

**ILEA Dec. 17, 2025 - Online Public Comment**

Julie Swain	<p>I oppose the ILEA proposals that would strip any power from the elected school board in IPS.</p> <p>As a parent of a child at IPS CFI 84, I believe public education belongs to the community, and it should be overseen by the people we elect. Creating appointed boards to manage our tax dollars and school facilities undermines democratic accountability.</p> <p>As for the rest of the proposed models, I urge you to accept the people’s proposal that allows IPS, as an elected entity, to oversee transportation, buildings, and selection/approvals of additional charters. Even then, repeal the \$1 law as this hinders IPS to effectively manage assets which could go towards the betterment of education or improvements within the community.</p>
Lacey Minton	<p>The ONLY ACCEPTABLE MODEL IS THE PEOPLE'S MODEL.</p> <p>Such a model would incorporate the following key elements.</p> <p><b>Fully Elected Public School Board</b> 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.</p> <p><b>One Charter Authorizer</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Transportation and Facilities: Elected School Board Stewards Operations</b> 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.</p> <p>Finally, such a model would provide intentional, equitable distribution of resources, facilities, and transportation across school types—a key legislative mandate of the ILEA.</p> <p><b>Equitable Standards: Elected School Board Creates Policy</b> Situating policymaking authority under a single elected board creates fair,</p>

	<p>equitable, and consistent standards for all school types, while preserving what makes each school unique.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>True Collaboration: Elected School Board Facilitates School Choices</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 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.</p> <p>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 families and communities; not to out of state billionaires, out of city ideologues, or city elites and private contractors. This is the model that parents, educators, and constituents have called for: one that preserves democratic elections and accountability, maximizes the efficient use of tax dollars putting more money directly into classrooms, prevents unnecessary disruption to students and their families, and allows for school choice, innovation, and universal, fair, and equitable standards. We call on the ILEA to adopt the principles stated here: a fully realizable vision for ending competition over resources in the most oppressed district of Indianapolis and building a unified, cooperative, and just fully public school system.</p>
Regina Turner	I strongly prefer that IPS RETAIN THE POWER TO ELECT ITS BOARD..
Gwendolyn Kelley	I support the plans for transportation, governance and facilities that allow IPS to retain its elected board and retain its position of leadership in supporting all schools in its boundary area. What happens to IPS impacts every school district in the state. Every district should remain the power to have an elected school board that is accountable to the community as a whole.
Connie Szabo Schmucker	I am in full support of fully funded fully public schools. The IPS board elected by residents in IPS district should be the ones who control how the schools are run. Anything else is giving away control to those who do not have the best interests of public schools. Please recommend that the model for governance of IPS schools will

	be done by a fully publicly elected school board, accountable to the residents in IPS district, students and parents and teachers.
Phyllis Roche	I, Phyllis Roche, a current Indianapolis Public Schools Educator, support The People's Proposal. I urge the ILEA not to support options 2 and 3. It would replace our school board with a board of appointees, 5 from the mayor and 4 from IPS. We would be at a disadvantage from the start. Again I urge the ILEA not to support options 2 and 3. Thank you.
Ivan Douglas Hicks	I am in support of whatever Dr. Kelley is doing because I know it is for the progress of the people....
Rachel Hedges	I say YES to the PEOPLE'S PROPOSAL to retail our fully elected, democratic school board.
Delores Kennedy-Williams	The Alliance should be ELECTED!
Carol Weeden	I need more information.
Ira Steele	I agree that IPS School Board should be elected by the Voters!
Carol Weeden	I support IPS.
Ebony M. Lee	I support the PEOPLE'S Plan: Because it: Retains our fully elected, democratic school board Gives them power over buildings and transportation so that public resources and assets remain under democratic control Makes IPS the only charter school authorizer to reduce the number of authorizers and control the number of schools in an unsaturated district. It gives parents and community members a choice through charter school options in the boundaries, but retains the stability of IPS and gives voters a voice through the elected school board.
LaShawna Tramill	As a resident and educator within the IPS district, I strongly urge the ILEA to support The People's Proposal. Public schools are governed by officials elected by and accountable to the communities they serve. Removing the public's right to vote undermines the foundational principles of our democratic process and silences the voices of the very citizens these institutions are meant to represent. Preserving local governance ensures transparency, accountability, and meaningful community engagement in decisions that directly impact our schools and students.

