

**August 24, 2023 Board Meeting Written Comments  
Received between Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> and Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup>  
Submitted via Written Comments Form**

1	Bateman’s playground is inaccessible, dangerous and sinking. Replacement and repair are necessary and responsible. Ignoring the accessibility challenges, engineering issues and environmental hazards would be negligent.
2	Bateman Elementary's playground is inaccessible, dangerous and sinking. Replacement and repair is necessary and responsible. Ignoring the accessibility challenges, engineering issues and environmental hazards would be negligent.
3	Why is there not enough resources for parents and students with mental health and other illnesses?
4	Due to the weather, I think the schools should go online for the rest of week . I am concern of the student and staff member, I believe we should go online. My daughters has been a teacher at cps for 30 years and her experience in during summer school was that there no AC, in which staff and students were in discomfort.
5	<p>As you prepare to approve 23-0824-PR15, I would encourage this Board to become well versed in procurement processes at CPS so that you may apply a framework that ensures students are well-served through administrative capacity with compliance and control mechanisms.</p> <p>The District currently uses an IT consultant to create our transportation routes. He was awarded the contracts on a no-bid process. That IT consultant uses a legacy software, Edulog, to (mis)create transportation routes for students with disabilities. As a result of State Corrective actions, CPS engaged in an RFP process and celebrated choosing a new software company to work on student transportation routing going forward. It's Edulog. The same as it ever was.</p> <p>Because the new Edulog contract will not be in place until the 2024-2025 school year, the Board of Education approved using the same IT consultant to create bus routes for 2023-2024 at the triple the cost of what he has previously charged. He has already made millions as a CPS IT consultant as well as having applied for PPP loans. As no surprise, especially to kids with disabilities who rely on bus service, there are still bus routes that are over 60 minutes and fantastical routing which really means some students remain practically unrouted. Using Edulog going forward also allows for CPS to use the same IT consultant to make modifications, as necessary. There is no material change to how routes can be created.</p> <p>And yet, on board report 23-0824-PR15, this Board of Education will rely on the use of outside IT consultants, including the same IT consultant who creates transportation routes to stand in for administrative capacity for CPS with little to no oversight.</p> <p>This critique is not targeted at one IT consultant. Rather, I am making the case that this Board of Education needs to widely consider procurement and its relationship to student services.</p> <p>In another example, ISBE has put CPS under a Corrective Action related to physical restraint and time out. As of the time of my writing this feedback, the CPS database shows that not all security guards are trained in physical restraint. While CPS claims compliance with ISBE's directive, it is not yet safe for students at the District. For</p>

reference, please review our continually updated analysis of the CPS physical restraint and time out training database:

<https://observablehq.com/@fgregg/has-cps-trained-any-staff-in-physical-restraint-of-students>

By August 21, the District was required to create a centralized way for CPS employees to report the use of physical restraint and seclusion. In ISBE's April 2023 compliance letter it states, "CPS appears to not have a centralized system of collecting, analyzing, and reporting on these RTO events as required by 23 IAC 1.285(f)(2) and 1.285(j)(2-3)."

As of August 23, 2023, CPS still does not have a centralized system of collecting, analyzing and reporting on RTO events. It seems as though, again, CPS will rely on the use of an IT consultant to build more functionality into Aspen. The quote was provided on August 8 with a closing date on August 18 and does not show a first estimated completion date until October 31, 2023 - a little over 2 months past the required date of compliance and well into the school year.

It is unacceptable that CPS did not create a data-reporting system for physical restraint/seclusion. Parents are under-notified when physical restraint is used and the use of restraint disproportionately impacts Black and brown students with disabilities. The District needs to take this seriously. The regular use of external consultants who are divorced from the realities of compliance and impacts upon student services is unacceptable.

It is this Board that approves procurement actions and pooled contracts like this and it is incumbent upon you to set a vision related to administrative capacity so that students receive their owed services.

