CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PUBLIC HEARING
FY 24 PROPOSED BUDGET HEARING
(Zoom)
held on
June 21, 2023

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
had in the above-entitled matter held via Zoom,
Chicago, Illinois, commencing at 3:03 p.m. and concluding at 3:50 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
MS. ELIZABETH TODD-BRELAND, Chairperson
MS. PAIGE PONDER
MR. MICHAEL SCOTT, JR.
MR. MIQUEL LEWIS

Reported By: Karen Fatigato, CSR
APPEARANCES:

MS. RUCHI VERMA, General Counsel
MR. CHARLES MAYFIELD, Interim Chief Operating Officer
MS. SUSAN NARRAJOS, Secretary to the Board
Whereupon, the following proceedings commenced at 3:03 p.m.:

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Elizabeth Todd-Breland, on behalf of my fellow Board Members, welcome to the second FY 24 Budget Hearing. I am chairing today's meeting as President del Valle attends to some personal business, but we're looking forward to his return at our Regular Meeting next Wednesday.

We are holding the second FY 24 Budget Hearing in the Board Room at 24 (sic) West Madison Street. I would like to note that the Board Members and senior leadership are physically present in the Board Room. Registered speakers may join us in person or virtually if they opted to do so.

The purpose of this hearing is to comply with the School Code provisions regarding the FY 24 Budget. Board Secretary, please state for the record the notice procedure for this hearing.

SECRETARY NARRAJOS: Thank you, Board
Member Todd-Breland.

Notice of this public hearing was published in the Chicago Sun-Times, a newspaper of general circulation in the city of Chicago and posted at Board Room, Principal Office and 42 West Madison Street lobby on June 13th, 2023. Notice was also posted on the CPSBOE.ORG and CPS.EDU websites on June 13th, 2023. I will now read into the record the public notice as published.

Notice: Public Hearings FY 24 Budget for the 23-2024 Fiscal Year. Chicago Board of Education, commonly known as Chicago Public Schools.

To Whom It May Concern: Public notice is hereby given by the Chicago Board of Education that it has prepared an FY 24 Budget for the 23 -- 2023-2024 Fiscal Year in tentative form and that five copies thereof available for public inspection have been filed and are now on file in the Office of the Board of Education of the city of Chicago, commonly known as Chicago Public Schools, One North Dearborn Street, Suite 950, Chicago, Illinois, 60602, and available at
CPS.EDU/BUDGET and that said Board of Education will hold two public hearings upon said budget on Tuesday, June 20th, 2023 and Wednesday, June 21st, 2023. Tuesday, June 20th, 2023 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 21st, 2023 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Chicago Public Schools, Loop Office, 42 West Madison Street, Garden Level, Board Room, Chicago, Illinois, 60602.

Registered speakers who wish to present during public participation may have the opportunity to participate in person at the location of the public hearing or virtually via an electronic format -- platform. The public will have access to the meeting via a live stream at CPSBOE.ORG. For these two public hearings advance registration to speak will begin on Tuesday, June 13th, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. and will close on Thursday, June 15th, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. or until 20 slots have been filled for each hearing, whichever occurs first. Advance registration during this period is available by the following methods: Online or by phone. Advance registration to observe will also be
available beginning Tuesday, June 13th, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. and will close on Thursday, June 15th, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. or until all slots are filled.

Advance registration during this period is available by the following methods: Online or by phone. The public participation segment of the public hearings will conclude after the last person who has registered to speak has spoken or at 7:30 p.m. on June 20th and 4:30 p.m. on June 21st, whichever occurs first.

Members of the public may submit written comments related to the FY 24 Tentative Budget via the Written Comments Form on the Board's website at CPSBOE.ORG or mailed to One North Dearborn, Suite 950, by 5:00 p.m. June 22nd, 2023. Dated at Chicago, Illinois, June 13th, 2023, Chicago Board of Education.

By: Miguel del Valle, President, and Attest, Susan J. Narrajos, Secretary.

I would also like to note for the record the members present here today.

Member Scott?

MEMBER SCOTT: Present.

SECRETARY NARRAJOS: Member Ponder?
MEMBER PONDER: Present.

SECRETARY NARRAJOS: Member Lewis?

