

**January 25, 2024 Board Meeting Written Comments
Received between Tuesday, January 23rd and Friday, January 26th
Submitted via Written Comments Form**

1 Chicago Board of Education
January 25, 2024

Dear School Board Members,

As the Chicago Mayor's Office has announced, new arrivals to our city will begin to be evicted from city shelters next week.

Since many of the people who will be evicted from city shelters will be children who are CPS students, we want to make sure the Board is fully aware of the situation.

Approximately 1,900 migrants are set to be evicted from city shelters on February 1st, another 961 people on February 2nd, and by the end of February, evictions are estimated to reach 6,239.*

Unless the Mayor's Office changes course and puts a stop to their shelter eviction proceedings, hundreds of students, their families, their classrooms, and their teachers will be negatively impacted. The trauma these evictions will cause to an already traumatized and vulnerable population could be extreme and lasting.

We request that, if it hasn't already, the Board reach out to the Mayor's Office and advocate on behalf of their students and families for whom they are responsible, to not be forced onto the streets in the middle of winter.

We also ask that the Board make sure that students and families are aware of, and receive services in accordance with their rights, including the right to remain in school even if they move from shelter, and the right to be transported to that school.

Please, if you haven't already, take up this cause and insist on the well-being of Chicago's students by demanding the City not evict people from shelter.

Sincerely,

Volunteers
Community Care Collective - 33rd Ward
bit.ly/CCC33Chicago

*According to city data, [reported on by WTTW](#)

2 Hello. I am mother to two children at Inter-American Magnet school. Inter-American is an immersive dual language magnet school for children to learn reading, writing and speaking in both Spanish and English.

I am a nurse with over 20 years of experience serving and investing in our great community of Chicago. As a health care worker who works with so many patients that

only speak languages other than English you can see how I really valued what an amazing opportunity it was to send my kids to a school where they could learn Spanish, which is the heart language of so many of Chicago's residents. We also chose to live in a primarily Hispanic neighborhood and since we are not Hispanic, having my children learn Spanish seemed like it would be a great way to connect better with our community.

When my oldest was going to start school I toured our local school and Inter-American. After discussing with the principal of our neighborhood school he was enthusiastic about his own school but also about Inter-American as his own kids had gone there. I was excited about also giving my kids this amazing opportunity of learning Spanish. My neighborhood school could not provide such an opportunity.

I chose Inter-American with the idea that there was a bus option since we live about 4 miles from the school. My kids have been big bus riders since they have started school. They are now invested in the school and happy with their teachers, experiences, learning more about Hispanic culture and their friends there. I do not wish to pull them out of all of this. They are presently in 6th and 4th grades.

As anyone who knows healthcare workers, they are not allowed to be late to work and we are an essential part of the community and workforce. My co-workers are relying on me to be timely and dependable so we can all share the patient load that day. My work schedule and my kid's school schedule start at the exact same time. I have relied on the bus in the past to get me to work on time.

Shame on CPS! Parents have been scrambling to now figure out how to get their kids to school and how to get themselves to work. For most parents, not having a school bus has shortened the amount of hours they are able to go to work. Driving all the way to school is much longer than having a close proximity school bus stop. Some have found carpools but that is hard for many families since not all families have cars or they only have small cars that make carpooling practically impossible, especially since small children can not safely sit in the front seat of a car. Taking away bussing from parents who already have their children invested and at least half-way or more through elementary school is cruel and unnecessary.

It is hard to believe that CPS has prioritized bussing even after claiming to do things like raise wages and do job fairs. If they did they would give schools what they had. How can there be NO buses for ANY school that had one last year? Why are there not SOME schools with SOME routes? That would give parents faith that they were giving all they could.

We all add and serve our communities in different ways. We depend on our communities and on each other. CPS is letting kids and parents down. We have made school choices and want to finish at the schools we are a part of. Don't have the schools fail the parents. Don't make them feel that to get their needs met they need to go to other communities! Why are you making going to school so unnecessarily hard? Serve the community in the way that you are needed, we all need to do our part and CPS is NOT doing that.