- 
- 6 Throughout many years, the success of providing school buses has been implemented in many ways. To the memories our children hold on meeting their bus driver to them arriving safely and on time. With recent changes, parents including myself have been devastated by the impact of limited transportation options. Pulaski International School of Chicago is driven by parents who have enrolled their children in the Gifted Bilingual Program.
- Moreover, the CTA has offered Pulaski and the rest of Chicago Public Schools a monthly balance of thirty five dollars. This alternative leaves us parents in distress for our kids' safety because of the statistics behind child abduction, sexual assault, vehicle collisions, and climate injuries. Therefore, who will be responsible for our children if Pulaski leaves the responsibilities to the parents? As a working parent with a minimum wage, I and many are responsible to provide shelter and nourishment to our kids. The health of our children can affect their academic performance. Weather conditions may cause interference with their transportation journey, physical and mental injuries may occur. Hence, the traffic becomes an obstacle to maintain a full time position, the distress of it may lead to an accident to the parents. Now if parents need to drive back and forth for the five days of the week the minimum wage will not be sufficient for the parent to provide care and after school activities. Another parent's solution that is not upheld by Pulaski is "car pulling." The probable consequences may lead to legal actions: accusation for sexual assault and accidents by parents or peers. This would result in an increase in the mental health for both parents and children.
- CPS is providing a monetary amount of five hundred dollars to a selective category of children, "diverse learners," based on CPS diverse learners only include visible

	<p>disabilities and refugees. Why would CPS use the term “diverse learners” if only two diverse groups of individuals qualify for the school bus? Why would Pulaski accept these terms and conditions if Pulaski is impacted statistically on the Gifted Bilingual Program. GBP is diverse because of a student's ethnicity, nationality, race, and community. Therefore, these students should be provided with transportation benefits as the previous years. When the petition is approved, we request the bus driver to be eligible to conduct safety protocols. Another solution to our request would be to increase the monetary budget and be distributed to all diverse learners.</p>
7	<p>Two days before school started about 50 families in the Gifted Bilingual Program at Pulaski International School of Chicago had the rug pulled from under their feet because they were told that they would no longer be receiving bus transportation which they had been receiving for many years. These families have invested in their children's education by sending them to a highly rated school that houses a selective program that their children tested into and it doesn't compare to their neighborhood school. How do you tell your 8th grader that you are suddenly transferring them out in their last year of elementary? How do you go on the bus every school day, especially during inclement weather with your baby and toddler to take your children to school? How do you help out with carpooling if you have no idea what will happen Heaven forbid there's an accident? It isn't sustainable.</p> <p>What is CPS doing to fill the bus driver positions? What is the progress? Can CPS offer pick ups and drop offs at prime locations? Why can't our parents, especially those families that live the furthest, be offered a reasonable stipend? Why can't students with asthma be included? It seems like we haven't even been met halfway.</p> <p>This situation saddens me. I have seen mothers crying about it. It is stressful for everyone involved. We want to see that something is being done to fix it.</p>
8	<p>I'm a parent concerned about the tras posts toon cut off all funds for my kids in need of bus or we cannot even apply for incentives for our transportation needs for our kids to school. The Ventra cards aire not really a good solution to the problems some moms have kids kids with health issues for example anxiety or asthma or other health conditions we are worried about cat safety if we are obligated to send our kids alone since parents need to be in a different place at the same time we do need answers and other solutions we want answers please because our kids deserve the help as well.</p>
9	<p>We, Parents, belong to Pukaski IB school. Where there is a gifted program (RGC). We need transportation for students that are coming from different locations. It is imperative because transportation is necessary for these families. People work, and don't have the necessary means to bring the students to Pulaski school.</p>
10	<p>My name is Sandra Cruz, and I am the mother of a girl that goes to Pulaski International School. She is in the gifted program, and I am asking that we solve the bus issue we have every year. Its impossible that there is nothing you can do to help us. Also, its not possible that they can't fix the air conditioning in the school that has been broken for years. What need do the children have to be learning in a space where they are hot and sweating all time all because the people in charge don't fix things.</p>
11	<p>I have two children enrolled in CPS selected program. Unfortunately, we are currently facing challenges due to a shortage of school bus drivers and frequent school bus cancellations this semester. What solution can we expect from the CPS to address this issue?</p>

12 Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. Please see a full version of my comments below, along with a petition with nearly 700 signatures supporting our request to reverse the decision to cancel bussing.

