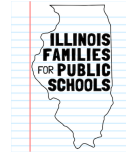


# OPPOSE HB 303: Moratorium on any changes to CPS schools with selective admissions requirements



In December 2023 the Chicago Board of Education passed a resolution calling for the creation of a 5-year facilities master plan to be guided by a vision that would “ensure fully-resourced neighborhood schools” and “transition away from privatization and admissions/enrollment policies and approaches that further stratification and inequity in CPS and drive student enrollment away from neighborhood schools.” Media coverage inaccurately framed this as a decision to close selective enrollment schools altogether.

## What would HB 303 prohibit the Chicago Board of Ed from doing?

Until Feb 1, 2027, the Board would not be able to:

- close, consolidate or phase out any schools (HFA2);
- change the admissions requirements for any selective enrollment school;
- take any action that results in a “disproportionate” decrease in either the total amount or percentage of funds allocated to a selective enrollment school, compared with other schools of similar size.

## Why is this legislation problematic?

### > It is unclear which schools it will apply to:

HB 303 applies to attendance centers with “selective admission requirements that apply to the entire student body.” **Nearly all schools, even selective enrollment high schools, have a mix of admissions requirements.** Will this law apply to Taft, a neighborhood high school with an IB program and an Academic Center for 7-8th grades? Lenart, an elementary with a regional gifted center but a preschool program? Jones College Prep, a selective high school with an attendance boundary for its CTE program and a special ed cluster program? It is not clear.

**> It blocks the ability to budget more equitably and more fairly:** For FY2025, the district is ending the so-called “student-based budgeting” policy (SBB) and will instead fund certain positions at all schools, but prioritize distribution of additional funds based on the needs of a school’s population (“Opportunity Index”). HB 303 would prevent this shift to more equity-driven budgeting, which began in 2021, altogether by barring any “disproportionate decrease” in positions or funds at an SE school. Experienced staff are paid more, and this bill won’t allow for that type of variation across schools. Moreover, **budget decreases or increases can be entirely independent of choices that the Board of Ed is making about how to budget, e.g. due to total enrollment fluctuations or changes in ELL or SPED population.** For example, the cost of a SPED cluster program at a selective school will vary depending on the services needed for the particular set of students enrolled. The looming deficit due to federal covid relief dollars ending will exacerbate HB 303’s restrictions on fair budgeting.

**> Educational outcomes of selective enrollment vs neighborhood high schools are not uniformly more positive,** as research from the Chicago Consortium on School Research and data from their To & Through Project shows. Given this, **why should SE schools receive special budgetary and enrollment protections in state law that non-selective schools can’t also benefit from?**

**> Changes are needed to admissions policies to selective schools to improve equity.** Since 2009, North Side SE high schools have become whiter and wealthier. In spring 2022, CEO Martinez proposed changing SE high school admissions by allocating all seats by residency tier rather than just 70%. HB 303 would block proposed improvements that would increase equitable access to selective schools like this one.

**> It ignores existing facilities planning process in School Code:** Years of advocacy work by communities most impacted by unjust school actions and disinvestment led ILGA to pass legislation in 2009<sup>1</sup> to create a task force and then in 2011<sup>2</sup> to create a process for facility planning, which was further amended in 2018<sup>3</sup> to expand the requirements for the planning process and supporting schools before any school actions. CPS must revise the Educational Facilities Master Plan every five years and create an annual capital improvement plan. There are detailed requirements for the planning process including community input. ILGA should build on existing oversight mechanisms, including reviving the Educational Facilities Task Force which hasn’t met since 2016.

<sup>1</sup> PA 96-0803

<sup>2</sup> PA 97-473, PA 97-0474

<sup>3</sup> PA 100-0965