

**ILEA Dec. 3, 2025 - Online Public Comment**

<p>Jonelle Chalmers</p>	<p>IPS should be the only charter authorizer and in charge of streamlined transportation. Tax payer assets should be managed by people accountable to the public. They already have the infrastructure and people to manage large scale projects. It would be inefficient to rebuild the infrastructure and system expertise that is already contained there.</p> <p>Tax payer assets should not be handed over to private groups who will use them to generate profit.</p> <p>The power of the voters should not be diluted with mayoral appointed positions.</p> <p>I am so angry at the plans to completely dismantle IPS and prioritize charter schools over our community schools, run by a democratically elected board, we've had charter schools for 20+ years and it hasn't worked. Public schools are guaranteed in the Indiana constitution. Public schools educate all students and don't play games with discipline to get more challenging students to leave their schools. Charters are motivated by profit. This is not what is in the best interest of our kids.</p>
<p>El'ad Nichols-Kaufman</p>	<p>For transportation, model 1 seems best, but contains its own dangers. I think it is important that the operation of transportation is done by the same bodies run schools. Transportation is closely tied to many aspects of day-to-day school operations, and separating the two would create issues for school start times, extra-curriculars, and disrupt decisions about school service areas. Additionally, I think that there could be a good role for IndyGo to serve high school students along their bus lines, I used the bus to get to my high school, and it was both convenient and helped build good transit ridership habits.</p> <p>For facilities, the choice is highly dependent on the governance model, as noted in the meeting, but option 3 seems like the only good option. Option 1 seems like it would be dysfunctional, likely to cause much conflict given current IPS-charter relations. Options 2 and 4 would separate facilities decisions from the people actually running schools, which is impractical, given how closely tied matters of facilities are to school operations, and would hurt the ability of school leaders to make the decisions they need to make for their schools.</p> <p>As to governance, options 2-4 are various degrees of disenfranchising voters. School boards provide an important way for people to voice their opinion directly on a single issue, creating a way for community to participate in shaping education policy that does not exist for any other issue. When a mayor is elected, voters are concerned with public</p>

	<p>safety, potholes, zoning and more: for voters who are not teachers and do not have children in school, education likely does not enter their top five priorities. While this is unfortunate and misguided, since education has something to do with all issues our city faces, my experience talking to voters at the polls has confirmed this many times over. People do not elect a mayor for her or his expertise in education. School boards, however, are a group of people who are not seeking honor, glory or money: there is none of those in a seat on the IPS school board, or at least much less than in the City-County Building. Instead, they are people dedicated to education, giving them important experience, skills and intentions to providing children with the best education possible.</p> <p>Taking power away from them in each of the options has a different, but dangerous, effect on education in Indianapolis. In option 2, unelected charter school leaders would have a disproportionate sway over Indianapolis school policy. If people in Indianapolis wanted more power for charter schools in the governance of the city's schools, they can vote for pro-charter candidates in elections. If they don't, the model should not be shoved down their throats against their will. Options 3 and 4 are essentially different degrees of mayoral control. Option 3 makes a mockery of voters choices by letting the mayor cherry-pick board members to align with her or his political ideology, and option 4 does away with the idea of representative government entirely by stripping away power from voters. Only option 1, full control by elected representatives with experience in education and elected by voters who have education in mind, can possibly serve the Indianapolis community.</p>
Mariama Shaheed	<p>The proposed models must clearly safeguard students, protect school autonomy, and ensure long-term sustainability. This requires guaranteed, written-into-policy representation for charter leaders on any governing board; preservation of at least two independent authorizers to prevent a single-authorizer monopoly; protection of schools' operational authority over staffing, closures, and growth; and a transportation system led only by entities with proven large-scale experience, with schools retaining flexibility and alternatives if service fails. Facilities decisions must be transparent, prohibit forced transfers, protect ownership and chartered growth plans, and ensure students are never displaced. Overall, any model must uphold fair governance with transparency and representation, independent oversight, equitable transportation, and transparent, student-centered facilities processes.</p>
Kevin Teasley	<p><a href="mailto:Kteasley@geoacademies.org">Kteasley@geoacademies.org</a></p>
Britt Booram	<p>We are calling for you to adopt THE PEOPLE'S PROPOSAL. - a proposal supported by over 1,000 IPS parents (via our sign on letter) that makes IPS the sole authorizer, manager of facilities/transportation, and remains governed by an elected board.</p> <p>Why? While we appreciate the work that went into these subcommittees, the models are inadequate, too vague, and siloed. This is largely due to poor guidance from the legislature. IPS parents are really frustrated with our city and state leaders. We believe</p>

decisions about our schools should be driven by parents and educators through a democratic process. We feel that the legislature forced this district review on us because of a problem they created - a complex system of unaccountable charters. IPS, on the other hand, has been consistently accountable to us and responsive to us through the democratic process. That's why we voted for RBS and why we trust our school board to make good decisions with our tax dollars. We hope you see this as an opportunity to rebuild trust in government by listening to and empowering IPS, not undermining it.

I also want to highlight some of the good work happening in IPS. Charters are good at telling their stories and we've heard from them about the importance of autonomy and innovation to drive outcomes. We believe this can be done, and is actively being done, within district-led schools that are also accountable and equitable in serving all learners. The IPS 55 Butler Lab Reggio Emilia model is a great example. It challenges traditional learning approaches through a research-driven curriculum of child-led projects, the 100 languages of learning, and the "Image of Child" philosophy that ALL children are capable and competent. To call us a "traditional" school is inaccurate. We are a great example of a school that is empowered to innovate while also participating in the IPS system and providing high quality education to all learners. At 55, we have 320 K-5 learners; about 50% free/reduced lunch, 13% on IEPs, and 10% ELL. We often get mid-year transfers from other schools and have been told our school is "recommended" to families with high need learners because of our inclusive philosophy. According to our principal, this year, about 50% of those transfers are from charter schools. While we are proud of our school's commitment to the highest need learners, we believe this is something all schools should strive for and that requires accountability and more funding. Each year, IPS has experienced a gap between the funds needed to serve students in special education vs what is funded by the state. The district makes up the difference by pulling from the general fund. If resources are taken from the district (to support charters), this gap will widen.

I really appreciated Dr. Johnson's question at the recent ILEA meeting "what problem are we trying to solve?" and I keep coming back to that. The problem is chronic underfunding and how to deal with charters who want to siphon taking tax dollars from IPS without accountability. The problem is NOT with IPS schools management. IPS parents do NOT want a city/state takeover of IPS to fix the charters' financial problems. If charters want tax dollars, then they need to join IPS and be truly public with one accountable authorizer and elected board. We can support a model that gives our democratically-elected IPS board sole authority over schools that get our tax dollars. We cannot support models that create additional layers of governance and independent authorities. It is deeply unpopular to add more complexity, cost, red tape, and administrative bloat. Creating a "collaborative" or "opt in" system without mandates doesn't solve the problem. We want local control and less bureaucratic meddling. Please adopt THE