Good morning, my name is Jessica Driscoll. My husband Mark and I have a kindergartener and 4th grader attending a selective enrollment school in CPS. And I am here today on behalf of the 8,000 children enrolled in magnet and selective enrollment schools who had their bussing canceled this school year, and on behalf of their parents. I thank the board and President Shi for allowing me to share our request today.

On July 31st, just 3 weeks before school started, CPS notified parents that, and I quote, "CPS has filled approximately half of the driver positions needed to provide transportation to all students who qualify." What this notice did not include is that CPS has opted to voluntarily double the quota for bus drivers with the goal of shortening bus routes. And that CPS currently has more drivers than last year but has made the choice to eliminate bussing for over half of these students in lieu of longer ride times. You have more drivers this year.

This unilateral decision has manufactured a crushing financial crisis for parents city-wide that working women and single mothers, specifically, are bearing the brunt of. Rather than let parents choose to opt out of exceedingly long bus routes, canceling bussing has forced thousands of parents to sacrifice providing for these very children in order to ensure their safe transport to school. Families have uprooted children from selective and magnet programs, returning them to their underperforming neighborhood schools because you have failed to keep your promise of transportation. Working parents and caregivers have relied on this promise to make decisions about their employment, housing, and childcare for years. Canceling these services without notice is simply unconscionable.

As much as it is an issue for our children, this bussing crisis is a very real women's issue and a clear demonstration of how women's work is so easily sidelined when our schools fail.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has data confirming that the cost to our state's economy for the loss of only one day of women's work is an astonishing \$920M. With that in mind, imagine the staggering financial impact that you incur by keeping working women from their professions and/or productivity for more than 10+ hours per week as they bring their kids to school.

Beyond the lost work hours, wages, and contribution to Chicago's collective revenue, there is a personal cost to families. The commute to take our children to school on the CTa is over 50 minutes each way, claiming 4 hours a day from our work day. That simply isn't possible. Whether we purchase a second car to transport our children, spend \$850/month for aftercare so that we can work full work days, or hire a driver to bring our children home the anticipated budget for covering the cost of transporting our children to and from school this year was \$8,000-\$10,000.

Beyond safe passage, bussing is safe childcare and this decision has created chaos and a huge financial burden on thousands of parents with virtually no notice.

We go to school to learn how to think critically, problem-solve, and work together. I would like to call upon the CPS administration to use these skills to reverse their decision to prioritize bus route length over the number of routes and return bus service to as many children as possible providing safe transportation and eliminating this manufactured crisis for Chicago's working parents.

Thank you.

Our Petition:

<https://chnj.it/YCRX2HcqHX>

---

13 The Chicago Public Schools created an environment where academically advanced students are segregated from the regular curriculum population. This started in the 60s in neighborhood schools with accelerated learning classes that eventually became magnet, classical and selective enrollment schools completely segregated from neighborhood schools in separate school buildings. One of the resources that these institutions received was busing because these children were pulled from neighborhood schools in their communities.

It is imperative that busing is provided to students in these programs. The neighborhood schools do not meet the academic needs of gifted students. The transportation budget is approximately \$117,000,000 which is more than enough to transport students to the schools they've earned the right to attend. If the district cannot organize transportation with this budget, then surely the money can be given directly to families to pay private transportation companies to take children to schools. The admissions policy of CPS has forced families to enroll their children in separate schools in different parts of the city which strains the resources of families who are already doing their best to survive our out of control inflation.

Until CPS is able to hire the appropriate number of bus drivers, families should be able to utilize the already allocated funds to get their children to school.

---

14 La reunión escuela Pulaski International school. Necesita que le reparen 13 unidades de aire acondicionado. El año pasado proveyeron aires los cuales no enfrían y solo ocupan mucho espacio. La necesidad es de urgencia para el edificio modular o pequeño.

