



Oppose SB3183: Principal Evaluation Reduce the power of LSCs to remove principals

Local School Councils (LSCs) are elected bodies made up of parents, teachers, community members, students, staff, and the principal at Chicago Public Schools. They are afforded a small number of core powers including budgetary oversight, approval of the school's plan for improvement, and the selection, review and renewal or non-renewal of a principal's contract.

This bill seeks to reduce the current authority LSCs have to not renew a principal's four year contract with the school, thereby diminishing the single most important power LSCs have in shaping the direction of their schools. It would increase the already extensive influence of CPS in retaining principals and codifies that influence in statute.

What does the bill specify?

- The amended version of the bill currently proposed would require that at least 65% of LSC members would need to vote against renewing a principal's contract if either the current or previous LSC had rated the principal as proficient or excellent. In practice this would actually require anywhere from 67% to 75% of members depending on the number of voting members.

Why is this problematic?

- **Unnecessary Protections:** There have been **only 11 cases of principal non-renewal since 2010**, this bill is a solution for a non-existent problem.
- **Undercuts Democracy:** LSC members are elected for 2-year terms and if they fail to meet the standards or goals of the community, a new set of LSC members can be elected. A major reason the community might choose to elect a new LSC is that a previous one failed to take school community input into account in principal reviews and contracts.
- **Reduces LSCs power:** Local School Councils are the **only elected bodies within CPS** and are made up of voices from all parts of the school community. The strongest power they are afforded is discretion in selecting a principal and renewing their contract. Reducing that power effectively waters down the LSC's ability to enact change.
- **Improperly extends CPS power over community needs:** CPS already sets the rules when it comes to principal evaluation, including LSC evaluation of principals; about half of a principal's evaluation by the LSC is dependent on metrics set by CPS Central Office. This evaluation is checked only by LSCs ability to renew or reject a principal. This bill would limit this ability further—based on the very evaluations CPS already dictates.
- **Reduces administrator accountability:** Under the current system, a principal has a strong incentive to act upon the guidelines provided by the LSC or face the possibility of contract non-renewal. They are already afforded the considerable stability of a 4-year contract, ample time to implement policy and prove their worth.
- **Provides contract protection in statute:** Unlike in the case of CPS teachers, where they must collectively bargain for their protections at the end of a contract, this bill would entrench protections for sitting principals in statute. This is a uniquely high bar to changes in the future.
- **Requires revealing confidential information:** The particular rating a principal receives is not publicly released as it is confidential personnel information. Requiring a certain voting threshold dependent upon that rating would require making that confidential information public.