MEMBER LEWIS: Present.

SECRETARY NARRAJOS: Member Elizabeth Todd-Breland?

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Here.

SECRETARY NARRAJOS: We have four members present. There is a quorum.

I'd also like to recognize Ruchi Verma, General Counsel, and Charles Mayfield, Interim Chief Operating Officer.

Thank you.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: All right. Let's begin with the FY 24 Budget presentation.

MR. SITKOWSKI: Thank you, Board Members. Good afternoon, my name is Mike Sitkowski, I am Deputy Chief of Budget and Grants Management in our Office of Finance. My presentation today will be an overview of our FY 24 Proposed Budget.

CPS's FY 24 Proposed Budget totals $9.4 billion, and this includes an increase of nearly 500 million in the District's Operating Budget. The Operating Budget totals $8.5 billion and
funds the District's day-to-day expenses. $155 million funds the District's Capital Budget, which includes investments in school buildings and infrastructure and is funded primarily through bonds issued by the District. $785 million funds the District's Debt Service Budget, which pays the principal and interest payments on the long-term bonds issued to fund the Capital Budget.

In our FY 24 Budget we have $4.8 billion in school funding. This is an increase of 243 million from FY 23 and a total of more than $480 million increased over the last two years. This funding supports core instructional priorities, including reasonable class sizes, limited split classrooms, access to high-quality arts education, more intervention supports and funding for local level priorities at our schools.

This budget also includes continued investments in nurses, social workers and case managers, bringing FY 2024 staffing levels to a new all-time high.

An additional $128 million is included
to support staffing needs to ensure our diverse learners have the supports and resources they need to achieve their full potential. And $670 million from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund or ESSER, which we'll talk about a bit later. This will fund investments in academic recovery, social and emotional supports, expanded summer and before and after school programming and other student services.

Our FY 24 Proposed Budget also includes 45,159 full-time employees. This is an increase of 1,781 from the FY 23 Budget. Our $155 million Capital Budget focuses on priority facility needs at schools, including major renovations and interior improvements, site improvements, building system investments, security and technology improvements.

$785 million of debt service funds our long-term debt. And $19.5 million funds interest on our tax anticipation notes to fund cash flow for operations needs.

Moving into the revenue portion of our Operating Budget, our total operating revenue is $8.5 billion, and this comes from three sources.
The first are our local sources which total 57 percent of our overall revenues or $4.8 billion. This is primarily property tax revenue, personal property replacement taxes and TIF surplus.

The second component of our overall operating revenue is state revenue, which makes up 23 percent or 2 billion of our total Operating Budget. The primary source of funding here is the state's allocation of evidence-based funding, but this also includes funding for teacher pension normal costs, which we'll also get into a bit later, and various categorical grants from the state.

Finally, federal revenues comprise 20 percent of our total Operating Budget, around $1.7 billion. These include our recurring sources that include title funding and funding from our lunchroom -- for our lunchroom expenses for breakfast and lunch for our students. And these sources primarily support low-income students.

This budget also includes federal relief funding through ESSER III that adds significant onetime revenues to our FY 24
When we look at our operating expenses, this chart on this slide shows our operating expenses by category and notes that 76 percent of our expenses are spent on salaries and benefits. So when you include the 45,000-plus employees that are a part of our FY 24 Budget plus funding for charter school tuition, which primarily funds salaries and benefits for charter school staff, we're north of three-quarters of our budget that's spent on personnel.

The remaining 24 percent of our budget is used to pay for non-personnel expenses, including commodities, such as, food and utilities, instructional supplies, equipment and software, student transportation and building repair and contractual services, such as, facilities management and Safe Passage.

I mentioned the 45,000-plus employees that are a part of our FY 24 Budget. This chart shows that over 96 percent of these employees directly support schools. This budget has an increase, as I mentioned previously, of 1,781
FTE from our FY 23 Budget. And with over 96 percent of these employees directly supporting schools, this is made up of teachers, school support staff and school administrators that are budgeted within school budgets and make up 81 percent of our overall employee base plus another 15 percent that provide city-wide support services to our schools. So these include custodians, nurses, social workers, employees that are managed centrally but work in our buildings on a daily basis. Four percent of our positions are Central Office administrative positions.