<p>Lisa Noe</p>	<p><b>Protect Indianapolis Public Schools and Our Children’s Future</b></p> <p>I am writing to you as a mother in Indianapolis whose family is directly impacted by the dismantling of our public schools. The decisions being made about Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) are not abstract policy shifts—they are lived realities for families like mine, and they are causing harm.</p> <p>Nearly 70% of schools in Indianapolis are now charter or “innovation” schools, meaning the majority of our children are educated outside the governance of the elected IPS board. This shift has stripped away democratic oversight, diverted public funds, and left marginalized communities—particularly Black, Latino, and disabled students—bearing the brunt of systemic disinvestment.</p> <p><b>The Harms We Are Experiencing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of stability: Children thrive on routine and familiarity. School closures and constant turnover destabilize their learning and emotional well-being.</li> <li>• Accessibility barriers: Longer bus rides and distant schools make it harder for children with disabilities to access the supports they need.</li> <li>• Segregation and exclusion: Charter schools in Indianapolis are among the most racially segregated in the city. Nearly half of charters have enrollments over 75% Black, and one in four are over 90% Black Indianapolis.... This accelerates racial isolation rather than integration.</li> <li>• Loss of community voice: Proposals from the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance (ILEA) would dilute the elected IPS board’s power, transferring control of transportation, facilities, and even tax dollars to mayoral appointees or independent boards. This strips families of democratic representation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Why This Matters for Indianapolis</b></p> <p>This is not just about my family—it is about the broader harm to our city. Privatization and gentrification are eroding our neighborhoods, stripping away democratic control, and deepening inequities. Budgets are moral documents, and the choices being made here show that our children, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, are not being prioritized.</p> <p><b>What We Need From You</b></p> <p>We urge you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect democratic governance by ensuring the IPS board retains full authority over our schools.</li> <li>• Stop the expansion of charter and innovation schools that divert resources and increase segregation.</li> <li>• Invest in neighborhood public schools so that every child has access to a stable, inclusive, and well-resourced education close to home.</li> <li>• Center equity in decision-making by prioritizing the needs of Black, Latino,</li> </ul>
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	<p>disabled, and low-income students who are disproportionately harmed by closures and privatization.</p> <p>All children deserve more than survival in a fractured system—they deserve belonging, stability, and the chance to thrive in schools that see them as fully human. The future of Indianapolis depends on protecting public education, democratic governance, and equity for every child.</p>
Hillary Brooks-Gallardo	The IPS school board should remain 100% elected by the people. I do not trust the mayor's office or any other body to appoint members to govern school decisions.
Tonya Reynolds	I believe that there shortly Jed still be an elected Board governing the IPS District including Transportation, Groundskeeping, Facilities, etc
Luke Boggess	Please do not weaken the power of my elected officials. The IPS school board should oversee all aspects of the IPS school district. Public schools are being attacked at the national level, the state level, and now, I am sad to say, our local elected officials are letting us down. Please revert back to Option 1 or the People's Proposal for IPS School Governance.
Marsha King	IPS needs to maintain an elected board where members are knowledgeable about the community, the problems and the needs of the students served. It is not always about money. It should be about the educational needs of all students so that they will develop and grow into educated independent adults.
Caitlin S.	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I hope to keep an elected school board for Indianapolis Public Schools. When you have an elected school board oversee a district, it helps keep local control, accountability and representation for the specific district. When we elect officials, often times they reflect similar values and concerns as most of the people they represent. If there is an outside organization in charge, I fear those will not be seen or considered. I also think that an elected board is important because they are in fact elected. Therefore, if the community doesn't think that a member aligns with the visions or the school or community anymore, they can be replaced; versus a hired position who might not ever see turnover. School boards have been a critical part in making Indianapolis Public Schools the district it is and it is important that they remain. Overall, I believe that elected school boards help keep schools responsive to the community, responsible with public funds and how they are spent, and focused on students first, which is most important. Thank you.</p>
Margaret Gallina-Flynn	In a democratic society, an elected school board is non-negotiable. We do not need any more appointed officials. We deserve elected representatives of the people.
Olivia Magnuson	All decisions regarding transportation, facility management, and governance should allow for IPS to keep its autonomy and be in control of decision-making. It does not make sense to have an independent board address these issues when they can

