

**Transition Plan as of July 12, 2013**  
**For the Delayed Closure of Miriam G. Canter Middle School****I. Introduction**

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is committed to ensuring that every student, in every community, has access to a high-quality, well-rounded education in order to graduate from high school ready to succeed in college, career, and life. From investments in early childhood education and a full school day to ensuring that there are effective principals and teachers in our schools, CPS is doing everything possible to provide Chicago's children with a 21st century education that helps them thrive and succeed. It is our obligation to work every day on behalf of our children's future.

However, our District faces a significant financial challenge, which threatens everything in our system by making it difficult to provide the robust supports and services that all children deserve. Our District's financial crisis has been significantly challenged by underutilization, resulting in financial resources being invested in half-empty buildings that are costly to maintain and repair. CPS has been financing schools and buildings with a capacity for 511,000 students while only serving 403,000 students. This utilization crisis has been spreading our already scarce financial resources much too thin.

To address this crisis, CPS is enacting a plan to address underutilization based on significant input from partners including parents, students, teachers, principals, community and faith leaders, the independent Commission on School Utilization, the Chicago Police Department, and the Department of Family and Support Services. Through these collaborative efforts, CPS' plan represents a new day for Chicago Public Schools, and a fresh start for our students in Fall 2013.

CPS is closing underutilized schools. These actions will enable CPS to maximize resources by supporting a reduced number of school buildings, which will improve our capacity to provide all children with greater access to critical resources and supports such as libraries, technology, playgrounds, nurses, and counselors.

In order to ensure a quality education for students, CPS is closing Miriam G. Canter Middle School (Canter). This decision is based on the underutilization of Canter, in accordance with the [Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Action](#) (Guidelines). This action will welcome returning students at Bret Harte Elementary School (Harte) or William H Ray Elementary School (Ray), which have sufficient space and can offer a quality academic environment.

The transition plan outlined below summarizes the action and identifies the supports that will be provided to impacted students to create a smooth and safe transition process.

**II. Summary of Action**

Canter was a neighborhood elementary school located at 4959 S. Blackstone Ave., in the Burnham Park Elementary Network of CPS. Canter served 228 students in 7th & 8th grades. CPS is closing Canter based on the school's underutilization. The closure meets the criteria of the Guidelines.

As a result of this action, all returning Canter students will be welcomed at Harte, located at 1556 E. 56th St., or Ray, located at 5631 S. Kimbark Ave. Families are also encouraged to pursue other educational options at CPS that best meet their student's learning needs and family priorities. Information about educational options is provided in detail in a

subsequent section of this transition plan. The proposed CPS will make for transitioning students at Canter, Harte, and Ray, as described in this transition plan, will provide students with a supportive learning environment and ease the transition process as much as possible.

The geographic boundary which was associated with Canter will be reassigned to Harte and Ray. This means that Harte or Ray, depending on the student's home address, will be the new neighborhood school for students living in the Canter boundary who are not currently enrolled at Canter.

### **III. Supports for Students and Schools**

CPS is committed to ensuring a successful transition for the 2013-2014 school year. To accomplish this, CPS will provide the following supports to meet the academic, social and emotional, and specific learning needs of transitioning students.

#### ***Academic Needs of Students***

Canter students will be welcomed at Harte or Ray, which are higher performing schools. To ensure Canter students receive high-quality academic instruction throughout the transition, Canter, Harte, and Ray will receive:

- **Principal Transition Coordinator (PTC):** PTCs are former principals, or other administrators with significant experience, who will be a resource to help the principal of Canter maintain academic rigor in the classroom and ensure a smooth transition to Harte or Ray. The PTC will follow students to Harte or Ray to ensure continuity of support for faculty and students.
- **Data Support:** Preparation and planning are key to ensuring the right supports are in place and ready for the beginning of the school year. To help facilitate a smooth transition for all students, CPS will provide Harte and Ray with comprehensive data on all transitioning students. Student-specific data such as test scores, attendance, and grades will enable all school staff to proactively identify and prepare to meet the needs of every student.
- **Network Chief Office Hours:** Network Chiefs, who oversee a geographic network of schools, will set aside dedicated time to discuss concerns and educational options with families and students affected by this action. For specific dates and times, please contact your school or Network office.

Additionally, Canter, Harte, and Ray will receive discretionary resources to provide direct academic support to students. Principals, with local community input, will decide how best to utilize these resources. Selections will be approved by the Network Chief. Options for use include, but are not limited to:

- **Instructional Coach or Teacher Leader:** An instructional coach or teacher leader will ensure instruction quality remains high as students transition so they do not lose any momentum.
- **Academic tutoring resources:** Resources for an academic tutoring position or program in reading and math may be provided.

#### ***Social Emotional Needs of Students***

CPS understands that whenever students transition to a new school, additional support is needed to help them adjust to a new environment. CPS will provide resources and work with schools to design a school-specific program of support which may include items such as:

- **Intervention groups or peace circles** aimed at helping students work through concerns associated with the transition as needed.
- **Implementing restorative practices** (such as peer circles and peer juries) to encourage peer-to-peer problem solving and resolution.