Our teacher pension costs, I mentioned this before, but we thought it was important to break this down as part of our overall 24 Budget. In FY 24 we will be spending over $1 billion on our teacher pensions. This chart shows the revenue sources that support this cost. I want to be deliberate here and walk through this chart, but what it shows is that if we look at the orange section on the top right and that small gray slit next to it, this is the portion that the state contributes to fund our
teacher pensions. We are the only district in the state of Illinois that does not receive full support for their teacher pensions, and it has a burden on our own taxpayers to fund our obligation here.

So with the state funding right around 31, 32 percent overall of our obligation here, this leaves 68 percent for the District to fund. This breaks down into two sources. We have a dedicated property tax levy to support teacher pensions that we expect to generate $557 million in FY 24, but then this leaves $142 million remaining that CPS must contribute from operating revenues that could otherwise be spent in classrooms. So nearly $700 million from Chicago taxpayers is going towards our FY 24 pension obligation, a burden that no other district in the state faces.

Moving on to school funding. This budget is $4.8 billion of school funding that prioritizes instructional priorities and resource equity. So we have 243 million more in school level funding than the FY 23 Budget included.
And within this increase is $128 million in additional funding for special education teachers and paraprofessionals. $32 million in new funding for teaching positions with an emphasis on our highest needs schools as identified by our Opportunity Index. $15 million increased in funding for bilingual instruction, including $8 million in additional funding for enrollment adjustments in schools receiving newly arriving students. $5 million increase in our equity grants for our smaller and under-enrolled schools. And we'll also be expanding pre-K by 480 seats with programs in all Chicago communities, increasing the level -- and increasing the level of direct outreach to parents of young learners.

Within the $4.8 billion investment in school budgets in our FY 24 Budget, it also includes investments that we made in FY 23 that we are continuing into this new fiscal year.

These include $45 million to provide teacher professional development District-wide
and fund additional instructional coaches at 184 schools.

$15 million to provide additional District-funded counselors at 131 of the District's highest needs schools.

$8 million to support athletics administration, including full-time athletic directors at over half of District high schools.

Continued support for expanded summer programs and Out of School Time programs to keep students safe and engaged outside of normal school hours.

Continued central funding for student devices and curricular supports, expenses which were previously born by schools in their own individuals budgets.

Continued funding for CPS Tutor Corps, which has provided high-dosage tutoring in reading and math to over 10,000 students to date.
And continuing funding for school nurses, social workers, social/emotional learning resources and advocates for students in temporary living situations. And this budget includes 50 of those advocates at 45 of our schools with high STLS enrollment.

We talk about factors and indicators of need at our schools, and I wanted to highlight here one of the important ones that lives in this budget and that's our Opportunity Index. So our Opportunity Index informs a lot of the investments, I mentioned investment in teachers, that's how we identified additional schools for additional counseling support and a myriad of other investments in our FY 24 Budget. And what this does is provide a comprehensive nuance assessment of need at each of our schools.

This slide shows the factors that are included in our Opportunity Index and includes traditional factors, such as, free and reduced lunch eligibility and percentage of limited English proficiency at our schools, but it also includes new factors that we think provide a more holistic assessment and includes some
community factors. So the percentage of
students that are free and reduced meal eligible
but are not enrolled in Medicaid, teacher
turnover, community life expectancy, so really
trying to understand both what is going on in
the schools and in the communities to give a
better more nuance holistic assessment of need
at all of our schools.

These next two slides show how this
assessment of need plays out in our approach to
school funding. So we continue to advance
funding based on school and student need. Here
we're going to talk about two different schools
that we're calling School A and School B.
School A is -- has a low Opportunity Index score
of 29, indicating that it is not high on the
indicators of overall need in our Opportunity
Index. It's serving 29 percent low-income
students, which is well below the District
average, 7 percent English learners and 18
percent special education students. So on the
low end of overall -- overall need.
School B on the other hand has an
Opportunity Index score of 50, which is on
the high end, indicating factors in the Opportunity Index are showing high need for these schools and these students. And it's serving 79 percent low-income students, 69 percent English learners and 29 percent special education students.