	<p>never fully understand the needs of the district. By rejecting all options that allow IPS to keep a fully democratically-elected school board, not only are the parents and families of IPS being stripped of their voice, these systems will become even more inefficient due to the interjection of a third-party.</p>
<p>Hannah Marley</p>	<p>Hello members of the ILEA,</p> <p>I am an IPS Traditional Public School teacher.</p> <p>I don't know how much of my (unpaid, after hours) time I have given to listen to your proposals. Teaching is a hard, exhausting job. You don't know the amount of mental and emotional energy that goes into leading 100+ 15-year-olds and helping them become literate, whether they want to or not.</p> <p>Educators are the experts on education. We have dedicated our careers to these kids, because we love them, and we believe in what we do. So why are our perspectives always considered last when making decisions about our field?</p> <p>Everyone wants to be a principal or "CEO." Everyone has big ideas about how to seismically alter education in this city. But no one wants to be, or listen to, the boots on the ground.</p> <p>You know what your proposal looks like to me, someone who has everything to lose in this fight? It looks like instability. It looks like not having a say in how our schools operate, when we are the ones running those schools. It looks like me, and everyone else who has shown up to advocate for public schools, being forced to comply with someone else's vision of what education should be— when those people have never been the one delivering that education to our kids! How does that make sense?</p> <p>In this moment when democracy is under attack, when our state legislature came so close to disenfranchising two entire cities, I am asking you to listen to us. I am asking you to represent us, even though we did not elect you.</p> <p>I am asking you to prioritize our desires as a community over your own as an individual, and especially over the desires of wealthy private interests. I am asking you to hear the educators, the students, the community who have shown up for us over these long months.</p> <p>I know. I've been here.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the People's Proposal. It gets its name from the fact that the</p>

	<p>ultimate power in that proposal comes from the people who vote for the elected board. Because that is who should have the power in any democracy: the people.</p> <p>It does not include any appointed members, which the public has spoken out overwhelmingly against. It makes the only charter authorizer accountable to the public through the school board. It protects union and collective bargaining rights, which are essential to retaining quality educators and making sure the system that relies on teacher labor is providing contracts that value and respect educators.</p> <p>It protects democratic Voice, while continuing to offer parents Choice.</p> <p>Educating our children is a sacred duty that I take incredibly seriously. There is no room for conflicts of interests. There is no room for a profit margin. Not everything should be run like a business because not everything is a business, and the only goal any school should pursue is the education and wellbeing of our young people.</p> <p>In a time of instability and attacks on democracy, choose the proposal that gives our communities a Voice and a Choice: The People’s Proposal.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration,</p>
Julie Gallina	<p>I support keeping an elected school board. Appointed committees do not accurately reflect Indianapolis desires and needs for a strong public school system.</p>
Renee A. Barnes	<p>I am special education teacher with Indianapolis Public Schools. I support the Transportation Taskforce Model number two, because the revenue should be dispersed in accordance to school district and charter school semester enrollment. Please remember that child count covers first semester expenses and second semester revenue is needed for school systems too. I vote for the Facilities Model option one model, because IPS remains an independent governing body that should receive the most dollars for the majority of the students. The Governance Model two option provides money for independent and innovative charters, public (managed) school districts, and innovative network schools.</p>
Shellie Rich	<p>I feel strongly that the school board should be made up of elected representatives. I also think that any arrangements that use public money to fund private schools, including charter schools, is wrong. I also think that there should be just one charter authorizer and that the authorizing body should be made up of elected people with school experience. Charters should be closely monitored and only given to entities that have a successful track record in making education happen for students.</p>
Cassandra Crutchfield	<p>I am a mom of a student at Harshman Middle School. I think that our public schools should be led by a fully elected school board that is voted on by the families who attend our schools. I think that if tax payer money is shared with charter schools,</p>

	<p>they should be overseen by that same elected school board and they should have to provide transportation and the correct services for any special needs students. Charter schools should not be considered public otherwise and should not benefit from tax payer money that is for public education.</p>
Tony Marino	<p>I support the People's Proposal.  This proposal . . .  Retains our fully elected, democratic school board  Gives them power over buildings and transportation so that public resources and assets remain under democratic control  Makes IPS the only charter school authorizer to reduce the number of authorizers and control the number of schools in an unsaturated district.  It gives parents and community members a choice through charter school options in the boundaries, but retains the stability of IPS and gives voters a voice through the elected school board.</p>
Amanda Cory	<p>YES to the People's Proposal and I urge the ILEA NOT to support options 2 and 3.</p>
Kelli Marshall	<p>As you decide upon models, I urge you to consider model considerations and revisions that would do more than just protect the elected voice at the lowest tier of decision making, but instead incorporate the perspective into the adopted authority who will inevitably have the privilege of influencing the design of public education. The proposed options resemble exactly what we are navigating through now with the appointment of the ILEA committee and the reality that it currently is lacking the perspective of charter leaders.</p>
Catherine Woodard	<p>IPS should maintain and elected Board that oversees facilities, transportation and governance for all public schools within the district boundaries.</p>
Craig Huljak	<p>To whom it may concern,  I am fully supportive of "The People's Proposal". This is the opportunity to vote for what's important instead of what we are slowly losing</p>
Emily Dunham	<p>I am an IPS Public School Educator and I support The People's Proposal.</p>
Paulo Oliveira Santos	<p>I support the the People's Proposal</p>
John Agostino	<p>I have given my comment before, but I wanted to add that I am in support of "The People's Proposal" wherein the people that live within the IPS boundary are given the autonomy to choose who makes decisions in their district that they live in and use.  Anything less is an act of disrespect to the residents and purely lipservice by the alliance. There is no reason that the people who live in the district and send their children to the schools in the district should not be given the ability to choose who</p>

	<p>governs their schools and school board. I am deeply frustrated by the previous actions of the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance and the incompetence or ignorance that its members have demonstrated. Despite the vast majority of public comment from residents and students insisting the importance of a fully elected school board, the alliance voted to dismiss any plans that would include that.</p> <p>As a resident, I am saddened that members of the alliance don't seem to care what members of the community have to say. As a teacher, I am worried about the consequences that will follow from the further loss of resources to a district that has been making cuts already. These resources are vital to the success of the students and district as a whole. Losing access to counselors, transportation, and other funding will only be to the detriment of the students.</p> <p>If the alliance does not vote for the People's Proposal, it will only be another in a long line of failures happening within this state and country. Marginalized communities will have even more opportunity taken away. I ask that the members of the alliance make the just choice, and not the one that dismisses the public good just for the benefit of a few.</p>
<p>Chloe Richardson</p>	<p>I am writing to urge the ILEA to vote NO to options 2 and 3 when it comes to legislature changes that would impact our school board, transportation, and buildings. I urge the ILEA to instead vote YES to the People's Proposal which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Retains our fully elected, democratic school board</li> <li>-Gives them power over buildings and transportation so that public resources and assets remain under democratic control</li> <li>-Makes IPS the only charter school authorizer to reduce the number of authorizers and control the number of schools in an unsaturated district.</li> <li>-It gives parents and community members a choice through charter school options in the boundaries, but retains the stability of IPS and gives voters a voice through the elected school board.</li> </ul> <p>Please vote YES to a plan that respects the people who live, work, and study in IPS boundaries.</p>
<p>Rosiland Jackson</p>	<p>I disagree with any model that takes governance, facility, or transportation control from IPS. It is utterly ridiculous that any of you think it's ok to steal control over IPS and the models that ILEA have come up with does exactly that. The recommendations from this committee became invalid the moment Maggie Lewis and Bart Peterson were placed on this committee, two people that advocated for the complete dismantling of IPS should never have been allowed to be involved with any decisions about IPS. This committee was a farce from the beginning, and it</p>

is utterly disrespectful to attempt to seize control over facilities and transportation that belongs to IPS. It is ridiculous that a district has to justify the use of their facilities and transportation. IPS's financial situation is due to the underhanded dealings of state legislators, continued years of underfunding and now deliberate diversion of tax dollars to both the out-of-control voucher system as well as property sharing dollars with charter schools.

No company should receive tax dollars earmarked for education because they posed as a public school. Several years ago, when a school district here in Indiana wanted to charge parents \$300 per student to provide transportation to their schools, a judge ruled that it is the school district responsibility to provide transportation for their students. Any charter school that can't provide transportation for their students should not be in existence. It is absurd that charter operators rolled into Indianapolis with a promise of cheaper and better education for the students in Indianapolis are now saying it is IPS's responsibility to make their business functional. They want to continue to throw around the word equity because they want to build their business off the backs of black and brown students, but don't want to pay for the things needed to run their "school".

The facilities that IPS have, are taxpayer funded institutions and their use should be decided by the taxpayers, not some hit squad put together to further erode the educational landscape in Indianapolis. Everyone wants to benefit off the backs of IPS and the students and communities they serve, but no one wants to pay for the services. If charter schools want to use IPS facilities, they should pay fair market value for rent and other operational costs. The \$1 charter law should be repealed immediately, that is a recommendation that ILEA should make and stand behind. One charter authorizer is all that should exist in Indianapolis and that decision should be left in the hands of IPS. IPS should be the entity that decides what to do with their facilities and transportation, not politicians and individuals that stand to gain financially by the disruption that will happen if any of the recommendations that the ILEA currently have go into effect.

The attempted steal of a district that is being proposed by ILEA is invalid and ridiculous. Everyone wants to have a say on what should happen to IPS without asking IPS what they want. A fully democratically elected school board is a must, just as we elect a governor, mayor, and city-county council it is the taxpayers right to elect the school board that their tax dollars are being used to sustain. There have been several OpEds written by various people that stand to gain financially through the destruction of IPS, and those people involved in such writings should not be involved with deciding the future of IPS.

	<p>Mr. Brandon Brown had the audacity to state the having one authorizer for charter schools is somehow unfair and silences the voices of parents, and charter advocates but he has no problem with silencing the voices of the taxpayer in Indianapolis. The taxpayers in Center Township should be the loudest voices to be heard because it is their taxes that sustain IPS.</p> <p>Fully funded, fully public schools sustained by a fully democratically school board is the only way.</p>
Ella Hereth	<p>I really feel strongly that Indianapolis should maintain elected school boards. We've watched other cities try to get rid of this and then really regret it and move back towards elected schoolboards. As a teacher and a parent, I want to live in a city that values me and my profession and the best way to do that is to allow us to elect our school boards. School boards are non-partisan and other elected officials are not. I really really feel strongly that we should not be getting rid of elected school boards.</p>
Carla Schmid	<p>I implore you to oppose both models presented tomorrow evening. They are both lacking a key component to our democracy--democratically elected school board members. Having democratically school board members is essential for accountable, community-driven schools.</p> <p>In addition, the mayor, alongside Dr. Johnson, has just publicly shared today that he, too, has misgivings about charter school overreach. I know you have a deadline to meet, but if the majority of ILEA members oppose and do the right thing for our Indianapolis students, then the city would be forced to come up with a more democratic, equitable model. Please consider the harm that normalizing privatizing our schools and fully opening the door to outside interest groups would do. We demand democratic oversight and accountability for our schools! Please reject both models and respect the greatest power that citizens have in a democracy-the power to VOTE!</p> <p>Sincerely, Carla Schmid Indianapolis Resident &amp; Special Education Teacher</p>
Kayla Wilder	<p>We as a community want to vote for our school board members. These people should have qualifications that reflect the position and should not be left for our politicians to just plop anyone they want there. That doesn't support our students - that's how you get people with no experience to treat school as a business AND IT IS NOT! Defend our right to vote!!!!!!</p>

Jon Bernardi	<p>I am firmly in favor of the People's Proposal. This is the only model that gives the authority to the people that actually live in this district. It retains democratic input and oversight. The mayor is elected by people throughout Indianapolis, for many of whom the welfare of IPS is not anywhere among their priorities. The mayor is not solely accountable to the voters of the district, so he/she does not have to place our interests first. The charter school folks can still vote for IPS Board Members, contribute to campaigns, etc. Their voice is not infringed in the slightest by the People's Proposal.</p>
Prof. Jishnu Guha-Majumdar	<p>It is clear from the listening sessions and from public comment at previous ILEA meetings that there is a strong constituency that wants a simplified set of models where a democratically elected board has the final say. That is, parents, students, teachers, and community members want a Voice AND a Choice.</p> <p>The best way to achieve this is what a number of community organizations are calling the People's Proposal: <a href="https://www.centralindsa.org/fffp-governance-model/">https://www.centralindsa.org/fffp-governance-model/</a></p> <p>This model makes the elected school board the highest authority for all schools. Additionally, there should be no carveouts for facilities and transportation -- the IPS school board should have authority over these as well. They should also be the sole charter authorizer, with no other unelected body having appeal authority, which just presents a loophole around public accountability.</p> <p>This approach solves all the issues discussed at ILEA meetings, because it creates a unified system with one set of standards for accountability. It allows just as much expertise as an appointed body, because IPS officials are closer to the ground and can appoint their own advisory experts. Moreover, it also ensures more public accountability. Currently, parents of charter school have no say over who runs their schools -- they are effectively disenfranchised. This model would enable them to not only choose their schools but have a voice in the whole process as well.</p> <p>Further, the ILEA body's decision to eliminate Governance Option 1, which comes closest to the ideal system above, was disgraceful. It was done without proper public input, at a hastily called meeting when most students and parents were dealing with school pickup. At the very least, it is incumbent upon ILEA to put Option 1 back on the table.</p>
Victoria Rian	<p>As an IPS educator, I only support the #1 People's Proposal. I DO NOT support options 2 &amp; 3. I urge the ILEA to NOT support options 2 &amp; 3. The People's Proposal option #1 gives parents true choice without sacrificing quality, transportation or accountability.</p>

