

June 18, 2018

Dear CPS Parents and Families,

As part of our efforts to strengthen our approach to keeping children safe, we are partnering with the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center to support students and help prevent sexual abuse. Our new partnership will help create safer and more responsive school environments by training Chicago Public Schools (CPS) employees on signs of abuse, connecting students with therapeutic resources, and leveraging additional partnerships to help protect Chicago's students.

Nothing is more important to CPS than keeping your children safe. While we have continuously strengthened critical protections in recent years, we are committed to doing everything possible to create safe and supportive school environments, and providing you with regular updates as we move forward with the comprehensive Plan of Action (bit.ly/cpsplanofaction) to better protect students.

We are also taking a look at the whole system to ensure we're supporting students effectively. Assistant U.S. Attorney and Illinois Executive Inspector General Maggie Hickey is conducting a top-to-bottom review of district policies and procedures to identify any other issues that need to be addressed. We expect that Ms. Hickey will release a preliminary set of recommendations in August, and we will work closely with her to implement them throughout the summer.

We also recently announced additional steps to strengthen investigations, background checks, Board policies, and communication with families:

- Before school begins in the fall, all adults who regularly work in schools – including CPS employees, coaches, volunteers, and vendors – will go through a re-check of their background to ensure they will contribute to a safe school environment. The background re-checks that occur over the summer will guarantee that all current staff, vendors, coaches, and regular volunteers are evaluated through the stringent process that has been in place since 2012. Moving forward, CPS will periodically re-check all employees to ensure the district has the most up-to-date information about any new arrests or convictions.
- The district will transfer the responsibility of investigating allegations of sexual abuse from the Law Department to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to ensure that these cases are investigated in a way that eliminates any perceived conflict of interest.

- In addition to handling the investigation of all allegations of student sexual abuse going forward, we've asked the OIG to review all sexual abuse cases involving students since at least 2000 and further back, as the cases warrant, to ensure victims receive proper support and any inappropriate actions by current staff are addressed. We will take any additional action necessary.
- We launched cps.edu/ProtectingStudents to help families locate resources and stay updated on the district's comprehensive effort to safeguard students.
- At the Board of Education's June 27 meeting, the Board will consider a new policy that will require all employees to report signs of predatory behavior, and not just suspected abuse. If approved, the policy would also require the reporting of grooming behaviors, a sign of potential future predatory acts, and inappropriately intimate relationships between staff and students.

We believe that these important steps will help address longstanding problems in the district and begin to create a safer school district. We will not rest until we've done everything possible to safeguard your children, and we will continue to keep you updated as our work continues.

Sincerely,



Frank M. Clark
President
Chicago Board of Education



Janice K. Jackson, EdD
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools