



Board of Education

Office of the Board
1 North Dearborn Street
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Chicago, IL 60602

Board Report

25-0130-RS4 FINAL

Agenda Date: 1/30/2025

RATIFY RESOLUTION REGARDING ACTING INSPECTOR GENERAL AND INSPECTOR GENERAL PHILIP WAGENKNECHT

WHEREAS, Section 34-13.1 of the Illinois School Code provides for the appointment of the Inspector General of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago (the "Board") by the Mayor of the City of Chicago ("Mayor") if a vacancy occurs; however, beginning January 15, 2025, successors shall be appointed by the Board instead of the Mayor;

WHEREAS, the position of the Inspector General became vacant August 23, 2024 upon the resignation of the incumbent before the expiration of his term of office which was July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2026;

WHEREAS, an Acting Inspector General was appointed by the Mayor on August 23, 2024;

WHEREAS, the position of Acting Inspector General became vacant on January 10, 2025 upon the resignation of the incumbent Acting Inspector General;

WHEREAS, the Board hereby acknowledges the appointment of Philip Wagenknecht by the Mayor of the City of Chicago as the Board's Acting Inspector General effective January 10, 2025 and as Inspector General, effective January 14, 2025 to fulfill the term of office from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2026;

WHEREAS, Section 34-13.1 of the Illinois School Code provides that the Board's Inspector General shall be under the Board's jurisdiction;

WHEREAS, Section 34-13.1 of the Illinois School Code provides that the Inspector General shall have "authority to conduct investigations into allegations of or incidents of waste, fraud, and financial mismanagement in public education within the jurisdiction of the Board by a local school council member or an employee, contractor, or member of the Board or involving school projects managed or handled by the Public Building Commission";

WHEREAS, Section 34-13.1 of the Illinois School Code provides that, in addition to the Inspector General's express authority to conduct the specific investigations outlined in the statute, the Inspector General shall perform other duties requested by and at the direction of the Board;

WHEREAS, Board Bylaws Rule I-9.IV provides that the Inspector General "shall investigate allegations of fraud, waste and financial mismanagement in the District by a Local School Council member or an employee, contractor or member of the Board or involving school projects managed or handled by the Public Building Commission and shall perform other duties requested by the Board including, but not limited to, investigations into employee misconduct, including allegations of criminal activity by employees;"

WHEREAS, Section 34-13.1 of the Illinois School Code provides that the Inspector General shall be independent of the operations of the Board and "shall have access to all information and personnel necessary to perform the duties of the office" but does not provide for the retention of legal counsel to provide advice to the Inspector General;

WHEREAS, Section 34-13.1 of the Illinois School Code provides that the Inspector General "shall have the power to subpoena witnesses and compel the production of books and papers pertinent to an investigation authorized by this Code" but does not outline the mechanism for enforcement of a subpoena issued by the Inspector General; and

WHEREAS, Section 34-11 of the Illinois School Code provides that the Board "by a majority vote of its full membership shall appoint a general counsel (the "General Counsel") who shall have charge and control, subject to the approval of the Board, of the law department and of all litigation, legal questions and such other legal matters as may be referred to the department" by the Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO THAT:

1. In addition to those duties conferred upon the Inspector General by the Illinois School Code and Board Rules, the Inspector General is hereby empowered to investigate reports of sexual misconduct by employees, vendors, or volunteers where a CPS student may be the victim. The Inspector General shall carry out these duties in accordance with the following guidelines:
 - (a) The Inspector General shall report to the Board on a monthly basis, including the number of reports received, the number of claims under investigation, the employees and schools involved, the nature of the allegations, and the status of any person subject of an investigation;
 - (b) The Inspector General shall have sole responsibility within the Chicago Public Schools and the Board of Education for the investigation of all reported incidents described in Section 1 of this Resolution, however, the Inspector General shall reasonably and appropriately cooperate with CPS staff and attorneys to ensure that employee discipline is not delayed and that information regarding the status of abuse reports and investigations are shared on a timely basis; and
 - (c) Decisions regarding discipline, including termination, shall remain solely under the purview of the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools ("CEO") and the Board. The Board and the CEO, however, shall reasonably and appropriately cooperate with the OIG to ensure that criminal investigations are not unduly jeopardized by the timing of discipline or termination.
2. The Board further directs the Inspector General to conduct a review of sexual misconduct cases dating back to at least the year 2000, and further if determined necessary by the Inspector General or the Board President.
3. The Board commits to providing the additional funding and resources necessary so that the Inspector General can perform the tasks detailed in Sections 1 and 2.
4. In performing the duties outlined in the Illinois School Code, this Resolution, and Board Rules, the Inspector General shall report directly to the Board and shall provide reports to the CEO and the Title IX Officer with respect to investigations of alleged Title IX violations, except in the following circumstances:
 - (a) If the Inspector General believes, in connection with a specific investigation, that the duties of the Inspector General as outlined in the Illinois School Code, this Resolution, and Board Bylaws Rules are in conflict with the requirement that the Inspector General shall provide reports to the CEO, the Inspector General shall report this matter to the Board immediately upon identifying the potential conflict. Based upon the Inspector General's initial report of such a matter, the Board will then provide additional direction regarding subsequent reporting in connection with the matter.
 - (b) If the Inspector General believes, in connection with a specific investigation, that the duties of the Inspector General as outlined in the Illinois School Code, this Resolution, and Board Bylaws Rules are in conflict with the requirement that the Inspector General shall report to the Board, the Inspector General shall report this matter to outside legal counsel immediately upon identifying the potential conflict and shall request that outside legal counsel prepare a legal opinion regarding whether there exists a conflict that precludes the Inspector General from reporting the

matter to the Board. To the extent that the legal opinion indicates that there is such a conflict, the Inspector General's outside counsel shall also advise the Inspector General regarding the legal requirements of reporting the matter at issue. If the legal opinion does not indicate the existence of such a conflict, the Inspector General shall report the matter to the Board as outlined above.

5. The Board also requests that the General Counsel provide legal counsel to the Inspector General as required to assist the Inspector General in performing the duties outlined in the Illinois School Code, this Resolution, and Board Rules, except in the following circumstances:
 - (a) If the Inspector General believes, in connection with a specific investigation, that the duties of the Inspector General as outlined in the Illinois School Code, this Resolution, and Board Bylaws Rules are in conflict with the requirement that the General Counsel shall provide legal counsel to the Inspector General as outlined herein, the Inspector General shall report this matter to the Board immediately upon identifying the potential conflict. Based upon the Inspector General's initial report of such a matter, the Board will then provide additional direction regarding subsequent retention of legal counsel regarding reporting of the matter.
 - (b) If the Inspector General believes, in connection with a specific investigation, that the duties of the Inspector General as outlined in the Illinois School Code, this Resolution, and Board Bylaws Rules are in conflict with (1) the requirement that the General Counsel shall provide legal counsel to the Inspector General and (2) with reporting the matter to the Board as outlined in the preceding paragraph, the Inspector General shall report this matter to outside legal counsel immediately upon identifying the potential conflict and shall request that outside legal counsel prepare a legal opinion regarding whether there exists a conflict that precludes the Inspector General from reporting the matter to the Board. To the extent that the legal opinion indicates that there is such a conflict, the Inspector General's outside counsel shall also advise the Inspector General regarding the legal requirements of reporting the matter at issue. If the legal opinion does not indicate the existence of such a conflict, the Inspector General shall report the matter to the Board as outlined above.
6. The Board further requests that the General Counsel represent the Inspector General in all instances in which the enforcement of a subpoena issued by the Inspector General is necessary. If the Inspector General believes there is conflict with the Board and/or the Chicago Public Schools, including the Law Department, outside counsel may be appointed to represent the Inspector General in such enforcement issues according to the conflict provisions above.
7. The Board shall retain counsel acceptable to the Inspector General to provide legal counsel in those circumstances where this Resolution authorizes the Inspector General to seek the advice of outside legal counsel rather than the General Counsel.
8. This Resolution shall take effect upon the appointment date and shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by further Board action for the tenure of the Inspector General's appointment including any renewals thereof.