What we see in terms of the overall funding for these schools is that we look at School A on the left, 49 percent of their overall budget is comprised of SBB funding, which treats every school the same. They're still receiving additional funding streams on top of that, but nearly half of their budget is coming through SBB.

School B on the other hand receives only 23 percent of its total funding through SBB. This is because these indicators of need that we discussed are generating additional funding streams on top of the per pupil funding that every school receives. We notice the equity grant here, some substantial bilingual funding and other funding that makes up 77 percent of School B's total budget.

When we look at what that means on a
per pupil funding basis, here our same schools, School A and School B, and what we see is the results of this approach to school funding mean that School B has nearly twice the per pupil funding that School A has. So when we look at the chart here, we see that the first block on the bottom for each school, the blue area, is their SBB, which is roughly the same per pupil for both schools. But then School B receives significant more per pupil funding in each of the categories on top of the SBB that are driven by indicators of need in our Opportunity Index and other factors that we use in our overall budget.

Moving into federal relief funding. I mentioned the ESSER funding before. By the end of FY 2023 CPS will have spent over $1.8 billion from the $2.8 billion federal ESSER relief funding allocation that we have access to through September of 2024. This funding has and will continue to cover important investments in academic recovery and social and emotional learning supports, pandemic-related operational expensed and additional school level funding for
teachers and school programming. This year's budget, FY 24, is $670 million in ESSER funding, and we plan to use 300 million, the remaining 300 million as part of our FY 25 Budget.

These next few slides break down what is included in the $670 million in our FY 24 Budget. 228 million of ESSER funding provides resources for academic recovery and social and emotional learning.

This includes $45 million for instructional coaching and school-based professional learning.

$30 million for summer school programming.

$25 million for Skyline curriculum materials and supports.

25 million for Out of School Time programming for all schools.

$19 million in school assistance and other part-time operational support.

15 million for instructional support leaders and content needs to support teacher professional development.

15 million for mental health supports
and trauma-informed interventions.

15 million for additional centrally-funded second counselor positions for high needs schools, again with the Opportunity Index as one of the inputs determining the need here.

15 million for reengagement home visits and truancy prevention programs to make sure our students are in school.

$10 million for Tutor Corps.

$7 million for athletic directors.

$3 million for our universal social/emotional learning curriculum.

3 million for early literacy support.

And 1 million for Chicago Roadmap funding.

409 million of our FY 24 ESSER funding will support school resourcing and continued investments in District priorities. This includes 104 million for centrally-funded teacher positions at every school on top of our core funding allocations.

101 million for funding for early childhood programs above what is covered by...
state grant funding.

$70 million in funding above projected fall 2023 enrollment, continuing our strategy of not making fall enrollment-based cuts to school budgets.

$55 million in our equity grant to support our small under-enrolled schools.

23 million in funding for loss cap and program support for schools to address outlier situations and support meeting the District's instructional priorities.

$6 million for the CPS Virtual Academy. And 50 million to provide charter schools a proportionate share of these investments so they can run like programming at their schools.

Moving on to our long-term fiscal health. This is a topic that we've discussed recently in some depth, and we want to touch on it here as well. CPS faces long-term financial challenges due in part to, although improved, inadequate state funding and inequities between CPS and other school districts in the state. Though evidence-based funding has introduced
more certainty and has advanced equity in state funding, the formula remains significantly underfunded. CPS receives only 75 percent of what the formula says the District needs to be adequately funded, leaving CPS nearly 1.4 billion, billion with a B, short of resources that could support our schools and students.

CPS is also the only district in the state that is required to fund its own teacher pensions. I mentioned before the state provides 32 percent of our total cost here, and this leaves Chicago taxpayers covering the remaining 68 percent or nearly $700 million. Again, a burden that no other city, no other district in the state faces.

Federal relief funding through ESSER has helped us manage this shortfall and to make the new investments such as the ones I’ve outlined on previous slides. By the end of FY 24, CPS will have spent $2.5 billion to address pandemic-related needs and District instructional priorities. And again, we’re planning to use the remaining 300 million in ESSER funds in FY 25 to support the continuation
of these investments and essential services, supports made possible by these dollars. We will also continue with our partners to advocate for more state and federal funding to combat our long-term financial challenges.