In the end, it will be the children that miss out and suffer the consequences the most. If you must send kids to their neighborhood schools then start with the kindergarteners. Don't cut the older kids off at the knees. I am an Essential Healthcare Worker who is serving my community but my school community is failing me! You are leaving so

3	<p>I am the Program Manager of the Margaret Hackett Family Program at the University of Chicago. We would like to provide two district events (free of charge) for parents of children with a CNS Anomaly (medical conditions include Chiari, Craniosynostosis, Hydrocephalus, Spina Bifida and Syringomyelia). This event would include a free lunch for families with this condition, a Q&A Session with one our nurse practitioners, and a resource expo for resources such as case coordinators, adaptive sports programming, etc. The second event will be held for anyone that assists with the IEP/504 process for these children. We would also offer a free lunch, Q&A Session with our nurse practitioner and resources such as medical providers they can reach out to with questions, condition specific pamphlets, etc. Please let us know if this would be an opportunity that you would be willing to explore!</p>
4	<p>\$4,585 less per pupil than the district wide average. Northside College Prep receives \$2,274 less per pupil than the district wide average. I have a child in a neighborhood school as well as a selective enrollment school, and the neighborhood school has much nicer facilities than the selective enrollment school. Please do invest in neighborhood schools - I agree that every child deserves a great education. But don't lie about the funding and act like SEES and magnet schools are getting more than everyone else.</p>
5	<p>Please stop perpetuating the myth that selective enrollment and magnet schools get more funding than neighborhood schools. Lane Tech, for example, receives \$4,585 less per pupil than the district wide average. Northside College Prep receives \$2,274 less per pupil than the district wide average. I have a child in a neighborhood school as well as a selective enrollment school, and the neighborhood school has much nicer facilities than the selective enrollment school. Please do invest in neighborhood schools - I agree that every child deserves a great education. But don't lie about the funding and say that SEES and magnet schools are getting more than everyone else.</p>
6	<p>President HShi- I believe you when you said, about December's Resolution," This resolution is not directing us to close selective enrollment schools", but the district's failure to provide a way for 5500 students, 85% of which are low-income, to get to their most appropriate schools will drastically change the face of those schools towards homogeny. We urge you to take up the Financial Relief Initiative and provide the promised assistance to help families get transportation to some of the most diverse schools in the city.</p> <p>Where's the promise?: last May's meeting when the Renewal Agreement for Transportation Services was approved:: 23-0524-PR16 ..."Programs served by school bus service includes, but is not limited to: Diverse Learners, Selective Enrollment, Controlled Environment Receiving Schools, Students in Temporary Living Situations, Parent Choice, shuttle services, and other programs as the Board deems appropriate."...</p> <p>Estimated Costs \$125M and nowhere is there mention of a Bus Driver Shortage The \$125,000,000 compensation to vendors included our 5500 students 85% of them are low income. It's wrong to exclude them now. Providing them financial relief for the entire year would be less than 1/5th of the approved amount. Less than 1/10th the amount if you just provided for 2nd semester.</p> <p>The transportation breakdown in CPS started long before the bus driver shortage. Outsourcing has led to the stranglehold vendors have over transportation. We are paying \$26,000 to over \$80,000 to transport single students in paratransit. Many of whose</p>

needs were met last year with a bus route that cost less than \$5000 per student. Spending like this only widens the wealth gap.

Ms. Fahey Hughs, did you know that the language of a stipend option for Students with Disabilities has been removed from the CPS transportation page. That's another 3900 students who will likely be funneled into the pockets of bus and paratransit vendors.

Wrapping Up:

Moving forward, WE need to own that bussing is a pillar of education and needs to be a core value. Take Charge of THOSE 50 ELECTRIC BUSES THAT ARE COMING. Use them as a pilot program of 100% in house Routed, Managed, and DRIVEN.

Transportation lost it's way long before anyone in this room was sitting in the seats they're in now, but we're the ones left to fix it. Not with a band-aid, but real solid corrective steps. Steps you will be proud to look back and say, "we did that"! Together with a tenacious group of parents who JUST WOULD NOT GIVE UP. We set about the hard work of restoring transportation to its rightful position as a pillar of an excellent and diverse education.

