessibility to the high school for after-school activities and culture. We were not confident that the current neighborhood high school would provide such - As a LSC representative, I was made aware of parents who were concerned of their children's transition to high school at a school so far away from the community that does not provide the support/resources in regard to language and safety ... For my daughter, luckily multiple acceptance letters were received - Noble's Muchin College Prep Charter High School was the best choice for attendance, culture and SAFETY and was 1.5 miles away and just one bus ride.</p>

	<p>My daughter graduated her senior year of high school with (3) AP classes, 3.87gpa, Top 5% in her class, participation in (3) sports throughout the school year plus 130+ booked community service hours - Evident the best choice and circumstance was made. My daughter had applied to 16 colleges and received 12 acceptance letters.. The reason I gave such detail is to show that her 7th grade grades/scores do not reflect the person she is or show the potential she has... Proudly, in the Chinatown / Bridgeport / South Loop communities, there are AT LEAST 8 neighborhood Level 1 Elementary Schools. Sadly, there is/are ZERO Level 1 Neighborhood High school(s) for these Elementary School students to know they are automatically accepted into... In addition, with the growth and development in ALL of our communities in this area - WE NEED &amp; Will NEED to ensure the RESOURCES necessary for our community. WE NEED &amp; DESERVE a QUALITY EDUCATION NEIGHBORHOOD High School Supporting the Communities where Haines, Ward, Healy, South Loop, NTA reside... I understand the point of view towards Phillips and/or Tilden High Schools to continue as the feeder high school but with the growth and development in the Bronzeville / Douglas / Canaryville area communities, the neighborhood elementary schools will need to have the accessibility to these two high schools so those surrounding communities have the best resource close by as well..... Bottomline, we are fortunate to have such growth and development for families in our communities but we need to match it with the appropriate resources - A neighborhood quality education high school supporting the area elementary schools of Haines, Ward, Healy, South Loop, NTA., Thank you for your time &amp; consideration ~ June Moy Coutre' Resident &amp; Community Supporter</p>
23	<p>I support low-income housing. I support elected officials that keeps their word. We need more funding into our neighborhood High Schools. If we put more funding into those schools, they could have all that this new South Loop High School has to offer and more. Also we have thousands of people still on the CHA low subsidy/ low income housing waiting list that still need assistance. The China Town residents are not even in support of the 24th State Street location. Please find another location for the South Loop High School and grant our people the promise that was made for Affordable Housing on 24th State Street. Thank you.</p>
24	<p>September 27, 2022 Chicago Board of Education 1 N. Dearborn, Suite 950 Chicago, Illinois, 60602</p> <p>SUBMITTED VIA WRITTEN COMMENTS FORM</p> <p><b>RE: Opposition to Resolution to Request Planning, Pre-Design and Design Services for the Proposed Near South High School Project</b></p> <p>Dear Members of the Chicago Board of Education: We are writing on behalf of Lugenia Burns Hope Center to alert you to the civil rights implications of the Chicago Housing Authority leasing public housing land held in trust for the Harold Ickes Homes/Southbridge Development to Chicago Public Schools for the development of a new high school. We understand that other individuals and groups have challenged the proposal on different bases, including the potential impacts on historically Black high schools on the near south side. Before you approve another major expenditure of funds related to the project, we urge the Board to conduct a community-led racial equity assessment and fully consider the implications of this decision—those outlined in this letter as well as those raised by others who oppose this proposal.</p> <p><b>The Ickes land, owned by the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) and subject to a declaration of trust, is to be used exclusively for public and affordable housing that has not yet been built.</b> In order to build something other than the long-promised, mixed-income housing development, the CHA, the City of Chicago, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</p>

must, respectively, approve the lease, rezoning, and lifting of the trust. When CHA approved this transfer at its July board meeting, it was one of two major relinquishments of public housing land it authorized this summer alone and a continuation of its pattern of championing non-housing uses of public housing land in gentrifying areas—while lagging behind its continually shrinking goals for redeveloping housing. This pattern, and the Southbridge proposal, continue Chicago’s economic and racial segregation and do not remedy the pushout of Black families, contrary to CHA’s and the City of Chicago’s obligations to affirmatively further fair housing and comply with civil rights laws. **Your decision to plan for construction of a high school on this land will be mired by the site’s history of displacement, redevelopment delays, and broken promises for low-income residents, particularly Black families and people with disabilities, and the resulting civil rights violations.**

**Lugenia Burns Hope Center (Hope Center)** works to develop the civic engagement and empowerment of residents through education, leadership development, and community organizing to empower residents to envision how they want their communities to be developed. **The organization has members who are former public housing residents displaced by CHA’s Plan for Transformation or who seek to move to the Southbridge development.** Hope Center is part of a civil rights complaint under investigation with HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity concerning the City of Chicago’s violations of the Fair Housing Act by blocking the development of family affordable housing in predominantly white and gentrifying neighborhoods.

#### **History of the Proposed Site**

**The site at issue is part of a former public housing development called Harold Ickes Homes, constructed in 1955 and including over 1,006 housing units for CHA families.** The development eventually covered six square blocks, or approximately 18 acres. As part of CHA’s Plan for Transformation, demolition at the site began in the early 2000s, when CHA cleared the three western blocks of the site. In 2010, CHA razed the remaining three eastern blocks, which contained 738 housing units, displacing hundreds of families to primarily racially segregated low opportunity areas of the city. **For years, CHA has promised those families they could return to public housing replacement units in a mixed-income, mixed-use community located in their historic community.**

CHA redeveloped the western blocks first, relinquishing the land for non-housing uses that included construction of a school, a public park, and an athletic field. In June 2015, CHA then selected and approved a plan to redevelop the three eastern blocks of the Ickes site into 877 new residential units as well as 60,000 square feet of commercial and retail space, collectively known as Southbridge. Only 244 of the newly built units would be dedicated public housing for CHA families—representing just a third of the original CHA units at the site.

Though development of Southbridge is underway, with construction of two residential buildings nearly complete, **so far only 68 of the 244 promised CHA units have been delivered.** The next phase of development is set to break ground in 2023 and will reportedly result in 39 additional CHA units. Nonetheless, at completion of the next phase, CHA will still owe over 55% of the promised replacements units, which again, only represented a third of the original public housing stock at the site. Plans for the next phases of development remain unclear and CHA

confirmed at the September 22 Near South High School Information Session that the new housing units will not be built before this proposed high school is open in 2025.

The site's location—a stone's throw from the loop, abutting the revitalized South Loop, and less than a mile from the lakefront—now provides abundant access to transportation, employment opportunity, green space, and recreational and cultural amenities. This is access those thousands of CHA residents once had, and lost, with the demolition of the Harold Ickes Homes and other CHA public housing developments near Chicago's city center.

### **The Proposal Continues a Pattern of Non-Housing Land Uses at the Expense of Public Housing**

Earlier this year, CPS approached CHA with a plan to build a new high school on the southernmost block of the Ickes site. In exchange for a 99-year ground lease, CPS would then deed two acres of land on South Wabash to CHA. On July 19, 2022, the CHA Board approved the plan, authorizing the lease and eventual acquisition of the land on South Wabash.

