



DRAFT TRANSITION PLAN For the Proposed Closure of William Rainey Harper High School

I. Introduction

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is committed to providing every child from every community with a high quality education that prepares them for success in college and in life. CPS students continue to make record-breaking academic progress in every part of the city. Our vision is that all CPS schools can build on this progress by offering high quality, rigorous instruction from talented educators that help put Chicago students on a path to lasting success.

Under-enrolled schools face challenges in providing a well-rounded education for their students, particularly in offering robust program options for students and recruiting staff. In turn, this makes it difficult to provide the high school experience that students deserve.

The Englewood community has recognized that these challenges are taking place in four existing neighborhood schools: Hope, Harper, Robeson and TEAM Englewood. Over the past 10 years, each of these schools have seen declines in enrollment of 70 to 85 percent, with current enrollment between 90 and 135 students at each school. At William Rainey Harper High School (Harper), 1,301 students were enrolled in the fall of 2006 while 133 students were enrolled in fall of 2017. As a result of these trends, the Englewood Community Action Council (CAC) recommended that CPS create a state-of-the-art neighborhood high school in Englewood and consolidate existing neighborhood high schools in Englewood. In turn, in June 2017, CPS followed through on the recommendation by formally proposing an investment to create a state-of-the-art neighborhood high school, now worth \$85 million.

Following the Englewood CAC's recommendation, CPS also formed a Community Leadership Steering Committee to work through the details of this proposal, including planning for the new high school and developing a plan for the current Englewood high schools and students. Over multiple meetings between the Steering Committee and CPS leadership as well as tours of the existing Englewood high schools, a variety of options were considered for the current Englewood high schools, including closure and multi-year phase outs. Ultimately, a vote was taken on two options and the majority vote of the Steering Committee was to close the high schools, including Harper, at the end of 2017-18 school year and provide robust, individualized support to transition current students to other higher performing high schools that are a good match for their needs.

The rationale for this action includes the following:

- If the high schools were to phase out over several years, the problems associated with declining enrollment would continue and the risk of diminished programs and staffing challenges would increase, potentially worsening educational opportunities for students.
- If the high schools were to phase out and certain students wanted to transfer before school closure, they would not be eligible to play sports the year they transfer as per the guidelines of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA), which governs participation in sports in the state.

- More than 90 percent of students who currently live in Englewood now choose to attend non-neighborhood high schools
- With the right individualized transition supports, students from Harper could have a better high school experience, be better prepared to graduate high school and better prepared for college and career.

The proposed closure of Harper meets the criteria of the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Actions (Guidelines) because it is a proposal requested by community members. Specifically, we have heard the request for this proposal from the Englewood Community Action Council and at a meeting of the Englewood Community Leadership Steering Committee in calendar year 2017.

II. Summary of Action

Harper is a neighborhood high school located at 6520 S Wood St. in the Englewood neighborhood and CPS' Network 11. Harper currently serves 133 students in grades 9-12. CPS is proposing to close Harper High School at the end of this school year (school year 2017-2018), effective June 2018.

As a result of this action, all current students and families at Harper will receive significant enrollment support to choose the school that they will attend in the following school year, based on their individual educational needs and priorities (see Section IV. Enrollment Support below). As part of this process, every student will be given numerous options and individualized attention in order to attend a higher performing school based on the School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP).

CPS has set aside approximately \$8.3 million over the next 3 ½ years to support the transition of students from the four proposed closure schools (Harper, Hope, Robeson, Team Englewood) to new schools. Beginning in January 2018, principals at Harper, Hope, Robeson and Team Englewood will work to implement the principles set out in the transition plan outlined below.

Starting in the fall of 2018, each school welcoming students from these four high schools will also follow a plan for providing additional supports for these students, funded by CPS. Funds will be in place through the spring semester of the 2020-21 school year, when the current students from all four Englewood high schools will graduate.