Kirstie Andersen	I oppose both models because they lack an elected board.
Herman Arrivillaga	I urge the ILEA to approve the People's Proposal for future governance of Indianapolis Public Schools. Local and direct governance that is less political will reflect the desires of the local stakeholders instead of diluting the decision makers' governamnce. The mayor is usually is usually a Democrat or Republican. Having the mayor's office appoint board members does not make for a bipartisan collaboration.
Alicia Baker	<p>Please seriously consider "The People’s Proposal for a Unified Public School System Where Everyone has a Voice and a Choice" - a governance model that unifies charter schools, innovation schools, and traditional public schools under the democratically elected public school board. The details of this plan can be viewed here: <a href="https://www.centralindsa.org/fffp-governance-model">https://www.centralindsa.org/fffp-governance-model</a>.</p> <p>Public education is a public good that belongs to the people of Indianapolis and its families and communities; not to out of state billionaires, out of city ideologues, or city elites and private contractors. This model preserves democratic elections and accountability, maximizes the efficient use of tax dollars putting more money directly into classrooms, prevents unnecessary disruption to students and their families, and allows for school choice, innovation, and universal, fair, and equitable standards. I call on the ILEA to adopt the principles stated here: a fully realizable vision for ending competition over resources in the most oppressed district of Indianapolis and building a unified, cooperative, and just fully public school system.</p>
Caroline E. Hensley	Dear ILEA members, please oppose both models presented at your final meeting tomorrow. Both models are missing a hallmark of our democracy--democratically elected school boards. Without an elected school board, there is no democratic oversight for schools and authority is no longer community-driven. The mayor himself, along with Dr. Johnson, today announced that he also has concerns with charter overreach in IPS. I know you have a deadline to meet, but if the majority of members oppose these models tomorrow, it will force the city to problem solve in a way that is equitable for ALL constituents. Please do no silence the power of the people. Do NOT strip away the greatest power we have in our democracy--the power of the vote.

<p>Allison Wiesman</p>	<p>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> <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.</p> <p>Such a model would incorporate the following key elements.</p> <p>—Fully Elected Public School Board</p> <p>This board is democratically elected, voted in and held accountable by all district constituents, and representative of all families regardless of school type.</p> <p>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. —</p> <p>One Charter Authorizer</p> <p>Shifting charter authorization to a single authorizer—the fully elected school board—would make real accountability possible.</p> <p>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.—</p> <p>Transportation and Facilities: Elected School Board Stewards Operations</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Finally, such a model would provide intentional, equitable distribution of resources, facilities, and transportation across school types—a key legislative mandate of the ILEA.—</p> <p>Equitable Standards: Elected School Board Creates Policy</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.—</p> <p>True Collaboration: Elected School Board Facilitates School Choices</p>
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	<p>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.</p> <p>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 charters once and for all. —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.</p> <p>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 families and communities; not to out of state billionaires, out of city ideologues, or city elites and private contractors. This is the model that parents, educators, and constituents</p>
Chris Reading	<p>While I agree with items 1 and 2 in December 16th proposal, I don't think the measure goes far enough. All schools funded by public dollars should be overseen by a locally elected school board. We already have an IPS board. I support expanding responsibility for IPS board to oversee all schools in IPS boundary --- same as one's ILEA is focused on. There needs to be public accountability for public funds. IPS board is this mechanism. Appointed oversight roles are too far removed, especially for the major expense of educating our community. I support the DSA proposal. Please adopt broader language than proposed.</p>
Marissa Flick	<p>I urge the ILEA to include in their recommendations the remaining existence of an elected school board who has power to decide facilities and transportation logistics. IPS already provides transportation in an efficient way for a majority of students, it does not make sense to reinvent the process. If ILEA is truly considering public feedback, they will leave the IPS school board as is, as that is overwhelmingly what public comment supports. The future of democracy depends on the existence of democratic elections.</p>
Alison Schumacher	<p>Dear ILEA members, please oppose both models presented at your final meeting tonight. Both models are missing a hallmark of our democracy--democratically elected school boards. Without an elected school board, there is no democratic oversight for schools and authority is no longer community-driven. The mayor himself, along with Dr. Johnson, has announced that he also has concerns with charter overreach in IPS. I know you have a deadline to meet, but if the majority of members oppose these models today, it will force the city to problem solve in a way that is equitable for ALL constituents. Please do not silence the power of the</p>

