



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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### **NEW PROCESS FOR NEW SCHOOLS RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, in August 2013, Chicago Public Schools issued a request for proposals for new charter schools to open in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years with the stated purpose of relieving overcrowding; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Board of Education voted in May 2013 to close 50 local public schools, stating that downsizing the school district was necessary to address its budget deficit; and

WHEREAS, by CPS closing schools last year, they divested \$149 million dollars away from 50 schools within 19 wards, and additionally cut \$17 million from the CPS schools that remained open in those wards.

WHEREAS, having 64% (74) of all charters in the city within 19 wards - was a direct cause of the local public schools being "under-utilized" and eventually closing; and

WHEREAS, Chicago Public Schools has increased its spending citywide on charter schools by more than \$143 million within the last two years, while the budgets of local public schools have been cut by \$351 million; and

WHEREAS, CPS increased the funding of 74 charters by \$42 million dollars within the 19 wards that had schools closed; and

WHEREAS, if Chicago's Board of Education approves the current 21 proposals for new charter schools, it will cost an additional \$225 million over the next 10 years to operate these new schools; and

WHEREAS, Chicago Public Schools has not produced an analysis of the potential negative effects a charter expansion could have on existing schools and their surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, there are more targeted and cost-effective approaches to relieving school overcrowding, such as attendance boundary shifts, mobile units, annex construction, and leasing additional space; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of the charter proposals that are being considered through the Request for Proposals are not located in the areas CPS has prioritized for new schools; and

WHEREAS, there is no clear evidence that Chicago's charter schools provide higher-quality educational opportunities than its traditional public schools; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago City Council approved the creation of an Independent Budget Office in December of 2013 tasked with providing an independent analysis of financial matters related to the City of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Board of Education is scheduled to vote on the proposed charter school expansion on January 22, 2014;

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois requires Chicago Public Schools to request proposals for new charter schools on an annual basis; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we hereby urge the Chicago Board of Education to suspend voting on any proposed charter school expansion - including that which is scheduled to be considered on January 22, 2014 - until a comprehensive analysis of the proposed expansion that is available to the public and includes the following elements:

- a) A detailed analysis of the additional capacity created by each proposed new school site and the utilization rates of the surrounding schools in the area conducted by Chicago Public Schools;
- b) A cost-benefit analysis of all available options for addressing identified overcrowding conducted by the City Council's Independent Budget Office;
- c) A fiscal analysis conducted and made public by the City Council's Independent Budget Office on the impact of charter school expansion, detailing the additional public funds that would be required, the impact on Chicago Public Schools' overall budget, and the particular impact on the budgets of existing traditional public schools in the communities targeted for charter school expansion;
- d) An analysis of each proposed charter school's target population and how it compares to the overall student population in the area, taking account of race, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learners, and students with special needs conducted by Chicago Public Schools;
- e) An analysis of existing funding disparities between charter schools and traditional public schools, and the impact that has had on students' educational opportunities conducted by the City Council's Independent Budget Office; and
- (f) All available evidence demonstrating why the proposed charter school will: lead to a reduction in the achievement gap of low-income students of color, adequately providing educational opportunities to English Language Learners, and students with special educational needs, demonstrate the ability to retain and graduate high school students within five-years of enrollment, and provide additional evidence of any other significantly improved educational outcomes for Chicago's students, provided by the charter applicant and reviewed by Chicago Public Schools

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we hereby urge Chicago Public Schools to collaborate with the City Council to ensure that the communities affected by any proposed charter school expansion are properly informed of the implications of these decisions and provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. At a minimum, a consortium of Local School Councils and Aldermen from the communities targeted for charter school expansion should host public forums in which the analysis described above is shared and community members are given the opportunity to provide input. We suggest that the Local School Councils then hold a vote of their school communities to assess the support for the new charter school along with the support for any alternative proposals. It is our recommendation that all such input and voting results be reported to the Chicago Board of Education and weighted heavily as they finalize their decisions on any proposed charter school expansion moving forward.