



125 S. Clark Street • Chicago, Illinois 60603 • Phone: (773) 553-1500 • Fax School: (773) 553-1501

Barbara Byrd-Bennett
Chief Executive Officer

DATE: March 21, 2013

Parent or Guardian of a Student at
Dewey Elementary Academy of Fine Arts
5415 S. Union Ave.

Re: **Proposed Reconstitution of Dewey Elementary Academy of Fine Arts**

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), I am committed to ensuring that every child in every neighborhood receives a high-quality education that prepares them to succeed in college, career, and life.

From investments in early childhood education and a full school day to ensuring there are strong principals and teachers in our schools, we are working each and every day towards achieving that goal and doing everything we can to make sure Chicago's children will thrive and succeed.

Part of that is making sure that every child can attend a school that has the supports and resources needed to help every student flourish. To do so requires some very difficult but necessary choices to boost the academic achievement of our kids.

Over the last 5 years, Dewey Elementary Academy of Fine Arts (Dewey) has been on probation and has not made the progress necessary to be removed from probation. This is why we are proposing today, after a very lengthy and thoughtful process, to reconstitute Dewey. In other words, we will make Dewey a "turnaround" school, which will provide your child with the opportunity to access a high-quality education and get on a path to success in the classroom.

As a former teacher and principal, I have lived through the process of turning around low-performing schools and I can assure you that CPS is working to overhaul Dewey in order to create a new culture of success without moving students. The turnaround process brings highly qualified staff who are specially trained to work in academically challenged schools to help meet the specific needs of those schools' children. Turnarounds focus on driving student learning and improving academic achievement immediately.

The results of these turnaround schools in Chicago have been remarkable – for example, the percent of students at elementary turnaround schools that met standards last year improved twice as fast as the CPS district-wide average. We want to provide your child with access to the same opportunities to boost their chance of academic success, which they will receive next school year if this proposal is approved.

Below you will find more information about this proposal and why we are considering Dewey for a turnaround in order to give your child access to a better educational environment.

Our Proposal

We are proposing that Dewey, located at 5415 S. Union Ave. be reconstituted at the end of the current school year in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(d)(4). Dewey has been on probation for the last 5

consecutive years and has failed to make adequate progress to address the deficiencies that placed it on probation. In other words, CPS is proposing to turnaround Dewey based on the school's chronic low academic performance and the need to provide higher quality educational options for students in the community.

If the Board of Education of the City of Chicago (Board) approves the turnaround of Dewey, I will recommend that the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) partner with the Board to provide educational services at the school. AUSL is a Board-approved turnaround provider and the organization has a track record of successfully serving a number of schools across Chicago. I invite you to visit their website at www.ausl-chicago.org or call them at 773-534-0129 to learn more about their approach to teaching students.

Details for Current Students

The turnaround of Dewey will have no effect on the enrollment of any current students or any students eligible to enroll. All current Dewey students will remain enrolled in the school after it is turned around. If you have any questions concerning this proposal, please call 311 (City Services).

Public Comment on this Proposal

A public hearing has been scheduled to receive public comment on the proposal:

Public Hearing

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

5:30pm-7:30pm

CPS Central Office

125 S. Clark St.

I invite you to share your feedback on this proposal at the public hearing. If you wish to comment at the hearing, you must sign up to speak on the day of, at the designated location, beginning one hour before the designated start time and ending one hour after the start of the hearing. You will have two minutes to speak, unless the hearing officer provides an extension. The hearing will conclude at the stated end time or following the comments of the last person who has signed up to speak, whichever occurs first.

After the hearing, I will review a written report from the hearing officer. At that time, I may recommend that the Board consider and approve the reconstitution of Dewey.

In addition to the scheduled public hearing, a community meeting will be scheduled in the coming days.

Further Questions and Concerns:

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call 311 (City Services) or visit www.cps.edu/qualityschools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Byrd-Bennett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'B' and a stylized 'H' at the end.

Barbara Byrd-Bennett
CEO, Chicago Public Schools