**The southernmost block of the Ickes site was slated to be the final phase of the Southbridge development, hosting the remaining replacement CHA units.** This new proposal calls into question if, where and how CHA will now construct those units. While CHA maintains that all the remaining replacement units will still be developed on site by increasing density elsewhere, the agency has provided no specific information or plan for how, or when, this will be accomplished.

CHA has, this summer alone, quickly pushed forward proposals to build this school at Ickes and a training facility for a professional sports team at the former Addams, Brooks, Loomis, Abbott (ABLA) site.<sup>1</sup> These proposals continue CHA's pattern of leasing, swapping, and selling vacant public housing land that CHA itself has failed to redevelop for more than two decades, <sup>2</sup> as initially promised in the Plan for Transformation (2000) and later by the Plan Forward (2013). While redevelopment of the long-awaited housing units languishes across CHA's portfolio, the City helps broker these development deals<sup>3</sup> and pushes them through City Council with the help of aldermanic prerogative.<sup>4</sup> Neither the CHA or the City have released a comprehensive plan or analysis that considers how offloading public housing land impacts their ability to meet the specific (and already-diminished) redevelopment goals across CHA's legacy public housing sites, the individual or cumulative civil rights implications of these deals, or their duties to affirmatively further fair housing.

### **The CHA's and the City's Pattern of Public Housing Land Transfers Violates Federal Civil Rights Laws**

The CHA, the City of Chicago, and HUD must consider the fair housing and civil rights implications of this proposal before, respectively, approving the lease, rezoning the parcel, or lifting the trust. Both the City and CHA have a duty not to discriminate, and to comply with the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits policies and practices that have the intent or effect of discriminating against members of a protected class.<sup>5</sup> Because CHA and the City of Chicago receive federal housing-related funds, they likewise have a duty to affirmatively further fair housing. Specifically, they must (as a condition of receiving the grants and funds) certify that their housing policies affirmatively further fair housing. 42 U.S.C. § 5304(b)(2). The duty to affirmatively further fair housing requires that "[a]ctions must be taken to fulfill, as much as possible, the goal of open integrated residential housing patterns and to prevent the increase of segregation."<sup>6</sup> A failure to comply with this duty jeopardizes the receipt of federal funds.<sup>7</sup>



Additionally, as a recipient of federal dollars, the City of Chicago and CHA are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and have a duty not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, or color in any program or activity that receives federal funds or other federal financial assistance.

In deciding whether to move forward with a new proposal at the Ickes site, including to lease the land to CPS, the CHA and the City must first consider the civil rights implications of this specific decision and the broader pattern of land transfers. They should evaluate the ongoing need for affordable housing in Chicago and on the Near South Side by considering market rents, vacancy rates, household incomes, rates of housing cost burden, and public and subsidized housing waiting lists. This analysis should consider the supply of affordable rental housing in areas of opportunity with easy access to public transportation, good jobs and schools, and highquality healthcare. Finally, they should consider how the proposals impact people of color, families with children, people with disabilities, and other protected classes.<sup>8</sup> On information and belief, the CHA and the City have failed to undertake any meaningful analysis of these factors prior to advancing this proposal or others.

HUD will also review CHA's proposal to lift the housing trust and lease this land. Under Section 18 of the United States Housing Act, the disposition of CHA-owned land for the development of a high school will also require HUD review and approval. Specifically, as described in the CHA's July board resolution, CHA must submit an application to HUD's Special Application Center that certifies that the retention of the property is not in the best interests of the residents or the proposed disposition otherwise meets certain requirements set forth at 24 C.F.R. § 970.17(a)-(d).

### Conclusion

**Before authorizing planning for a new high school on Ickes land, we encourage you to conduct a community-led racial equity assessment that fully considers the impacts of a new high school and building on this site displacement.** In addition to concerns voiced by other community members and groups, this proposal is yet another failure by CHA and the City to consider the civil rights and fair housing impacts before approving development on public housing land. To date, CHA has delivered barely a third of the promised public units at Southbridge. The CHA's delays in delivering replacement units cannot serve, once again, as the basis to jettison a vital supply of coveted, available, public housing land in a gentrifying community. Advocates, including the Hope Center and former Ickes residents, will continue to challenge CHA's and the City's failures to affirmatively further fair housing with this proposal and resulting civil rights violations. We urge Members of the Chicago Board of Education to consider these comments prior to authorizing a budget expenditure for planning a new high school on a site that will be mired by CHA and the City of Chicago's fair housing and civil rights violations and to reject the proposal.

Sincerely,  
Emily Coffey  
Micaela Alvarez  
MacKenzie Speer

**Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights**

- 25 | I believe that a new school is needed for the advancement of our youth. Prayerfully it will benefit the AFRICAN AMERICAN community as well as others. Skilled Programs (Welding,Nursing,Culinary etc),Technology and The Arts are much needed in our schools and community . Social Justice, Counseling plus general care and concern is what our scholars require and DESERVE.
- 
- 26 | While a new high school serving the communities on the near south side is a positive improvement, I have a variety of concerns associated with the process moving forward as is. 1) Community Engagement - Community engagement numbers are not representative of the actual community feedback. Twenty-four hours notice to attend and join an in person focus group in the middle of the week speaks to CPS not truly seeking actual productive feedback from the surrounding community. My family lives in Bridgeport and the only way we happened to find out about this is my son received a lottery spot at Healy, and the school notified us the day before that there would be an 8 am focus group meeting IN PERSON at the school if we wanted to join. We are lucky enough that one of us could move our schedule around and make the meeting, many families and working parents do not have this luxury. The process has excluded people by nature of not making meetings and the information accessible. If my son did not attend a feeder school we would have not of known focus groups existed nor would we have had the opportunity to join one. Even this comment form came through with just over 24 hours notice to submit comment. 2) Boundary/Feeder Schools - All of south Bridgeport has been cut out of the boundary. Why? There is a lack of diversity for both involvement in the process and demographic even though CPS is preaching diversity. The boundary MUST be finalized prior to completing a land swap and releasing design. Ultimately, the boundary will dictate the space program for the school because the boundary dictates capacity needs of the school. CPS has already stated they have overcrowding concerns for the new school due to it being a new facility and many wanting to attend and “the boundary isn’t final but we don’t expect to add more schools”. So the boundary is final. It’s ironic how the only action item with a TBD next to it in the meetings is the Board voting on the boundary. Proceeding with design and saying the boundary isn’t final is a lie, politically and behind closed doors the boundary is final. Maybe the Board hasn’t voted on the boundary but the entire size and design of the school is based off of the boundary and anticipated attendance and future growth within that boundary. If the boundary is not final, what is the process for finalizing the boundary? 3) Diversity - This school will not be diverse as proposed. It was stated in a meeting by CPS that south of 35th was not included in the boundary because those people are most likely to send their kids to private school. Most people send their kids to private school due to subpar CPS high schools, not because they prefer to pay tuition. Essentially, CPS was saying if you do have resources, they don’t need to provide access to public education. This is inaccurate on many levels as the public school system can offer many services that private schools do not such as services for diverse learners. They also provide access to services to underserved populations they may not otherwise have access as well. The schools also have a unique opportunity to provide all kids with exposure to diversity. 4) Admissions Policy - It was stated that CPS is considering modifying enrollment policies to allow those who attend a feeder school but do not live within the boundary to attend Near South. While this could potentially be a great effort it still leaves the issue of cutting Bridgeport off south of 35th Street. Cluck like a chicken during the board meeting if anyone actually read this.
- 
- 27 | My family has lived in the South Loop for 16 years and our son is currently in the 3rd grade at South Loop Elementary. My nieces and nephews went through South Loop Elementary as well. A Near South High School is the single most influential factor in determining whether we will continue to live in this neighborhood or move to where our families needs can be met. We chose to send our son to South Loop Elementary because we value diversity, we value challenge, and we value neighborhood schools. We could have sent our son to a myriad of private schools, classical schools, or charter schools, but we believe the best education is delivered in a school that looks like our city. And this is what we want in the Near South High School. It’s important to us that surrounding neighborhoods and schools are not adversely impacted by the opening of the school, and the data we’ve seen from CPS has convinced us that this is the case. The plan is not perfect, and everyone’s voice should be heard. But our voice, the parents of South Loop Elementary students who have committed to public education and neighborhood schools when the default easier path would have been some alternative, should be heard as well. Let’s build the

