

Mary Gage Peterson Elementary
College Graduates, Community Leaders, Cultural Ambassadors

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Dear Peterson Families,

I am writing to provide you with an update on the budget at Peterson and how recent adjustments to the budget will impact kids at Peterson.

As you may recall, most neighborhood schools in Chicago like Peterson receive three (3) major sources of public funding:

- 1) Local Funding (Also Known as 115 or Student Based Budget, SBB);
- 2) State Funding (Also Known as 225 or Supplemental General State Aide, SGSA); and
- 3) Federal Funding (Also Known as NCLB or 332--Title I).

The majority of funds that Peterson receives are from Student Based Budgeting (SBB or 115), and these 115 or SBB funds are based on the number of students a school such as Peterson has. Peterson receives a specific amount for each student or pupil in grades K to 3 (\$4,373) and a specific amount for each pupil or student in grades 4 to 8 (\$4,087).

As you may or may not be aware, the school-based budgets that schools receive in the spring or summer for the upcoming fiscal year are based on a **projected** (not actual) number of students. Chicago Public Schools adjusts budgets based on the **actual** enrollment on the 10th day of school and for the number of low-income families on the 20th day of school. These adjustments are sometimes referred to as the 10th and 20th day enrollment adjustments.

When Peterson received its budget over the summer for this fiscal year (2017), it was based on a projected enrollment of 884 students (without PK), but unfortunately, despite the best efforts of the staff, the actual number of students on the 10th day was 837 students. This meant that Peterson lost approximately \$204,031 in its SBB or 115 funds due to decreased enrollment. Additionally, as more experienced staff members have moved or retired, Peterson lost a teacher salary adjustment that had been previously allocated by the District of \$29,374. Therefore, the total lost for 10th day adjustments was **\$233,405**. For 20th day adjustments based on the number of low-income students, Peterson lost \$19,169 in 225 funding and \$2,237 in 332 funding. **Ultimately, Peterson recently has been faced with a reduction in funding of \$254,811 due to 10th and 20th day enrollment adjustments.**

As you might imagine, this loss in funding had an enormous impact on the school. With the support of Chief Anna Alvarado and the LSC I was able to manage the loss so that the cuts did not directly impact the classroom. *However, I would like to be very clear as I communicate this impact to you: regardless of whether a funding cut directly impacts a classroom, every single cut to the budget of a school impacts kids.* Whether it is a cut that impacts the staff that makes sure that students are safe at recess and lunch or a cut that impacts the amount of instructional materials that a school is able to purchase, cuts in funding impact kids.

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Additionally, it is also important to understand that the decrease in enrollment is not due to a lack of success at the school level. Through the collective work of students, staff, and families, Peterson is succeeding as a school. Within two years the school has moved from a school that was classified as “Not Yet Organized” as measured by the 5 Essentials to a school that is classified as “Well Organized for Success.” Last year students were growing at the 90th percentile in reading, and well above the average in math. Attendance is at an all time high of close to 96%, and with a concerted effort on culture and climate the number of suspensions has dropped drastically within the past two years. Furthermore, Peterson continues to receive grants and recognition for its ongoing work. For the past two years Peterson has received the Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP) grant from the United States State Department, the Out of School Time (OST) grant for before and after school programs, and is one of only 36 schools within Chicago Public Schools to be recognized as an exemplary social and emotional learning (SEL) school.

Unfortunately, while individuals at the school have been working with families to make sure students are successful, Peterson is a neighborhood school, and its enrollment depends upon the families living within its boundaries as well as the families who apply through the CPS Options for Knowledge Program. As I learn more, I will work with the Peterson community to put stronger systems of communication in place so that Peterson is not facing a similar enrollment challenge in the future.

In the meantime, I ask for your assistance in navigating this challenge:

- 1) Please stay informed. One of the best ways to do this is to attend the Local School Council meetings on Tuesday evenings once a month and talk with the community and parent representatives on the LSC. LSC meetings are on the Peterson Calendar on the website, as are the members of the LSC.
- 2) Please volunteer at Peterson if you are able. Volunteers are needed on a consistent basis for recess and lunch and to support the younger learners in the classroom. Please contact Ms. Janet Sotelo for more information about the volunteer process: jsotelo46@cps.edu.
- 3) Please support the Friends of Peterson (FoP). Friends of Peterson has provided a large number of resources for the school in line with its strategic plan. The website for Friends of Peterson is <http://www.friendsofpeterson.org/>.

Thank you as always for your partnership in the education of your child.

Respectfully,

Kate Kane, Principal, Peterson Elementary School