

# AN OPEN LETTER TO CPS ON THE SINGLE APPLICATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL

JULY 14, 2017

CPS parents, teachers, and counselors,

Below is a letter regarding the new single application for high school. If you share these concerns, please sign on to the letter [here](#).

To learn more, attend our public forum on Thursday, July 20, 2017 at Benito Juarez Community Academy from 6-7:30pm to hear about the concerns around the new application process. You can register and find more details [here](#).

You can also sign up to attend or speak at the CPS Board meeting on Wednesday, July 26th to ask CPS your questions. You can find sign-up information here: <http://www.cpsboe.org/meetings>

To the members of the Chicago Board of Education, Forrest Claypool, and Janice Jackson:

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has rolled out its new high school application process with the expressed aim to simplify the previously complicated system. While the new GoCPS application appears to be streamlined, we do not know what kind of impact the process will have on students, schools, or communities. Parents and students are facing an application deadline this fall without a full understanding of how the process works and how common enrollment will limit their choices.

Parents and students absolutely deserve an improved way to choose a high school, but the new GoCPS process leaves many unanswered questions. The results of similar high school application process

changes in New York City have not increased equity of access to great schools, but instead have reinforced patterns of socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic segregation.

In addition, the new process was rolled out without adequate time for questions to be answered at the end of the 2016-2017 school year before students and staff went on summer break. This spring, CPS counselors were directed by CPS to rush students into a new application process that they do not fully understand. This is resulting in families unsure of how best to prepare for the high school selection process and school staff inadequately prepared to support them.

We, the undersigned, recommend that Chicago Public Schools address the following concerns in order to support Chicago's students and neighborhood high schools.

#### 1. **INCLUSIVITY**

- CPS should fully involve students, parents, school staff and community members in a public **engagement process** that addresses the implementation and the impact of the new application. Those most affected by the process deserve for their voices to be heard.

#### 2. **TRANSPARENCY**

- CPS should **release the algorithm** used to match applying students to their single high school option. Students and parents deserve full details of how matches are made.
- CPS should share **projections** of how they anticipate this new process will impact students and high school enrollment patterns. CPS should make public any data that shows how the new policy will impact school segregation and the citywide facilities plan.
- CPS should provide assurances that Schoolmint, the company creating CPS's enrollment software, will not sell or use student data for other purposes.

### 3. EQUITY

- CPS should prioritize **neighborhood public high schools**. This means investing in them and promoting them to demonstrate that they are exciting, high quality options for students. This will vary by school and includes:
  - Making a significant and sustained investment in facilities, programs, and staff.
  - Providing marketing and communications resources, as well as reasonable counselor workloads, so that schools can compete in student recruitment.
  - Reversing budget cuts and suspending policies that undermine district-run high schools.

#### Related Reading:

Ali, T., & Wilson, A. V. (2017, June 19). Less than 25 percent of Chicago kids go to 'neighborhood high schools'. *DNAinfo Chicago*. Retrieved from

<https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20170619/englewood/chicago-public-schools-neighborhood-high-school-enrollment-attendance-charter>

Generation All. (2017, February 1). *WILL A SINGLE APPLICATION FOR HIGH SCHOOLS HELP EXPAND EQUITY IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS?* (Publication). Retrieved

<http://www.generationallchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Generation-All-Single-HS-Application-Issue-Brief-FINAL.pdf>

Harris, E. A., & Fessenden, F. (2017, May 5). The broken promises of choice in New York City schools.

*The New York Times*. Retrieved from

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/05/nyregion/school-choice-new-york-city-high-school-admissions.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/05/nyregion/school-choice-new-york-city-high-school-admissions.html?_r=0)

Perez, J., Jr. (2017, April 26). CPS board set to transform high school application process. *Chicago*

*Tribune*. Retrieved from

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-chicago-high-school-application-met-20170426-story.html>