	PEOPLE'S PROPOSAL and make IPS the sole authorizer, manager of facilities/transportation, and democratically governed.
Stephanie Rowe	For transportation, the Collaborative Compact model seems most appropriate. For Facilities, IPS should be the provider. For Governance, the IPS board should over-see all district run schools. There are the only options I see as appropriate to be responsible with taxpayer money and to ensure quality education for all IPS students.
Bri Booram	I support the The People's Proposal
Katie Polemis	Public education belongs to the people of Indianapolis, not to appointed bodies. Schools must remain under the full oversight of democratically elected officials who answer directly to the community.
Monica Shellhamer	<p>After the recommendations from the ILEA this past week, the Indianapolis Education Association believes that there are some strong options for the future of IPS.</p> <p>When looking at the transportation options presented at the meeting, we believe that the advisory board would be the best option. IPS already has shown the ability to uniquely run transportation for the traditional public schools and the innovation schools within the IPS family. IEA feels that Indianapolis Public Schools should be the one who is the facilities provider and helping to maintain the buildings within our boundaries. We already show a strong partnership with Innovation Schools who utilize our buildings and think that this model just needs to be refined as we look at how we can best service all the buildings within the boundary. We do agree with the facilities task force that the fourth option presented is the least favorable.</p> <p>Finally, with the recommendations for the governance structure, the first option where IPS is the authorizer and you could appeal to the mayor's office would be best. We elect the officials to the IPS Board as a commitment to the communities they serve. This ensures that governance is responsible to the people that they serve and provides a clear structure for community engagement when the time for new programming in specific parts of the city is necessary. IEA feels that any attempt to outnumber an elected body that serves IPS is harmful to the community and a board with more appointees than elected officials sends a message that the community can't be trusted with our schools.</p>
Jesse Brown	<p>First - your selection of a feedback session at a date/time when teachers and parents will not be able to attend shows that this board is not the appropriate decisionmaker about education matters.</p> <p>But more substantively: it is totally inappropriate to subrogate the duties of a democratically elected school board away to an appointed board. This would be true in any city in the United States, but it's especially true in a city run by an absolutely corrupt and unpopular mayor like Joe Hogsett. Moving forward with any of the ILEA options that remove democracy in favor of cronyism would be a political disaster - I can promise that.</p> <p>Every resident of Marion County deserves a choice and a voice - the fully funded, fully</p>

	public option presented by DSA encourages more participation in our elections, gives accountability and options to all people, and importantly doesn't waste public money in hiring consultants or middle-men. Facilities and transportation are both managed well for all school types, with no waste caused by empty buildings or inefficient bus routes.
Chris	Here's a recommendation for the Mayor and his "alliance" -- how about you stop trying to dismantle public education! You can twist yourselves into pretzels trying to justify the privatization of public education all you want, but the truth is either a) you stand to profit off this Republican-led privatization (cough, MindTrust, cough) or b) you are a terrible coward who should does not deserve the weighty responsibility of making this decision. Either way, you are a bad person and history (as well as your God) will judge you accordingly. Shame, shame, shame.
Angela lamble	The present state of our schools is terrible. Trying to run schools as buisnesses is falling,no schools don't make profits . We want fully funded PUBLIC schools that teach education, critical thinking, not robot test takers. My children take test for scores for the state more than they learn skills that will actually help them. They test all but one month during the active school session.We want educators not shills of government running schools. All schools deserve funding, so. E need to do better but usually that comes with funding them and paying teachers livable wages. I am tired of closed door meeting that take away from schools and the day to day leadership. We want raises above 10%, fully funded public school, no more vouchers, and school board control.. Not our mayor, not the minds trust or whatever co. Mittee is trying to make charter schools a thing . Stop get your politics out of schools, they are not buisnesses, they are learning institutions. As a a state that is low in efucation, bring back education and not for profit models that enrich business interest. Your current model needs to be changed. Let the school boards , parents , and educators make choices on transportation, classes, curriculum - Not Politicians who don't even have a clue about government more or less education. The mayor should never be involved. He is failing us a mayor, destroying the community. We definitely do not want our public school resources being used for charters and private schools. Try funding IPS instead of trying to make for profit badly run schools the only option. The regulation on charters is terrible and they don't perform better. Public school fully funded, all areas even poor areas.
Eric Reiberg	Fully Funded PUBLIC education. No more charters. No more vouchers. Get the MindTrust and TogetherED and all the other vampires out of our public schools.
Elizabeth Sorgius	A school board should be fully elected by the people it represents. They should serve a term that lasts at least 4 years. The elected board should be the sole charter authorizer. Too many charter authorizers weakens the integrity of educational programming. With no continuity in oversight, there is ample opportunity for inequity when multiple authorizers exist.
Megan Alderman	I completely endorse the Fully Funded, Fully public model which would great a single, equitable, truly voter-represented system to determine facilities and transportation. It

	<p>also makes total sense to have ONE democratically-elected charter authorized in this completely over-saturated market.</p>
<p>Erin Turner</p>	<p>I STRONGLY OPPOSE the ILEA proposal. This is an undemocratic power grab.</p> <p>You want to hand control of our schools to an unelected board? Absolutely not. We already have elected IPS Board Commissioners who answer to voters. This proposal strips away our democratic right to choose our own leaders and hold them accountable.</p> <p>If you can't win elections fairly, you don't get to just eliminate elections. That's not democracy—that's a dictatorship.</p> <p>This is corruption, plain and simple. This whole scheme is designed to funnel taxpayer money to politically connected insiders through outsourced contracts. We've seen this playbook before with the IEDC scandal. Organizations like TogetherEd—packed with charter school industry operatives and former officials with documented conflicts of interest—are already lining up to profit off our kids' education.</p> <p>Our tax dollars should educate children, not enrich cronies. IPS is improving—stop sabotaging it!</p> <p>IPS just achieved more than double the state average increase in IREAD scores. Parents are organizing. The community is engaged. The district is improving under its current elected leadership.</p> <p>And your response is to blow it all up? This isn't about improving education. This is about powerful interests trying to force an outcome they couldn't achieve through democratic means.</p> <p>The Real Solution: FULLY FUNDED, FULLY PUBLIC</p> <p>Keep the elected IPS Board in charge of transportation, facilities, and authorization for all schools. Create one unified, equitable system. Unite charter schools under local democratic oversight. Stop the middlemen from stealing our resources.</p> <p>Let voters decide the future of education in Indianapolis—not backroom dealers and privatization profiteers.</p> <p>What I demand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kill the ILEA proposal immediately</li> <li>2. Adopt the Fully Funded, Fully Public model instead</li> </ol>

	<p>3. Stop working with right-wing privatizers to destroy public education</p> <p>4. Let voters choose their own leaders</p> <p>Mayor Hogsett and Councilor Lewis: You call yourselves Democrats while conspiring with far-right Republicans to disenfranchise voters and sell off public assets. This is a betrayal of everything your party claims to stand for.</p> <p>We see what you're doing. We know who benefits. And we will fight this corruption every step of the way.</p> <p>Vote NO on ILEA. Protect democracy. Defend our schools.</p>
Frank Chiki	Indianapolis Education Authority, with one change. Five, not four members of the elected IPS Board should be appointed. Since the IEA would oversee IPS, elected officials should form the majority of the Authority since they have been selected by the people of Indianapolis.
Adriel Trott	Public education is a public good. I support The People's Proposal for a Voice and a Choice. There should be one elected school board, one charter approving body, making the elected school board responsible for transportation and facilities, establishing equitable standards, true collaboration, and equity in right-sizing.
Alicia Earnest	I support a fully-public, democratically elected school board to make decisions regarding transportation and facilities in the Indianapolis Public School district. Those making decisions regarding public funds and assets MUST be accountable to the people they serve, and the only way to do that is if they are democratically elected. As a parent of a disabled child who currently attends special ed preschool and who will need an IEP all the way to graduation, I support fully-funded, fully-public education. Kids like mine seem to be forgotten in this conversation, even though decisions made will deeply affect their opportunities for equal access to education.
Graham collins	I would prefer if IPS is consolidated into just center township
Amelia Robinson	The governance model seems to make the most sense when it comes to keeping things fair, accountable, and focuses on families and their students.
Emily Holmes	I am Emily Holmes, a concerned IPS parent of a student at CFI2. In general, I have found the decision-making around public schools in Indianapolis to be unnecessarily opaque, and I worry that the current governance proposals will only worsen that aspect of the education system here. I am in favor of governance that includes a democratically elected school board that oversees all public schools (including charter schools). As it is, the system is fragmented with too many competing interests. Finally, I would like to express my disappointment that these meetings happen at times that prevent parents from being involved.

