

# GENERATION ALL STATEMENT AT THE JULY 2018 CPS BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

BY ROSARIO ALEXIOS MOORE ON JULY 30, 2018

## Statement to the Chicago Board of Education, July 25, 2018

Good afternoon. My name is Beatriz Ponce de Leon. I'm the executive director of Generation All. We work to expand equity in education by supporting, investing in and advocating for neighborhood public high schools and their students.

Imagine that you've been in an accident. You're injured so you make your way to the emergency room. The room is filled with people with a variety of injuries, from minor to life threatening. You search for a triage room. There is none. You wait. You wonder. A nurse finally opens a door and calls the name of a young man who seems to have stubbed his toe. Before she can shut the door, you rush up to tell her you're hurt too. You're bleeding!

"When will I get to see the doctor?" You ask.

"I have no idea," she answers. "But have you tried contacting your alderman?"

This analogy illustrates the way in which CPS addresses facility repairs and capital planning. Building assessments have not yet been updated, and from the public's perspective there is no clear process through which repairs get prioritized. Why does Whitney Young get their bathrooms remodeled while the students at Crane don't have adequate heating? CPS needs to set up a transparent, rational, and equitable system for facilities and capital planning, one that doesn't include the kinds of politicking that will inevitably reproduce inequities, and that does include meaningful public engagement.

According to CPS there is 1.9 billion in unmet critical facilities repairs. And yet CPS proposes to build new schools. Why build a new high school, for example, on the far Northwest Side when Steinmetz and

Schurz are both strong schools, but under-utilized? And when redrawing boundaries would be an opportunity for more racially and socioeconomically integrated schools?

The cost of building a new high school: 75 million dollars. The cost of changing attendance boundaries: 0

CPS recently announced its intention to build a new West Loop High School. Again, why not work instead to proactively draw West Loop families into the Wells HS community. Wells is doing well and just received a \$3 million dollar sports field. Similarly, why displace NTA students for a new high school in the South Loop instead of re-imagining nearby Dunbar or Phillips with local residents and current students as the school of choice for the area and investing in their collective vision?

Simply responding to the demands of wealthier communities will inevitably lead to more segregation and inequity.

We applaud the upgrades to Hyde Park, Senn, and Washington HS, and the new science labs for many of our neighborhood public high schools. But we are concerned about the lack of rational planning, the absence of any meaningful and legitimate public engagement, and the overall absence of transparency in the planning and budgeting process.

We urge the board to delay the vote on the budget until there is a clear explanation of how facilities improvements and capital investments are prioritized and there is additional and legitimate public engagement so that the budget is more equitable.