---

15 **REPORT TO THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Thursday, August 24, 2023  
By Maria R. Owens,  
Vice Chairperson, Emil G. Hirsch Metropolitan H.S. LSC**

I come before you to address a critical issue of equity we face at Hirsch. The District has touted its dedication to equity throughout our system and we at Hirsch hope that your proclamation is genuine. Unfortunately, we have not felt the impact of that mission. We were initially encouraged that the season of being passed over and ignored was subsiding when the District appeared to recognize the needs of our special education student population which tops 40% of our student body. The funds that the District allotted to us included funding we were using to add three much needed new special education teachers. Our Principal, David Narain, was assured that special education staffing for all schools would include four special education teachers for each core subject for self-

contained classes and four special education teachers for each core subject for co-taught classes.

Based upon the Board's representation to us, our Local School Council approved our budget including the funding for these positions. Principal Narain, advertised and interviewed candidates for the positions. He was even able to find three candidates for the positions. Subsequently and without warning, the District omitted funding for one of the positions from our budget. The Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) confirmed that the funding would not be made available in spite of the fact that their own budget presentation confirmed that Hirsch would receive eight teachers in total. It is wholly unacceptable for ODLSS to alter a budget that was duly adopted by our LSC. It is also a travesty to deny our students resources and programming we desperately need to meet their needs.

Hirsch has been systematically underfunded. We have been twice denied Arts programming we've applied for and are qualified for. We have suffered delays in facility improvements such as our exterior lighting which posed serious security issues until they were finally replaced. We have been pleading for the repair of our pool locker room and showers for years. As we stand here today, we have a operational pool we can't use only because of these facilities. Rather citing our enrollment numbers as a catalyst for increased help, the numbers have been used as an excuse to penalize and neglect us. To add insult to injury, our neighborhood elementary school graduates are diverted to schools farther away from us which directly affects the very enrollment numbers used to justify denying us needed resources. Our school is a hidden gem that should be transformed into a community hub that serves the entire Greater Grand Crossing Community. In this atmosphere where the District has committed to building entirely new schools in communities that already have viable existing institutions, we implore you not to overlook our community that stands starving for your attention. Please provide us with a written response to our request within 7 days.

Maria R. Owens,  
Vice Chairperson - Hirsch Metro H.S. LSC



---

16 The following comments are in response to Mr. Mayfield's reply to Bateman's parents' concerns near the end of the 8/24/23 meeting. He said, "So, Bateman. Heard the community loud and clear. In this case we're working with the community and we're also working with the state. There is a state grant that we haven't fully secured yet, still an open matter up to \$800,000, so we'll continue to work with the state to secure those funds and the community to keep them abreast. The playground is safe. There is a section that appears to have a sinkhole and we'll have our contractors out there today on site looking at that sinkhole to determine what next steps are"

First, Mr. Mayfield's did not hear us. Had he truly heard us, it would have been clear to him that we were not there to ask about money coming from the state, we know that money is in the works - we were there to specifically ask CPS to do their part and commit financially, from their own budget, to the safety and accessibility of our

playground and play lot. Mr. Mayfield's remarks failed to address our primary request, that CPS commit to doing their part financially. The state grant money is wonderful, but as you well know - \$800,000 is not enough to demolish and rebuild a playground in most metropolitan areas, and it's certainly not enough in the City of Chicago

He went on to say that "the playground is safe", again he missed the point. If we assume he's talking about the play structure - yes, today it is safe. Today the bridge is connected, the slides are intact, the missing screws don't seem to be creating immediate risk. But that's only today - it's a matter of time before the next part fails, and then the next and the next. And each failure is likely to bring with it a period of restricted access - in this case that means 900+ kids without a jungle gym for weeks, possibly months at a time. A 20 year old playground is beyond it's life expectancy; no reputable playground equipment company will warranty a playground for anywhere near that long yet Mr. Mayfield's attitude seems to be that everything is good. It's not. The time to replace the play structure is long overdue.