Windi  
Hornsby

I am writing to express strong opposition to any proposed governance model that includes appointed school board members. Our schools do not need additional layers of bureaucracy or political influence. They need a board directly accountable to the families and communities they serve. A fully elected school board ensures transparency, responsiveness, and trust, which are essential to maintaining public confidence in our educational system.

We are an IPS family by choice. Schools like Potter and Harshman have offered and continue to offer opportunities that our districted township schools cannot. Because of these programs and the dedication of IPS educators, our eldest child will enter high school with 12 earned credits. This success reflects the strength and innovation within IPS when it is guided by local leadership accountable to its community.

We reject any governance option that removes control of operations, facilities, and transportation from those who know the district best: IPS itself. These essential functions must remain under IPS management to ensure consistency, safety, and quality for all students. Furthermore, we resent the insinuation that IPS taxpayers are not informed or capable enough to elect their own school board members. IPS must remain democratically elected, fully funded, and fully public — for the good of its students, families, and taxpayers.

I am also disappointed that this meeting is scheduled during school pick-up hours and the regular workday, making it difficult or impossible for many families to attend, myself included. Meaningful community engagement requires accessibility, and the current schedule completely and thoroughly undermines that goal.

Additionally, requesting feedback only two weeks after the November 19th presentation does not provide sufficient time for families, educators, and community members to review materials, discuss implications, or prepare informed responses. Limiting public comment to a single hour further restricts participation on an issue of such importance.

Finally, the indication that the committee may vote immediately following public comment is deeply concerning. Such a timeline fails to demonstrate genuine consideration of community input; the majority of the board clearly doesn't value community input, which feels like back room deals have already been made. Decisions about how our schools are governed should be made with care, reflection, and respect for the voices of those most affected: our families, educators, communities, and students.

I urge the ILEA to postpone any vote, ensure authentic community engagement, and commit to a governance model that keeps IPS democratically accountable, fully funded,

	<p>and fully public, for the benefit of the children and families it serves.</p> <p>Respectfully,  Windi Hornsby  Current Harshman FSTA At-Large Member and parent of 6th and 8th grade students  Former Theodore Potter #74 PTO Coordinator and parent  #IPSbyChoice  Central Indiana Democratic Socialists of America - Powers and Mary Haggood Local  Member #fullyfundedfullypublic</p>
Katie Polemis	<p>Scheduling your meeting about public schools DURING public school pickup time (and typical work hours) is clearly a strategy to reduce or remove the public comment portion of your meeting. I am extremely disappointed in your decision to make it very difficult or impossible for parents and caregivers to attend.</p> <p>There are well over 1000 IPS families, including mine, who do not support any governance model that includes appointed school board members. Our schools don't need unnecessary layers of bureaucracy — we need a school board we trust, directly accountable to our children and our community.</p> <p>Please listen to the community you serve.</p>
Michael Bell	<p>I want elected officials rather than Appointed.</p>
Anh Nguyen	<p>1. The three topics need to be treated together since we cannot really separate them. One of the purposes of the ILEA work is to make the system more efficient. Breaking transportation, facility, and governance into 3 different branches makes it less efficient and more bureaucracy. From the parent perspective, this creates more barriers for parents to be involved and be informed about the education landscape. With independent board for each one, if parents want to stay informed and raise concerns, they need to go to each one. This is not sustainable for many families given that we also have other commitments such as works, kids' extracurricular/homework. In fact, my family found it really hard to balance between attending ILEA, school board meetings and family activities/work the past 6 months. While we can pull it off that past few months, this is not sustainable in the long run.</p> <p>2. Thus, there needs to be one board overseeing transportation, facility, and governance, and the board needs to be fully elected. As of right now, the IPS school board is already responsible for many innovation schools. The IPS school board president also stated that students living within the IPS boundary regardless of school choice always have a voice back in February (<a href="https://www.facebook.com/IndyRecorder/videos/ips-school-board-president/4025054437729259/">https://www.facebook.com/IndyRecorder/videos/ips-school-board-president/4025054437729259/</a>). In fact, many charter school parents have been attending and raising their concerns/voices at IPS school board meetings. And it is clear that the school board is voted in by all people living within the IPS boundary, not just parents who send their kids to district-run schools.</p>

	<p>3. Therefore, I want to support a model in which we have a unified and fully elected school board that will oversee transportation, facility, and governance/academic. Within this model, the unified school board will also authorize charters. This is to ensure that all schools are hold under one accountability system.</p> <p>4. To ensure stability and little to no disruption, there should be a transition period. As charter schools transition from multiple authorizers to 1 authorizer, the process should be as little disruptive as possible. My suggestion is to let the current charter carry through with their current authorizer until they have to renew their school authorization or give charter schools a period of 5 years. Then after that, they will have to go through with the fully elected ,unified school district of Indianapolis.</p> <p>5. The transportation should be mandatory, and schools have 3-5 years to opt-in. I think it may be a logistical nightmare if all schools opt in at the same time. This will have to be carried out in phases. Also, there should be little disruption (or none) to students who are currently using the bus. Students who have been using buses should still have access to the bus moving forward. We should expand the bus services; that does not mean taking away from one group to give to another group.</p> <p>6. There should be a moratorium on schools for 5 years (by the end of 2031) to be aligned with items 4 and 5 and to give time to stabilize schools in the district as well as carrying out transportation implementation.</p>
<p>Connie Szabo Schmucker</p>	<p>Transportation model* - provide transportation for all IPS students. Any charter students need to provide their own transportation.</p> <p>Governance model - Use Model 1 - Current IPS Governance.</p> <p>Fully Fund - Fully Public Schools</p> <p>*Pursue Alternative transportation - look at establishing Bike Buses and Walking School Buses for kids within 1 mile of schools where there is safe walking/bicycling infrastructure. Use funds within the City of Indianapolis to establish safe walking/bicycling infrastructure options for students to get to school. One time expense for infrastructure which will save funds in the long term on transportation, students would arrive more energized and ready to learn and those prior-transportation funds could be spent on teachers, students, education, curriculum.</p>
<p>Allison Wiesman</p>	<p>ILEA members, parents, teachers, advocates for traditional public schools and charters alike agree on the value of a unified school system. But there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The best unified school district would be ultimately accountable to the public via a democratically elected board. The ILEA's other proposed options add needless complexity and create further opportunities for wealthy, private actors to personally profit rather than address the real issues: underfunding, systemic racism, and lack of public accountability.</p>

A governance model that unifies charter schools, innovation schools, and traditional public schools under the democratically elected public school board will provide all families and community members with a voice and a choice. It will create a stable, effective, innovative, and high-quality education system for all students. Under this plan, charter students and parents will finally have an accountable board that represents them democratically without sacrificing their school choice. Similarly, IPS and innovation school parents will have the flexibility to exercise school choice without exiting their stable public school system.

