

Dr. Tony Smith  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Re: CPS letter to ISBE dated Nov 22, 2017

Dear Dr. Smith:

On behalf of the signatories to the joint open letter to the ISBE on CPS special education issues dated November 16, 2017 we want to thank you, your staff members, and all of your Board members for your attentiveness to our presentations at the November 17 Board Meeting. We also appreciate that Mr. Claypool opened up CPS special education for some level of scrutiny as reflected in his letter to ISBE dated November 22, 2017.

At this point, collectively, we are not as yet prepared to respond to the many complex aspects of the Chicago Public Schools letter. We will be responding on December 7 in some detail. We think you will discover that there are a wide variety of issues presented in the CPS letter on which we are not in concurrence with CPS and we believe ISBE, under its authority based in the Illinois School Code and SEC. 616 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, will need to examine the factual basis for the divergence. We believe that there are significant implications in relationship to the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education for many students with disabilities in the divergence.

We do believe it is important for ISBE to promote improvement in the education of students with disabilities in the Chicago Public Schools and the services that will drive those improvements. We believe ISBE has numerous options on how to proceed. We do all believe that the working group proposal raised by CPS in their letter lacks a level of enforceability we believe ISBE needs to exert in relation to the special education program at CPS. But, we are all willing to sit together with CPS and ISBE to find a path forward for our City's students with disabilities. Our more formal response will be forthcoming on December 7.

Yours,

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Representing the signatories to the November 16, 2017 Open Letter to ISBE

Cc: James T. Meeks, Chairman, ISBE  
Members of the ISBE  
Stephanie Jones, Chief Legal Counsel, ISBE  
Forrest Claypool, CEO, CPS  
Janice Jackson, CEO, CPS

Elizabeth Keenan, Chief Officer Diverse Learner Supports and Services, CPS