

## Chicago Municipal Election 2019: Candidate Questionnaire

1. What do you think the purpose of public education is?

Every child deserves a quality education; it's a tradition going all the way back to the Founding Fathers. Chicago has a moral and legal obligation to give our kids the tools they need to thrive and succeed in life.

2. List your top three priorities for improving public education in Chicago.

My top priorities for public education are:

Repurposing the 50 schools that were closed by CPS and now sit dormant, blighting our neighborhoods. Gery is committed to turning these buildings into community centers, affordable housing, retail, mental health centers, and job training sites.

Creating the largest ever expansion of technical educational opportunities for CPS students. Gery will work with CPS, Chicago Federation of Labor and the Chicago Teachers Union to make this happen. He will open new programs and new schools dedicated to technical and vocational training tracks that lead to apprenticeships, well-paying paying jobs and new opportunities for kids for whom traditional college is not the best option. Four-year universities are not for everyone, and it's time to get serious about providing education alternatives that will still lead to substantial careers.

Hiring more librarians, psychologists and social workers as CPS. Currently, the district has one social worker per 1,238 students – which is five times the recommended level. Gery will also ensure that new social workers are trauma informed experts who are focused on students in Chicago's highest crime neighborhoods.

3. Currently, the mayor appoints the CPS CEO. Would you replace Janice Jackson as CEO of CPS?

No. Dr. Jackson has done a superb job leading CPS in a time of grave crisis and should continue her good work.

4. Explain your plans to deal with school funding inequity and inadequacy in Chicago.

I intend to work with the state of Illinois to fund schools at the recommended per-pupil funding level. I will also push for the state to assume all CPS pension obligations, as it does for all other school districts.

5. CPS recently released a report on facilities that uses their school ratings to label schools and regions as having “quality” seats. Illinois now also has a school rating system. Why should CPS have its own rating system? Is the current method of rating schools useful? Would you ask the Chicago Board of Education to modify or get rid of the CPS rating policy? What role should standardized test scores have in evaluating schools?

I am interested in the reevaluation of ratings policies at CPS, including the role of standardized testing. I would work with CTU and specialists in the field to ensure that school ratings are informative and constructive.

6. Under what circumstances and via what process should or could a public school be closed, if ever?

Schools should not be closed without a process to repurpose former school sites into community centers that continue to serve our neighborhoods.

7. Should Chicago have a fully elected representative school board? If so, when should an elected representative board be put into place? What policies or structures are needed to ensure that an elected board is truly representative across geography, race, class, and stakeholder constituencies (parents, teachers, etc)?

I will empower parents to elect 7 school board members out of a total of 15. Doing so will allow parents’ voices to be clearly heard while also ensuring special interests do not buy elections for their candidates. The mayor will still be accountable for fixing our schools and providing every child a top quality education.

8. Until an elected school board is put in place, the next mayor will be responsible for appointing the Board of Education and the CEO of Chicago Public Schools. What criteria will you use to evaluate potential board members?

I believe all involved and informed stakeholders should be considered for board members, including CTU, groups such as Raise Your Hand and subject matter experts such as Diane Ravitch

9. Recently, the Illinois State Board of Education conducted an investigation of CPS special ed programs and found CPS wrongly cut and denied services to special education students in several areas. ISBE has placed a monitor in charge of CPS special ed department for three years and formed a Special Education Parent Advisory Council. What more, if anything, should CPS be required to do to ensure that special education students are getting all of the services they need?

I will partner with the State's Independent Monitor that oversees CPS Special Education so that the kids most in need receive the support and services they deserve. Eventually, CPS must be "best in class" for special education services and require no monitor.

10. Does the system of selective enrollment schools where student admissions are based on standardized test scores help or harm CPS students? Why?

I believe neighborhood schools are the anchor of the community. If your local school is thriving, your neighborhood is thriving. I will fight for capital money in Springfield to modernize and renovate schools in every neighborhood. I will also use TIF surpluses to fund the construction of new schools.

11. Chicago's school facility decisions over the last eight years have in many cases exacerbated segregation by race in CPS rather than lessened it. What policies and programs would you carry out to increase integration in CPS?

I will work to get parents to opt into CPS schools as CPS says it has over 150,000 empty seats and more than 60,000 seats in the highest performing schools. I will give parents choices to send their children to the 60,000 student vacancies in the highest performing schools.

12. Research shows that charter schools: have no better education outcomes than regular public schools; drain resources from neighborhood public schools and do not support the professionalization of teachers. In what way would these research findings inform your decisions about the existence of charter schools in Chicago?

I will keep the current cap on new charters in place and ensuring charter schools are held to the same standards as neighborhood schools, recognizing that more than 60,000 students attend charters.

13. Illinois' recently created a neo-voucher program, the Invest In Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program. It is set to sunset in 2023. Do you support tax credit scholarships or vouchers? If not, as mayor, how would you use your power and influence in Springfield to mitigate the harm that this program that drains funds from public schools to private schools causes to the public school system?

I do not support vouchers. Parents need to opt in to the 150,000 empty seats at CPS, 60,000 of them in the highest performing schools.

14. Educational software collects ever larger amounts of personally-identifiable data about students and families. What rights do families have if they do not wish to hand over sensitive personal data in order to participate in school curriculum, programs and services?

No family should be forced into mass data collection; there are far too many data breaches and misuse of personal data. I will enact strict opt out policies regarding personal data at CPS.

15. In the aftermath of CPS sexual abuse violations, a CPS Office of Student Protection and Title IX was created to respond to allegations of sex abuse and bullying in schools. Are you satisfied with this solution? Are you satisfied with CPS communication to the public about changes they have implemented to improve sexual abuse and bullying response? Should the Mayor's Office or City Council hold further investigations into this scandal?

I will increase due diligence in staff and teacher hires to ensure that no one who victimizes or hurts children is in the classroom.

16. Give three examples of the policies, resources or best practices you would implement as mayor to retain excellent teachers and attract new ones to CPS.

Working with the Chicago Teachers Union to encourage greater utilization of their professional development programs.

Investing in principal and school leadership development programs, including principal training and residency programs, to ensure that every Chicago Public School has a high-quality principal that every student, teacher, and family deserve. While teachers have the most direct impact in

the classroom, research makes clear that high-quality leadership creates the conditions for improving instruction.

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