



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

Administrators, Faculty, Staff and LSC Members at
Dewey Elementary Academy of Fine Arts
5415 S. Union Ave.

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

Dear Administrators, Faculty, Staff and Local School Council Members:

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 take it off 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 students with the opportunity to access a high-quality education and get on a path to success in the classroom.

As a former teacher and a principal, I have lived through the process of turning around academically challenged schools and I can assure you that CPS has made this decision in an effort to create a culture of success at Dewey in order to give all students the high-quality education they deserve.

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 students 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 per 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 have 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 turn-around provider and the organization has a track record of successfully managing 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.

Details for Administrators, Faculty and Staff Members

If the Board approves this proposal, all current administrators, faculty and staff members assigned to Dewey will be displaced at the end of the 2012-13 school year in accordance with Board policies and any applicable contracts and collective bargaining agreements. You will be supported through this process by the Talent organization. You will receive invitations to participate in future networking and hiring events limited to displaced teachers, and may be encouraged to reapply for your current position as well. If you have human resources questions or concerns, please contact us at (773)553-4748 (HR4U).

CPS has also implemented an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides a safe, confidential environment to access grief counseling during job loss with a trained professional. This service is completely free, absolutely confidential, and available to all employees and members of their households, 24 hours per day and 7 days per week. EAP specialists have masters-level training and a minimum of 3 years of counseling experience.

To access EAP services, which also include mediation, and financial services support, please:

- **Call 1-800-711-6087.** When prompted, press '2' for members. You will be asked for your Member ID and you can say "I don't know it" to proceed. Lastly, please press '1' for EAP [(TDD) Dial 711 and enter number above]; or
- **Visit <http://liveandworkwell.com> online.** Web Access Code: 'CPS'.

Details for Local School Council Members

If the Board approves this proposal, the Local School Council at Dewey will remain intact but certain powers may be impacted, in accordance with any applicable laws and policies. For more information, please contact the Office of Local School Council Relations at (773) 553-1400.

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 hearings, 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, reading "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