

**December 6, 2023, Agenda Review Committee Meeting Written Comments  
Received between Monday, December 4th and Thursday, December 7th  
Submitted via Written Comments Form**

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1 I would like to request CPS to provide stipends to ALL families that were promised busing when they made school choices. I'd also like to request more transparency on the Transportation issue.

CPS said, they don't have the \$25 Million needed for stipends for 5,500 General Education students. \$25 Million is 0.2% of the \$9.4 Billion CPS budget. Transportation is crucial for the equity of Selective Enrollment and Magnet Schools. If you can't provide promised transportation, the least you can do is it to provide stipends now. You're getting Chicago's best students into the best schools for a fraction of a percent of the overall budget. Find the money if you believe in equity.

CPS said, in order to cut travel time to under 60 minutes for Diverse Learners, they needed to double the number of drivers. But CPS didn't double the transportation budget. How were you going to pay for these drivers if you're sincere about trying to hire them? I wonder why the Director of Transportation is celebrating 29 new hires when your goal is to hire over 600 additional bus drivers.

CPS said, they plan to invest in neighborhood schools. While this could benefit the future generation, it is not a solution for the city's gifted students right now. 154 students across 14 schools had to leave a school they love this year. Not only is the disruption of their education harmful, they won't get back the seat that they were forced to give up. Give us stipends because it's the right thing to do.

CPS said many things about the transportation issue that doesn't make sense or that's been misleading.

CPS should understand that the lack of notice regarding its decision and the lack of transparency since has resulted in DEEP mistrust both of the information CPS chooses to share and the potential for CPS-led solutions. As a parent and a taxpayer, I am concerned that CPS is not actively working to resolve this problem.

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2 Hello, my name is Walter Brzeski and I'm a Steinmetz community member.

I'm here today because of the extremely poor communication, ineptness, and customer service of the CPS ADA Office in approving my ADA accommodations for online access to Steinmetz PPLC, BAC, and PAC meetings.

Specifically, Stephanie S. and Shunna W. Both of these employees have been horrible to work with at best. Their boss Dalila B. was equally inept but she recently left CPS.

Did you know that the ADA Office makes people wait for ADA accommodations approval for 60 business days? My current request is going to take three calendar months, from Sept 25th to Dec 23rd. How is this transparency?

This as I've already was approved ADA accommodations to attend STEINMETZ LSC meetings online, albeit only audio access. And the PPLC, PAC, and BAC are all subcommittees of the Steinmetz LSC and they report to them.

BTW: The video button is right next to the audio button on the recording device the Steinmetz LSC uses for their meetings. Audio only access denies me the opportunity to see visual presentations and who's actually speaking at their meetings.

Mr. Shi, you're in the loop on this and you've done nothing but declare to Rachel Arfa Commissioner of the City of Chicago's Office on Disabilities (which I filed a complaint on my limited access to the Steinmetz LSC meetings) that I wasn't made to see my doctor again at my own cost and have them fill out paperwork again for the same ADA accommodations I had last school year.

In addition, while I was made to go through the process of getting ADA accommodations to attend Steinmetz LSC meetings online, 5 CPS employees and multiple LSC members were allowed to attend, participate, and vote online without going through the same process I did. This is discriminatory and I demand the Board have an investigation opened immediately.

Steinmetz already has some serious discrimination issues there with Steinmetz teachers and staff bullying and suing each other and their students. Search Steinmetz and racism on Twitter to see for yourself, including one flyer aimed at a Steinmetz employee that uses the N-Word. (See attachments)

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3 I would like to begin by addressing the transportation department's response to every question that they have been asked about the busing issue. They say they had to cut busing because of a nationwide driver shortage. This shortage is real, but no other city has cut busing as drastically as Chicago. The only city that comes close is Philadelphia, and they immediately offered their families stipends, something CPS is refusing to do, saying that they do not have the money. This leads me to my next point:

The transportation budget was increased by \$40 million in May of '23, and then two months later, the number of students bused was cut by at least 30% with no stipends offered to general education students. How do you justify that? You cannot just say, "It's a bus driver shortage!" I am asking where that \$40 million went. How do you think taxpayers will feel about that information, especially with CPS asking for an increase in taxes?

