

EDUCATION

SMARTER

★ ★ AND ★ ★

STRONGER

SOPHIA KING

★ ★ MAYOR ★ ★



# SOPHIA KING

★★ MAYOR ★★

As a former teacher I know that investing in public education is the most important thing we can do to secure the future of Chicago. Safe neighborhoods and good schools will attract and keep people in Chicago and stimulate vibrant and thriving communities. We must use our tax dollars to create a public education system that helps every child reach their full potential regardless of the zip code in which they live or the type of school they attend. A mayor with educational experience is necessary for real visionary change in education.

I know this first hand. I worked as a High School Chemistry teacher at the Latin School of Chicago and then helped found Ariel Community Academy in the North Kenwood -Oakland community to bring the same high level instruction my students on the northside received to my community on the south side. To me, education is personal and it is powerful!

**My bold plan to create a Smarter and Stronger Chicago Public Schools is grounded in these six pillars:**

- 1. Uplifting our Teachers**
- 2. Bringing Trades Back to School**
- 3. Embracing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education**
- 4. Re-centering the neighborhood**
- 5. Increasing Access to Child Care**
- 6. Expanding Early Education**



# SOPHIA KING

★★ MAYOR ★★

## 1. UPLIFTING OUR TEACHERS

We need to uplift and empower our teachers. There are two professions at whose feet we throw all the problems we cannot solve: teachers and police. In order for our educators to better serve our students, we need to supply them with the wrap-around resources necessary for them to focus on classroom success.

The most dedicated teachers can do little to improve the quality of education when their students return to school after more and more deadly weekends in their neighborhoods. Kids affected by gun violence lose the ability to focus, learn, develop resilience, and create close relationships. Another way to improve K-12 education is by hiring more counselors and nurses for our schools.

We also need to ensure that Chicago's teachers don't only have the best resources, but have the best experience. We can do that by incentivizing teachers to move and work in Chicago by selling them city owned vacant lots for \$1 each, providing interest free loans backed by City bonds for construction, rehab and down payment assistance.

## 2. BRINGING TRADES BACK TO SCHOOLS

We have to embrace the power of and in education, and recognize that every student deserves the opportunity to experience and choose a profession or occupation which is right for them. That means not only maintaining a strong curriculum grounded in college preparedness, but also restoring the access to the trades and apprenticeships as a key component of our public school education.

There are thousands of disconnected youth in the city, and education is the primary vehicle needed to re-engage them into school and/or good paying jobs. By providing a more direct connection to their own personal material success, we can enhance their connection to educational institutions and future opportunity. By ensuring that students are able to take advanced courses in history and automotive maintenance, we can enhance students' futures while crafting a workforce that will enhance Chicago's future as well.

No other candidate running for mayor has a plan to bring the trades back to the high schools. Here's how Sophia King will make it happen.

# SOPHIA KING

★ ★ MAYOR ★ ★

Chicago Vocational High School, Dunbar Career Vocational Academy, Simeon Career Academy, Farragut and other high schools that once taught job skills are all currently under enrolled, costing CPS millions in federal funding based on per capita formulas.

CVS, Dunbar, Simeon, Farragut and other schools that offer training in skills that can get 15-18 year-olds off the street and into good-paying jobs, a critical step to stabilizing neighborhoods and getting young people on a career track. To fund this initiative, Sophia King will:

- » Seek to engage more students targeting seventh and eighth graders before they become disengaged in order to mitigate the attrition that occurs before high school thus increasing enrollment and per capita income. One estimate puts the number of dropouts in Chicago between the ages of 15 and 20 at 40,000. Bringing back just a fraction of those young people can mean millions in federal funding to CPS (approximately 1,200/pupil).
- » Seek to increase the millions in currently available federal Perkins grants to expand academic and technical skills for career opportunities and job training
- » Use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and float capital bonds to complete upgrades to physical plants and pay for furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) at CPS high schools, so their shops can train students on relevant equipment. For example, currently CPS students work receive automotive vocational training on cars made in the '70s and '80s, training that doesn't work for today's highly computerized car fleets. King's plan fixes that critical flaw in the current system in shops that teach everything from automotive systems to computer hardware on up-to-date technology
- » Prioritize neighborhood schools with trade and tech components in capital budget
- » Work with unions to bring apprentice programs inside the schools to increase access to pipeline of good paying jobs
- » We can partner with corporations and unions to provide resources and training for jobs that are currently unfilled. Corporate donations and expertise can both fund and create curricula that leads directly to good-paying jobs. For instance, companies like Johnson Controls now pays \$50 - 80,000 per year to their certificate employees who have training in heating, cooling, and HVAC systems, but can't fill those jobs because they don't have applicants with the right training.

# SOPHIA KING

★★ MAYOR ★★

## 3. EMBRACING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) EDUCATION IN EVERY SCHOOL

We can create the Silicon Valley of the Midwest by launching a new tech ecosystem with vocational/technical education to develop a world-class workforce that is ready for the opportunities of the future. STEM jobs account for two-thirds of the U.S. workforce and the need to sustain STEM workers is vital to our economy both locally and across the nation. I will create a Chicago Tech Talent Alliance including leaders within the tech industry, K-12, university, and community stakeholders to identify solutions that help our young people grow their talents and build their futures right here at home. The Chicago Tech Talent Alliance will also partner with schools to expand internships in STEM fields to students in the most underserved areas and encourage coding and computer science education.

## 4. RE-CENTERING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

We have to grow as a city in order to improve and sustain our neighborhoods. In order to attract and retain people in our city we need safety and good schools. People will not stay in Chicago or come to Chicago if they do not have good schools to send their children to. We can grow the school population by putting resources into existing schools and increasing the growth of selective enrollment school options, adding a strong neighborhood component. This has to be coupled with a strong investment in co-curricular or after school activities to create a school that not only teaches, but socializes and uplifts our children.

## 5. DEMOCRATIZING CHILD CARE

High quality child care can be life changing for a family. It allows children to grow and develop in the company of their peers, and allows parents the ability to continue working, growing, and earning. In attempting to make it better, we face a two-fold problem. Parents can't afford to pay increasingly steep prices for an essential need, and childcare workers are unable to make a living on their wages. We should make a \$100 million dollar investment to expand access to childcare, invest in facilities, training, and tax incentives to democratize childcare and allow every child access to care, and every worker access to a good life outside of their care center.

## 6. EXPANDING EARLY EDUCATION

Well-known studies have taken place in Chicago that prove how important education is during the first five years of life. This critical time sets the stage for life-long development. And yet, 75% percent of Illinois children are not prepared for kindergarten (1). This has long-term consequences. The ill-equipped kindergartner becomes the ill-equipped fourth grader, becomes the ill-equipped high schooler. By investing substantially more in Chicagoans during that critical period, we stand to create a strong upstream multiplier effect, improving graduation rates, educational attainment, and economic outcomes especially in underserved communities.