	<p>most diverse high school in the city, in a thriving and civic-minded neighborhood, that serves as a shining example of Chicago's future and convince each other that we are still capable of doing great things.</p>
28	<p>As a resident of the South Loop who's kids attend South Loop Elementary School, which is likely the most diverse neighborhood school in CPS if not the world, I support the new high school that has been proposed at 24th and State St. With a gap of 6.6 mile from Phillips to Lincoln Park High Schools north-south and 2.6 miles east-west from the lakefront to Juarez and Wells High Schools, aside from the industrial / natural areas of the Lake Calumet area, I suspect we lie within the most under-served part of the city in terms of proximity to a walk-able neighborhood high school that doesn't require busing kids in from afar. Please support this proposed neighborhood high school that our diverse Near South communities need, as there currently isn't a single neighborhood high school here."I'd like to begin by providing sincere gratitude to you and the Family and Community Engagement team for providing a space to share feedback regarding the Near South Neighborhood High School. The ability to be a part of these conversations has been greatly appreciated.</p> <p>I'm the parent of a current 7th grader who attends one of the 9 feeder Elementary Schools. Although my student will not be attending the proposed Near South High School (NSHS) due to the tentative 2025 opening, I strongly believe that a new neighborhood high school is needed to serve the near south residents. To date, residents in the area have not had access to a neighborhood high school that can provide a competitive education and resources that adequately prepare them for their collegiate careers and beyond. As a CPS graduate and someone who has resided on the southside of Chicago for most of my life, I recognize the disparities across education due to race and place. Growing up, I traveled outside of my community to attend a magnet elementary school and high school. Both of which helped to prepare me in various ways to attend a private, highly rated, 4-year university. Many of the students who reside in the vicinity of the proposed neighborhood high school are having to do the same. Candidly, that is unacceptable. Minority students who reside on the Southside should have access to a neighborhood high school that can compete with any selective enrollment high school across town.</p> <p>I also believe that resources should be provided equitably to the neighborhood high schools that are currently serving the Southside...such as Phillips and Dunbar. No student should be penalized because of race and/or place. Mirroring the level of programming offered at the proposed neighborhood high school for those schools that currently exist, is low hanging fruit. I do not believe the answer is to create a school that further perpetuates disparities amongst the neighboring communities.</p> <p>Lastly, my support of the proposed Near South Neighborhood High School is not to be at the expense of those that have been historically disinvested in.</p> <p>Thank you again for your time and thoughtful consideration."</p>
29	<p>It is a slap in the face to see the board continuing on the path to a new South Loop high school while President De Valle tells families to recognize that the district is on the edge of a fiscal cliff. It is mismanagement of our tax funds to build a new school while nearby schools sit with available capacity. And it is the perpetuation of generations of anti-Black policies to uplift the desires of families who refuse to send their children to school with Black kids. As a parent raising Black children who are zoned to attend Phillips high school, I have not been invited to any community meetings. I have not seen a survey. I have not been asked what I think of this plan in any forum until this form.</p> <p>Phillips high school is at 36% capacity according to CPS' own data. If we have \$120 million to invest in school, then why not invest it in Phillips and Kelly? If we are truly sitting on the edge of a fiscal cliff, why not move the selective enrollment program from Jones to Phillips and make the Jones facility a south loop neighborhood school? Why not do the equity impact analysis that will surely tell you that your decision to proceed with building a new school is inequitable, racist and a</p>

	<p>misuse of our precious resources?</p> <p>Shame on each any every one of you who continues this effort to appease the families who've experienced little harm at the hands of CPS, while heaping more harm onto the families and communities who've experienced the most. Your legacies will be written alongside those of racist school closings and racist segregation trailers. Our children deserve equity. Our children deserve true stewardship of our tax dollars. Our children deserve a city where we all work to uproot the anti-Blackness that has shaped so much of our policy since before my grandma migrated to Bronzeville from Arkansas. Our children deserve better than an unelected board who cherry picks which communities they listen to. Do better.</p>
30	<p>I contacted CPS Transportation yesterday afternoon (after waiting months for my child to be routed, my transportation application was submitted to the school, LMSA, in June), and was told CPS is not processing any general education applications, only special education/diverse learners are being routed. Again, I received no notice that my child's application was not even being considered for processing after waiting months to be routed. I am unsure how CPS discards one class of students in favor of another. I get bridging gaps for protected classes, but this should not negatively impact others. Denying general education students transportation for which they qualify according to CPS rules is equivalent to CTA bypassing and refusing all riders except "Priority Seating" riders. This has become blatant discrimination against the general education student population and will not go unaddressed.</p>
31	<p>It is unacceptable that we build a new HS in south loop without properly first investing in current underutilized schools and demonstrates classism bias in our education system</p> <p>Michelle Bautista</p>
32	<p>Working with Chinese immigrant students the past 9 years in Chinatown and surrounding neighborhoods, there are many who have low English proficiency are forced to give up education even when they are not 18 years of age yet. Many will first visit Thomas Kelly HS and hope to enroll there as it is the only HS with bilingual Chinese program. Those who are 16 and 17 of age, Kelly staff would direct them to their neighborhood schools (Tilden or Philips) or even City Colleges no matter how much HS credit they have accumulated (after evaluation from foreign student services). When these families visited Tilden/Phillips, they felt helpless because without the language support, students and parents can't communicate or navigate in an all English environment. Students can't learn when they don't understand anything, try to use google translate for everything, but still have trouble even getting to the right classes, locating where the teachers are referring in the books. Students have no clue what is going on each day and can't complete the homework, all they can experience is failure and denial. When the door of education is shutting them out, they settle for part time jobs that don't require any language skills or education background (e.g. waiters and waitresses and limit to jobs in Chinatown). For city colleges, they can only take English classes, but some can't even get to ESL level 3, which they are assigned to less formal classes. Even if they finally finish the ESL curriculum, they can go no further because they didn't graduate HS and would need to study for GED. Over the past 9 years, unfortunately, I have not seen a successful case in getting the GED and move on to receive higher education. Chinese immigrant students and families need a neighborhood school, they need a school that can provide the support and services that can help them grow and thrive. ESL programs that suit all levels of English of proficiency. And not just helping them in English language, but also in other subjects and program (career exploration and training with language support) that can help them tap into their own talents and other resources. They too can become contributing citizens and help Chicago grow and thrive. Please give these Chinese immigrant students a chance to contribute with a neighborhood school!</p>
33	<p>You stated you've processed transportation application for all students who applied through Labor Day, which is inaccurate. I submitted my child's application to the school, LMSA, in June, both in person and via email, as requested and required. After calling and emailing daily, being told by CPS, there was no application on record, Mr. Herrera from Lindblom assured me my application was submitted. I am not sure who dropped the ball, LMSA or CPS, but my child should not suffer due to the failure of CPS. My child's application is now "stamped" as being received 8/30/2022, which is still prior to Labor Day, yet still unrouted so how are you claiming to have routed all students who submitted applications prior to Labor Day. This statement is false. There needs to</p>

