

2016 BUDGET PROPOSAL

ADDRESSING OVERCROWDING AND CAPITAL NEEDS, GIVING OUR STUDENTS A 21ST CENTURY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Ensuring that every Chicago child from every Chicago neighborhood has access to a high quality education is the top priority of Mayor Emanuel. Thanks to the hard work of our students, teachers, principals and parents, the City is headed in the right direction. By every measure—from graduation rates, to test scores, to attendance, and others— more Chicago students than ever before are receiving the high quality education they need today for success in the jobs and careers of tomorrow.

Making sure that every child can learn inside a modern, 21st century school is essential to their future success. But, for too many students, the schools they are learning in are not up to par. Today, some of our schools are falling victim to years of delayed investments and are combatting leaky roofs and stifling hot classrooms. Meanwhile, some of our schools are so overcrowded that children have classes in stairwells, hallways – and sometimes even in converted closets.

In light of the financial challenges facing Chicago Public Schools (CPS), we as a city need to step in and help. These financial challenges include billions of dollars in deferred maintenance costs and programmatic needs that continue to grow each year.

Utilize the special property tax levy to modernize our schools. In 2003, the legislature in Springfield gave Chicago the right to levy a \$45 million special property tax to help with school modernization. However, in all those intervening years, the city never followed through.

Once this levy is authorized, it will enable CPS to address school overcrowding in Chicago once and for all and it will enable us to ensure that every classroom in every neighborhood is fully air conditioned.

How it would work:

- The CPS capital improvement levy was created by the State Legislature in 2002
- The capital improvement levy is outside of CPS' property tax cap limitations and may increase only by inflation in future years
- The City Council can authorize CPS to approve and enact a capital improvement levy with one vote, after which the CPS board may vote to maintain, increase, or decrease the levy in future years.