Moving on to the Capital Budget. Our FY 24 Capital Budget includes $155 million of projects, 100 million of which are funded by bond offerings and other CPS capital funds. The remaining 55 million of our capital budget are funded by external local, state and federal dollars.

When we look at the sources and uses within our Capital Budget, we see that 100 million will be funded by anticipated bond offerings and other capital funds. $42 million will be covered by Tax Increment Financing or TIF funding. 10.6 million will come through external funding for our space to grow projects. And 2.2 million is earmarked as other potential external funding.

In terms of the uses of our capital funds, $103 million will go towards facility
needs and interior improvements in our school buildings.

2 million will support educational programming.

6.2 million will support IT security and building system investments.

23.6 million will support facility site improvements.

And 20 million will support our capital project support services.

I want to also note here that we expect -- this is smaller than our normal capital budgets, and we expect to return at some point later this year with a supplemental capital plan.

Finally, our Debt Service Budget. Our FY 24 Budget includes appropriations of 785 million for long-term debt service payments. It also includes approximately 19.5 million of appropriation for interest on short-term debt as part of our Operating Budget that is used to provide for our cash flow needs. This chart shows our long-term debt obligations by funding source. And the important point I want to
highlight here is we see the green portion of each of these bars, that represents the evidence-based funding that we use to cover our principal and interest payments on long-term debt. We use evidence-based funding because we don't have other dedicated revenue sources to service this debt. So each year when we receive our funding allocation from the state, even with the inadequacy that we talked about before, $500 million comes right off the top of that to service our debt each year. And absent an alternative source this will continue for some time as this chart shows we continue to make needed investments in our capital infrastructure.

And that is the end of my presentation, I'm happy to take questions now.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Okay. Thank you.

Questions and comments on the budget?

MEMBER SCOTT: I have one question that I heard you say something today that I missed yesterday, and it is about -- we talked about the ways that you -- you have like nuance ways
of how you direct funding to communities that are underserved -- have traditionally been underserved. One thing that I didn't hear in the kind of list of things that you do is community input. And are you talking to communities around that how you push those moneys out to communities that need it? I'm sure all of those things kind of work -- you talked about a litany of different things, but are you talking directly to communities about or how that money should be allocated?

MR. SITKOWSKI: Yeah, so I think it's worth addressing sort of how -- the two parts of our school budget process. One is the District coming up with the formulas and the allocations for each school. The second piece is the school community deciding what to do with those dollars.

So for the second part we do provide principals, LSCs, school communities a wide range of autonomy and support in determining what is best and most appropriate for that school and school community. But on the first part, you know, it's important for us that we're
targeting the resources where they're most needed. And so part of what we're doing in the FY 23 Budget, the FY 24 Budget, some of the new investments we're making, some of the investments that we're continuing from the past, a lot of them are born out of a series of community engagement forums that we've done over a few years where we've got a significant amount of feedback from communities, from the public both in terms of, you know, what they're looking for at their individual schools, ways that they think we can improve in how we're devolving resources to schools.

There was a working group that was operating in conjunction with some of those forums that Member Todd-Breland was a part of that we issued a report back in 2020 and with a pretty specific set of recommendations. That still lives through in what we're seeing today, what we're seeing this year, what we'll be seeing in FY 24, really in terms of understanding different levels of need, us incorporating the Opportunity Index and being able to target resources both to address that
need and also to meet some of the instructional
gaps and some of the other -- some of the other
needs of our schools.

MEMBER SCOTT: And I appreciate that.
You know, I believe you said that, you know, you
look at life expectancy and, you know, who is on
free and reduced lunch that is on Medicaid, you
know, a group of things, right, and I think
those are all really necessary. You know, one
of the things that I think as a District that we
have not done is -- and you've done a lot more
over the last few years so this is not a
criticism at all, this is how do we things a
little bit better, and that is, you know, having
conversations in those communities that we know
are underserved, those places like Roseland and
North Lawndale, I should have said North
Lawndale first, East and West Garfield, the
Austins, the places where we know that we
traditionally have not allocated resources in
the way that we should have and having
consistent conversations with those folks about
allocations and how they should be allocated. I
know that that can't happen now, but I'd urge us
as a District in places that we know that we're seeing all of these indicators from all of the things that we're doing is to having conversations, ongoing conversations throughout the year about allocations and how they should be allocated and what communities want to see and what is going to help them or bring more people to the table or bring more people back in our doors, right. And I think the more that we do the more successful that we will be.