We could instead assume that when he said "the playground is safe" he meant the sinking turf area is stable. If he knows that for certain, that's great news and should have been shared with the school immediately. Having said that, it does nothing to remedy the many existing issues created by the sinking. Being stable won't mean it can suddenly be used reliably and safely by kids again. Being stable doesn't change that it's actively disintegrating and washing into nearby natural areas and sewers. Being stable won't stop kids from tripping or shoes from getting soaked. I would LOVE to be sure that it's stable, but I also want to know when it will be replaced and how the area will be repaired.

Mr. Mayfield dismissed our actual requests and concerns. He glossed over the surface of everything we said and suggested to you that it's all ok. It's not. The time to replace the Bateman play structure and repair the playlot is now, it's not getting any better and has the potential to get much worse.

Thank you again, for your time and attention. I very much look forward to a day when the Bateman playlot is safe, accessible, reliable and suitable for a student body of our size.

---





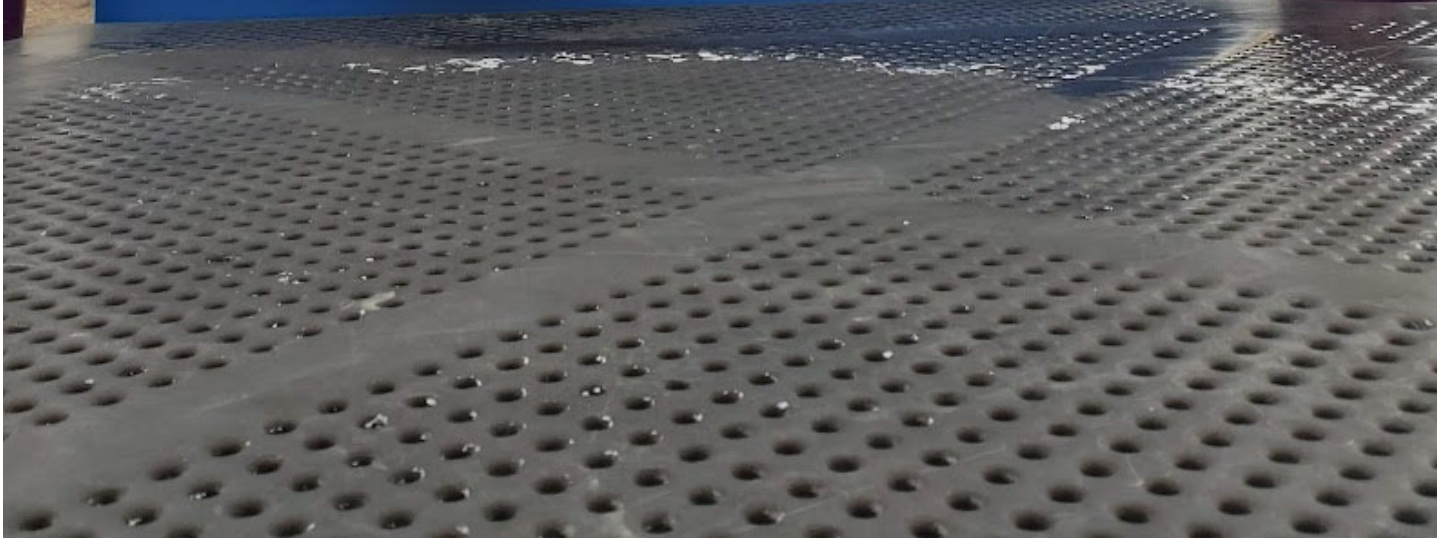








BATEMAN S



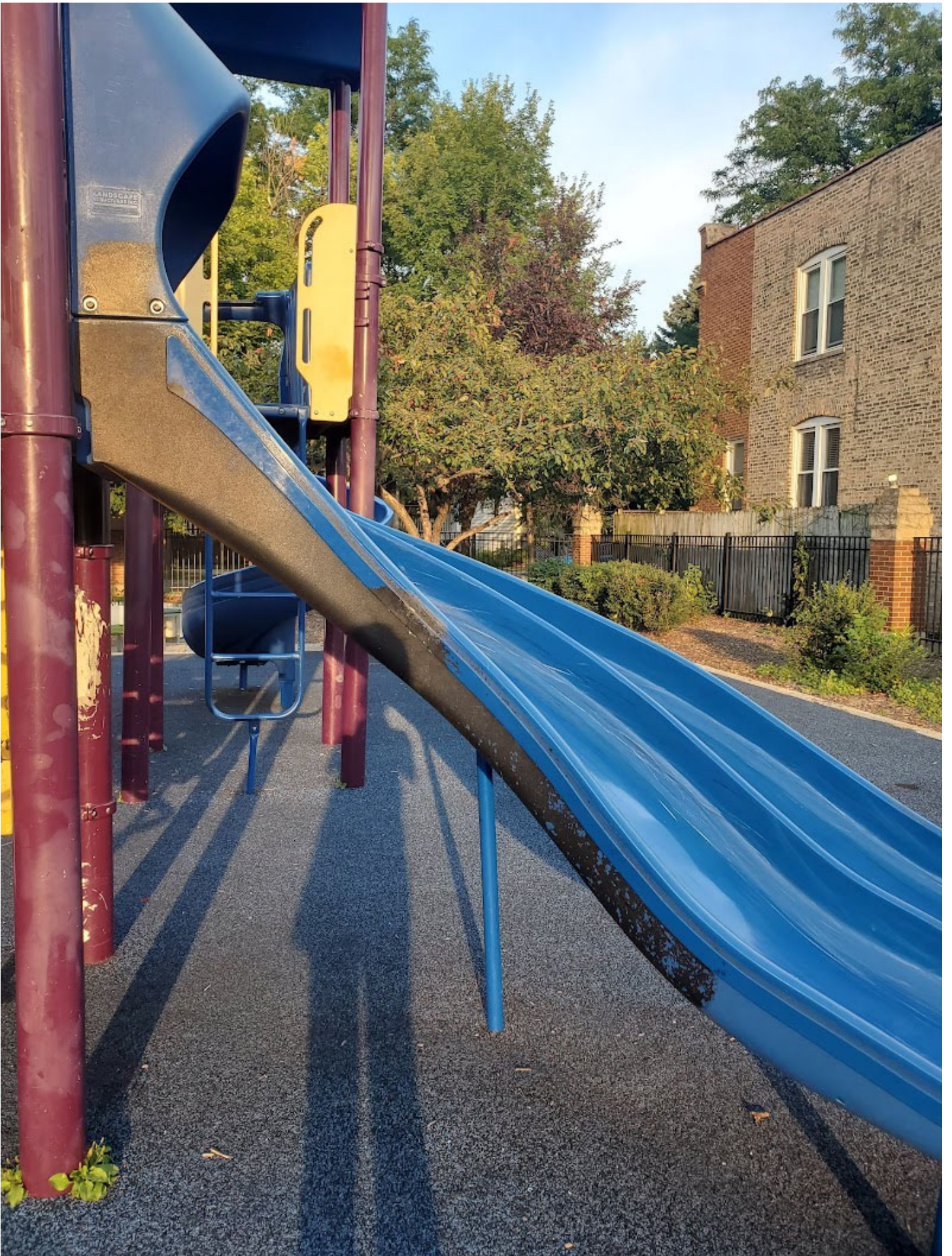
















































Sinkhole Area

Existing Play Structure





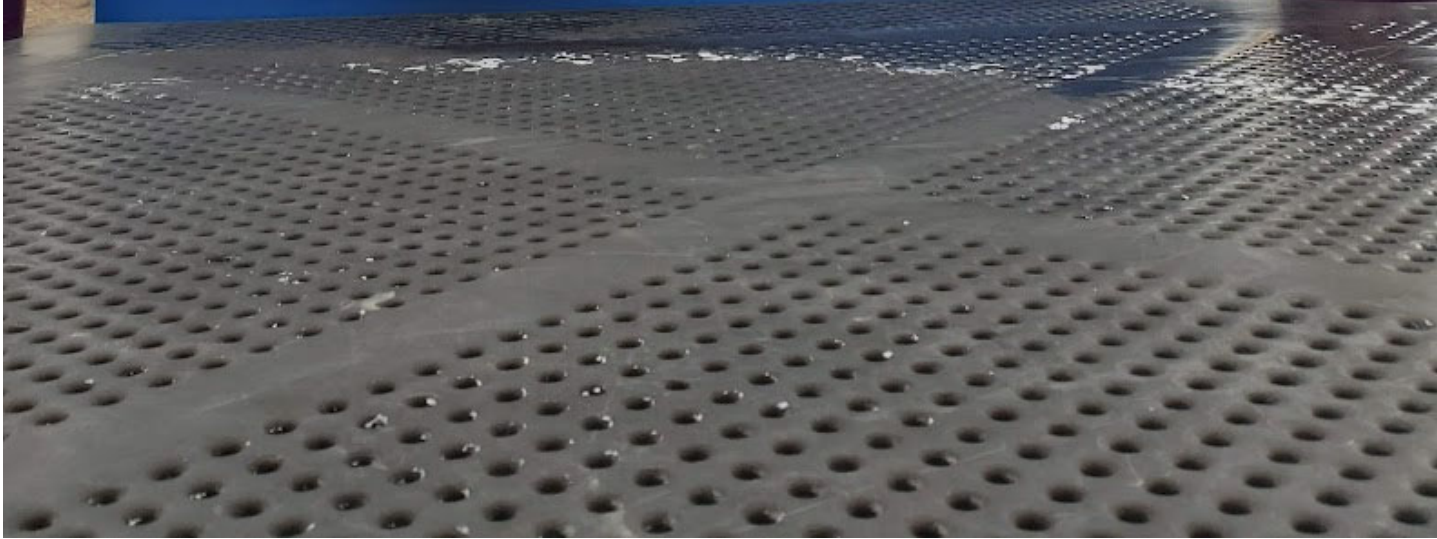








BATEMAN S

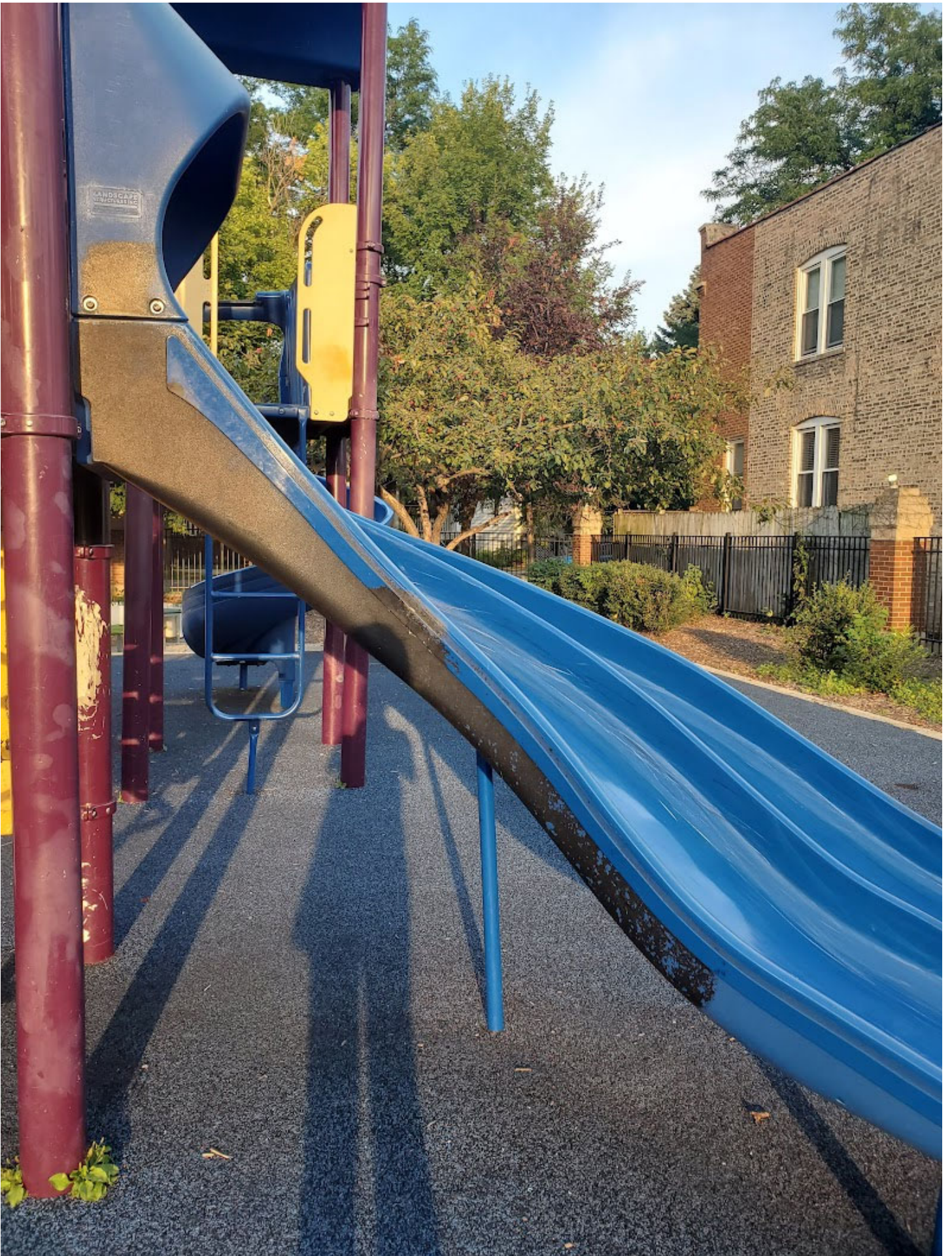
















































**REPORT TO THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Thursday, August 24, 2023  
By Maria R. Owens,  
Vice Chairperson, Emil G. Hirsch Metropolitan H.S. LSC**

I come before you to address a critical issue of equity we face at Hirsch. The District has touted its dedication to equity throughout our system and we at Hirsch hope that your proclamation is genuine. Unfortunately, we have not felt the impact of that mission. We were initially encouraged that the season of being passed over and ignored was subsiding when the District appeared to recognize the needs of our special education student population which tops 40% of our student body. The funds that the District allotted to us included funding we were using to add three much needed new special education teachers. Our Principal, David Narain, was assured