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- 7 One thing I learned from being a CPS parent is that students and parents CANNOT count on CPS. CPS promised bussing for students at Selective Enrollment and Magnet schools. It's unconscionable that CPS abruptly canceled the promised transportation and did not offer financial relief. I wish I could afford to move to a better district or pay for private school for my kids. I cannot afford either. Are my children stripped of opportunities?
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ATTACHMENTS

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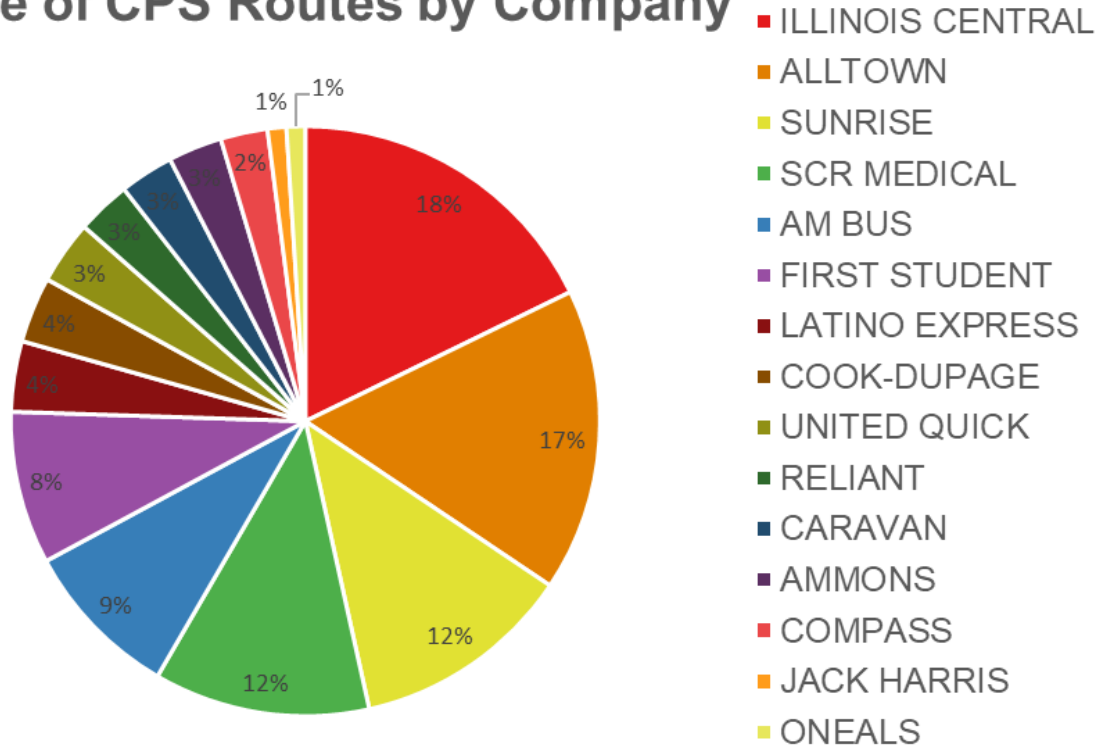
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Dr. Angel Alvarez Handouts for January 25, 2024 CPS Board Meeting