Such a model would incorporate the following key elements.

#### Fully Elected Public School Board

This board is democratically elected, voted in and held accountable by all district constituents, and representative of all families regardless of school type.

This board would be the highest level governing body for all the schools in the district boundaries. Neither the OEI nor any mayorally-appointed board can be allowed to overrule the decisions of those who directly represent school families.

#### One Charter Authorizer

Shifting charter authorization to a single authorizer—the fully elected school board—would make real accountability possible.

This ensures that schools' first priorities are serving the needs of students and filling gaps even when those needs come into conflict with the desires of wealthy political actors.

#### Transportation and Facilities: Elected School Board Stewards Operations

Continuing to operate facilities under IPS ensures minimal disruption to parents, families, and educators, while preserving expertise and continuity of IPS services.

It also would avoid further outsourcing, which is inefficient and allows taxpayer dollars to exit the community.

Finally, such a model would provide intentional, equitable distribution of resources, facilities, and transportation across school types—a key legislative mandate of the ILEA.

#### Equitable Standards: Elected School Board Creates Policy

Situating policymaking authority under a single elected board creates fair, equitable, and consistent standards for all school types, while preserving what makes each school unique.

Policymaking authority would include the ability to transparently track real student population needs with a consistent data methodology and attend to on-the-ground needs that may vary from school to school.

#### True Collaboration: Elected School Board Facilitates School Choices

Unifying district managed schools, innovation schools, and independent charter schools under one governance structure would end the power struggles caused by a fractured public school system.

Making charters, innovation schools, and district managed schools alike eligible for funding from one pot of money will end the competition for resources between IPS and

	<p>charters once and for all.</p> <p>Equity in Right-Sizing</p> <p>In the unfortunate circumstances when schools must close, an accountable school board, acting with community input and applying universal criteria that promote racial, economic, and geographic equity, is the best actor to make these tough decisions. A unified public system minimizes disruption to families, teachers, staff, and the local economy, because students and staff could easily transfer to other schools within the same system.</p> <p>Public education is a public good. Full stop. It belongs to the people of Indianapolis and its</p>
Collin Campbell-Maher	<p>Scheduling this meeting for a time when IPS parents are not available is dishonest, disrespectful to families of IPS students, and is proof that this body knows they are in the wrong. Removing the accountability of elected school board officials and replacing them with political cronies is the wrong direction for the public school system in Indianapolis.</p>
Jessica Saenz	<p>This scheduling speaks directly to how much weight public input carries in yet another government-appointed body's decision making process. Do NOT take away our schoolboard elections.</p>
Leslie Leatherman	<p>As an IPS parent and community member, I urge the Indiana Local Education Alliance to make it a priority to preserve a fully elected, community-accountable school board. Democratic governance is essential to keeping IPS responsive to the families it serves, especially as the education landscape in Indianapolis becomes more fragmented and resources are stretched thin.</p> <p>With years of underfunding and uneven accountability across schools, the district cannot afford to lose one of its strongest safeguards for transparency and equity. A fully elected board ensures that decisions about budgets, oversight, real estate, and the opening or closing of schools are made by leaders who must answer directly to the community.</p> <p>IPS families rely on public schools as stable, inclusive anchors for their children. To protect that stability and maintain public trust, it is critical that the final recommendations affirm the importance of keeping the school board fully elected and accountable to voters.</p> <p>Leslie Leatherman IPS #55 parent</p>
Danielle Cruz	<p>My name is Danielle Cruz. I am a proud IPS alumni and current IPS parent. I am writing today to plead with you, the ILEA, to remember that a successful public education system leads to a more successful community. People who care and want the best for</p>

	<p>themselves and others.</p> <p>I want people in a governance role that feels the same. And that must be FULLY, DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED school board. There can not be a board overseeing the education of thousands of Marion county’s children that are appointed by the mayor or trusts.</p> <p>It’s inappropriate, unacceptable and unethical to allow other people to decide who will serve as the board. We are a public school system- we deserve and demand a voice. That voice is elected. Not appointed.</p> <p>I would be there in person, but the time you choose is ridiculous. I sat until almost 9 barely two weeks ago to speak but had to leave because of my children. To choose the next opportunity to share public comment at 4pm on a weekday is comical. I don’t clock out until after 4, in midtown. I would never be able to make it in time. I feel that this was intentional. You have left little time for public comment (I think you may know how unpopular some of your models are) and barely any time to really digest the options.</p>
Noah Simpson - Speakeasy Soccer	<p>Our partnership with IPS has been an incredible boon to my 501(3)c charities ability to assist, deliver and help our local community via at-cost and for-benefit programming. We are concerned that if management of our schools is moved to a private entity our partnership and programming will be disallowed and access to local resources for local's will be limited to those with the highest income or the highest bidders.</p>
Jessica Simpson	<p>Our partnership with IPS has been an incredible boon to my 501(3)c charities ability to assist, deliver and help our local community via at-cost and for-benefit programming. We are concerned that if management of our schools is moved to a private entity our partnership and programming will be disallowed and access to local resources for local's will be limited to those with the highest income or the highest bidders.</p>
Austin Fortiner	<p>Trying to support IPS</p>
Lacey Minton	<p>THE only acceptable governance model is the PEOPLE'S PROPOSAL. This includes shifting the charter authorization AWAY from the mayor's office to an elected, publicly accountable school board that represents the true diversity of families and constituents within IPS. This School Board should be responsible for OPERATIONS and POLICY, including governance of IPS schools, innovation schools and charter schools. This is a FULLY REALIZABLE VISION for building a unified, cooperate and just public school system.</p>
Chloe Ramsey	<p>I am a junior at Shortridge High School, and I am very concerned that HEA 1515 allows private and charter schools to access more public resources. If these schools receive the benefits of public funding without following the same rules as public schools, how wi ll this impact the future of public education and how can we make sure that public schools continue to receive equal support?</p>
Lindsey Shine	<p>THE only acceptable governance model is the PEOPLE'S PROPOSAL. This includes shifting the charter authorization AWAY from the mayor's office to an elected, publicly</p>

	<p>accountable school board that represents the true diversity of families and constituents within IPS. This School Board should be responsible for OPERATIONS and POLICY, including governance of IPS schools, innovation schools and charter schools. This is a FULLY REALIZABLE VISION for building a unified, cooperate and just public school system</p>
Anna Zimmerman	<p>The only acceptable governance model is the PEOPLE'S PROPOSAL. This includes shifting the charter authorization AWAY from the mayor's office to an elected, publicly accountable school board that represents the true diversity of families and constituents within IPS. This School Board should be responsible for OPERATIONS and POLICY, including governance of IPS schools, innovation schools, and charter schools. This is a FULLY REALIZABLE VISION for building a unified, cooperative, and just public school system.</p>
Maggie Girard	<p>I am a licensed mental health counselor, IPS alumni with 2 children at school 91. I am discouraged that this meeting was scheduled during the work day/right at school pick-up time, making it so difficult to attend. Voting right after the meeting doesn't give ILEA members time to process and discuss the comments of attendees. I worry how many voices are not being heard, given these circumstances.</p> <p>The idea of appointed school board members is troubling to me. They are meant to represent our students and community, and appointees in those roles will almost certainly view these issues through lenses that will not prioritize the needs of our kids and community. The only model that TRULY fits the needs of our students and community is modeled in the People's Proposal, which eliminates an extra layer of bureaucracy by unifying all public schools with one democratically elected board who represents charters, IPS and innovation schools. This eliminates the competition between school models and allows the available resources to be shared among students. I am unsure why charters need separate boards if the resources are being shared in the ways proposed. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.</p>
Leslie Schulte	<p>Public schools should be run by the public. Appointed leaders circumvent the public directly voting directly for leaders!</p>
Luke Boggess	<p>I am a teacher in Indianapolis Public Schools. I have a child who attends Indianapolis Public Schools. My property taxes go to Indianapolis Public Schools. I vote for the school board that oversees my livelihood, the safety of my children, and the educational experience of my students. Please, do not diminish the value of my vote. I trust my community to make the right decisions when electing school board members because I am engaged in my community, I talk to my neighbors, and I participate in the democratic process.</p> <p>I do not trust appointed positions. I have no way of being heard by these individuals; nor will my community be able to hold them accountable. Please do not undermine the voices of my community.</p>

	<p>Please support Governance Model Option 1.</p> <p>Please allow my elected board members to oversee how tax dollars are spent when it comes to facilities and transportation.</p>
<p>Jonelle Chalmers</p>	<p>Any governance model should require that the schools be directed by a democratically elected school board and contain no appointed members. Schools should be led by people who are accountable to the public and not at all motivated by making a profit for their funders.</p> <p>Under the leadership of the elected school board, IPS has drastically increased testing scores and improved graduation rates. There is absolutely no evidence that they are not capable of leading a thriving school system. If you actually took comments from the public, instead of limiting them to 60 seconds and one hour total, you may actually hear from parents that we like our schools.</p> <p>We have a tremendous relationship with so many adults in our child's school. Any issues have been promptly addressed. Our school board publishes their meeting times and holds meetings at a time when people can actually attend. It is unconscionable to schedule a meeting about an issue that will affect parents and teachers at a time when most cannot attend without extraordinary effort and spending money on childcare. The fully funded, fully public model is the only way to go. IPS has the experience to manage large school transportation and facilities operations because they have been doing it for years and years.</p> <p>A look to other cities who have converted their schools to all charter shows that it doesn't work! Why are we spending all of this money and effort to model a system that has shown it doesn't work?</p> <p>Why are we considering spending all of this money to duplicate systems already in place and add needless additional layers of bureaucracy?</p> <p>Why bring in extra administration that costs money and takes away from the primary purpose of education?</p> <p>Everything about this process stinks. The state government and charter groups have been trying to dismantle IPS for years. It must stop. This outright aggression towards one public school system is disgusting.</p> <p>Schools spend public money and should be accountable to the public, not to a mayor or a private board or anyone else. Anything less than this risks destroying our public schools. IPS should run everything.</p> <p>IPS should be the only charter authorizer.</p> <p>There needs to be a moratorium on new charter schools. The market is saturated.</p> <p>The \$1 law must be repealed.</p>

	<p>IPS deserves the right to control their own destiny. It has continued to face additional hurdles that other districts don't face and is constantly being judged on things that are outside of their control.</p> <p>I'm truly disgusted by this attempt to disenfranchise Indianapolis voters.</p>
Bri Booram	<p>I am the parent of a Kindergartener at School 39 as well as a social worker working in early intervention. I only support a model that retains a fully elected school board. As the system is fragmented by too many choices and traditional schools are losing funding, we need one cohesive, locally accountable board to help ensure the future of our public schools best represents the stakeholders.</p> <p>I also want to express my deep disappointment that ILEA chose to schedule a “public” meeting about the future of education at a time when most families are unable to participate due to school pick-up. This either seems devious or out-of-touch (both options concern me about your fitness for making such big decisions relating to our children’s educational future).</p>
Zane Houser	<p>Our partnership with IPS has been an incredible boon to my 501(3)c charities ability to assist, deliver and help our local community via at-cost and for-benefit programming. We are concerned that if management of our schools is moved to a private entity our partnership and programming will be disallowed and access to local resources for local's will be limited to those with the highest income or the highest bidders.</p>
Joseph Kartholl	<p>I would love to attend the meeting, but I am a teacher and my contract hours are until 4:10pm. It would be beneficial and helpful to many, including parents of current students, to hold the meetings at a time that is not during school pickup.</p>
Kate Brumbaugh	<p>Indianapolis families deserve the same rights as every other school district in our state, of having elected school board commissioners who represent their constituents and are held accountable by them.</p> <p>I have grave concerns with governance models with appointed boards and how conflicts of interest will be defined and addressed, especially with partisan affiliations.</p>
Kim Reier	<p>The Indiana Charter Innovation Center (ICIC) represents charter schools across the state, including the vast majority of those located in Indianapolis. Our members include both independent and innovation charter schools that collectively serve the majority of students who live within IPS boundaries.</p> <p>We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony to the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance (ILEA) and to reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that every student in Indianapolis has equitable access to high-quality public education.</p>

The ILEA was created by the Indiana General Assembly to explore solutions that improve equitable access to schools within IPS boundaries, specifically regarding facilities and transportation. We urge the ILEA to recommend that the General Assembly establish independent entities to oversee facilities and transportation within the IPS district boundaries. Governance of those entities should include individuals with strong content knowledge and reflect the reality that most students residing within IPS boundaries attend charter schools.

While there has been public discussion suggesting that transportation and facility solutions require consideration of overall district and charter governance, we respectfully disagree. Governance of these entities is indeed important, but the four overarching governance options presented at the most recent ILEA meeting would constrain charter school growth and innovation. Charter schools within IPS boundaries are academically and financially strong, even with the stark difference in overall funding compared to IPS. Independent transportation and facilities entities could address issues of underutilized buildings or school density without additional oversight beyond what exists today.

The charter schools represented by ICIC are united in opposition to any recommendation that would:

- Restrict or reassign authorizing authority;
- Require schools to change authorizers; or
- Grant mandatory authorizing power to IPS.

It is important to note that no stakeholder group, including families, schools, authorizers, or policymakers, has called for changes to charter governance. Indiana already has a rigorous authorizing framework that ensures accountability, transparency, and performance oversight. This framework has been nationally recognized for its effectiveness, as Indiana currently ranks first in the nation for its charter school law, according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Any effort to consolidate or restrict authorizing authority would put that ranking at risk and could weaken a system that has long been regarded as one of the strongest and most balanced in the country.

We strongly urge the ILEA to continue its focus on advancing coordinated and effective strategies to ensure equitable access to facilities and transportation for all students. These issues are complex and deserving of focused attention, and addressing them could meaningfully improve how students and families access schools across Indianapolis.