that special education staffing for all schools would include four special education teachers for each core subject for self-contained classes and four special education teachers for each core subject for co-taught classes.

Based upon the Board's representation to us, our Local School Council approved our budget including the funding for these positions. Principal Narain, advertised and interviewed candidates for the positions. He was even able to find three candidates for the positions. Subsequently and without warning, the District omitted funding for one of the positions from our budget. The Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) confirmed that the funding would not be made available in spite of the fact that their own budget presentation confirmed that Hirsch would receive eight teachers in total. It is wholly unacceptable for ODLSS to alter a budget that was duly adopted by our LSC. It is also a travesty to deny our students resources and programming we desperately need to meet their needs.

Hirsch has been systematically underfunded. We have been twice denied Arts programming we've applied for and are qualified for. We have suffered delays in facility improvements such as our exterior lighting which posed serious security issues until they were finally replaced. We have been pleading for the repair of our pool locker room and showers for years. As we stand here today, we have a operational pool we can't use only because of these facilities. Rather citing our enrollment numbers as a catalyst for increased help, the numbers have been used as an excuse to penalize and neglect us. To add insult to injury, our neighborhood elementary school graduates are diverted to schools farther away from us which directly affects the very enrollment numbers used to justify denying us needed resources. Our school is a hidden gem that should be transformed into a community hub that serves the entire Greater Grand Crossing Community. In this atmosphere where the District has committed to building entirely new schools in communities that already have viable existing institutions, we implore you not to overlook our community that stands starving for your attention. Please provide us with a written response to our request within 7 days.

Maria R. Owens,  
Vice Chairperson - Hirsch Metro H.S. LSC

██████████  
████████████████████