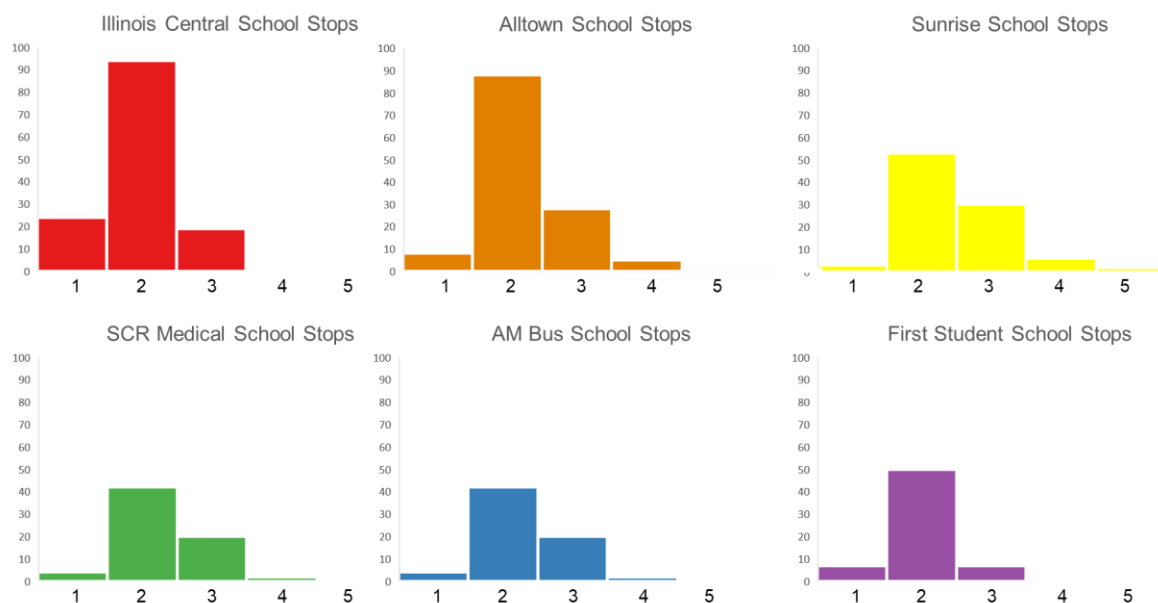
CPS Vendors Have Unfair Pricing Power Because of Flawed Policies

Analysis by Dr. Angel Alvarez of CPS records4
 SY22 Six Companies Operate 3/4th of CPS Routes

Share of CPS Routes by Company



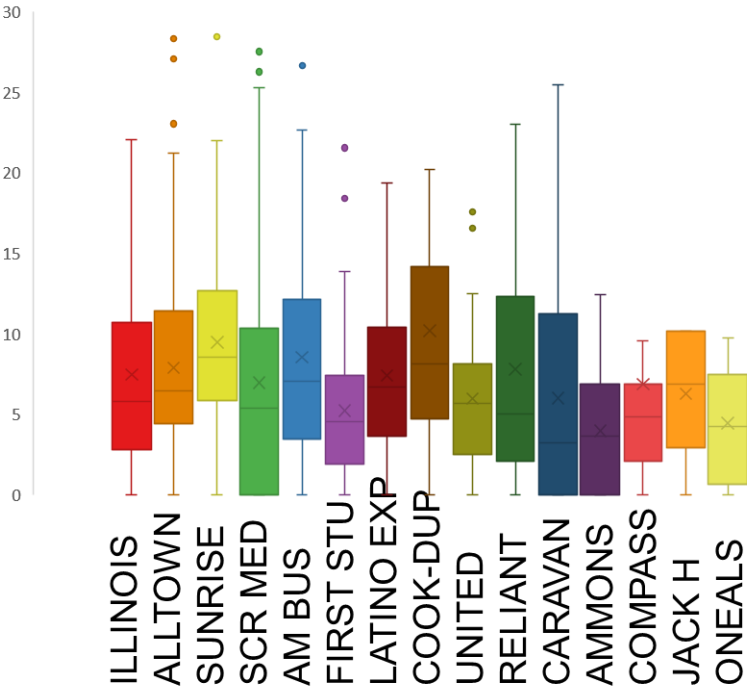
Distribution of CPS School Stops Differ by Company