So, where is the money going? Let me cite some information from other districts and then compare to Chicago.

Elgin, the second largest district in Illinois, spends about \$1000 per student per year to bus students. Chicago spends nearly \$15,000 dollars per student per year. Compare that for a second: \$1000 vs. \$15,000 per year. What is going on here?

You may say, "Well, it's different in a city." Fine. Let me give you numbers for New York City and LA. LA spends approximately \$5000 per year per student. New York City spends approximately \$10,000. Chicago is still spending 50% more than New York. Why? No one is willing to answer that question. And no one is acting.

Let me stress why action and stipends are urgent.

At the last board meeting, one of your members addressed us and stated that busing students with IEPs in under an hour is "the right thing to do." We couldn't agree more.

Now I would like you to keep the idea of moral obligation in mind while I share one last story.

Last week, I spoke to a family from the Austin neighborhood who just sold their TV to have enough money to get their kid to school this week. When you decided to cancel that child's bus ride to school and leave that family hanging just three weeks before the start of school, was that "the right thing to do?" Is denying that family a stipend "the right thing to do?" That family does not have months or years for CPS to figure this out. They are literally selling appliances. They needed a stipend yesterday. You may ask, "Why can't the student just go to his neighborhood school? Why are his parents financially decimating themselves to get him to Skinner North?" Because their neighborhood school has a math proficiency of 0% on the most recent IAR exam, and this kid scored into a school where the math proficiency is over 94%. We applaud your commitment to improving neighborhood schools, but it is not going to happen overnight, and you will be denying the opportunity of a lifetime to thousands of children like this one if you do not offer stipends now.

We emailed Mr. Martinez and Mr. Mayfield on Monday requesting a meeting this week. We need those two decision makers present for anything to actually happen. We are here and ready talk.

Thank you.

Parent of Skinner North kindergartener and member of CPS Parents for Buses

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- 4 Nationally, over half of the nation's 49.5 million K-12 students use the school bus to get to school each day, at an average cost of about \$1,000 per student. School buses facilitate reforms, such as desegregation and enable students to access better-matched schools than their neighborhood zoned school.(1)  
This year CPS is spending an average of \$14,900 per transported student. \$5000 more than NY and \$10,000 more than LA. With the \$40Million budget boost given to paratransit last May STS is spending \$186 Million but only transporting 12,500 students having left 5500 worthy students standing at the curb. Why are we spending more than any other city to deliver fewer kids to school? The wool's been pulled over everyone's eyes.  
Paratransit costs have skyrocketed  
CPS Supplier Payments for Fiscal Year:2023 to KAIZEN HEALTH, INC. \$12,229,946.99  
Kaizen Health Paratransit negotiated a golden contract with a base cost of \$450/day per vehicle about \$80,000 per year. Up from \$233 in the previous contract cycle. Over \$80,000 to mostly transport single students MANY were able to take a regular school bus to school last year and preparing to do the same this year. Zum our cheapest paratransit provider is STILL \$153/day \$27,000 per year. Those are starting prices and do not include mileage, fuel surcharges, nurses, aids or specialized equipment. By the way, a similar OAKPARK/RIVERFOREST Zum Contract to the Kaizen Golden Contract, is \$75/day; this is also close to what UBER Estimates for a similar trip. Kaizen is not providing more than Zum or others.  
Although \$80,000 is disgusting, and should be addressed by you, it really isn't about dollars:  
We're not the typical families who lost bussing. They can't be here today. If you look at the CPS Annual Regional Analysis dashboard you'll see the highest % of students not attending their neighborhood schools are in East Garfield Park, West Garfield Park, Austin, North Lawndale, Calumet Heights, Avalon Park, Auburn Greshams, West

Englewood. These are neighborhoods where 70-79% do not attend their neighborhood or zoned school. Those are the students your policies are hurting. For them, bussing is a shot at a future bigger than their neighborhood, for them, bussing means the difference between learning to thrive or going to a school that is failing so badly they don't even make the charts. Those neighborhoods, those students, that had bussing robbed from them are the ones being hurt most by the loss of bussing.

