

CPS has identified 4% of its total enrollment as homeless, with almost 18,000 homeless and doubled-up students identified this school year. It's common for students experiencing homelessness to encounter a multitude of barriers that prevent them from being able to obtain the same education as their peers. How would you help students experiencing homelessness?



BILL DALEY

"My plan to cut CPS bureaucracy by merging it with the City Colleges will bring savings that can then be funneled down to individual schools. This means more counselors, nurses and social workers who can identify the needs of homeless students and work together to address them. I have also proposed to reform how our school councils operate, which I believe could contribute to a better assessment of neighborhood-level issues, such as homelessness. Under my proposal, local school councils would become neighborhood school councils, responsible for 8-10 schools instead of one. Neighborhoods will be better able to coordinate resources to address difficult neighborhood challenges like supporting homeless students that individual schools might not be able to handle."



AMARA ENYA

"Our campaign recognizes that our city needs to invest in ALL students, from all walks of life, and not leave anyone, especially our homeless population, behind. This means more mental health and addiction counseling resources in schools, increasing the number of pilot programs for family job training opportunities, continuing and expanding the paid mayoral summer internship program so that students can stay engaged and motivated, and reforming the Tax Increment Financing Fund program so that historically marginalized schools on the South and West Sides of the city are not starved of the resources they need to educate our kids."



LASHAWN FORD

"As a teacher in CPS for 6 years, I could tell when a student was struggling, and it was often not because of the academics but because of something going on outside of school. Both parents and students who are experiencing homelessness need social service support at their school, and before and after school in their community, and instead of cutting the social service support within CPS, we must enhance it so students can thrive. More supportive housing is needed for unaccompanied youth. I voted for and strongly supported legislation in the 98th General Assembly that allows unaccompanied minors ages 14 to 18 to be able to consent to their own routine medical care. Working with university students, in the 99th General Assembly I introduced and passed a House Resolution which urges the boards of trustees of every public university in Illinois to provide housing scholarships to college students who are registered as homeless. I also envision and will incentivize public-private partnerships where basic needs such as food, clothing and transportation are met for families and students experiencing homelessness. It is only by helping those most in need that our whole city will thrive."



LORI LIGHTFOOT

"CPS must expand the Community Schools Initiative. In 2002, CPS adopted the Community Schools Model, where a school contracts with a non-profit to transform the school into a community center that meets many of the needs of students and adults in that community. Those agencies engage individual neighborhoods in a participatory manner to identify specific services and programs that a community lacks, such as health clinics, job training, English as a second language classes, nutrition services, day care, and before- and after-school programs. Next, the non-profit works with the city and social service providers to co-locate and operate these services within neighborhood school buildings.

There are currently 200 community schools and 20 non-profit partners district wide. Community schools are open in the morning, afternoon, evening, and during the summer, and are able to provide for or connect family members to a range of services to support their well-being.

The Chicago Teachers Union built upon on the existing CPS community school model with the creation of the 'sustainable community schools pilot initiative.' This expanded model includes an infusion of needed supports during and after the school day such as medical and mental health services, peer mentor and home visitor programs, clinical services, trauma interventions, and expanded after school programs. As mayor, I will fund an evaluation of the two models to understand how best to replicate the model moving forward and I will ensure continued funding for all community schools, with the goal of transforming as many CPS schools as practical into community schools.

In addition, as set forth in my education plan, I would expand trauma-informed instruction and mental health services in CPS. Fifty percent of all mental illnesses start by age 14. In urban areas, between 50 and 96% of all students may be experiencing trauma. CPS is no exception. Given that students and teachers are living in and working in trauma, and mental illness often starts in middle school, we must equip our schools accordingly – by providing trauma-informed instruction, providing coaching, training and support to teachers, and by providing mental health instruction and services in schools."



SUSANA MENDOZA

"The concept behind my 50NEW Initiative is a full commitment to the community school model, including wraparound services available to children and their families in the school. I will encourage the development of innovative solutions to closing student achievement gaps through the Initiative. For example, in recent years, some schools have found that installing washers and dryers at school can increase attendance by giving kids access to clean clothes.

Solutions like these that would be particularly impactful for students experiencing homelessness would be at the core of my 50NEW Initiative. I will also work to make sure that Chicago Public Schools increases support for homeless youth through its Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) program, enhances training for school-based liaisons, and provides specialized resources for students in a housing crisis. I will follow closely the success of these programs to reduce student homelessness and retarget resources each year to address the areas where there is the most need."



TONI PRECKWINKLE

"Chicago Public Schools need additional resources to ensure that every neighborhood has a well-resourced public school that can meet the needs of the students it serves. This includes children whose families are homeless and are more dependent on resources the school provides. We need to invest in critical support staff, like nurses, social workers, counselors and teachers aids, to better serve all students, especially students with physical or mental health needs. I have committed to a moratorium on school closings, which negatively impact the educational futures of students and reflect a withdrawal of public support in communities already sorely lacking in investment, which also affects the homeless population.

CPS has created a Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) department to help service CPS students experiencing homelessness. I would work with this department and implement their recommendations so students in challenging situations can still rely on their neighborhood school as a safe place."



WILLIE WILSON

"Homeless children are a heartbreaking problem that calls for a comprehensive plan that includes the resources of DCFS and our homeless team to come together to solve. We must make sure the children have a proper parental guardian, not just a place to sleep."