



2025 - 2026 ACADEMIC CHESS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Dear Chess Coaches and Administrators,

The Department of Academic Competitions is pleased to offer elementary and high school students the opportunity to participate in after-school chess clubs and compete in various tournaments throughout the academic year. For the 2025–2026 season, Academic Chess will be divided into two categories:

- **High School (Grades 9–12)**
- **Elementary/Middle School (Grades K–8)**

Chess Season Overview

The chess season begins in October and will encompass the following activities:

- **Conditioning and Practice** – Preparatory sessions to enhance students' chess skills.
- **Online Tournaments** – Weekly rapid and monthly tournaments.
- **City-Wide In-Person Competitions** – Tournaments open to Academic Chess schools city-wide.
- **Conference Playoffs (K–8)** – Playoffs to determine the top-performing teams.
- **City-Wide Championship** – The final event to crown the city champions.
- **Sanctioned Tournaments** – Additional tournaments sanctioned by CPS.

Cops & Kids Program Integration – Due to budget reductions, the Cops & Kids program will be rolled into the regular Academic Chess Program this year.

- No separate compensation will be provided for schools that have a CPD officer participate in their chess class.

Administrative Responsibilities

The administration of Academic Chess within Chicago Public Schools falls under the Office of Student Support and Engagement (OSSE) in the Department of Academic Competitions. Each school's Principal is responsible for all matters related to Academic Chess, ensuring effective implementation and student participation within their school.

Support Provided by Academic Chess

To assist schools in running their chess programs, Academic Chess will provide the following:

- **Coaching Pay** – See *Compensation Process* section below.
 - **Busing** – Transportation to and from Academic Chess tournaments.
 - **Meals** – Breakfast and lunch for students at Academic Chess-organized tournaments.
 - **National Tournament Opportunity** – High school students may compete in the US Chess High School National Championship, and female students may participate in the KCF All-Girls National Championship.
 - **ChessKid Gold Memberships** – Access to premium resources for student training.
 - **US Chess Memberships** – Provided for students who participate in an Academic Chess-organized or sanctioned tournament.
 - **Chess Equipment** – New schools can receive 5 chess sets and 1 chess clock.
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School Responsibilities

Schools are expected to:

- Hold regular weekly chess classes.
- Participate in at least two (2) Academic Chess in-person tournaments and the Championship/Playoff tournament.
- Cover any additional costs associated with their chess programs.
- Input chess class attendance into ASPEN using the designated chess codes to help meet CPS' goal of 50% student OST participation by 2029.
- Designate the school's point of contact for Academic Chess and ASPEN.
- Follow the Chess Rules and Regulations.

Compensation Process & Details

Per CPS HR Department the CTU contract does not allow stipends for chess coaching.

All CPS-employed chess coaches must now:

- Clock in and out using the CPS timekeeping system to be paid for their hours and/or complete an online Academic Chess timesheet reporting the hours they worked.

The Academic Competitions staff will verify these hours against the authorized totals and submit the reconciled figures to CPS Payroll. Coaches will receive payments twice during the chess season: once in January and again in April

Hour Allocation

Each participating school is allotted **39 hours** of compensation, which may be divided between up to two coaches:

- **2 hours** – Annual Coaches Meeting
- **7 hours** per tournament for up to **3 tournaments** (21 hours total)
- **16 hours** – Weekly chess classes during the season

An **additional 7 hours** is available if your team participates in either the **IHSA Sectionals** or the **Elementary K–8 Championship**.

Eligibility

To be eligible for compensation, coaches must be a CPS Teacher, ESP employee, or Misc employee.

Pay Rate

Last year's hourly rate under the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) contract was **\$30.68/hour**. The updated rate for this year will be published in the new CTU contract once available.

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE BELOW FORM AND RETURN TO
DAVID HEISER AT DAHEISER@CPS.EDU**



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To Confirm Your School's Participation:

Please have your school administrator complete this document by **Tuesday, September 30, 2025** and return it to David Heiser at daheiser@cps.edu. Schools that do not have this form on file by the deadline will not be allowed to participate in Academic Chess events.

Confirmation of Participation

Yes, my school: _____
would like to participate in the 2025-26 CPS Academic Chess Program.

Our school agrees to:

- Hold regularly scheduled chess classes for students.
- Ensure that our chess coordinator, coach, or other school representative attends the annual online Coaches Meeting in September. (see www.cpschess.org for dates)
- Input chess classes & tournament attendance into ASPEN using the designated codes for chess to help meet CPS' goal of 50% student OST participation by 2029.
- Participate in a minimum of two (2) in-person CPS tournaments and the Playoffs/Championship. High schools may substitute one (1) outside tournament.
- Send a sufficient number of chaperones with students to supervise and manage their behavior at events.
- Acknowledge that tournaments and events may limit the number of students that can participate from each school.
- Follow the Chess Rules and Regulations and adhere to the deadlines set by Academic Chess.
- Provide funding for our chess program supplies and materials.
- Be responsible for expenses incurred by participating in non-CPS Academic Chess sponsored/sanctioned tournaments.

Name _____

Title _____

Signature _____

Date _____



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SCHOOL DATA SHEET

School Name _____

School Level _____

School Network _____

This is our first year in Academic Chess Yes No

School Point of Contact will be _____

 Email _____

 Phone Number _____

ASPEN Contact will be _____

 Email _____

 Phone Number _____

Head Chess Coach will be _____

 Email _____

 Phone Number _____

 CPS Role _____

 Employee ID # _____

Assistant Chess Coach will be _____

 Email _____

 Phone Number _____

 CPS Role _____

 Employee ID # _____

Return completed MOUs to David Heiser at daheiser@cps.edu