- Access to highly structured interventions for smaller groups of students in need of more individualized attention.
- Student Leadership and Culture-Building Activities: To foster an environment that is both supportive and inclusive for all students, CPS will provide resources to school leadership to help create positive relationships among students and implement culture-building activities (such as staff luncheons and team- and trust-building activities).

Additionally, CPS believes cultural integration of the school communities is important for a successful, smooth transition. To support this, CPS will provide resources for “Fresh Start” Activities. Harte and Ray will be provided discretionary resources to implement "get to know your new school" activities, such as visits for families, coffee chats with the welcoming principal, picnics, field trips, and parent meetings.

### ***Support for Specific Students Needs***

To ensure students at Canter who have unique needs or circumstances are adequately supported in this transition, CPS will provide the Network with additional resources to work directly with families and assist in explaining their school options. Additionally, CPS will provide the following:

#### ***Students with Diverse Learning Needs***

- Once students transition to Harte or Ray all instructional, paraprofessional, clinical and related services will be provided in accordance with their IEPs. All specialized services, including nursing, speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, social work, psychology, assistive technology support, and special education instruction will continue to be provided in the manner stated on each student’s current IEP.
- CPS will work with Harte and Ray to ensure classrooms are set up to meet student needs, to schedule all students in accordance with IEPs, and ensure there is adequate staff to fully implement student IEPs.
- In addition, to ensure IEP implementation, CPS will review all IEPs with the staff at Harte and Ray, review schedules to ensure student IEPs will be implemented, and observe classrooms when school has resumed.
- CPS will provide scheduling training for all welcoming schools to ensure IEPs are fully implemented in an efficient and effective manner.
- CPS will also provide disability awareness training to staff at Harte and Ray, customizing training based on the unique population of the students in the school.
- CPS will support welcoming schools in hosting meet and greet events for parents to meet the administration and teachers at the welcoming schools and review student IEPs and share critical information about student needs.
- CPS will make phone calls to all parents of students with IEP and 504 plans in closing schools to ensure knowledge of welcoming schools and answer any questions.
- CPS will ensure classrooms for special education separate instruction are in appropriate locations in the school to be near same age and grade peers.
- Harte is not accessible and Ray is minimally accessible to persons with disabilities according to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Schools designated as “minimally accessible” all have a basic level of access, but the accessibility of floor levels, rooms and features may vary. For more information, contact the CPS Director of ADA Policy at (773) 553-2158.

#### ***Students in Temporary Living Situations***

- The CPS Department of Support for Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) Transition Support Coordinator will facilitate group sessions to offer support services to STLS students and families affected by this action.
- Every STLS family from Canter will have an opportunity to meet with an STLS Transition Support Coordinator to develop an individual transition plan for STLS students and receive ongoing enrollment support from that coordinator through the beginning of next school year. The STLS Transition Support Coordinator is employed by WES Health System.
- The STLS transition plan will be developed in partnership with students and families; it will describe the goals that the family will work toward with the STLS Transition Support Coordinator over the summer, and serve as a tool to keep students connected to school and STLS during the transition period. The goals set in the transition plan are determined by the family and based on what type of assistance the family requests. For example, one family's goal may be improved attendance and action steps toward that goal might be related to ensuring the student has his or her basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter met so that the student is ready for school.
- The STLS Transition Support Coordinator has an enrollment and academic history report for each STLS student at Canter that will be used as a reference for families and the STLS Transition Support Coordinator throughout the course of their work together.
- An STLS Transition Support Coordinator will be available at Canter Monday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to provide ongoing support to STLS students and families. During those hours the STLS Transition Support Coordinators may be at the school or conducting home visits. The hours will be flexible based on the need at the school.

The STLS Department will continue the supports currently provided to Students in Temporary Living Situations 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.

### ***English Language Learners (ELL)***

#### ***Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI)***

- Harte is projected to have to have 19 or fewer English Language Learners (ELLs) of the same language background.
- Harte will have at least one English as a Second Language (ESL)-endorsed teacher, and develop a schedule to provide push-in services to all ELLs. During push-in services, a highly-qualified teacher with an ESL or Bilingual endorsement/approval co-teaches the ELLs in the general education classroom. Push-in services include ESL support, sheltered English instruction, and native language support.
- Harte will ensure that there is at least one highly-qualified classroom teacher at each of the grade levels that may receive ELLs.
- Teachers assigned to instruct ELLs will be required to attend training on instructional strategies for working with ELLs. Training will begin in the summer and continue throughout the year as part of the ongoing support DoLCE is committed to providing schools based on their needs.
- When possible, Harte will cluster ELLs in one classroom per grade level to facilitate collaboration and scheduling with ESL push-in. The designated classroom will be staffed by a teacher who has an ESL or bilingual endorsement and is qualified to provide instruction for ELLs.