Some CPS Vendors Operate More Favorable Routes

CPS Route Distances Differ by Company

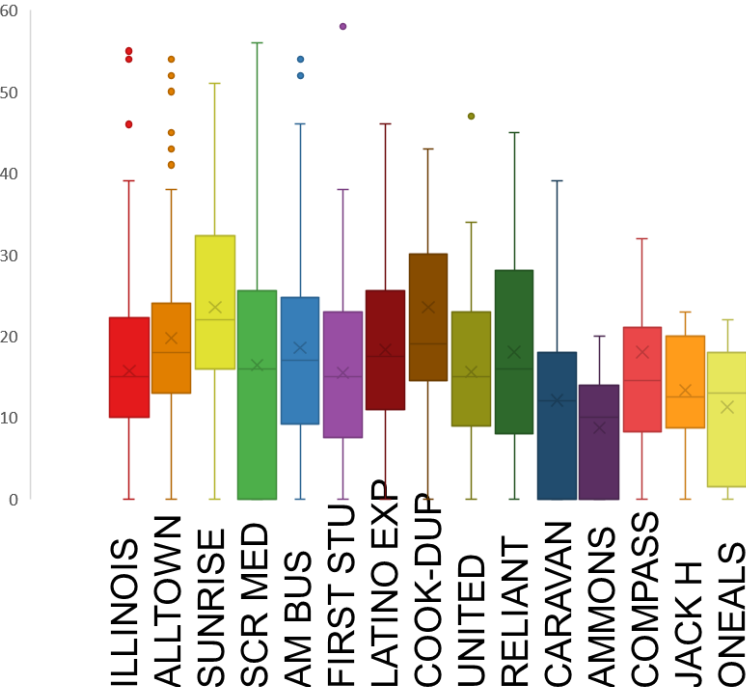
Miles per CPS Route by Company



*Note: Seven routes >30 miles not shown, but included in analysis

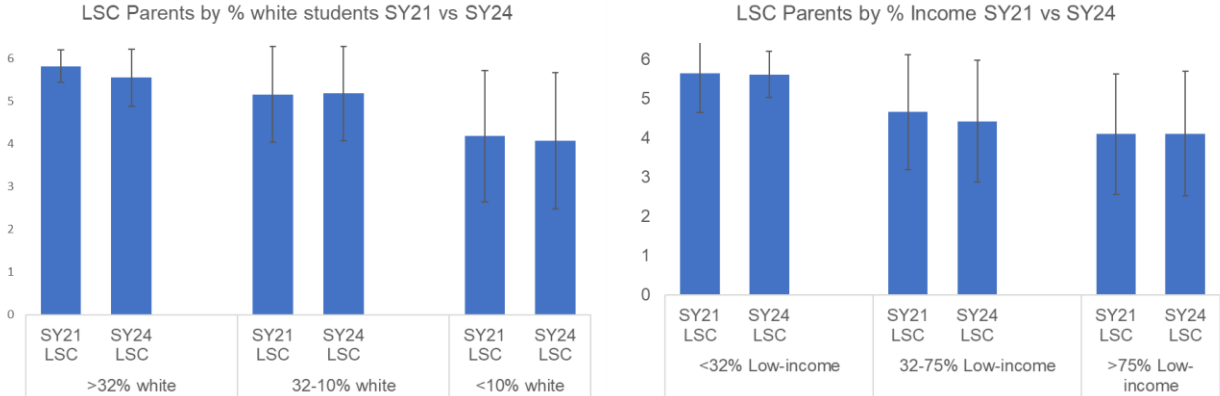
CPS Route Travel Times Differ by Company