	<p>be transparency and consistency for this and all CPS processes. At this point, feel this is a matter of discrimination towards General Education students or retaliation for my bringing daily attention to the inconsistency and inequity within CPS, both are unacceptable and I will continue to raise awareness and demand equality, transparency and accountability.</p>
34	<p>Hello, my name is Debbie Liu. I was born and raised in Chinatown, am a CPS alum and a mother. The anxiety of having to navigate the complex high school system for the first time is still a vivid memory. A neighborhood high school has been a long time coming for the Greater Chinatown area. While this moment can be a time of celebration, I have serious reservations of where this proposal is right now.</p> <p>Four years ago, CPS announced similarly that there was “robust feedback” in converting National Teachers Academy into a high school to serve Greater Chinatown. At that time, I was willing to listen and be involved and even sat on CPS’s “Near South Planning Committee”. Now, the people involved at CPS and the City may be different but the same tactics are used: district leaders are making promises (during an election year nonetheless) and community members are only informed about certain aspects of the proposal. Today’s vote to approve a land swap with CHA does not have wide support as housing advocates want the land reserved for the promised housing.</p> <p>This high school may reflect the needs of the Chinatown community and the outcome may appear to be equitable. However, equity is both the process and the outcome. I’m afraid the process has been the typical divide and conquer approach. There are ways to address this high school need. None of which have been publicly vetted.</p> <p>CPS staff have said that 16 sites were reviewed but to this date no official report or detailed analysis has been released, despite several attempts at asking. One of the alternative sites that has been discussed more openly has been The 78. I find it hard to believe that one of the reasons is the lack of infrastructure despite the University of Illinois’s Discovery Partners Institute breaking ground around the same time.</p> <p>Please reconsider the board votes today, we simply need more time to further understand the pros/cons and implications with all the communities involved. One of the issues related to this is the lack of a master plan for the Near South area. With a number of megadevelopments proposed or in process along with the changing population, there is a need to examine how this school will fit and location is a big issue to not hastily decide today.</p>
35	<p>South Loop is in need of a neighborhood high school. Many of these children work hard, and give their everything to get into a CPS high school that has limited enrollment. Chicago wonders why many kids drop out, are they given an equal chance to attend a good school? No. If your child doesn't test well but has amazing grades, too bad for that child. Over the past couple of years, many families have moved out of the city knowing that they don't need to worry about where they will now send their child to high school. At that same time, more students are coming in which lowers the percentage they will get into a close school. As a working parent, who is still required to go into the office, I struggle with how I will get my child to and from school that is on the other side of the city. Public transportation is no longer safe! We are parents fighting to give our children the same fighting chance to succeed as suburb schools allow them do to. Sports, after school clubs, keep our kids off the streets. Private schools, personally I am working to save money to put my child through college, I shouldn't have to pay to get them into a HS. Many days I receive backlash for sending my child to a CPS school. I believe in CPS schools but want to feel safe and secure that I can get my child to and from school, something close to home with amazing teachers, staff and programs.</p>
36	<p>I am a volunteer with a local Chinatown non-profit and work with Asian American youth on civic engagement.</p> <p>To me, the root of this question is simple: The only growing Chinatown in North America is asking for a local high school of its own (and has been for two decades). This is not</p>

an unreasonable request, and while issues around affordable housing and effects on neighboring schools complicate how we respond to this request, they do not diminish its validity.

There is a better way to answer this request than to pit historically black high schools, housing advocates, and Chinatown against each other as this proposal currently does: Build the high school on The 78. I am unconvinced by the city's argument that The 78 cannot support a high school when it can host shops, entertainment, housing, and a brand-new Discovery Partners Institute to the tune of \$7 billion. Building the high school in The 78 would help preserve the boundaries of historically black high schools, allow the city to build affordable housing on the former Ickes lot (as promised), and satisfy Chinatown advocates.

It seems Chicago is imposing an artificial scarcity of resources when a perfectly viable option exists to satisfy most community advocates. In doing so, the city signals that it's more concerned with satisfying gentrifiers and urban developers than serving the communities this new high school impacts -- regardless of how much city leadership claims otherwise.

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37 My name is Courtney Mix-Binish and I am the Managing Director of Performance Management with Acero Schools. I am grateful to have this opportunity to speak to you all today.

There is a general acceptance in education that quantitative data can determine the extent to which a school has either led students to success or failure. This is because data is most easily understood when it is quantified, which has unintentionally perpetuated an education system rooted in scientific management theory...where success is ultimately measured by the resulting output of the system.

I am grateful that stakeholders in this room believe that students are more than a number. We know and understand that to see the whole picture of education's impact on even a single student, we must focus our lens inward and see the system that is producing the quantitative result. We do this at Acero Schools.

For example, post-secondary enrollment and persistence data ensures we provide students the necessary skills to enroll and graduate from a college or university. At Acero, we also see the outcomes of complementary and focused work, like that of Cruz K-12 principal Dr. Alyssa Dons, where our school community is developing a work study/internship program with students' places of work to provide leadership mentor programs.

Also illustrative, suspension data is necessary to ensure students are not being kept from or excluded from their appropriate learning environment. At Acero we also evaluate the results of the restorative practices put in place to ensure the students who experienced an out-of-school suspension are well-equipped to re-enter the school environment with an improved experience that has a positive impact on their shared school community.

Finally, as Acero serves predominantly Latino communities and has a significant emergent bilingual population, we must offer equitable access to high quality English learner instruction. To that end, we currently have 74 teachers and leaders who voluntarily signed-up to participate in an ESL and Bilingual endorsement cohort to provide even better access to the high-quality educational experience our students deserve. By the end of this cohort, there will be more than 200 Acero staff who work directly with students with either one or both an ESL or Bilingual endorsement.

I encourage every board and staff member to shift the lens inward with us and engage in our living stories. We would love to have you - our collaboration is essential to our scholars and school communities' story. Thank you for considering Acero Schools for the longest charter renewal term possible.