My suggestion; give them 71 buses/routes and start getting them back to their future in January. You can stipend/reimburse the rest of us until you can get us all routed. Stipends will also save money because it's a fraction of paratransit costs and can save paratransit for where it is needed most.

2022-date \$450 Kaizen Health Paratransit agreement

[https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/procuredocuments/pdfs/contracts/2022\\_07/22-0727-PR20-7.pdf](https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/procuredocuments/pdfs/contracts/2022_07/22-0727-PR20-7.pdf)

\$232/vehicle Kaizen Health paratransit agreement

[https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/procuredocuments/RS\\_Online\\_Contract/Kaizen%20Health,%20Inc.%20\(12.15.21-06.30.22\)%20Paratransit%20and%20Alterbate%20Modes%20of%20Student%20Transportation%20Services%20Agreement%20\(21-0728-RS7\).PDF](https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/procuredocuments/RS_Online_Contract/Kaizen%20Health,%20Inc.%20(12.15.21-06.30.22)%20Paratransit%20and%20Alterbate%20Modes%20of%20Student%20Transportation%20Services%20Agreement%20(21-0728-RS7).PDF)

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5 There are students where high para-transit costs are a legitimate expense and required for FAPE.

When a highly skilled transportation team and vehicles are necessary it's good and right to spend appropriately.

However when it's hard to distinguish between this option and a deluxe ride share. Where is the extra money going?

CPS Supplier Payments for Fiscal Year:2023 to KAIZEN HEALTH, INC. \$12,229,946.99

I do not have the exact data on how many routes/students that 12 million represent.

In most cases there is only one student assigned to a route.

2022-date \$450 Kaizen Health Paratransit agreement

[https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/procuredocuments/pdfs/contracts/2022\\_07/22-0727-PR20-7.pdf](https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/procuredocuments/pdfs/contracts/2022_07/22-0727-PR20-7.pdf)

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6 My name is [REDACTED] and I'm a Bronco from Kenwood Academy Academic Center. Thank you for listening to me today.

I'm speaking on behalf of my little brother. He would be here today, but he wanted to stay at school because today is his birthday.

We always took the bus to and from school until this year. Now, he's driven to school alone in a CPS paratransit vehicle.

He wishes he wasn't alone in the car, and he wishes we could help some of the friends from our former bus stop with the 4 empty seats in his paratransit vehicle. Did you know that CPS is spending up to \$80,000 per year on each paratransit vehicle before add-ons? typically only transporting one student? Couldn't you route a full bus of students that he could be on for close to \$80,000?

You now know some facts about my brother, but because I told you he takes CPS Paratransit, you also know another private detail about his life that he would prefer not be broadcast to everyone everyday.