Minutes per CPS Route by Company

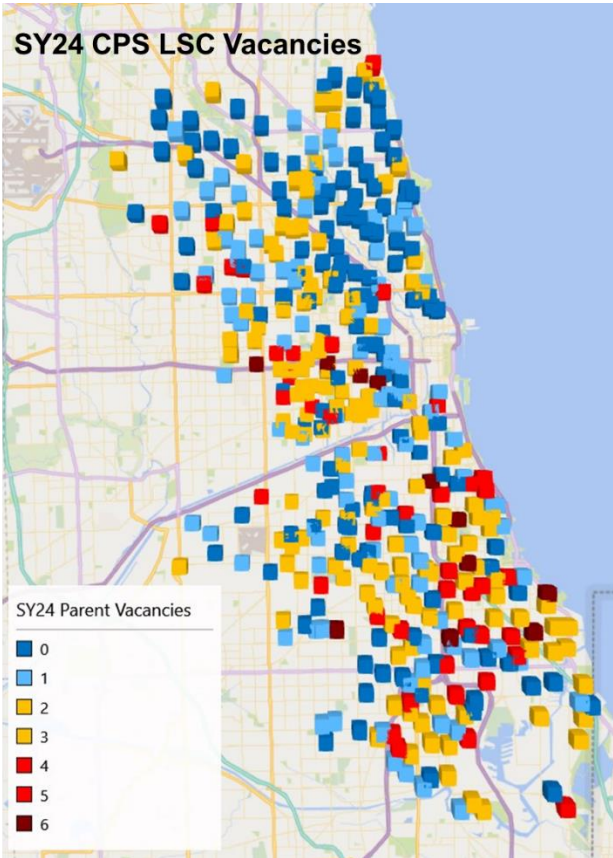
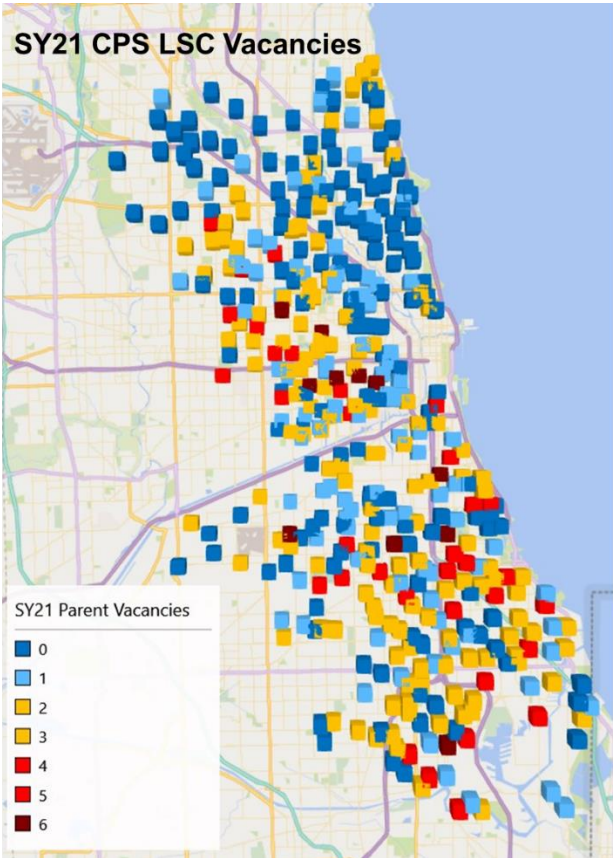


Parent LSC Representation Has Not Improved Despite Changes in Law

Parent LSC Vacancies Are More Common in Schools that Serve Low-Income and Students of Color



Data from CPS and Jianan Shi/Raise Your Hand IL, Analysis by Dr. Angel Alvarez



Records

I was sad to see nothing in that policy that does anything to improve both the maintenance and retention of records. Or brings accountability when principals or other CPS employees delete, alter, or withhold records, particularly for students with disabilities. These students and families need access to these records to advocate for themselves. Not only does this violate FEWRPA, ISSRA, and IDEA, it also prevents them from actually engaging and benefiting from the education they have a right to.

Budget

Let's talk about the budget, the budget is unsustainable. You are facing an over \$300 million deficit next year alone. It's going to keep rising. You need to have workshops and explain how you are going to control costs. There are multiple areas that need reform to control costs and utilize our resources to do the most good for our students. One way of doing this is vendor reform.

Vendor Reform

The way we approve vendors is problematic and overly bureaucratic. It is not equitable and discourages Black and Brown entrepreneurship. It makes it more difficult, not just for people of color, but for all small businesses in the city to try and serve their communities. There are consequences to that beyond not achieving a more diverse workforce- it also costs us more money. This is clear in the example of transportation.

Transportation

Transportation Services does not operate in an efficient or effective manner. Using the limited data that was made available, I discovered in 2022 that 75% of routes were controlled by just 6 companies. This creates an oligopoly that benefits from CPS waiting to the last minute because it gives them pricing power. Moreover, you can see some companies appear to have more lucrative routes than others. The distances traveled, stops required, and neighborhoods serviced are not random and any unfair profitability of these routes should be investigated.

LSC

Changes to the LSC law that this Board and other advocates championed should be examined. Analysis by Board President Shi, while at Raise Your Hand, found a large number of vacancies. My analysis of his data and additional records from CPS found LSC vacancies disproportionately occurred in schools that served low-income and Black and Brown students. The law was reformed and nothing changed. The systemic racial and economic disparities persist because, as I warned, the incentives to silence Black and Brown voices has not changed. This is a failure and needs to be fixed.