It is well known that IPS faces significant financial and operational challenges. While those issues are critical to the future of the district, they are specific to IPS and not to charter schools. Any discussions about the district's future, including how it is governed, should occur through the appropriate processes and not alter the governance or

	<p>oversight of charter schools.</p> <p>We support a strong and thriving IPS that provides students with access to excellent schools and modern facilities. At the same time, Indianapolis’s charter schools must continue operating under a governance framework that preserves their independence, innovation, and accountability. These priorities are not in conflict. Both are essential to meeting the needs of students and families across our city, and both can advance without restructuring charter oversight. (1/2)</p>
Kim Reier	<p>The Indiana Charter Innovation Center respectfully asks that the ILEA focus on the legislative mandates of creating solutions for facilities and transportation and, if desired, recommend a governance structure for IPS while leaving charter school governance in its current form through Indiana’s nationally recognized and successful charter authorizing system. We also recognize how deeply invested the members of the ILEA are in supporting students and strengthening public education. Our shared commitment to students is exactly why it is essential to remain focused on the issues we all agree must be addressed.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing commitment to improving educational access for all Indianapolis students. (2/2)</p>
Meredith Foster	<p>A strong democratic backbone to our public institutions is vital, especially here and now. Electing school board officials means the local community is represented by people who serve their interests, who answer to them and not the whims of big government.</p>
Beth Booram	<p>I am speaking out against any form of organization in public school education that eliminates an elected board that includes parents! The meeting you’ve called today, on short notice and during pickup time, is an example of just how committed you are at eliminating parental input. It’s disgraceful!!</p>
Deborah Heath	<p>In looking at the models presented, I feel that IPS needs to remain at the helm. The constituents of Indianapolis Public Schools deserve an elected school board as a voice for how the schools are ran within its boundaries. In looking at the transportation models, has ridership been discussed with IndyGo? It is concerning that is even a consideration of IPS students riding on public transit. I feel there needs to be provisions for all schools that take public tax dollars to accept all students. In closing, I would be remiss to not address the timing of your meeting. It is reprehensible to schedule a meeting that is intended for public comment about the models to be scheduled at 4:00 PM in the afternoon. Many IPS parents are just picking up students during that time window so some would assume that you do not value their presence or comments about the models.</p>

Stephanie Lehner	As an IPS parent, I am displeased that I cannot participate in public comment at today's ILEA meeting, due to the meeting being scheduled during school pickup. I demand that the ILEA suspend their voting and instead take more time to listen to the students, families, and educators who rely on IPS every day. I demand a democratically-elected school board and will not support any model that takes away our voting rights and our right to democratically-govern our public schools.
Steven Grossi	As a parent of two IPS students, I cannot support any governance model that includes appointed school board members. We parents need accountability: a fully-elected board accountable to voters, not additional layers of bureaucracy and diffusion of responsibility.
Jessie Herdrich Irwin	Your scheduled December 3 meeting to vote on the proposed plans is during school pickup/ drop off making it nearly impossible for most parents to attend. This seems to have been scheduled purposely. I am the parent of IPS students and the spouse of an IPS teacher. We deserve to take part in these decisions. This should be rescheduled for a time and date when parents can actively participate and postponed so that more feedback from parents can be submitted. I demand a democratically elected school board and I will not support a model that takes away my voting rights or our right to democratically govern our school board.
Abigail Freeman	I wanted to show my support for the model number 3 or number 4. I've been an IPS parent for many, many years but have never lived in the district and I've never gotten to choose representatives of the district. I would rather a more educated and informed person appoint people rather than others electing - either way, I'm not getting a voice.
Rachel Popma	<p>As an IPS parent of 10+ years, and the parent of a student attending a private high school, I'm familiar with the challenges and opportunities of the Indianapolis school landscape. As a taxpayer and an IPS parent, I'm strongly against any model that removes an elected board as a decision-maker for transportation, facilities, or governance involving IPS. It's critical that decision-makers are able to be held accountable for their use of our community's funds and their decisions involving our children.</p> <p>I also question the ILEA's decision to hold a vote on proposed models before there has been sufficient time to gather feedback via ongoing surveys and listening sessions. This does not create the impression that the alliance is genuinely interested in hearing from the community or that it values that insight.</p>
Nicole Brock	<p>Governance Model Option 1 is the only option that even comes close to what I think should be done.</p> <p>I believe in public education, and desperately want it to succeed in Indianapolis. The landscape now is so frustrating it's making me consider moving to give my child a better foundation. We have been investing time and energy into our son's IPS school that we</p>

	<p>can walk to, and building community in our neighborhood. But it often feels like an uphill battle against people who ought to be on our side. Childhood is short, and our students' education can't wait for Indiana to get its act together. These decisions are affecting real kids, right now.</p> <p>Public schools need to be run by elected school boards that the community can hold accountable. The population that elects the Indianapolis mayor goes way beyond IPS district boundaries, so we should not be allowing people whose tax dollars and votes go to other school districts to influence how our district is run. Option 4 makes no sense, and should be dismissed.</p> <p>My personal opinion is that we don't need charter schools at all. We need a public school district that has the flexibility to offer what students and families need. If there's a market for private schools, that's fine, but tax dollars should not be going to families who choose them. All of the "choices" feel unnecessary to me, and create mind-boggling inefficiencies, not to mention massive confusion for parents entering the school system.</p> <p>What would it take to make all of our public schools desirable, vibrant, safe, and successful? They are supposed to be a cornerstone of democratic society, and it's enraging to me how little regard our state's leaders seem to have for these foundational institutions. Schools don't need to be customized to every family's desires to do the job they were intended to do.</p>
<p>Malia Vanaman</p>	<p>I am a proud public school parent and I support a fully funded and fully public education system. This means maintaining a democratically elected school board with transparency and responsibility to their constituents. Regarding any of the proposed options for Transportation, Facilities and Governance, I have a couple of high priority concerns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adding layers of governance or supervisory administration will further divert resources to management rather than putting funding directly where it is needed: classrooms, facilities, teacher and staff compensation, educational materials and resources, etc. Effective and efficient management should be streamlined and not burdened by middlemen.</li> <li>2. For instance- why is there not a model for Transportation that mirrors the Facilities model #3 and Governance model #1 where IPS is the transportation authority and service provider rather an a collaborative compact or independent authority?</li> <li>3. What accountability structure will be put in place for independent charter schools getting access to public funds/tax dollars?</li> <li>4. It seems that part of the issue that has brought us here is that charter schools don't have access to the transportation options that IPS schools do. If transportation is necessary for choice, then participation in whatever transportation model should be mandatory, or any school opting out should forfeit public funding for transportation. As a public school parent, it's getting frustrating that charter schools want to cherry pick their</li> </ol>

	<p>benefits and opt out of inconveniences while simultaneously lamenting that they don't have access to what public schools do. Frankly, either they are public schools and participate fully, or they aren't and they operate separately.</p> <p>5. It seems to me that the first item to determine direction is governance. Since currently constituted option #1 is "unacceptable" to charter/independent schools- the most "fair" option on the table is #2. There is no circumstance under which I would support Option #4 that essentially sets up the Mayor as the authoritarian for IPS. This is literally undemocratic. It also gives non-IPS district voters who also elect the Mayor a voice/a say in matters that do not directly affect them.</p> <p>Finally, I listened to the discussion at the previous ILEA meeting, I was struck by two things but did not sign up to speak.</p> <p>1. The comments about IPS as a "fragmented" and "confusing" or "chaotic" system. I agree. It is bewildering as a parent. It has divided people into public vs. charter supporters and pitted them against each other to fight for resources and to blame or resent each other for perceived or actual disparity. I've lived in Indianapolis since 1997 and I have a recall of how this system got fragmented. It is disingenuous of some ILEA members to bemoan the fragmentation that they helped create and perpetuate. Public schools have been able to innovate, to adapt, to provide access and equity - particularly when they are held publicly accountable and provided with adequate resources. The idea that was fed to everyone that charter schools could do better was only true because charter schools could hand-pick their governing boards, market themselves, raise money independently, and didn't have to accept every student.</p> <p>2. The comments that IPS school board elections have become politicized and expensive is also true. But let's not forget the outside entities, special interests, and privately funded agendas that have created and perpetuated that pattern.</p> <p>To summarize my feelings and frustration on those last two points, I say this: Those ILEA members whose history and participation in fragmenting, dividing, and politicizing public education have no basis to lament the situation and are literally now tasked with fixing what they broke. This is the equivalent making the weather and then saying "well, shoot, it's raining"</p>
<p>Bryan Duarte</p>	<p>I am an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Purdue University, but this written testimony is my own and does not reflect the views of my employer. I live and pay property taxes within the IPS boundary, and I research the effects of school choice on marginalized communities.</p> <p>The time of the December 3rd meeting poses significant accessibility issues for parents in our community. The afternoon hour coincides with school dismissal times, which means that parents are engaged in picking up their children from various schools across the city. This scheduling choice inadvertently excludes a vital segment of our population from</p>

discussions that directly affect them and their families.

Additionally, the timeline for presenting the governance models, just two weeks prior to this meeting, raises significant concerns about the community's ability to adequately process the implications of each option. Even members of the ILEA have indicated that they are still grappling with understanding the nuances of these models. Rushing into a vote under such circumstances does not foster meaningful engagement or reflection. It is crucial that community members have sufficient time to evaluate how these changes could affect their families and the broader educational landscape.

Moreover, limiting public comment to a single hour, followed by an immediate vote, undermines the importance of community feedback. It sends a worrying message that the ILEA may not be genuinely interested in considering the perspectives of parents and other stakeholders before making such critical decisions. To ensure that all voices are heard and valued, it is essential to delay the vote. This would allow for a thorough discussion and greater transparency, ultimately leading to more informed and equitable decision-making that prioritizes the needs of our community.

Regarding the models, each is problematic because it incorporates features that further constrain parents' voices. Governance model 1 may be the most promising only if it unifies all public schools under a fully elected school board. This would eliminate competition for resources and enable parents of IPS and charter schools to vote for the body that makes decisions about transportation and facilities. The other models introduce or maintain unnecessary bureaucracy, which will only exacerbate the fragmented system of multiple authorizing bodies with influence over our public schools.

Relatedly, I recommend that the ILEA also consider eliminating the Mayor's office of Education Innovation, because it no longer serves a purpose in our city. The office's sole function is to authorize charter schools, which are no longer innovative, as they date back to 1991, with Indianapolis opening its first in 2002. For the past 23 years, charter schools in Indianapolis specifically have not collectively outperformed traditional public schools. Rather, they have only produced a fragmented model of public schooling through the infiltration of IPS, which now contains a mix of traditional, innovation, and charter schools, and forced the district to move to a whole school choice model with no investment in the transportation infrastructure that would allow all families in Indianapolis to exercise school choice. As a result, it has led to competition for public resources, with more schools than are appropriate for the number of students within the boundary. Thus, mayoral interference in IPA can only be seen as a selfish power grab, a mechanism of control over the most racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse school district in the city. While other cities are grappling with the problem of mayoral

	control, this begs the question: Why should the mayor of Indianapolis hold such influence over only 1 of the 11 school districts in the city?
Jeanne Agostino	I am most interested in understanding why the ILEA does not support an elected IPS school board to oversee all public and charter schools in Indianapolis?
Emily Masengale	<p>I'm the CEO of Christel House Indianapolis and a proud innovation partner with Indianapolis Public Schools. While we appreciate our partnership and it has been positive, some of the suggestions put forth by this committee so far do not address the issues at hand.</p> <p>One of the most critical issues right now are the governance recommendations being discussed. This is where the consequences will be long-term and difficult to unwind. It is unclear to me what "problem" these proposed structures are trying to solve.</p> <p>If the goal of one authorizer is to limit the amount of new seats, I think there are other ways to look at the number of projected students per grade level within district boundaries and a number of seats available in charters and in the district and ensure that an unreasonable amount of new seats are not being approved. I think a calculation or ratio could be created that is realistic for the number of students needing seats so that we do not have significantly under enrolled buildings, but also gives families access to choice by not solely looking at number of seats, but looking at quality of seats.</p> <p>I encourage the committee refocus on the fiscal reality that led to the creation of ILEA in the first place.</p> <p>There is a lot of noise right now pulling attention away from the actual reason this committee exists. I am struggling to understand the practicality of putting any authorizing under the district when we collectively need to be looking at solutions to help fiscal projections for the district.</p> <p>I encourage ILEA to return its focus to the real structural issues at hand rather than getting swept up in distractions. I appreciate all the work and time you have put into this and ask you to please put forth recommendations to the state that address true issues and provide solutions for the greater good.</p> <p>Emily Masengale</p>
Mary Scott	Hi, thank you all for your hard work. As discussed at the November meeting, the decisions ILEA is making are less about transportation and facilities than they are about governance. As a taxpayer and the parent of two children in IPS, these questions are important to me. I cannot say how strongly I oppose governance models 2, 3, and 4. All

	<p>of these are unnecessarily complex, and strip voters of basic rights to make decisions about their communities. I also oppose model 1, which allows IPS to be overruled by an as-yet-decided appealing body. None of these is simple enough or allows taxpayers their full rights make decisions. It has been suggested that appointed positions--on the school board or otherwise--allows for expertise in particular areas. However, IPS and the school board are already able to consult experts when there is a need for that. THE SIMPLEST SOLUTION IS USUALLY THE BEST ONE! Please do not add more bureaucracy, boards, or appointed positions to the district. Thank you again.</p>
<p>Dr. Gayle Cosby</p>	<p>As an individual member of the IPS governing body, I personally am appalled (along with many community members) at the times selected for today's (12/3, 4pm) and upcoming (12/15, 12pm) public ILEA meetings. Meetings concerning the public, and especially a large constituency of citizens who have other obligations during daytime hours, should have not even been under consideration by this body. Despite what I assume are numerous communications from parents protesting these dates and times, the ILEA has persisted in scheduling meetings to make important community decisions at times inaccessible to the very community that is most impacted by the ILEA decisions. This is not only tone-deaf to the community's desire to be heard, it is deceptive and unethical practice, which has unfortunately become all too commonplace in Indianapolis politics.</p> <p>Regarding the options presented in November: none of the options to manage transportation and facilities reflect the will of the majority of community members.</p> <p>The majority of constituents that I have heard state that they want IPS, our public school system, to be governed by the body that was elected to represent them. The community expresses a desire to keep public assets (especially facilities) governed by this democratically elected IPS board, and implemented by the IPS professionals who have years of experience in doing so. None of the models retain elected governance, instead placing created "nonprofits" or other appointed bodies or individuals in positions of power above or alongside the duly elected officials committed to carrying out this work, as well as replacing the IPS staff with years of experience in managing transportation and school buildings.</p> <p>Let's call this what it is and has been for the past decade: a culmination of the work to 'purchase' influence and power with elected officials capable of legislating the THEFT of public assets and transferring them into the hands of private businesses interested in using them for generating profit. While students are often the focal point of the public facing rhetoric which rationalizes these political moves, in actuality the students in these ILEA models are NOT the focus at all. They are just a means to a 'profit-motive' end, and there are many community members who see this exactly for what it is. A hyper-localized version of the gerrymandered Indiana redistricting proposal, which removes representation and voice of voters. A hyper-localized rescinding of protections, a way to do harm to a massive number of students and families. I speak in my individual capacity, as a professor of urban education - and urge you to stay on the right side of history in preserving the promise that public education holds. Allow our public school buildings</p>