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38 Good morning, my name is Alfredo Nambo, Interim Chief Education Officer for Acero Schools. I'm honored to be here today to share some of the great work Acero Schools has worked on recently.

I am a proud graduate of Pilsen's Benito Juarez High School and was a bilingual teacher in the Little Village community before becoming a principal and later an administrator.

Year over year, Acero Schools have shown growth in multiple areas. The final time SQRP was implemented in 2019, 10 of our campuses received a 1/1+ rating. Additionally, 93% of our schools were ranked commendable by the Illinois State Board of Education. While CPS continues to develop the next accountability framework, Acero Schools is honored to be a contributing thought partner to that process.

As for the work occurring in our high schools, since the 2019-2020 SY, our student retention rate has been 95% or higher and our graduation rate over the last four years has shown that 98% of our scholars successfully completed high school.

We know that our scholars are more than a statistic and wholeheartedly believe in our scholars. This is why since 2018, Acero Schools has supplied over \$49,000 in scholarships to our graduating 12th and 8th grade scholars. Acero Schools believes in empowering our scholars academically to launch the next generation of lifelong learners, discerners and doers.

Acero has developed a comprehensive system for school leadership development, support and evaluation that we think will continue to ensure a great academic experience for scholars. For the last three years, we have developed our Pillars of Practice Framework that will guide us for years to come. I have brought copies for your reference.

I echo the words of CEO Martinez who I had the pleasure of seeing yesterday along with our INCS and other colleagues at a debrief session on gun violence prevention, "we need to eliminate this us vs them narrative."

Acero Schools is here to partner with you to make Chicago, CPS, our scholars and our families stronger. I invite you to visit our campuses and I thank you for your time, commitment and consideration toward the longest charter renewal term possible for Acero Schools.

Alfredo Nambo, M.Ed.  
Acero Schools, Interim Chief Education Officer

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39 Dear Board President and Board Members

CEO Pedro Martinez and CEDO Bogdana Chkoumbova and Chief Leslie Mckinity

Good morning and Thanks for all you do to make Chicago Public Schools the best in the nation.

On behalf of the LSC, BAC, PAC, SWOP parent volunteers, and Parents at Peck School:

We thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak at today's board meeting. We want to thank the Board for the new Peck Pre-K Center. Peck School's Pre-K students really did not have the space they needed to learn and play in the previous location. It is a great and nice change for Pre-K students and staff as the new facility is more spacious and conducive to learning. We are transitioning from a facility that did not have a cafeteria, playground, and enough classrooms to house all our Pre-K students to one that offers all of these things and more. We are very grateful to Mr. Pedro Martinez and the entire senior leadership team for investing in our children and our school.

**Peck School has been a Level 1+ school for many years and leads in STEM education among elementary schools, In order to continue the strong education students receive at Peck, we are asking that you make Peck School a Pre-K to eighth grade school. We would even be open to having Peck go up to 12th grade to allow students the opportunity to continue receiving the strong STEM education they are already receiving at the school to better prepare our students with the skills to participate in an ever-demanding, complex**

**modern world. You can make the change as early as the beginning of the second semester in January of 2023 because a decision was made in 2017 to move our 58 grade students to a new location.**

In January of 2017, Peck School's fifth through 8th grade students were moved to another school in order to relieve overcrowding. We want to see the growth of students, and that needs at least a three years of growth span to do so. Currently, they are only able to measure 3rd and 4th grades' academic growth at this time, and we need to see a steady school climate and culture of learning that we instill in our students to continue with them in high school and college.

Here are the reasons why Peck should be at least a Pre-K to eighth grade school again:

1. We have a solid foundation to prepare them for High School.
2. We have an excellent bilingual program that creates a solid foundation for our EL students.
3. We are the first public elementary STEM school certified at the national level
4. We have excellent leadership since 2000 and continue to remain Level 1 status.
5. We have proven year after year that every child is entitled to and provided with a high-quality education.
6. The vision of equity and access at Peck School has been a successful practice that we are committed to following and have been doing so for years

For these reasons, we would like you to consider making Peck School a Pre-K to eighth grade school once again. It's a great school, but we need the right amount of continuity for our students so we can better address their learning needs.

Thank you,

Silvana Tabares  
23<sup>rd</sup> District Alderperson

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40 Hola mi nombre es Perla Meza soy una madre de 4 estudiantes, 1 de ellos se a graduado y 2 están actualmente inscritos en Pritzker College Prep una Escuela Nobel, Estoy aquí hoy para compartir mi experiencia en Nobel, este año que como Red escolar tuvimos más del 90% de asistencia el primer dia de clases, específicamente en Pritzker el porcentaje es del 92% el primer dia de clase.

Han pasado muchas cosas desde que envié a mi primer estudiante, tuvimos una pandemia en la que tuve que acostumbrarme a que mis estudiantes estudiarán en forma remota, esto trajo desafíos pero aun con ello pudieron obtener ayuda de sus maestros y trabajar duro.

Mis estudiantes estaban muy emocionados de regresar a la escuela y a sus rutinas de aprendizaje, Mi segundo hijo ahora está en su último año y está muy emocionado de ir a la Universidad y mi hija de segundo año está tomando class de Honores y Avanzadas este es un desafío el cual ella lo está asumiendo con responsabilidad porqu e sabe que le ayudará cuando aplique para las Universidades a las cuales desea ir.



El Sr. Biddix asesor de mi primer estudiante fue quien lo motivó y empujo aplicarse y término yendo a la Universidad y ahorita esta en su tercer año en la UIC, después de ver este cambio en mi hijo fue que así me dieron la confianza y motivación en Pritzker para enviar a mis hijos a formar parte de esta gran escuela.

Como madre la escuela me ha hecho sentir bienvenida y no tengo nada de que quejarme de Pritzker porque la escuela siempre se comunica con los padres sobre próximos eventos o cambios que beneficiaran a los estudiantes de Pritzker.

La confianza que me dio Pritzker cuando envié a mi primer estudiante permanece todos estos años después y es por eso que estoy felizmente esperando aplicar para enviar a mi actual estudiante de 8 grado para que siga los pasos de sus hermanos el próximo año Gracias.

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# **ATTACHMENTS**

Regarding Interim Principal Abdul Muhammad at Lindblom.

As a parent I have many concerns about the future of Lindblom under Mr. Muhammad and the administration he's brought to the school. Communication from the school is scattered, disorganized, and delayed. Additionally, riddled with improper word usage, misspellings, and grammatical errors. Lindblom students recognize this and are finding it harder and harder to take admin seriously. To quote my son, "they're a joke, but the pep rallies are fun." That's the best the students can come up with. It's so very sad. The kids never see anybody from admin, which is contrary to what Muhammad claims, and leaves the students feeling unsupported. This is contrary to what we are used to in the Nest.

Back to School night was a disaster. Originally planned then canceled 24 hours before and rescheduled for the 5th week of school. Information was poorly communicated to parents, teachers, and students which resulted in the event being poorly attended and a frustrating waste of time. This could have been a prime opportunity for the new administration to put its best foot forward and gain some support. I fear the best foot actually was put forward.