	<p>people. Do NOT strip away the greatest power we have in our democracy--the power of the vote.</p>
LaToya Tahirou	<p>I plan to show up and speak tonight, but I believe we will be limited to one minute. Below are my planned remarks, before shortening them. I really wanted to submit this so you could all hear the fullness of what I want to say:</p> <p>My name is LaToya Tahirou. I'm a mom of three, and I've spent more than 10 years advocating for great schools. My oldest daughter was just 10 years old when I started this work—she's 21 now. My two younger kids are still in school. And guess what? We are still here. We are still facing the same opportunity gap. Ten years later, we've barely moved the needle.</p> <p>That's why I'm here today. Because I don't want this same conversation to be the same conversation 10 years from now.</p> <p>These slides are complicated—because politics are complicated. But what I'm asking for is not complicated:</p> <p>I want intentionally great schools and the ability for every child to reach them. I want us to make choices that grow schools not based on who is most affluent or what enrollment data says, but based on which schools close the opportunity gap—schools that help all kids thrive, no matter their race, income, or zip code.</p> <p>Right now, the status quo is failing. It leaves parents like me—who have been advocating for years—stranded. It leaves us with a system where only 5.2% of Black students in IPS direct-run schools are on grade level, while white students are testing five times better. It leaves us with an opportunity gap so wide that it feeds the school-to-prison pipeline and crushes the dreams of kids who deserve far more than the endless “traditional vs. charter” debate offers.</p> <p>And here's what I know from experience: I've had kids in charter schools, traditional IPS schools, and innovation schools. The school type never determined success. What matters is whether the school has the components to help kids thrive.</p> <p>Transportation is another reality. It wasn't an issue when I was a stay-at-home mom, but now it is. And if kids can't get to school, then school choice is a myth.</p>

Look around this room. Do you know what we all have in common? We care. That's why we're here. But caring isn't enough. I've cared for over a decade, and the opportunity gap is still here. For the first time in years, I feel we have the chance to change that—by removing the politics.

Here's what I'm asking:

---Direct that care toward kids—not politics.

---Understand that I'm not asking for IPS's board to go away. I'm not asking for our democracy to disappear.

---What I am asking for is an independent authority—one that works with both IPS and charter schools to ensure kids can access schools that are accountable and grown intentionally based on achievement data. An authority that shares power so no single entity has too much of it, and so politics don't dictate the future of our children.

I want a common accountability framework. I want us to close schools that have failed our babies year after year and grow the schools that are working. Why is that so complicated? It shouldn't be.

I'm asking for more for our kids. And I believe an independent authority is how we get there. Thank you.

<p>Nicolette Mendenhall</p>	<p>am the parent of a First Grade student at an IPS school and resident of Center Township.</p> <p>I am also an attorney who, over the years, not only developed experience handling corporate bankruptcies and corporate liquidations, but also spent years working in state government where I was responsible for providing guidance about the use of tax dollars and public planning of government projects. I strongly believe that we can have a great education system but also strongly believe that we need to be careful with the fiscal impacts of decisions we make.</p> <p>School choice with no limits on charter schools is being touted as a solution to our education issues without regard to the negative consequences this platform has on the use of public funding. Public funding of education is getting more difficult and we need to be better stewards of public funding. We shouldn't treat investment in schools like investments in businesses—the failure of a business and loss of investor funding has less impact on a community than the failure of a school. A community that has more schools than necessary not only wastes taxpayer dollars as a result of the the operation of unneeded schools, we are also losing out on positive impacts we could have by increasing per student funding.</p> <p>Smart oversight of education public funding would ensure that there are limits on new schools being opened and ensure that communities are involved in the decision-making process of where new schools are opened. There should be a limit on charter school authorizers, a cooperative process over where schools are opened as well as the types of schools opened, and uniform support for all students in the boundaries of IPS.</p> <p>IPS has significant experience handling a transportation system; my daughter has been using the bus and I am continuously impressed with how well the system operates considering the number of schools IPS supports. The most efficient use of our existing system would be to simply expand IPS's transportation network and let IPS handle transportation; IPS similarly has the most experience managing operations for many different schools and expanding its existing operations to support all schools is the most efficient and cost-effective way to manage public funding. Finally, IPS has an elected school board responsible to all residents within its boundaries; any selected Governance Model should ensure that these elected officials are included in the Governance process in a way that does not allow unelected appointees to have more power than elected officials.</p> <p>Creating new systems when existing systems can be more easily modified and expanded is not the best use of taxpayer funding.</p>
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	<p>IPS has worked hard to include the community in assessing what our community needs. I've attended multiple IPS sessions and I strongly support IPS's recommendations. I encourage you to listen to IPS's proposals as they are supported by the community.</p>
Anna Kavanaugh	<p>None of the options on the table are acceptable. The best way to solve problems in Indianapolis schools AND give students and parents a voice AND a Choice is what a number of community organizations are calling the People's Proposal: <a href="https://www.centralindsa.org/fffp-governance-model/">https://www.centralindsa.org/fffp-governance-model/</a></p> <p>This model makes the elected school board the highest authority for all schools. Additionally, there should be no carveouts for facilities and transportation -- the IPS school board should have authority over these as well. They should also be the sole charter authorizer, with no other unelected body having appeal authority, which just presents a loophole around public accountability.</p> <p>This approach solves all the issues discussed at ILEA meetings, because it creates a unified system with one set of standards for accountability. It allows just as much expertise as an appointed body, because IPS officials are closer to the ground and can appoint their own advisory experts. Moreover, it also ensures more public accountability. Currently, parents of charter school have no say over who runs their</p>