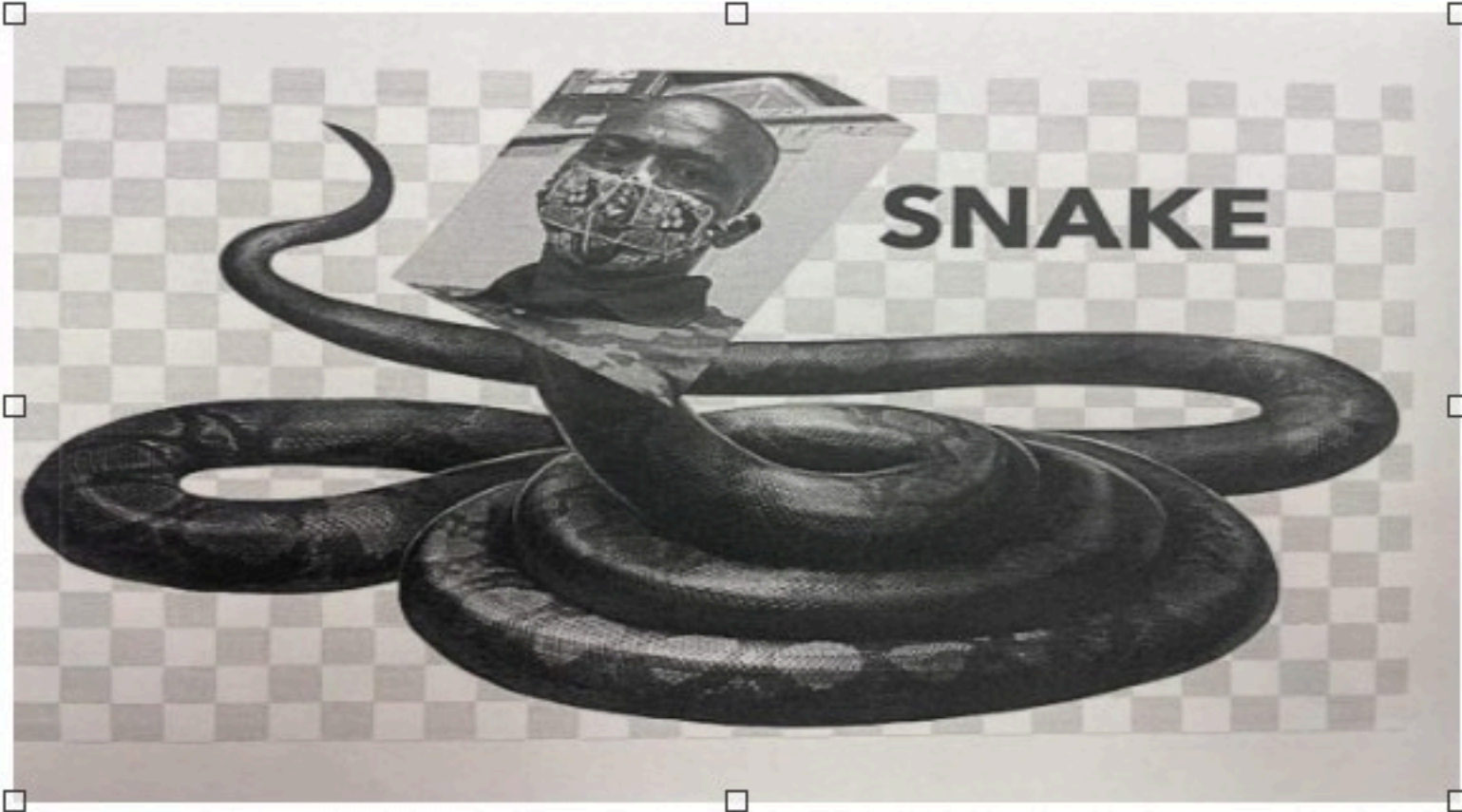
You now know he either has a disability or is living in temporary housing. I think that's one of the reasons why federal and state law recommend: the beginning point for consideration of the appropriate way in which to transport a child with disabilities is the "regular" (i.e., non-special needs) school bus. This "regular" environment must occur unless a child cannot travel safely in the regular bus.(section 300-17) I know this is an agenda meeting. Our family has tried to work with the transportation office and Ms. Chi Chi to have empty transportation seats made available to the 5500 students promised them, but we have seen no results. The question I would like you to ask them in the board of Ed meeting is why they are not routing as many students as possible into empty seats especially when some paratransit vehicles are costing the district \$80,000 a year? Especially when it is in the best interest of the special needs student originally assigned to that route.

Thank you for listening

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Racial and Disturbing IMAGES  
circulating at Steinmetz College Prep High School



**N [REDACTED] DO AS  
YOU ARE TOLD!**



121. Additionally, the First LSC Email stated, “[Vince Caputi] and his partner, Tara Dun[n]e are both on a mission to not just get rid of the principal but the chair and the vice chair.”

122. Further, the First LSC Email stated, “[Vince Caputi] is solely responsible for the image that depicts the principal as an empty headed leader and it was said that he placed the racial slur flyer in the main office.”

123. These statements are false.

124. Plaintiff Caputi is the second individual Defendant MSG Davis has accused of placing the racially degrading flyer in the main office.