Muhammad has closed a Science teaching position at Lindblom Math and SCIENCE Academy in order to open a business manager position (Although not confirmed, it is suspected another friend of Muhammad's is expected to get that job). A position that is nearly nonexistent in Chicago HS as multiple APs and the Principal should be able to cover those responsibilities. Closing a core subject teaching position is absurd to say the least.

The beloved wrestling coach Mr. Ostrozovich (coached multiple sports, knew LMSA athletics, and had a good working relationship with the athletic director) was forced to leave the school when Muhammad removed him from the position he was in and had been promised, only to bring Ahmad Shareef from his former school (with a school wide enrollment lower than Lindblom's boys' soccer team roster.) There is no indication Shareef is remotely capable or qualified for the job of Lindblom's athletic coordinator. So much so that a "mentor" is being brought in to teach him how to do his new job! Money that could be directed to the students, is slated to be used to teach a new hire how to do his job. Maddening.

Major moves for an Interim, all by week 4 of the school year. These moves reek to high heaven of Nepotism, give no indication they will be beneficial to Lindblom, and by all accounts are wasting precious funds that could benefit students. There is no pause to acclimate or learn the climate and culture of the Lindblom community. Everything seems very geared toward benefiting Abdul Muhammad and nobody else.

The ALSC seems very committed to keeping Muhammad, but will never answer what they base that on. The school community has asked the ALSC to tell us what they believe makes Mr. Muhammad a good fit, hoping for good news, but they simply won't answer.

The Lindblom community deserves better. The future of Lindblom, serving high achieving mostly minority students, is dependent on the Board to not ratify Mr Muhammad's contract.

September 27, 2022

Chicago Board of Education  
1 N. Dearborn, Suite 950  
Chicago, Illinois, 60602

SUBMITTED VIA WRITTEN COMMENTS FORM

**RE: Opposition to Resolution to Request Planning, Pre-Design and Design Services for the Proposed Near South High School Project**

Dear Members of the Chicago Board of Education:

We are writing on behalf of Lugenia Burns Hope Center to alert you to the civil rights implications of the Chicago Housing Authority leasing public housing land held in trust for the Harold Ickes Homes/Southbridge Development to Chicago Public Schools for the development of a new high school. We understand that other individuals and groups have challenged the proposal on different bases, including the potential impacts on historically Black high schools on the near south side. Before you approve another major expenditure of funds related to the project, we urge the Board to conduct a community-led racial equity assessment and fully consider the implications of this decision—those outlined in this letter as well as those raised by others who oppose this proposal.

**The Ickes land, owned by the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) and subject to a declaration of trust, is to be used exclusively for public and affordable housing that has not yet been built.** In order to build something other than the long-promised, mixed-income housing development, the CHA, the City of Chicago, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) must, respectively, approve the lease, rezoning, and lifting of the trust. When CHA approved this transfer at its July board meeting, it was one of two major relinquishments of public housing land it authorized this summer alone and a continuation of its pattern of championing non-housing uses of public housing land in gentrifying areas—while lagging behind its continually shrinking goals for redeveloping housing. This pattern, and the Southbridge proposal, continue Chicago’s economic and racial segregation and do not remedy the pushout of Black families, contrary to CHA’s and the City of Chicago’s obligations to affirmatively further fair housing and comply with civil rights laws. **Your decision to plan for construction of a high school on this land will be mired by the site’s history of displacement, redevelopment delays, and broken promises for low-income residents, particularly Black families and people with disabilities, and the resulting civil rights violations.**

**Lugenia Burns Hope Center (Hope Center)** works to develop the civic engagement and empowerment of residents through education, leadership development, and community

organizing to empower residents to envision how they want their communities to be developed. **The organization has members who are former public housing residents displaced by CHA's Plan for Transformation or who seek to move to the Southbridge development.** Hope Center is part of a civil rights complaint under investigation with HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity concerning the City of Chicago's violations of the Fair Housing Act by blocking the development of family affordable housing in predominantly white and gentrifying neighborhoods.

### **History of the Proposed Site**

**The site at issue is part of a former public housing development called Harold Ickes Homes, constructed in 1955 and including over 1,006 housing units for CHA families.** The development eventually covered six square blocks, or approximately 18 acres. As part of CHA's Plan for Transformation, demolition at the site began in the early 2000s, when CHA cleared the three western blocks of the site. In 2010, CHA razed the remaining three eastern blocks, which contained 738 housing units, displacing hundreds of families to primarily racially segregated low opportunity areas of the city. **For years, CHA has promised those families they could return to public housing replacement units in a mixed-income, mixed-use community located in their historic community.**

CHA redeveloped the western blocks first, relinquishing the land for non-housing uses that included construction of a school, a public park, and an athletic field. In June 2015, CHA then selected and approved a plan to redevelop the three eastern blocks of the Ickes site into 877 new residential units as well as 60,000 square feet of commercial and retail space, collectively known as Southbridge. Only 244 of the newly built units would be dedicated public housing for CHA families—representing just a third of the original CHA units at the site.

Though development of Southbridge is underway, with construction of two residential buildings nearly complete, **so far only 68 of the 244 promised CHA units have been delivered.** The next phase of development is set to break ground in 2023 and will reportedly result in 39 additional CHA units. Nonetheless, at completion of the next phase, CHA will still owe over 55% of the promised replacements units, which again, only represented a third of the original public housing stock at the site. Plans for the next phases of development remain unclear and CHA confirmed at the September 22 Near South High School Information Session that the new housing units will not be built before this proposed high school is open in 2025.

The site's location—a stone's throw from the loop, abutting the revitalized South Loop, and less than a mile from the lakefront—now provides abundant access to transportation, employment opportunity, green space, and recreational and cultural amenities. This is access those thousands of CHA residents once had, and lost, with the demolition of the Harold Ickes Homes and other CHA public housing developments near Chicago's city center.

## **The Proposal Continues a Pattern of Non-Housing Land Uses at the Expense of Public Housing**

Earlier this year, CPS approached CHA with a plan to build a new high school on the southernmost block of the Ickes site. In exchange for a 99-year ground lease, CPS would then deed two acres of land on South Wabash to CHA. On July 19, 2022, the CHA Board approved the plan, authorizing the lease and eventual acquisition of the land on South Wabash.

**The southernmost block of the Ickes site was slated to be the final phase of the Southbridge development, hosting the remaining replacement CHA units.** This new proposal calls into question if, where and how CHA will now construct those units. While CHA maintains that all the remaining replacement units will still be developed on site by increasing density elsewhere, the agency has provided no specific information or plan for how, or when, this will be accomplished.