For students who desire to attend a neighborhood high school, a neighborhood high school designation will also be assigned. Starting in the fall of 2018, the northern portion (north of 67th Street) of the geographic boundary currently assigned to Harper HS will be assigned to Gage Park HS and the southern portion (south of 67th Street) will be assigned to Bogan HS.

The transition plan outlined below summarizes what will be provided by CPS for transitioning Englewood students to ensure a smooth transition. We have separated the transition plan based on supports that will be provided to transitioning students before the fall of 2018 (i.e. before students transition to a different school) and ongoing supports that will be provided from fall 2018 through Spring 2021 (i.e. after students transition to a different school). Throughout this plan, we will be offering answers to key questions and considerations that parents and community members raised throughout the community engagement process CPS held earlier this year. We expect to provide additional information as transition plans are finalized in partnership with the community and school administrations.

III. Transition Supports Before Fall 2018:

Transition Teams

CPS will fund additional staff to support students with individualized academic and safety plans as they transition from their current school to a different school. The team will consist of several key positions including:

- **Principal Transition Coordinator:** The Principal Transition Coordinator (PTC) will be responsible for overseeing the transition team and transition supports for current students from Harper. The PTC will be responsible for holding all members of the transition team accountable for achieving key milestones along each student's transition (i.e. choosing the school each student will transition to, preparing an academic plan and preparing a safety plan). The PTC will also be responsible for overseeing administrative needs such as transferring all student records. In addition, the PTC will provide support to administrators and school staff at transition schools to ensure they are prepared to welcome transitioning students. Principal Transition Coordinators will be former or current CPS Principals.
- **School-Based Transition Coordinators:** The School-Based Transition Coordinators will be the central point of contact for Harper students and their families. In the spring of 2018, CPS will provide this additional staffing capacity to support current school counselors to meet with students to create individualized transition plans, including choosing a transition school, creating academic readiness plans and safety plans, as well as ensuring each student is supported by coordinating with staff at transition schools.
- **Student Outreach and Re-engagement Center (SOAR):** Before students transition to their new schools, CPS SOAR Center staff will play a role in supporting students who have dropped out, do not consistently attend school or are significantly behind in obtaining credits. They will be focused on supporting students in enrolling and attending a transition school. In the 2018-19 school year, the SOAR Center will follow up with all transitioning students from Harper High School to track attendance and enrollment and ensure student engagement in learning. Early interventions will be identified for students who demonstrate disengagement.

General Supports for Students and Families

Students in schools undergoing transition will receive a variety of supports, including access to high quality academics, remedial support for literacy and math skills, counseling and social supports and student safety support. CPS' goal is to ensure that students and their families receive access to high quality instruction, understand their rights to available school options and are safe and secure through the transition process.

Supporting Harper Students' School Choices for 2018-19

Recognizing that many families would have applied for other options if they had known their school was going to be affected by school actions, we will assign additional staff to each school in the spring semester to help students determine their preference of transition schools (as detailed above). To support this process, CPS will provide information on open seats and performance at CPS schools to support students and their families in selecting their school. If students choose not to

develop a preference list for transition schools, they will be reassigned to a higher performing neighborhood school. The proposed process and the resources provided may be further customized as feedback is obtained at community meetings and a public hearing regarding this proposal. Additionally, resources may be adjusted to meet the unique needs of affected students if deemed necessary.

Timeline for Supporting Students

- [By January 30] Provide support for students to apply for transfer to selective enrollment schools, where eligible
- [By January 30] Hold informational sessions for students and families to learn about the process and options
- [By February 15] Hold high school fair for transitioning families so they can learn about other high school options
- [By March 15] Hold meetings with each student to identify top 10 schools to transition to; submit preference list
- [By April 15] Students informed about the school they will transition to in the 2018-19 School Year
- [By May 30] Finalize academic readiness plans to prepare for transition
- [By May 30] Finalize safety plans to ensure students travel safely to school
- [By May 30] Provide “academic resumes” for each student to schools those students will transition to in the 2018-19 School Year, so that students’ academic progress is not interrupted and academic needs are met

Support for Families

The Network office will host informational sessions at Harper in the spring. Families who are looking for additional guidance on school options should attend one of these sessions. For families unable to attend the informational sessions, the Network office will conduct office hours to help families navigate the process. Please contact your Network for specific timing.