	<p>and transportation of students to be facilitated and governed by the voters, the parents, the people of Indianapolis.</p>
Alexia Pace	<p>strongly oppose any effort by the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance (ILEA) to eliminate our democratically-elected school board or shift full appointment power to the mayor. This is not a neutral governance change. Research and real-world examples show that removing elected school boards consistently leads to less accountability, less transparency, and fewer opportunities for parents and communities to shape the schools our children rely on.</p> <p>National studies of appointed or mayor-controlled school boards show no clear academic benefit to replacing elected boards — but they do show predictable harms: loss of community voice, weakened local oversight, and a breakdown of trust between families and decision-makers. Districts that lost elected boards, including Houston ISD, saw upheaval, instability, and no guaranteed improvement for students. Scholars warn that when power is centralized at city hall, under-represented communities lose the most, because appointed boards are not accountable to the voters they serve.</p> <p>This is exactly why elected school boards exist. They are the mechanism through which parents — especially those in diverse urban districts like IPS — can push for transparency, ask questions, vote out leaders who ignore our children’s needs, and insist on equitable policies. When that power is taken away, families lose their only democratic lever.</p> <p>The process unfolding right now only deepens those concerns. The December 3rd ILEA meeting was scheduled with minimal notice and during school pickup hours, effectively shutting parents out of public comment. A governance vote taken under conditions that exclude the very people affected is unacceptable.</p> <p>I am asking you to intervene today.</p> <p>Please call on the ILEA to suspend today’s vote and require genuine engagement with IPS parents, students, educators, and community members. Any process that diminishes public participation — or removes public voting rights altogether — is fundamentally undemocratic.</p> <p>IPS belongs to the people who live here, learn here, and raise our children here. We will not support any governance model that takes away our right to elect our school board or concentrates power in the hands of one political office.</p> <p>Our voices matter. Our votes matter. And today, they must be protected.</p>

<p>Courtney Hawk</p>	<p>I'd like to first address the timing of this meeting. Holding a session specific to hearing feedback about our SCHOOLS at a time when the majority are dismissing AND when adults are at work THE WEEK AFTER A HOLIDAY near the end of the year when time off may be running low - as the kids say it's giving performative "we solicited feedback!" box checking [Hope your consulting firm didn't recommend this strategy; it's tired, overused, and we see right through it].</p> <p>Also, the models were first put forth on 11/19. Presumably the ILEA has been working on defining and refining these models for months yet the people impacted the most are given 2 weeks to submit feedback. With written comments due at noon today the ILEA will review these in 4 hours, listen to an hour of public comment, and then vote to narrow down the models. This timeline is another example of performative feedback gathering and it's insulting to those who are invested in our public school district.</p> <p>Second, I implore the committee to commit to delaying the implementation of ANY model, including the appointment of any governing or oversight bodies, to after the next mayoral election. There is absolutely no reason to be confident in the ability of the current mayor and his administration, including the majority of the city-county council, to remain impartial, to act ethically and morally with the best interests of students in mind, and to resist the urge to trade sweetheart deals in exchange for campaign contributions when the facts of the past 7 years tell us otherwise. The lack of transparency and truly democratic engagement since the inception of ILEA does not inspire confidence in any mayor-appointed or appointed board model to seriously consider the needs and voices of public school staff, adults, students, and community members.</p> <p>Third, none of these models work unless it is mandatory for ALL schools receiving a cut of property tax dollars that previously all went to IPS to participate. By making any of the models optional, it dilutes any potential upsides and further increases the risk of disruption when a charter closes overnight or decides to stop participating without notice.</p>
<p>William Hawk</p>	<p>I am in Miss Brooks third grade class at CFI 27 and I have gone here since PreK. I like riding my bike to school and having recess at MLK Park. We are learning about Ancient Rome for our unit of inquiry. We are learning about democracy and how it helps communities be more fair and just. In Ancient Rome not everyone had the same rights and it was not fair. People who do not work at a school should not make choices about a school. It is not fair to just take money from people and give it to someone else to decide what to do with it [we've had some interesting discussions about taxes at home]. You should listen to the teachers and the students first. My teachers deserve to be supported and paid fairly and I do not want my school to close or lose money because we have a great school.</p>

Jishnu Guha-  
Majumdar

I have two comments.

1) The ILEA process has been a sham of deliberative democracy. Calling a sudden, unscheduled meeting on Dec 3rd when most educators and students are at school -- including one of your own board members -- to take a consequential vote is an OBVIOUS power play meant to subvert the public's voice. I will be using this example in my classroom, in units on deliberative democracy, to show them exactly how people in power can manipulate the rules fo the game to avoid public accountability.

2) The only democratically legitimate form of governance is one that unifies authority under a democratically elected school board. If you think that students, families, and teachers ought to have a say, then the best way to ensure that is to protect the authority of their elected leaders, and give them an additional voice at the ballot box. Transportation and facilities governance ought to be under the school board's aegis as well -- otherwise these become carve outs for private interests to subvert democratically elected boards.

This is best represented by the People's Proposal, forwarded by a wide array of community groups. Governance Proposal 1 does not fully do this because it gives the Mayor's OEI office appeal authority, which is just a backdoor for mayoral authority. It also does allows transportation and facility carve outs.

To answer some arguments against this option: it does not preclude expertise. The question is who \*choose\* expertise and who is that expertise accountable to. There is no reason to believe that mayoral control leads to better expertise than school board members who are closer to the ground and are not distracted by other city functions (and scandals). There can still be advisory boards, but these all report to the school board.

It also does not needlessly politicize the process. This is political no matter what. The mayor is a political office. The charters funnelling millions of dollars in are taking advantage of political processes. There is no way out of politics for a public good - best that it be as local and democratic as possible. Undocumented people, children, etc, are ALSO not represented by the mayor, so that is not an argument against school boards anyways, and the idea that appointees can speak for them is a travesty of social justice.

Last, the mayor's election does not provide enough democratic accountability either. People vote for the mayor for many reasons that go beyond education. Many people outside of IPS boundaries vote for the mayor and should not have a say in IPS questions. Last, there is a danger inc entralizing power, as evidenced by this mayoralty's many scandals.

MaryAnn Schlegel Ruegger	<p>The only model that you should consider is the model that keeps the entirely elected IPS Board, does not add any additional IPS Board members, and keeps IPS in charge of transportation and buildings. Anything less than that is another step away from democracy and resembles the redistricting efforts currently in process at the Statehouse. Keep public schools public and democratic.</p>
Emily Clust	<p>As an IPS parent and member of the community and someone who voted for Joe in both elections, I am very disappointed in the ILEA process. We must maintain democratically elected representatives on our school board. Having appointed representatives is not acceptable, and allows for the district to become an echo chamber benefitting one side or another depending on who is in power on the 22nd floor. Seeing a Democrat consider removing democratically elected representation is deeply disheartening. We have enough favoritism and nepotism in Washington, we don't need to mirror that ugly behavior in Marion County. We need to use everything in our collective power to shore up our public school system, protect budgets and communities who rely on these neighborhood schools, and fight back against vouchers and under regulated charter schools that syphon funds away. Seeing the pendulum swing from voters who supported (myself included) rebuilding stronger, and the State gutting funding for public schools shortly thereafter has undermined any gains we may have seen via the Rebuilding initiative. Do Better. Schedule ILEA meetings during hours that parents and teachers can participate. Are their voices not the most important of all?</p>