I appreciate all of the work that has gone in, and I know that from, you know, the time that I've served in council and from past administrations, and I've seen them for a long time with my father being here, we are doing a much better job of being transparent and I appreciate that. Again though, I want us to do things better and I want folks to see that their thoughts, their desires and the things that they want in their communities will be carried out by us as a District. And the only way that we do that is to continue to have these conversations.

So again, I appreciate that. Again, I
just want us to dig in a little bit more.

MR. SITKOWSKI: Thank you.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Building on that, I guess I just wanted to say -- reflect back to the meetings that you were talking about. So we had these -- this was like late 2019, early 2020 right up until like right before the pandemic, maybe the last one might have been like in January 2020, and I want to say there were seven, maybe eight in communities all over the city exactly like you're saying going into neighborhood schools in particular, having people from -- and hundreds, maybe even thousands of people came out and participated in that. And it was really valuable I think for all of us who were involved in that, one, and that that information sharing went two ways, right. So that of course as Board Members, as CPS staff we're learning from community, but also it really helped in that moment to galvanize our communities around the realities of the inequities that we're facing financially as a District.

I mean, I think until I sat in this
seat, and I studied CPS for my job, and I don't think I really realized the degree to which and the specific ways in which we are treated differently than everyone else in the state and how profound those inequities were. So, you know, we had these conversations, there's the presentation, conversation, then the table conversations that you're having, lots of tables all over cafeterias or gyms or wherever we were on that given day, and in those conversations, you know, parents and even some students, community members, like this isn't right. I'm like, it's not, right, like what are we going to do. And so this idea of all of us having, you know, a role in that and that two-way communication I think is really important. I don't think if it looks like that, but having a way to sort of re-up that energy maybe using other structures that already exist within -- you know, we have lots of different structures within our communities I think is so valuable. So thank you for bringing that up.

I'm sorry, did others have questions? This is our maybe third time talking about the
budget, so perhaps your questions have been
answered.

MEMBER SCOTT: I want to talk about
what you just talked about just a little bit
more.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Go ahead, please.

MEMBER SCOTT: You know, as it relates
to -- there's been that article about school
closures in and around in the last ten years and
what we've done, and I think, you know, one of
the things that not the last administration but
the administration beforehand, although the
intention behind it might have been right, the
one thing that they did not do is communicate
with communities about the reason and just about
what Member Breland just talked about,
Todd-Breland talked about, and that is where we
are financially, right. And I think the more
that we have these conversations, the more
people understand the inequities that the state
has pushed on us, right, the more that we can
get folks to come down and rally with us with
their state legislators about what needs to
happen in the city of Chicago. You know,
they're all taxpayers, they all send their children to school, and they all want a decent education, and the more that we go out and we talk about just kind of where we are in our budget and being real with people and let them really understanding the complexities behind it. And, you know, you say it all the time and we know it because we hear it all the time, you know, we're not funded the same as anybody else. And if they would just fund the pensions the way that they funded everybody else, we can put some of that money towards capital, we can put some of that money towards investment in education and all of those things.

So I think, again, to continue to have those conversations throughout the year about where we are in terms of, you know, Ivan talks all the time about the age of our buildings and how much money needs to go in in terms of capital repair, right, and to really have adult conversations with adults in our communities about that and urge them to come and rally with us and, you know, take a bunch of people downstate and try to change how this goes,
right. But I think the only way that we do that is to continue to have these real conversations with them and continue throughout the year.

So again, I thank you. And if there is something I can help along those lines in organizing with that, I would love to do so.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: So despite all these, you know, structural deficit on the horizon, we still do have our ESSER funding right now and it is allowing us to make these investments that have been prioritized for this year. And so I did have -- wondering if you could just speak a little bit more about some of the investment dollars and how they will be used, particularly I wanted to talk a little bit about the special education funding. I know we have increased dollars for special education. Can you talk about where that money is going to go and how that is going to improve, whether it's staffing or otherwise, the conditions and the experience in education of special education?

