

Jessica Biggs Biography

Jessica Biggs is a CPS Board of Education member, parent, former public school teacher and principal, and community organizer committed to bringing responsible, principled leadership to our public school system. She was elected to the CPS Board in 2024 with nearly 45 percent of the vote in a 3-way race to represent the 6th School Board District.

Jessica comes from a family of public-school teachers. Her mother and father worked as elementary school teachers in the Chicagoland area for their entire 35+ year careers. Her brother is a special education teacher.

Jessica began her teaching career through Teach for America as a special education teacher at Richmond High School in California. As Jessica recognized the critical need to support students' literacy development earlier in their education, she chose to move to one of Richmond High's feeder middle schools, where she again partnered with administration to ensure all students had access to the literacy support they needed. Here, Jessica felt the impact that a school leader could have on a whole school community.

Jessica earned a Master's in School Leadership at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, and worked as a principal intern in Boston Public Schools to prepare her for school leadership in Chicago. She began her career in Chicago Public Schools as a resident principal at Canter Middle School in Hyde Park.

Jessica was appointed principal at Edmund Burke Elementary School in 2012. Over her tenure, Jessica more than doubled the size of the student body, incorporated a Child Parent Center to support Burke's youngest learners, tripled the size of the school's staff, engaged parents and community in the life of the school, and ultimately moved the school off of probation in 2018.

During the 2017-18 school year, Jessica spoke publicly about CPS policies that were harmful to her students and teachers. When CPS attempted to change the way it funded special education students that led to services being delayed and denied, Jessica helped show the impact that policy had on her students. She also took a stand against the conditions that the CPS janitorial contract with Aramark had left her school in. Devastatingly, these public positions cost Jessica and the Burke school community, as she was ultimately removed from the principalship at the end of that school year.

Today, Jessica continues her commitment to community schools through her work with the Southwest Organizing Project, where she has led the development and implementation of the Southwest System of Care and Healthy Southwest in partnership with more than a dozen other community-based organizations, healthcare and social service institutions and the Chicago Department of Public Health.

Jessica and her husband, Earl Grandberry, are CPS parents. They reside in Bronzeville.