



Chicago International

CHARTER SCHOOL



December 2016

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Our Mission

The mission of Chicago International Charter School (CICS) is to provide, through innovation and choice, an attractive and rigorous college-preparatory education that meets the needs of today's students.

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Reflecting and Looking Ahead

Year-End Note from Elizabeth Shaw

Greetings, CICS community-

Yesterday was a great day for CICS. I stood alongside CICS families and educators to request that the Chicago Public Schools Board renew our charter, and grant us the opportunity to continue serving our brilliant students in the years to come. The CPS Board voted unanimously to renew CICS. Charter renewal is an important milestone because it means our students will have the opportunity to thrive in CICS schools for years to come.

As we celebrate this important milestone and approach year-end, and as I conclude my first one hundred days at CICS, I want to take a minute to reflect and to share my sense of

optimism about the future of CICS and my gratitude for the commitment and talent across the CICS network.

CICS was renewed because of the work of our CICS educators, families, community members, SMO partners, Board, and staff. It was humbling to represent our CICS community yesterday and to highlight your tremendous accomplishments. Thank you for making sure our 8,600+ students continue to have the opportunities CICS provides them, and for helping our students succeed every single day.

2016 has been a year of change and opportunity for CICS. We have seen our third consecutive year of network-wide performance growth-- despite a challenging political and fiscal climate-- and our schools continue to do even more to put students on a path to succeed in college, careers, and life. I joined CICS this past September and I have spent my first one hundred days learning, assessing, and getting to know our schools and community. Thank you for welcoming me into the lives of our 8,600 students! I have been to every school multiple times, been in over a hundred classrooms, and I have gotten to know many wonderful educators, students, families and CICS partners. I have encountered so much talent, so much great work, and so much potential across our network.

Overall, I see CICS at a remarkable turning point. We have had the privilege and responsibility of educating thousands of Chicago's children over our nearly 20-year history and we have delivered, meeting and exceeding CPS performance standards and outperforming traditional schools in the neighborhoods we serve. Over the next five years, we will do even more for our students and for our communities. We will ensure that each and every one of our CICS students is on a path to succeed in college, careers, and life. We also owe it to our city to be a strong fixture of the education landscape: a fixture which is forward-thinking and innovative, driven by strong values while remaining consistent in its outcomes.

In 2017, CICS will craft a new organizational strategy and eventually develop a new five-year vision and strategic plan for our organization. The strategic planning process aims to answer key questions about how we will optimize our positive impact on the success of current students, future students, and on the education ecosystem in Chicago. We will communicate openly and transparently, and invite our partners and stakeholders to engage in this process with us. Through our focused efforts we will see tremendous opportunities for our students. In the next year, we will face the fiscal, political, and strategic changes ahead of us with one singular priority: the success of every single CICS student.

I am proud to be a part of a community that is so full of promise and can't wait to share what 2017 holds for all of us.

Onward and Upward,



Elizabeth Shaw

Update on CPS Budget Shortfall

As you may have seen, last week The Governor vetoed a pension reform bill that would have guaranteed CPS \$215M it is counting on in its budget this year. We are not panicking or bracing for cuts, yet, but it is essential that our elected officials find a solution that supports our students. The situation will continue to evolve over the coming month. We are monitoring closely and we will keep our CICS community and our partners informed as the situation unfolds.

Post-Election Resources for Parents and Teachers

- Education World's [Guides for Teaching Tolerance](#)
- Kids Health Guide for [Talking about Tolerance and Difference](#)
- Module of [2016 Post-Election Classroom Resources](#) as requested by educators
- The Southern Poverty Law Center's Unit on [Civil Discourse in the Classroom](#)



A Culture of Reading at CICS Northtown

On Monday, Nov 28, the CICS Northtown campus welcomed award-winning author Laura Ruby to its monthly book club. Students were able to meet and ask questions of Ms. Ruby while learning about her latest novel. Travon, a CICS Northtown freshman, was among the enthusiastic students in attendance. "Laura Ruby is the most significant author I ever seen," he said.

[Read More](#)

Thank You for Your Support!

CICS received over 1,400 letters from parents, staff, teachers and community members in support of our charter renewal. We also felt the love on #GivingTuesday, the national day of philanthropy kicking off the holiday season.

As our students head into winter break this month, we have to say **thank you** to everyone who has supported us this year!

[More Ways to Give](#)

Thank You to Our Donors

Thank you to those who have given in support of our scholars! These donors have generously contributed to CICS and made a difference in and outside of the classroom.

For more on how you can join these donors, please visit our [Ways to Give](#) webpage.

Program Level: \$9,125 and Above
 The Broad Center
 Community Foundation of Northern Illinois
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 Good Sports
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Classroom Level: \$3,650 and Above
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Study Group Level: \$1,825 and Above
 John and Weezie Gates Charitable Trust
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Scholar Level: \$365 and Above
 Accenture

Friends of CICS: up to \$365
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Sandra Belo-Osagie
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Kathleen Van Hecke
Lucy Rosales
Marlene Garza-Anaya
Mary Ann Boggs
Mary Petri

Upcoming Events



-Dec. 23: Bucktown, Irving Park, Prairie, West Belden: No School

-Dec. 26- Jan. 6: Winter Break for all Students

[View More on the CICS Calendar](#)

[Submit Event for the CICS Calendar](#)

For more events, please check school websites.

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