



Jean-Claude Brizard
Chief Executive Officer

November 30, 2011

Parent or Guardian of a Student at
Crane Technical Preparatory High School
2245 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60612

Parent or Guardian of a Student at
Chicago Talent Development High School
4319 W. Washington Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60624

Re: Proposed Phase-Out of Crane High School and Proposed Co-Location of Crane High School and Chicago Talent Development High School

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), nothing is more important to me than making sure your child is getting access to a high quality education. My team is dedicated to ensuring that every child in every community can be successful in the classroom and graduate ready for college and career – which is why I am writing to you today.

There are too many schools in Chicago failing our children. Across the District, only 7.9% of 11th graders last year tested ready for college, while achievement gaps for African American and Latino students remain in the high double-digits. As adults, we all have a responsibility to make sure that we are putting the academic needs of our children before all else. To do so requires some very difficult but necessary choices to boost the academic achievement of our kids.

For too long, Crane Technical Preparatory High School (Crane), located at 2245 W. Jackson Blvd., has been one of the schools not meeting the needs of its students. Over the last few years, Crane has been a chronically underperforming school with a graduation rate that is far below that of other schools in its area and is among the lowest academic scoring schools in the district. This is why we are proposing today, after a very lengthy and thoughtful process, to phase-out Crane. This means that current ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students would continue to attend Crane, but the school would not enroll new ninth grade students next school year.

We are also proposing to relocate Chicago Talent Development High School (Talent Development) to the same facility at 2245 W. Jackson Blvd. beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.

I know this may be difficult for you to hear because of the connections you have to Crane, but I ask that you give us the opportunity to explain this decision and urge you to take a few moments to carefully review the draft transition plan that your child will soon bring home, which will go into far greater detail about the reasons for this decision and the supports CPS plans to offer for these proposals.

Crane will still receive the district-wide supports that the district is providing to schools citywide that focus on improving student learning and ensuring that your child receives the quality education they deserve. At Crane and schools across the district, we are making significant investments in core areas:

- Providing a longer school day with additional instructional time for students;
- Using new, more rigorous curriculum that meet Common Core State Standards to better prepare your child for college;

Below you will find more details about these proposals, which aim to provide students with access to a better educational environment where they can thrive and succeed.

Guidelines

I have released Guidelines for School Actions (guidelines) that helped focus our attention on the district's lowest performing schools and the communities most in need of better performing school options. The guidelines can be accessed online at www.cps.edu/qualityschools. I considered the criteria specified below when recommending schools for action, such as reassignment boundary changes, phase-outs, co-locations, school closures, and school consolidations:

1. If a school received the lowest performance level (Level 3) on the CPS School Performance, Remediation, and Probation Policy (Board Report 10-0728-P04) for two consecutive years and was not excluded from consideration based on the minimum performance criteria listed in the guidelines; or
2. If a school is in the process of phasing out based on previous action by the Board; or
3. If two elementary schools within 0.5 miles of each other individually offer less than Kindergarten through eighth grades and can be reconfigured to a single Kindergarten through eighth grade school; or
4. To co-locate a Board approved new or existing school.

Our Proposal

Our proposal is to phase-out Crane High School over the next three years by reducing one grade level each year until the end of the 2014-2015 school year and changing the attendance area boundary. This proposal meets criteria 1 above because Crane has achieved the lowest performance rating, Level 3, every year since the Level 3 rating was introduced four years ago.

Crane was not excluded from consideration as it did not have a 5-year cohort graduation rate at or above its geographic network average in the previous school year, nor did it score at or above the 25th percentile on the trend and growth component of the CPS Performance Policy in the previous school year. In other words, CPS is proposing to phase-out Crane based on the school's chronic low academic performance and the need for higher quality educational options for students in the community.

We are also proposing to relocate Talent Development, currently located at 4319 W. Washington Blvd., to the 2245 W. Jackson Blvd. facility per criteria 4 above.

Details For Current Students

If the Board approves this proposal, Crane will not enroll incoming ninth grade students for the 2012-13 school year, and will reduce its grade offerings by one grade every school year thereafter until the end of the 2014-2015 school year. The enrollment of students who are currently attending Crane will not be affected. Current ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students will continue to be assigned to Crane for the 2012-2013 school year.

The Crane Achievement Academy Program will be closed at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. Students currently enrolled in the Crane Achievement Academy who complete the two-year program at the end of the 2011-2012 school year will matriculate into Crane High School. Students who have completed one year of the two-year program will be given an alternative placement based on an individualized transition plan that will take into account skill level, home address, and other factors. Elementary students who qualify for an achievement academy placement for the Fall of 2012 will be enrolled at Clemente Achievement Academy High School, located at 1147 North Western Avenue.

CPS will invest in these proposals by adding transitional supports for students. A draft transition plan outlining these supports has been sent home from school with students. Copies are also available in the school's main

office and at www.cps.edu/qualityschools. If you have any questions concerning these proposals, please call the CPS Quality Schools Hotline at 773-553-5020.

Details For The Attendance Area Boundary Of Crane

I am also proposing to reassign Crane’s attendance area boundary to Wells Community Academy High School (Wells), located at 936 N. Ashland Ave., Manley Career Academy High School (Manley), located at 2935 W. Polk St., John Marshall Metropolitan High School (Marshall), located at 3250 W. Adams Street, and David G. Farragut Career Academy High School (Farragut), located at 2345 S. Christina Ave., at the end of the 2011-12 school year. In other words, rising ninth grade students who would have been assigned to Crane will now be assigned to Wells, Manley, Marshall, or Farragut, based on the student’s home address.

Public Comment On The Proposal

Two community meetings and one public hearing have been scheduled to receive public comment on these proposals.

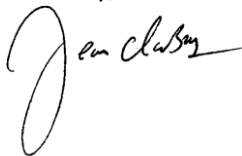
COMMUNITY MEETING #1	COMMUNITY MEETING #2	PUBLIC HEARING
Friday, January 06, 2012 Malcolm X College 1900 W. Van Buren St. 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm	Friday, January 20, 2012 Malcolm X College 1900 W. Van Buren St. 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm	Tuesday, January 24, 2012 125 S. Clark Street, 5 th Floor Board Chambers Chicago, Illinois 60603 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm

I invite you to share your feedback on this proposal at the community meetings and public hearing. You may also provide alternate proposals or other suggestions. If you wish to comment at the community meetings or 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 meeting or hearing. You will have two minutes to speak, unless the hearing officer or meeting organizer 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 community meetings and public hearing, I will review a written report from the hearing officer. At that time, I may recommend that the Board consider and approve the proposal for Crane at its meeting on February 22, 2012.

I can assure you that we will not take action on any school without careful consideration for what is best for our students, and that my team and I will work to make any transition as smooth as possible. If you have questions or concerns, please call the CPS Quality Schools Hotline at 773-553-5020.

Sincerely,



Jean-Claude Brizard

CC: David Vitale, Board President Noemi Donoso, Chief Education Officer