

Dear CPS Families, Colleagues, and Supporters,

One of our greatest assets as a city, and as a school district, is our diversity. Students in Chicago Public Schools are exposed to languages and cultures from around the globe, including Puerto Rico, which is experiencing a difficult time right now.

Thousands of our fellow Americans are being forced to leave their homes because of the devastating hurricanes that hit Puerto Rico back in September and we want all displaced Puerto Ricans that have come to our city to know that Chicago's schools will welcome them with open arms.

Although most may only be staying with us for a short time, those who left Puerto Rico deserve every resource that our city has to offer. Everyone should feel at home in Chicago, especially our youngest citizens.

We want to support our Puerto Rican students academically, socially and emotionally, which is why CPS is partnering with agencies across Chicago to make sure their needs, and the needs of their families, are being met. Every Monday and Tuesday in November, agency representatives will gather at the Humboldt Park Field House - 1400 N. Sacramento - from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. to assess the needs of evacuees and provide the following services:

- Access to medical information and services
- Access to services for persons with disabilities
- Access to clothing and other personal items
- Assistance with access to housing

CPS representatives will be on hand to help families from Puerto Rico enroll their children in school. Children forced to flee Puerto Rico because of the hurricanes are considered students in transitional living situations, which means that they may enroll in school immediately without previous records or health screenings.

CPS will waive school fees for these students and will provide them with school supplies and uniforms free of charge. We will also expedite the review process of IEPs, which outline accommodations for students with disabilities, for all children displaced from Puerto Rico, and will provide these students with free health screenings.

CPS will also help to translate any school transcripts. Requests for these translation services can be made by calling (773) 553-1036. Finally, we will assist any qualified professional interested in working in our school system with finding employment. Interested applicants may learn more about available positions by calling CPS Talent Representative Christopher Betts at (773) 553-1051.

Most of us will never know what it's like to have to start over in a new and unfamiliar city. This is what many from Puerto Rico are facing as they arrive in Chicago, and we want to make them feel welcome and supported in our communities. We hope that all displaced families will take advantage of the resources outlined above, and encourage any evacuees from Puerto Rico who need further assistance to call (773) 553-2242.

We value all that our Puerto Rican students bring to our school communities, and pledge to provide them with the same quality education that is afforded to all of Chicago's youth.

Sincerely,

Forrest Claypool
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools

Dr. Janice K. Jackson
Chief Education Officer
Chicago Public Schools