

**July 16, 2024 and July 17, 2024, Budget Hearing Written Comments  
Received between Wednesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup> Submitted via  
Written Comments Form**

1	<p>I understand that there has been a significant amount of paraprofessional positions cut from this budget. This puts our most vulnerable students at risk as paraprofessionals primarily work with our special education students. Their roles are pivotal in supporting the school's special education community. Budget cuts should not impact students learning and safety and I guarantee you that cutting these positions literally guts the schools educational support and functioning. Please reconsider these cuts. I thank you</p>
2	<p>As budgets are reviewed and analyzed, I kindly ask the Board to consider any and all cuts to school libraries and librarians. I am aware of at least librarian layoffs (Taylor Elementary and Clemente HS) but there could be more. Librarians are a critical asset that make a significant impact on a school community in more ways than I can possibly enumerate here. The Clemente High School was remodeled just two years ago through a grant worth hundreds of thousands of dollars -- a grant that the (now laid off) Clemente librarian applied for, promoted, and won. While I haven't physically visited the space, I have seen photos reflecting a modern space with an abundance of culturally relevant literature, technology, and programming.</p> <p>When you remove the librarian from a school library, it often sits empty and unused. A library like Clemente -- now potentially without a librarian --will likely be staffed by security guards or sit unused entirely and collect dust while the books become outdated within a few years. Clemente's library was already closed for a decade before being revitalized. If its librarian is cut, the same tragic thing will happen yet again. We can and should do so much better for our students. While all students deserve a school library with a librarian, the Board should start by ensuring no cuts to libraries happen.</p>
3	<p>I'm writing to voice my support for the RE:ALIZE dual enrollment program's dance studio capital project, which is a "Programmatic Investments to Build Upon School Success." RE:ALIZE is a partnership between CPS, Wells Community Academy High School, and Columbia College Chicago (CCC). Unlike traditional dual enrollment where students aren't scheduled on the days when they don't attend college, RE:ALIZE supplements the learning students receive at CCC with weekly workshops led by professional teaching artists at Wells High School. The RE:ALIZE program is open to all CPS juniors and seniors, but prioritizes students who do not have access to advanced coursework at their school. When a RE:ALIZE student graduates from CPS, they have earned 12 free college credits, developed a clearer sense of their artistic identity, completed a paid summer internship in their field of choice, and created a portfolio of original work that they can use to submit for college or career. The program has requested that capital invest in the creation of a dance studio at Wells, so that RE:ALIZE can open up a dance track for SY25/26.</p>
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## **ATTACHMENTS**



## KIDS FIRST CHICAGO

**To:** President Jianan Shi  
Vice President Elizabeth Todd-Breland  
Mariela Estrada  
Mary Fahey Hughes  
Rudy Lozano, Jr.  
Michelle Morales  
Tanya D. Woods

**Cc:** Adam Lechnir, Chief of Staff, Chicago Board of Education  
Jessica Cañas, Kristin Pollock, and Hal Woods, Kids First Chicago

**From:** Citywide LSC Leaders (Various)

**Date:** July 15, 2024

**Subject:** Written Comment for FY2025 Tentative Budget Hearings

Dear Members of the Chicago Board of Education,

As members of 30+ Local School Councils, we have expressed our concerns regarding the recent overhaul of the district's approach to funding schools.

The decision to move away from student-based budgeting was made without the consultation of Local School Council members. This exclusion has resulted in a significant lack of transparency and has left our school communities with numerous unanswered questions.

At the upcoming FY25 budget hearings, we seek clarity on several critical aspects of the new funding approach:

- Is this new funding approach intended to be temporary, and if so, what are the long-term implications for schools?
- How is the Opportunity Index calculated, and what formula is used?
- What are the justifications for the proposed student-to-teacher ratios, and how were these ratios determined?
- How will funding adjustments be made in response to mid-year student enrollment changes?
- Are there specific budget provisions for supporting migrant students and those with special education needs?
- What level of discretion will principals and Local School Councils have over the use of school funds and positions? How will the issue of unfilled positions be addressed?
- What resources will be made available to enhance school safety?

**The need for openness in how our schools are funded cannot be overstated. Transparent communication is essential for building trust and ensuring that all students receive the education they deserve.**

We look forward to your prompt response and the district providing answers to these questions at

the upcoming budget hearings.

Sincerely,

Mykela Collins  
George Manierre Elementary School  
Co-Chair

Jason Emeott  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Parent Representative

Baltazar Enriquez  
Farragut Career Academy  
Community Representative

Daniel Faulkner  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Non-Teacher Representative

Hermelinda Flores  
Luther Burbank Elementary School  
Chair

Luz Maria Flores  
Back of the Yards College Prep High School  
Chair

Agnos Fong  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Parent Representative

Corey Garcia  
Maria Saucedo Scholastic Academy  
Parent Representative

Margarita García  
Irene C. Hernández Middle School  
Parent Representative

Martha R Garcia de Godínez  
Eric Solorio Academy High School  
Community Representative

Socorro Gaytan  
Eric Solorio Academy High School  
Community Representative

Carrie Glaspie  
John Hay Community Academy  
Parent Representative

Juanita Guerra  
Zapata Elementary School  
Parent Representative

Joann Hardeman  
Hirsch Metropolitan High School  
Parent Representative

Colum Lavelle  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Community Representative

Clent Lewis  
Bernhard Moos Elementary School  
Parent Representative

Karonda Locust  
Willa Cather Elementary School  
Chair

Lorena López  
Back of the Yards College Prep High School  
Parent Representative

Norma Lopez-Murillo  
Steinmetz College Prep, Chair;  
Belmont-Cragin Elementary,  
Parent Representative; and  
Dr. Jorge Prieto Math and Science Academy,  
Community Representative

Consuelo Martinez  
Ray Graham Training Center High School,  
Parent Representative; and  
Back of the Yards College Prep High School,  
Community Representative

Steven McClellan  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Community Representative

Uriah Muhammad  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Chair

Lourdes Neris  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Parent Representative

Darlene O'Banner  
Earle STEM Elementary School  
Community Representative

Gabriela Oria  
McCormick Elementary, Co-Chair; and  
Madero Middle School, Community Representative

Maria R. Owens  
Hirsch Metropolitan High School  
Co-Chair

Renye Owens

Air Force Academy High School  
Chair

Michele Polkowski  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Teacher Representative

José Quiles  
Steinmetz College Prep, Co-Chair; and  
Belmont-Cragin Elementary,  
Community Representative; and  
Mary Lyon Elementary,  
Community Representative

Edgardo Ramirez  
Maria Saucedo Scholastic Academy  
Parent Representative

Yadira Ramirez  
Lara Elementary Academy  
Parent Representative

Eva M. Rodriguez  
Sor Juana Elementary School  
Community Representative

Rachael Russ  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Parent Representative

Elvia Sandoval  
Peter Cooper Dual Language Academy  
Community Representative

Rachinda Smallwood  
Bernhard Moos Elementary School  
Parent Representative

Silvia Torres  
Seward Community Art Academy Elementary  
Community Representative

Jaqueline Vargas  
Eric Solorio Academy High School, Chair; and  
Socorro Sandoval Elementary School, Parent  
Representative

Julia Vega  
Kanoon Magnet Elementary School  
Chair

Abigail Vences  
Mather High School  
Parent Representative

Maida Wallen  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Parent Representative

Yolanda Williams  
Michele Clark Academic Prep Magnet High School  
Parent Representative

Zoe Zaranko  
LaSalle Language Academy  
Teacher Representative