

**Board of Education Candidates Disability Questionnaire 2024****Candidate: Miquel Lewis**

**Question: In no more than a paragraph, introduce yourself and why you are running to serve on the Board of Education.**

Answer: I am Dr. Miquel A. Lewis and I am running for the elected Chicago Public School Board because I know the transformative power of a quality education- and all children deserve access to quality education. I am a product of the Chicago Public School District as are my wife and children. We are all examples of the transformative power of education.

**Question: Have you interacted with the special education system in CPS in any capacity? If so, what was your experience?**

Answer: Yes, I've had two contrasting, yet similarly impactful interactions with the special education system in CPS. My first experience was as a freshman at the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences. Without notice or instruction I found myself in a classroom with only black male students. We were all placed in a special education track. After our parents addressed the administration we were all placed in the primary track with other classmates.

Fast forward, until the recent resignation of the seven appointed board members I had been serving on the CPS Special Education Advisory Council. We were tasked by Mayor Johnson to identify the next chief of the now Office for Students with Disabilities. We achieved the objective in selecting Chief Joshua Long to lead the office. The opportunity to learn from parents what is most important to them in the leader of that office highlighted for me how insightful and invested in children's education parents are in the process, again.

**Question: Many families of students with disabilities talk about the challenges they face trying to navigate the special education system in CPS. Why do you think families are so frustrated?**

Answer: Every parent I've ever spoken with about access to resources for students with disabilities expresses frustration with their experiences with the CPS. Families are frustrated because they don't feel heard.

**Question:** At the beginning of this school year, over 1,500 students with disabilities legally entitled to transportation had not received a bus route. These routing delays, common since 2020, result in students missing valuable school hours and parents missing work opportunities.

**What steps will you take as a board member to ensure that students are provided bus routes in a timely manner?**

**Answer:** I will work with CPS leadership to ensure there is adequate funding to remove any barriers to supporting a safe and effective transportation experience.

**Question:** Preparation for life after high school is important for all students, especially those with disabilities. Research shows that students with access to transition programs such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Dual Credit courses have greater graduation and employment outcomes than their peers. However, in CPS, disabled student enrollment in these programs lag well behind their nondisabled peers.

**As a board member, what would you do to ensure equal access for students with disabilities to career training offerings?**

**Answer:** No answer provided

**Question:** Over 65% of CPS schools are not fully ADA accessible. In practice, this means that “neighborhood schools” are not an option for many students with physical disabilities, let alone disabled teachers, disabled parents, disabled voters, or other disabled community members visiting our schools. The 2023 CPS Facilities Master Plan identifies building accessibility as an important priority, but the district has not adopted a roadmap or plan to achieve better building accessibility.

**What steps should the district take to address a lack of accessibility in its buildings?**

**Answer:** No answer provided

**Question:** CPS has a history of segregating students with disabilities. The Corey H. settlement in 1998 required the district to move toward meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities for students who could make meaningful progress in a less restrictive environment. In the last two years, the number of cluster classrooms in the district has increased by 200%, presumably because these students cannot be supported to make meaningful progress in the general education setting, even with supports. As a board member, what kinds of questions would you ask to understand this sharp increase in restrictive placements?

**Answer:** No answer provided



**Question: What would be your top priority for improving access to education for students with disabilities in CPS?**

**Answer: No answer provided**