	<p>schools -- they are effectively disenfranchised. This model would enable them to not only choose their schools but have a voice in the whole process as well.</p> <p>Further, the ILEA body's decision to eliminate Governance Option 1, which comes closest to the ideal system above, was disgraceful. It was done without proper public input, at a hastily called meeting when most students and parents were dealing with school pickup. At the very least, it is incumbent upon ILEA to put Option 1 back on the table.</p>
<p>Jessica McGuire</p>	<p>I am writing to support the IPS service-led model going forward. I believe that elected school boards for public schools are crucial to ensure accountability. It was the fact that traditional public school have a democratically elected board that was a main deciding factor for our family to choose IPS. The communities in each district within Indianapolis elect their school board representative and and the parents and children of IPS deserve the same.</p>
<p>Chrystal Ratcliffe</p>	<p>reater Indianapolis NAACP Branch 3053 Opposes Appointed IPS Governance; Affirms Authority of Elected School Board</p> <p>The Greater Indianapolis NAACP Branch 3053 strongly opposes any move to weaken or replace the democratically elected Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) Board of Commissioners. Transferring power to a mayor-appointed or hybrid structure undermines democratic accountability and silences the voice of our community.</p> <p>The latest proposal advanced by the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance (ILEA) would shift control of facilities, transportation, and public tax dollars away from elected officials to appointed bodies, leaving voters without meaningful oversight. Elected school boards answer to the public. Appointed boards reduce transparency, weaken community participation, and erode trust in decisions that affect every neighborhood in Indianapolis, particularly historically marginalized communities.</p> <p>The NAACP remains committed to public accountability, educational equity, and community representation in the governance of our nation’s public schools. The proposed changes risk increasing privatization by creating unfair advantages for charter or privately managed schools. A fully empowered elected board is essential to ensuring equitable resources across all schools and preventing fragmented governance. Diminishing the authority of the IPS elected board threatens the principles of democracy and would further destabilize the district. The Greater</p>

	<p>Indianapolis NAACP Branch 3053 stands unequivocally against any appointed or hybrid governance model. Public schools must remain governed by leaders chosen by voters.</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>We need an Elected School Board in charge. Appointed School Boards have no checks and balances and only serve their own self interests. IPS money should go to IPS schools. Charters have their own means to raise money. If they want IPS money, they should become an IPS school.</p>
<p>Megan Alderman</p>	<p>First off, I want to commend Superintendent Johnson and the Mayor for supporting the following community-backed alignments: 1) an IPS exemption from the \$1 Law 2) mandatory transportation participation for all schools and 3) limiting charter school authorizers. IPS parents have long asked for all three of these goals and we applaud your collaborative statement endorsing them. They are good common sense and fair measures.</p> <p>However, these commitments still do not secure a fully elected IPS Board, which remains essential to maintaining accountable, democratic schools. It is unfortunate that ILEA has taken the People's Proposal off the table--most of the Indianapolis community supported it, even Senator Hunley. In its absence, I ask that you endorse the plan that leaves as much power as possible with IPS over building and transportation maintenance.</p>