



Why Did the IL State Board of Ed Take Over CPS Special Ed? What Does It Mean For You?

Here is what you need to know:

- Last fall [WBEZ aired a 3 part report](#) on its investigation of Special Education practices in CPS. WBEZ's findings confirmed that CPS had instituted policies and procedures that violated the laws governing Special Education, and that as a result students were not receiving services for which they were eligible. Google "WBEZ CPS Secretly Overhauled Special Education" to read WBEZ's report.
- Last November, a group of Special Education advocates and attorneys wrote an open letter to the ISBE (IL State Board of Education) requesting an investigation into Special Education in CPS. See the Advocates' letter at: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Open-Letter-to-ISBE-Board.pdf>.
- In December, ISBE agreed that an investigation was warranted. ISBE conducted a [Public Inquiry into Special Education in CPS](#) in February and March 2018. See all the information pertaining to the Inquiry at: <https://www.isbe.net/publicinquiry>
- In April the Inquiry found that CPS did indeed violate Special Ed. laws during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. Read the report of the findings at: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Public_Inquiry_Final_Report.pdf
In summary, CPS's violation of Federal Special Ed. Law (IDEA) affected Special Ed. services in several ways including:
IEP Meetings: Parents were not provided with the opportunity to participate as equal members on IEP Teams.
Transportation: Busing services were denied to or withdrawn from some students who qualified to receive them.
Education and Related Services: Because CPS did not provide every school with enough money, many schools could not fund enough Special Ed. teachers or paraprofessionals. As a result many students did not receive their IEP services.
Paraprofessional (SECA) Support: Due to issues with CPS's computerized IEP system, paperwork requirements and other policies, paraprofessional support was denied to or withdrawn from some students who qualified to receive it.
Summer School: ESY services were denied to or withdrawn from some students who qualified to receive them.
- In May, the ISBE approved the Corrective Actions recommended by its attorney based on the Inquiry findings. See the Corrective Action report at: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Corrective-Action-Report.pdf>
In summary ISBE is requiring that the following actions be taken:
Staff Training: One reason that these violations were system-wide is that CPS trained its employees to follow policies and procedures that were against the law and violated students' rights. ISBE is requiring that every CPS employee receive proper training. See the powerpoint for the training at: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ISBE-CPS-Teacher-Training-201808.pdf>
Parent Resources: In accordance with the ISBE Remedies:
 - ISBE is updating it's Parent Guide. See the current version at: <https://www.isbe.net/pages/special-education-parent-rights.aspx>
 - ISBE and CPS are developing a "parent-friendly" Procedural Manual reference sheet, and a Parent FAQ document which will be forthcoming.
 - A district wide Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) has formed. Contact: cpssepac@gmail.com for information about the PAC, upcoming meetings, etc.
 - ODLSS (Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services) Parent Trainings: Find info about Parent Trainings at: https://parentu.enschool.org/apps/news/show_news.jsp?REC_ID=536437&id=0**ISBE Monitor:** ISBE has appointed a **Monitor** whose job it is to make sure that CPS complies with the Corrective Actions, and to help identify and resolve Inquiry-related issues at the school level. if you have information about Special Education violations at your school, please contact the Monitor at isbemonitor@isbe.net.
Your name will not be given to your school if you do not want it to be.
Student Specific Corrective Action (Compensatory Education): ISBE is developing a plan for CPS to identify students who were harmed because of the IDEA violations and for those students to be able to get compensatory relief (possibly additional services). ISBE will circulate the details once the Compensatory Education Plan has been developed. Meanwhile, if you believe that your child was harmed by the systemic violations identified in the Public Inquiry please contact the Monitor at isbemonitor@isbe.net.

If you have questions and want to talk to someone about the Inquiry and your child's rights, contact:

Equip for Equality (a free legal aid group) **866-543-7046**; Raise Your Hand info@ilraiseyourhand.org;
Parents 4 Teachers (a free parent advocacy group) info@parents4teachers.net; ISBE Monitor: isbemonitor@isbe.net