- Email: Network11@cps.edu
- Phone number: 773-535-8230

Safety and Security

Before the start of the 2017-18 school year, School-Based Transition Coordinators, with support from the Office of Safety and Security and the SOAR team, will be responsible for meeting with each student individually to discuss safety supports and ensure they have an individualized plan to get to and from school safely once they transition to a different school in the fall of 2018.

The section of this transition plan related to the fall of 2018 through 2021 provides additional detailed information on supports for safety and security, based on conversations with community members.

Support for Students’ Social and Emotional Needs

Students will be supported in the transition process through the proactive support of students’ social, emotional and behavioral needs. CPS Office of Social and Emotional Learning (OSEL) will work with school administrations and the community to develop specific plans for schools and

individual students. This will ensure students understand the proposed change and how it will affect them. CPS will also work with school principals, School-Based Transition Coordinators and other school staff to define students' potential needs and develop a plan for supports to address these needs, such as implementing a seminar curriculum to support students as they transition.

Support for Students' Academic Needs

CPS will allocate funds for the upcoming semester to support Harper in providing academic supports to students to best equip them for a smooth transition. These supports will include:

- Additional resources in schools this year to help students prepare academically;
- School-Based Transition Coordinators who will work individually with students to conduct a credit audit and create an academic readiness plan to ensure they are prepared as they transition. During the summer of 2018, based on their academic readiness plans, students will have the opportunity to participate in credit recovery programs to make up credits;
- "Academic resumes" for each student (created by School-Based Transition Coordinators), informed by the academic readiness plan, that will be provided to the school where students transition so that students' academic progress is not interrupted;
- Comprehensive data on all transitioning students to the schools where students transition;
- Monitoring instructional quality through regular visits to closing schools from Network staff to ensure that students continue to progress academically in their classrooms;
- Meetings with school staff at transition schools, including teachers, principals and coaches, before the beginning of the 2018-19 school year (e.g. over the summer).

Support for Specific Students' Needs

Support for Diverse Learners

Students with disabilities and their families will be supported in the transition process by the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) through clear communication, continual support for academic instruction and ensuring that transition schools are fully able to implement students' Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Students with disabilities, as with all students affected by school actions, will receive intensive support to ensure their academic and social-emotional needs are met. Students with disabilities will also receive the following categories of support, adjustable to individual student/family need:

Current students with disabilities will continue to receive the following supports, required by law:

- A free and appropriate public education (FAPE)
- The implementation of the student's IEP in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- A focus on student academic and social emotional progress

In addition, to ensure that instructional quality is maintained, CPS will provide the following support:

- As students move through this process, a district representative from the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) will be assigned to Harper to work with families and students to ensure they are informed about their options and support them throughout the process of transitioning to their new school for the 2018-19 school year. Specifically the district representative will:

- Review all IEPs at Harper and support decision-making on the best school for students in the 2018-19 school year
- To support the transition, ODLSS has appointed a District Representative to serve as the point a contact for all students and families. Harper families can reach their District Representative, Dee Haywood, at dohaywood@cps.edu.

Support for Students in Temporary Living Situations

- The CPS Office of Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) will continue the supports currently provided to Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) as required by law. These include free school meals, enrollment support, provision of required school uniforms and school supplies as needed, transportation assistance when eligible, and waiver of all school-related fees.
- Students in Temporary Living Situations will be encouraged to attend any events in which they can meet with school staff and/or learn about schools where they can transition.
- For those students who had been homeless before the 2018-19 school year, their school of origin will become the first school where enroll in the 2018-19 school year.
- Students in Temporary Living Situations will have the opportunity to meet with STLS staff, in addition to other staff on the Transition Team, to discuss their options, develop academic readiness plans and safety plans to support them throughout the transition period.
- For families currently enrolled in the STLS program, younger siblings may attend the same school that their older sibling elects under this proposed action (assuming the younger and older siblings are both in high school).
- Additionally, CPS will provide professional development and support to staff on providing transition services for STLS students.

