

## **A Better Chicago: Reinvesting in Public Education**

The best investment our city can make is in our young people. During the past decade, Chicago has lost population and has seen the enrollment at CPS decline. People want to live where there are great schools, both for the quality of their children's education and the health and vibrancy of their neighborhood.

Toni Preckwinkle will reinvest in Chicago Public Schools, ensuring that every child has access to a high quality education in their local, neighborhood school. Great schools will help revive our city, attracting new residents and growing our population and economy in every neighborhood. Not enough of our city's children are receiving a high quality education. Chicago must ensure that what's possible for some of our children is the reality for all of Chicago's children.

**As mayor, I commit to a vision of our education system that values, listens, and represents the students and families of Chicago.**

### **Fighting for an Elected School Board**

Feeling valued goes hand in hand with being heard. Currently, Chicago Public Schools has the only appointed school board in Illinois. That means that the Chicago Board of Education answers only to the Mayor and has no direct accountability to the communities, students, and educators it is supposed to serve. Toni supports an elected school board for Chicago Public Schools to make sure that every family in Chicago has a voice in the direction and future of their child's education.

Over the course of the last 23 years, too often, the Mayor's appointed board has failed the residents and students of our city. It skipped a decade of pension payments, granted bloated and ineffective no-bid contracts, and presided over multiple scandal-plagued administrations. The Board's mismanagement has led to pulling resources out of the classroom and away from the students. Currently CPS is unable to provide adequate support for students with special needs and cannot fix crumbling infrastructure. The path forward must include reinvestment in our schools in conjunction with transferring more decision-making power to those who are most directly affected and know best what our priorities should be. Toni will support a fully elected school board, with a structure that ensures the board is truly representative of the rich and diverse fabric of our great city and limits the influence of outside interests in the election process. Toni is committed to using the full power of the Mayor's office to secure the finances of CPS so that the newly elected board will have the ability to properly guide the future of our schools.

### **Stopping School Closures & Fighting for Our Neighborhoods**

When we close a neighborhood school, we are not simply reallocating the budget or finding efficiencies— we are withdrawing public support from communities that already lack critical resources and investment. It's no surprise that studies have shown that school closings actually

widen the achievement gap between Black and white students<sup>1</sup>. Toni believes that it's not enough to promise a temporary moratorium on school closings - we need to secure a long-term funding resource to help us make real investments in the schools that have been chronically underfunded. Toni also believes we need to bring communities together with public and private partners to repurpose previously closed schools to address other community needs like recreational space, youth enrichment, and senior services.

We often say that Chicago is a city of neighborhoods. Therefore to be a great city, Chicago must make sure all of its neighborhoods are thriving. That starts with a strong neighborhood school. While Chicago Public Schools has done a good job at creating high quality special-enrollment schools in different parts of the city, it must work harder to ensure that every parent also has the choice of a high-quality, well-resourced school in their neighborhood. School closings have eliminated that choice for too many parents and Toni will work to reverse that trend. As mayor, Toni will make sure that every student in Chicago is invested in and valued.

### **Fairly and Equitably Resourcing Our Schools**

The state's new formula aims to reduce the inequities in how we fund education and ensures that every child has the basic resources necessary for success. And recent changes have improved the fiscal outlook at CPS from a few years ago. However, in order to fully fund education, Illinois needs to add an additional \$7 billion to its education budget. The new bill only commits to adding half of that over the course of the next 10 years. Without additional revenue, Illinois will be unable to live up its commitment to Chicago's students. That's why Toni supports a tax reform package that includes real progressive revenue, including dedicating yearly TIF surplus specifically to public schools.

### **Ending Education Privatization through Charter Schools**

Under previous administrations, corporate privatization of our public schools expanded with negative results, from shoddy janitorial services to profiteering charter school corporations. While some charter schools are doing good work for our students, too many are engaging in troubling disciplinary practices and marginalizing special needs students while paying their CEOs up to 10 times their teachers. Toni believes it is time to stop the expansion and focus our efforts on improving oversight and ensuring that all our schools treat families, students and teachers with respect. Toni will fight for the adoption of a fully elected representative school board and support a freeze on any new charters until that new board is elected.

### **Educating the Whole Child & Keeping Them Safe**

For many students, educational success can only be achieved with robust support both inside and outside of the classroom. Chicago Public Schools must invest in nurses, social workers, and critical support staff, such as teacher's aids, to better serve all students, especially those with physical and mental health needs. More counselors are needed to serve the significant number of students who experience violence in their neighborhoods and families, and school

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<sup>1</sup> UChicago Consortium on School Research. *School Closings in Chicago*. May 2018. <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/School%20Closings%20in%20Chicago-May2018-Consortium.pdf>

leadership must do a better job at protecting students from any form of physical or sexual abuse at school. No child should be afraid to learn. This is another reason why Toni supports changes in the TIF program to dedicate yearly surplus to public schools. For example, a portion of this money could go to expanding the Sustainable Community Schools program that gives communities the opportunity to collaborate on programs to meet specific community and student challenges and create safe spaces within schools. It's not just enough to fund positions - our city must ensure consistency of care and quality wrap around services.