MR. SITKOWSKI: Certainly. So I
mentioned before that this budget includes $128 million in new investments in our special education staff, and so these are teachers and paraprofessionals that are in our schools, and so really making sure that we have the supports for our students with IEPs, with 504 plans, so on and so forth. So we're seeing increased staffing both in the teacher and the paraprofessional side.

We're also continuing to make the investments that we've made for a few years now in social workers, nurses, case managers to make sure that we're providing the supports for both our special education students and the rest of our student body with things that we didn't previously have in our buildings.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Thank you.

And on that last point, and maybe this is more of a question for Ben, but where are we in relation to the CBA in terms of our staffing levels? Yeah. Thank you.

CHIEF FELTON: I want to get you some special education numbers hot off the press, Board Member Todd-Breland, so pardon me being on
my phone.

So actually since we connected
yesterday I pulled some new numbers, so we're up
about 50 school social workers from last year,
about 50 nurses from last year and about 80
additional counselors from this time last
year.

I think it's worth pointing out
historically, you know, since we really started
this additional push for related service
providers in about 2019 or so, we're up -- we
had -- in 2019 we had 329, at the same time 329
school social workers to 580, so that's up about
75 percent. On nurses we had about 310, as of
today we're at 543, so that's up about 74
percent. I think counselors we're up about 150,
so that's about 19 percent. So we're broadly --
we made a ton of progress on recruiting school
social workers, nurses and counselors. We're
broadly about on track to meet our contractual
obligations, you know, these were very ambitious
contractual goals. We talked briefly about it
yesterday, you know, it's one thing to open the
positions, it's another thing to find the
bodies. You know, I see criticisms sometimes of CPS saying that like we open the positions, we're not trying to fill the positions. And I always wish those people could like meet our team who are like working around the clock trying to staff these positions because we know those are our commitments and we know that's the right thing for kids.

So, you know, we're broadly directionally about on track with our contractual requirements. And again, those are very ambitious goals I think that everyone agreed at the time, and we are we're making good progress towards them.

On the special education front, you know, if you'll give me a few minutes I can pull out specific numbers, but we're up, you know, well over -- we're adding about 200 or 250 additional special education teachers every year. So, you know, that's been true over the last four or five years. So, I mean, that sort of -- of course special education formulas are based on IEP minutes and a complicated process, you know, that is really designed to meet
students' needs. But when you look at the aggregate, you know, I think -- again, I don't have the numbers exactly handy, but I think over the past, you know, two or so years we're probably up four or 500 special education teachers, which, you know, pencils out to about one a school. So we've made a really remarkable improvement in special education staffing and that's -- and that trend has, you know, occurred each of the last four or five years that I've been here leading this work.

So, you know, we have a dramatically different special education workforce both for special education classroom assistants and for special education teachers over the last four or five years.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Thank you.

Sorry, just one last thing on the overall budget. On that slide 14 where you're comparing like School A and School B, I think the other thing to note, and not the first one but the second one where you see like one up here and one down there, based on trying to layer on these extra investments based on need, I think
we should still note that above each of those
there's also still a gap between what we're
giving, you know, able to give these schools and
what they need to be even at what the state
considers to be adequate for both of those
schools, A and B. Their gaps may look
different, but we also -- just a recognition
that even with the ways that we are trying to
address need, there is still need, you know, at
the school level and that's why we need to
continue to look at these creative revenue
sources.

MR. SITKOWSKI: Absolutely. And the
investments that we've made in the FY 23 Budget
and FY 24 Budget have really made -- you know,
we've continued to increase equity in our
investments, but the big inequities that we
don't have access to $1.4 billion that we have
that would allow, you know, every school to have
more and to really be able to make those
investments like we talked about.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Got it. Thank
you.

Any other questions or comments?
Okay. Well, thank you all very much.
Thank you for working so hard to get this to us.
Appreciate it. And to all of your teams as well.

Okay. Let's now proceed with today's public comment segment. Board Secretary, please share the rules for public comment.

SECRETARY NARRAJOS: Thank you, Board Member Todd-Breland.