Support for English Learners

- Current and future English Language Learners (ELs) will receive state mandated bilingual services (either Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI), as required.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction provided by an ESL-endorsed teacher is part of both programs.
- Meaningful access to the core curriculum is provided to TBE students through native language instruction in the core content (language arts, math, science, and social studies). For TPI students, meaningful access to core curriculum is delivered through sheltered English content instruction and native language supports, based on the individual student's need, and provided by appropriately endorsed (bilingual- or ESL-endorsed) teacher(s).

Support for Students' Transportation Needs

- Provisions for specific student populations (i.e., student with disabilities, Students in Temporary Living Situations and NCLB qualifying students), as determined by the CPS transportation policy, will continue to apply.

IV. Ongoing Transition Supports From Fall 2018 Through Spring 2021

CPS will guarantee the Principal Transition Coordinator position through at least the end of School Year 2018-19, to ensure a smooth transition process through the first transition year. For additional supports, CPS will work with each school welcoming students from Harper to finalize a plan to support transitioning students, including meeting their academic and social-emotional needs. CPS will then provide sufficient funds to fulfill the plans, basing some share of the funding on a proportional calculation of incoming transitional students. These funds will be adjusted each semester, based on the number of transitioning students present at each school in that semester. Each plan will include:

Safety and Security

The CPS Office of Safety & Security has engaged the Englewood community, including the Community Leadership Steering Committee and its members, on transitioning student safety. The Office of Safety & Security will continue to work with Harper and the Englewood community to ensure their safety and security plans are appropriate for this proposed closure and transition of students. These supports may be further customized as feedback is obtained at community meetings and the public hearing for this proposal. Additionally, resources may be adjusted to meet the unique needs of affected students (if deemed necessary).

Safety supports discussed to date include:

- Review existing Safe Passage routes and adjust routes as appropriate based on an assessment of the schools where students will be transitioning;
- Partner with CTA to review potential staging of buses to facilitate safe and smooth dismissals;
- Evaluate transportation support, including distribution of limited-use CTA cards for transitioning students based on their individualized safety plans;
- Review security staffing and adjust staffing as appropriate in schools where students will be transitioning;
- Evaluate security systems and technology in schools where students transition.

Support for Students' Social and Emotional Needs

CPS understands that when students transition into new situations and environments, additional support is needed to help them adjust. CPS and the Office of Social Emotional Learning (OSEL) will consult with schools that receive transitioning Englewood students to evaluate existing SEL supports and determine additional resource needs for a school-specific plan. These plans may include the following:

- Establishing a climate & culture team to lead the planning of school-wide practices to promote positive relationships and a welcoming, supportive and trauma-sensitive school environment;
- Implementing restorative practices (such as talking circles and peer councils) to encourage peer-to-peer problem-solving and resolution;
- Developing behavioral health systems to identify when students have higher levels of social and emotional need, connecting them to targeted interventions and tracking their progress to ensure success;
- Implementing targeted small group supports or circles aimed at helping students work through concerns associated with transition as needed;

- Access to social & emotional or trauma interventions for students who need more individualized attention;
- Developing Student Leadership and Culture-Building Activities to ensure students feel welcome in schools where they transition;
- Ensuring continuity of existing mentorship programs (e.g. BAM and WOW) to serve students throughout the transition process;
- Providing professional development and training opportunities in trauma-sensitive practices, restorative practices, social emotional learning and other relevant topics to staff at schools where students transition.