CHA has, this summer alone, quickly pushed forward proposals to build this school at Ickes and a training facility for a professional sports team at the former Addams, Brooks, Loomis, Abbott (ABLA) site.<sup>1</sup> These proposals continue CHA's pattern of leasing, swapping, and selling vacant public housing land that CHA itself has failed to redevelop for more than two decades,<sup>2</sup> as initially promised in the Plan for Transformation (2000) and later by the Plan Forward (2013). While redevelopment of the long-awaited housing units languishes across CHA's portfolio, the City helps broker these development deals<sup>3</sup> and pushes them through City Council with the help of aldermanic prerogative.<sup>4</sup> Neither the CHA or the City have released a comprehensive plan or analysis that considers how offloading public housing land impacts their ability to meet the specific (and already-diminished) redevelopment goals across CHA's legacy public housing sites, the individual or cumulative civil rights implications of these deals, or their duties to affirmatively further fair housing.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights et al. to Committee on Zoning, Landmarks, and Building Standards (Sept. 16, 2022), *available at* <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5871061e6b8f5b2a8ede8ff5/t/632ca66dbccf07721a620c82/1663870575216/Zoning+Committee+Opposition+to+Request+to+Amend+the+Planned+Development+%23896+9.16.2022.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Natalie Moore, "A proposal to swap CHA land for a new South High school is part of an old trend," WBEZ (Sept. 2, 2022), *available at* <https://www.wbez.org/stories/public-housing-residents-want-an-end-to-cha-land-swaps/0b168c58-ac93-4139-825c-177cd600d847>.

<sup>3</sup> *See, e.g.*, Press Release, City of Chicago Mayor's Press Office, "Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Chicago Fire Football Club, Chicago Housing Authority Begin Talks for New Near West Side Training Facility," (Jan. 27, 2022), *available at* [https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mayor/press\\_room/press\\_releases/2022/january/ChicagoFireTrainingFacility.html](https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mayor/press_room/press_releases/2022/january/ChicagoFireTrainingFacility.html).

<sup>4</sup> HUD Administrative Complaint, *Chi. Area Fair Hous. All. et al. v. City of Chicago* (Nov. 15, 2018), *available at* <https://www.povertylaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CAFHA-et.-al-v.-City-of-Chicago-HUD-Administrative-Complaint.pdf>.

## **The CHA's and the City's Pattern of Public Housing Land Transfers Violates Federal Civil Rights Laws**

The CHA, the City of Chicago, and HUD must consider the fair housing and civil rights implications of this proposal before, respectively, approving the lease, rezoning the parcel, or lifting the trust. Both the City and CHA have a duty not to discriminate, and to comply with the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits policies and practices that have the intent or effect of discriminating against members of a protected class.<sup>5</sup> Because CHA and the City of Chicago receive federal housing-related funds, they likewise have a duty to affirmatively further fair housing. Specifically, they must (as a condition of receiving the grants and funds) certify that their housing policies affirmatively further fair housing. 42 U.S.C. § 5304(b)(2). The duty to affirmatively further fair housing requires that “[a]ctions must be taken to fulfill, as much as possible, the goal of open integrated residential housing patterns and to prevent the increase of segregation.”<sup>6</sup> A failure to comply with this duty jeopardizes the receipt of federal funds.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, as a recipient of federal dollars, the City of Chicago and CHA are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and have a duty not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, or color in any program or activity that receives federal funds or other federal financial assistance.

In deciding whether to move forward with a new proposal at the Ickes site, including to lease the land to CPS, the CHA and the City must first consider the civil rights implications of this specific decision and the broader pattern of land transfers. They should evaluate the ongoing need for affordable housing in Chicago and on the Near South Side by considering market rents, vacancy rates, household incomes, rates of housing cost burden, and public and subsidized housing waiting lists. This analysis should consider the supply of affordable rental housing in areas of opportunity with easy access to public transportation, good jobs and schools, and high-quality healthcare. Finally, they should consider how the proposals impact people of color, families with children, people with disabilities, and other protected classes.<sup>8</sup> On information and belief, the CHA and the City have failed to undertake any meaningful analysis of these factors prior to advancing this proposal or others.

HUD will also review CHA's proposal to lift the housing trust and lease this land. Under Section 18 of the United States Housing Act, the disposition of CHA-owned land for the development of a high school will also require HUD review and approval. Specifically, as described in the CHA's July board resolution, CHA must submit an application to HUD's Special Application Center that certifies that the retention of the property is not in the best interests of the residents or

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<sup>5</sup> *Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs v. The Inclusive Communities Project, Inc.* 576 U.S. 519 (2015).

<sup>6</sup> *Otero v. New York City Hous. Auth.*, 484 F.2d 1122, 1134 (2nd Cir. 1973).

<sup>7</sup> *United States ex. Rel. Anti-Discrimination Center Inc. v. Westchester County*, 668 F. Supp. 2d 548, 569 (S.D.N.Y. 2009); See generally HUD's 2021 Interim Final Rule Restoring Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Definitions and Certifications, available at <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2021-12114.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g. *Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago v. City of Chicago*, No. 1:18-cv-03399 (N.D. Ill.) (challenging the City of Chicago's use of millions of dollars in federal funding on affordable housing development that is noncompliant with accessibility requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Fair Housing Act).

the proposed disposition otherwise meets certain requirements set forth at 24 C.F.R. § 970.17(a)-(d).

### **Conclusion**

**Before authorizing planning for a new high school on Ickes land, we encourage you to conduct a community-led racial equity assessment that fully considers the impacts of a new high school and building on this site displacement.** In addition to concerns voiced by other community members and groups, this proposal is yet another failure by CHA and the City to consider the civil rights and fair housing impacts before approving development on public housing land. To date, CHA has delivered barely a third of the promised public units at Southbridge. The CHA's delays in delivering replacement units cannot serve, once again, as the basis to jettison a vital supply of coveted, available, public housing land in a gentrifying community. Advocates, including the Hope Center and former Ickes residents, will continue to challenge CHA's and the City's failures to affirmatively further fair housing with this proposal and resulting civil rights violations.

We urge Members of the Chicago Board of Education to consider these comments prior to authorizing a budget expenditure for planning a new high school on a site that will be mired by CHA and the City of Chicago's fair housing and civil rights violations and to reject the proposal.

Sincerely,

Emily Coffey  
Micaela Alvarez  
MacKenzie Speer  
**Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights**



I am a volunteer with a local Chinatown non-profit and work with Asian American youth on civic engagement.

To me, the root of this question is simple: The only growing Chinatown in North America is asking for a local high school of its own (and has been for two decades). This is not an unreasonable request, and while issues around affordable housing and effects on neighboring schools complicate *how* we respond to this request, they do not diminish its validity.

There is a better way to answer this request than to pit historically black high schools, housing advocates, and Chinatown against each other as this proposal currently does: Build the high school on The 78. I am unconvinced by the city's argument that The 78 cannot support a high school when it *can* host shops, entertainment, housing, and a brand-new Discovery Partners Institute to the tune of \$7 billion. Building the high school in The 78 would help preserve the boundaries of historically black high schools, allow the city to build affordable housing on the former Ickes lot (as promised), and satisfy Chinatown advocates.

It seems Chicago is imposing an artificial scarcity of resources when a perfectly viable option exists to satisfy most community advocates. In doing so, the city signals that it's more concerned with satisfying gentrifiers and urban developers than serving the communities this new high school impacts -- regardless of how much city leadership claims otherwise.

My name is Courtney Mix-Binish and I am the Managing Director of Performance Management with Acero Schools. I am grateful to have this opportunity to speak to you all today.

There is a general acceptance in education that quantitative data can determine the extent to which a school has either led students to success or failure. This is because data is most easily understood when it is quantified, which has unintentionally perpetuated an education system rooted in scientific management theory...where success is ultimately measured by the resulting output of the system.