Members of the public who registered to speak were given the option to attend in person or via on electronic format. For those who preferred to attend via an electronic format, sorry, they were given information to access this meeting by dialing a number and using their phone. We did this so that speakers with limited or no access to the Internet or who may have weak Internet connection could still participate using their phones.

Also, members of the public may submit written comments for the FY 24 Tentative Budget via the Written Comments Form on the Board's website at CPSBOE.ORG or mailed to One North Dearborn, Suite 950. Written comments received
between the day the public agenda was posted through 5:00 p.m. the day after the second Budget Hearing will be submitted to the Board and published within five business days on our website at CPSBOE.ORG.

This hearing will conclude after the last speaker who has registered to speak has spoken or at 4:30, whichever occurs first. Please state your name for the record and the 2-minute timer will begin. When there are 30 seconds remaining, I will inform you so that you can proceed to conclude your remarks.

I will proceed by calling the first speaker, Ashley Cuza, speaker number 1 who is here in person.

MS. CUZA: I'm Ashley Cuza, and on behalf of Goethe Elementary School's LSC and Friends of Goethe Organization, I am asking the Board to allocate funds in the next fiscal year for safety improvements, drainage repairs and the revitalization of Goethe's overwhelmingly distressed outdoor space.

Goethe is a Title I neighborhood elementary school. Over 75 percent of our
student population is of the global majority, 66 percent of whom identify as Hispanic. In fact, more than a quarter of our students are English language learners.

I stand before you today because I have the means and the privilege to be here, and I have the privilege and it is my privilege and my responsibility to give a voice to the parents of Goethe whose children do not have access to a safe or functional outdoor environment at school.

As you can see in your packet of photos, Goethe’s outdoor space and only recess area is comprised of concrete and eroding playground and unlevel bare soil. This area also suffers from extreme drainage issues rendering a majority of Goethe’s outdoor environment dangerous and unusable for much of the school year. The condition of Goethe’s outdoor space has confined more than 700 elementary school students to their classrooms for recess even on days with optimal weather. It has also impeded Goethe’s ability to offer on-site sports programming to some of the city’s
most vulnerable students.

CPS's own Facility and Assessment Report recommends replacement of Goethe's landscape and hardscape. A local architectural firm has recognized the critical need to renovate Goethe's outdoor area and has offered to develop and oversee the project pro bono.

We are working hard to secure funds outside of CPS to pay for this project, but the families of this Title I school simply do not have the resources available to generate funds on this scale. So I am imploring the Board to allocate funds to this project to equitize the educational experience of Goethe's diverse and at-need students.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Thank you.

MEMBER SCOTT: Can I ask her a question?

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Can you wait?

Sorry.

SECRETARY NARRAJOS: Thank you for your comments.

No other speakers have joined that were registered to speak.
MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Oh, okay. Hold on.

Board Members, any comments or questions?

MEMBER SCOTT: Yeah. So I just wanted to know from the school Goethe, you said -- so even when it's optimal weather that the drainage won't allow them to play outside?

MS. CUZA: Exactly. As you can see from some of those photos, any amount of wet or inclement weather will impact the outdoor environment for days thereafter. So this isn't just a matter of it's raining outside, the kids aren't able to use the facilities. It renders it inaccessible for many days to come. And the problems are not just with using the outdoor, it's actually with the kids also coming back into the facility. As mud is tracked into the facility, we don't have the adequate level of janitorial services to clean everything up so we have slippery staircases, a mess in the classroom and really it's left our administrators with no other choice but to keep these kids inside, many kids inside very small
classrooms.

MEMBER SCOTT: Okay. Thank you.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Thank you so much.

MEMBER LEWIS: Thank you.

MEMBER TODD-BRELAND: Okay. This concludes the second FY 24 Budget Hearing. Have a great afternoon everyone.

(Whereupon, these were all the proceedings had at this time.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS )

) SS:

COUNTY OF COOK )

Karen Fatigato, being first duly sworn,
on oath says that she is a court reporter doing
business in the City of Chicago; and that she
reported in shorthand the proceedings of said
hearing, and that the foregoing is a true and
correct transcript of her shorthand notes so
taken as aforesaid, and contains the proceedings
given at said hearing.

Karen Fatigato, CSR
LIC. NO. 084-004072
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