Support for Students' Academic Needs

The principal and other school leaders at transition schools will receive individualized “academic resumes” for each transitioning student. CPS will provide additional funds for academic supports to schools receiving transitioning students. CPS will work with school leaders to determine how to best allocate these funds in order to provide supports and resources for transitioning students. These supports could include:

- Academic remediation and intervention supports such as tutoring and credit recovery;
- Additional staffing to support students in classrooms.
- Office hours and other opportunities to meet with school principals, administrators and staff

Support for Specific Students' Needs

Support for Diverse Learners

Students with disabilities and their families will be supported in the transition process by the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) through clear communication, continual support for academic instruction and ensuring the schools where students transition are fully able to implement student Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Students with disabilities, as with all students impacted by school actions, will receive intensive support directly after announcement of a proposed school action, to ensure their academic and social-emotional needs are met. Students with disabilities will also receive the following categories of support, adjustable to individual student/family need:

Current students with disabilities will continue to receive the following supports, required by law:

- A free and appropriate public education (FAPE)
- The implementation of the student’s IEP in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- A focus on student academic and social emotional progress

In addition, to ensure that instructional quality is maintained, CPS will additionally provide the following support:

- As students move through this process, a district representative from the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) will be assigned to students transitioning from Harper to work with families and students to ensure they are informed on their options and

support them throughout the process of transitioning to their new school for the 2018-19 school year. Specifically the district representative will:

- Review all IEPs with the school students transition to ensure implementation and provide observations of classrooms when school has started and train staff on specialized equipment for specific student needs

Support for Students in Temporary Living Situations

- The CPS Office of Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) will continue the supports currently provided to Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) as required by law. These include free school meals, enrollment support, provision of required school uniforms and school supplies as needed, transportation assistance when eligible, and waiver of all school related fees;
- Students in Temporary Living Situations will be encouraged to attend any events in which they can meet with school staff and/or learn about schools where they can transition;
- For those students who had been homeless before the 2019-20 school year, their school of origin will become the first school where they enroll for the 2019-20 school year;
- Students in Temporary Living Situations will have the opportunity to meet with STLS staff, in addition to other staff on the Transition Team, to discuss their options, develop academic readiness plans and safety plans to support them throughout the transition period;
- For families currently enrolled in the STLS program, younger siblings may attend the same school that their older sibling elects under this proposed action (assuming the younger and older siblings are both in high school);
- Additionally, CPS will provide professional development and support to staff on providing transition services for STLS students.

Support for English Learners

- Current and future English Language Learners (ELs) will receive state-mandated bilingual services (Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI)), as required;
- English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction provided by an ESL-endorsed teacher is part of both programs;
- Meaningful access to the core curriculum is provided to TBE students through native language instruction in the core content (language arts, math, science, and social studies). For TPI students, meaningful access to core curriculum is delivered through sheltered English content instruction and native language supports, based on the individual student's need, and provided by appropriately endorsed (bilingual- or ESL-endorsed) teacher(s).

Support for Students' Transportation Needs

- Provisions for specific student populations (i.e., student with disabilities, Students in Temporary Living Situations and NCLB qualifying students), as determined by the CPS transportation policy, will continue to apply.

V. Additional Logistical Information

Information Regarding Choice of Schools

CPS is committed to providing educational options that fit each student’s unique learning needs. To support families in understanding their enrollment options, information from the Office of Access & Enrollment is available:

- Online (www.cps.edu or www.cpsoae.edu),
- By email (oea@cps.edu),
- By phone (773-553-2060)
- At an information session to be scheduled at a future date if the Board approves the proposal.

Public Comment

CPS will hold two community meetings and one formal public hearing regarding the proposed closure of Englewood High Schools. Public comment will be accepted during each meeting or hearing. CPS is committed to considering community feedback and will amend this draft transition plan accordingly.

Community Meeting 1

January 10, 2018
6 to 8 p.m.
Kennedy King College
(Great Hall, U Building)
740 W 63 St

Community Meeting 2

January 17, 2018
6 to 8 p.m.
Hamilton Park Fieldhouse
513 W 72nd St

Public Hearing

January 30, 2018
5:30 to 8 p.m.
CPS Central Office
42 West Madison Street

Further Questions and Concerns:

All of this information can be found at CPS.edu/Transitions. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this proposal and the draft transition plan, please call Chicago Public Schools at (773) 553-1500 or email Transitions@cps.edu.