- The Department of Language and Cultural Education (DoLCE) will collaborate with Harte to train between one and five people to be certified in Screener/ACCESS administration (these need not be bilingual or ESL endorsed teachers). The Screener is used to identify potential ELLs based on responses given by parents on the Home Language Survey (HLS); the ACCESS test checks ELLs' progress in English language development. Teachers must be certified to administer these tests.
- Harte will also designate an ELL Liaison (formerly known as the Bilingual Lead Teacher) to maintain contact with DoLCE. In addition to attending quarterly meetings with DoLCE to receive professional development on instruction and compliance issues, the ELL Liaison will also communicate with DoLCE throughout the year as different needs or concerns arise.
- Harte's ELL Liaison, clerks, counselors, and administrators will attend training on the registration process to ensure that accurate information is entered into the CPS system and that all students are enrolled in the proper programming according to their needs.
- Schools that welcome newcomers to the United States will be provided student orientation kits and will receive assistance from CPS to coordinate with resettlement centers, translation/interpretation services, tutoring services in the native language, and social-emotional supports tailored to their specific needs.

### ***Early Childhood Participants***

- Children currently attending a preschool program and who will be turning 4 before September 1, 2013 will be automatically enrolled in their identified welcoming school. Therefore, no action must be taken by the family to continue their enrollment in the welcoming school.
- If a family is interested in attending a program OTHER than the welcoming school, they must complete the School Transition Form indicating the 3 schools (in order of priority) that they would prefer to attend. Families may return the forms to their school main office, and these forms should be faxed back to the Office of Early Childhood Education at 773-553-2010 by school personnel. If you did not already receive these forms they are available at <http://cps.edu/qualityschools/pages/parents.aspx>. PLEASE NOTE: A student's assigned slot at the welcoming school will not be released and offered to another family until the student receives a placement and registers at another school.
- An Application Representative from the Office of Early Childhood Education will be available at the Network Enrollment Fairs to help facilitate the early childhood application process. Also, schools will provide this information to families directly during their "open enrollment hours".
- For families wanting to enroll in preschool for the first time: While the first round of application acceptance will close May 24, 2013, we will be re-opening the application process during the summer. More information will be coming about that after May 24.
- All records will be transferred for continuity, and the Office of Early Childhood Education will track students involved in school actions to determine support needs.

### ***Transportation***

- CPS will provide transportation in the form of shuttle buses for all students matriculating from Shoemith to Harte and Ray. The shuttle bus will provide transportation to and from Shoemith Elementary located at 1330 E. 50<sup>th</sup> St. and to Harte Elementary as well as Ray Elementary. After the 2013-2014 school year, CPS will conduct an evaluation of these **transportation** services to determine whether the need for such services still exists based on the current safety and security concerns. If there continues to be a need for **transportation** services beyond the 2013-2014 school year, CPS will provide shuttle buses and continue

to evaluate the need for such services. CPS will ensure that parents and guardians are kept informed about whether or not the transportation services will extend beyond the 2013-2014 school year.

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

#### IV. Information Regarding Choice of Schools

Schools (both closed and welcoming) and network offices conducted enrollment drives to assist parents in selecting a school for their child. Parents were able to choose from a list of schools that have space available. Though parents may choose from any school on the list, a web-based tool showed schools that are within a mile from their child's current school. Enrollment drives at schools were held every evening until 7pm between May 22 and May 31, 2013. For the list of the Network enrollment fairs, please visit: <http://cps.edu/qualityschools/Documents/NetworkEnrollmentFairs.pdf>. Schools, networks, and the Office of Access and Enrollment continued to enroll students through June 12th through the enrollment tool and will continue to enroll students through IMPACT thereafter.

CPS offers an end of year application process that begins in July and seeks to fill remaining open seats in magnet, magnet cluster, and open enrollment elementary schools. Students affected by school actions who are still seeking alternative enrollment options will be given first priority in the end of year process. Students must apply and submit an application to the Office of Access and Enrollment to be considered. The application can be found at [www.cpsdae.org](http://www.cpsdae.org) between July 8-July 19, or by calling (773) 553-2060, or in person at 125 S. Clark Street.

#### V. Public Comment

##### ***Community Meetings and Public Hearings:***

CPS held two community meetings and one formal public hearing regarding this action. Public comment was accepted during each meeting or hearing.

##### **Community Meeting 1**

Monday, April 08, 2013  
5:00pm-7:00pm  
Kenwood High School  
5015 South Blackstone Avenue

##### **Community Meeting 2**

Friday, April 12, 2013  
5:00pm-7:00pm  
Kenwood High School  
5015 South Blackstone Avenue

##### **Public Hearing**

Wednesday, April 17, 2013  
5:30pm-7:30pm  
CPS Central Office  
125 S. Clark St.

##### ***Further Questions and Concerns:***

If you have any questions or concerns, please visit [www.cps.edu/qualityschools](http://www.cps.edu/qualityschools).