I am grateful that stakeholders in this room believe that students are more than a number. We know and understand that to see the whole picture of education's impact on even a single student, we must focus our lens inward and see the system that is producing the quantitative result. We do this at Acero Schools.

For example, post-secondary enrollment and persistence data ensures we provide students the necessary skills to enroll and graduate from a college or university. At Acero, we also see the outcomes of complementary and focused work, like that of Cruz K-12 principal Dr. Alyssa Dons, where our school community is developing a work study/internship program with students' places of work to provide leadership mentor programs.

Also illustrative, suspension data is necessary to ensure students are not being kept from or excluded from their appropriate learning environment. At Acero we also evaluate the results of the restorative practices put in place to ensure the students who experienced an out-of-school suspension are well-equipped to re-enter the school environment with an improved experience that has a positive impact on their shared school community.

Finally, as Acero serves predominantly Latino communities and has a significant emergent bilingual population, we must offer equitable access to high quality English learner instruction. To that end, we currently have 74 teachers and leaders who voluntarily signed-up to participate in an ESL and Bilingual endorsement cohort to provide even better access to the high-quality educational experience our students deserve. By the end of this cohort, there will be more than 200 Acero staff who work directly with students with either one or both an ESL or Bilingual endorsement.

I encourage every board and staff member to shift the lens inward with us and engage in our living stories. We would love to have you - our collaboration is essential to our scholars and school communities' story. Thank you for considering Acero Schools for the longest charter renewal term possible.

**CPS Board Comments**  
**September 28, 2022**

Good morning, my name is Alfredo Nambo, Interim Chief Education Officer for Acero Schools. I'm honored to be here today to share some of the great work Acero Schools has worked on recently.

I am a proud graduate of Pilsen's Benito Juarez High School and was a bilingual teacher in the Little Village community before becoming a principal and later an administrator.

Year over year, Acero Schools have shown growth in multiple areas. The final time SQRP was implemented in 2019, 10 of our campuses received a 1/1+ rating. Additionally, 93% of our schools were ranked commendable by the Illinois State Board of Education. While CPS continues to develop the next accountability framework, Acero Schools is honored to be a contributing thought partner to that process.

As for the work occurring in our high schools, since the 2019-2020 SY, our student retention rate has been 95% or higher and our graduation rate over the last four years has shown that 98% of our scholars successfully completed high school.

We know that our scholars are more than a statistic and wholeheartedly believe in our scholars. This is why since 2018, Acero Schools has supplied over \$49,000 in scholarships to our graduating 12th and 8th grade scholars. Acero Schools believes in empowering our scholars academically to launch the next generation of lifelong learners, discerners and doers.

Acero has developed a comprehensive system for school leadership development, support and evaluation that we think will continue to ensure a great academic experience for scholars. For the last three years, we have developed our Pillars of Practice Framework that will guide us for years to come. I have brought copies for your reference.

I echo the words of CEO Martinez who I had the pleasure of seeing yesterday along with our INCS and other colleagues at a debrief session on gun violence prevention, "we need to eliminate this us vs them narrative."

Acero Schools is here to partner with you to make Chicago, CPS, our scholars and our families stronger. I invite you to visit our campuses and I thank you for your time, commitment and consideration toward the longest charter renewal term possible for Acero Schools.

Alfredo Nambo, M.Ed.  
Acero Schools, Interim Chief Education Officer

# PILLARS OF PRACTICE

Developed through a multi-year process, the Acero Schools Pillars of Practice is rooted in research-based, best-practice and defines Acero's educational philosophy through a comprehensive framework of excellence. Using an equity lens, the Pillars of Practice promotes continuous growth, development and achievement for every child.



## STANDARDS-BASED TEACHING & LEARNING

Ensuring that students can master the learning for their grade-level and that the curriculum is both relatable and challenging.



## MISSION-DRIVEN AND DATA-INFORMED

Transforming the minds of scholars through academic empowerment and success, using data-based methods to support all unique learners, languages and backgrounds.



## SERVING THE WHOLE CHILD

Expanding scholars' minds beyond the classroom: improving social and emotional skills, providing a global perspective, encouraging community engagement and ensuring proactive, responsive and restorative approaches.



## LINGUISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring scholars have access to a language rich school environment and staff by recognizing and building on their multicultural and multilingual assets that scholars possess to enhance linguistic development.



## PERSONALIZED LEARNING

Supporting scholars with a personalized education that is focused on their unique backgrounds, interests, choices, and needs while empowering them to take ownership of their learning.



## ASPIRATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Empowering scholars in their personal journey, ensuring access to opportunities, and recognizing scholars for their achievements and the role their families play in that success.



## COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT

Establishing opportunities for collaboration, coaching, and development.

Dear Board President and Board Members

CEO Pedro Martinez and CEDO Bogdana Chkoumbova and Chief Leslie Mckinily

Good morning and Thanks for all you do to make Chicago Public Schools the best in the nation.

On behalf of the LSC, BAC, PAC, SWOP parent volunteers, and Parents at Peck School:

We thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak at today's board meeting. We want to thank the Board for the new Peck Pre-K Center. Peck School's Pre-K students really did not have the space they needed to learn and play in the previous location. It is a great and nice change for Pre-K students and staff as the new facility is more spacious and conducive to learning. We are transitioning from a facility that did not have a cafeteria, playground, and enough classrooms to house all our Pre-K students to one that offers all of these things and more. We are very grateful to Mr. Pedro Martinez and the entire senior leadership team for investing in our children and our school.

**Peck School has been a Level 1+ school for many years and leads in STEM education among elementary schools. In order to continue the strong education students receive at Peck, we are asking that you make Peck School a Pre-K to eighth grade school. We would even be open to having Peck go up to 12th grade to allow students the opportunity to continue receiving the strong STEM education they are already receiving at the school to better prepare our students with the skills to participate in an ever-demanding, complex modern world. You can make the change as early as the beginning of the second semester in January of 2023 because a decision was made in 2017 to move our 58 grade students to a new location.**

In January of 2017, Peck School's fifth through 8th grade students were moved to another school in order to relieve overcrowding. We want to see the growth of students, and that needs at least a three years of growth span to do so. Currently, they are only able to measure 3rd and 4th grades' academic growth at this time, and we need to see a steady school climate and culture of learning that we instill in our students to continue with them in high school and college.

Here are the reasons why Peck should be at least a Pre-K to eighth grade school again:

1. We have a solid foundation to prepare them for High School.
2. We have an excellent bilingual program that creates a solid foundation for our EL students.
3. We are the first public elementary STEM school certified at the national level
4. We have excellent leadership since 2000 and continue to remain Level 1 status.
5. We have proven year after year that every child is entitled to and provided with a high-quality education.
6. The vision of equity and access at Peck School has been a successful practice that we are committed to following and have been doing so for years.

For these reasons, we would like you to consider making Peck School a Pre-K to eighth grade school once again. It's a great school, but we need the right amount of continuity for our students so we can better address their learning needs.

Thank you,

Silvana Tabares

23<sup>rd</sup> District Alderperson