

VALLAS IS WRONG FOR CHICAGO

Q Who is Paul Vallas?

A Paul Vallas is a former head of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) who is running for mayor. He has a long track record of failures. He would be a disaster for public education, union members, and Chicago residents. From Chicago to New Orleans to Philadelphia, Vallas has left a trail of budget disasters that taxpayers are still paying for today.

Q What is Paul Vallas' track record on education?

A Paul Vallas is a champion of school choice, vouchers, and charter schools, which funnels millions of dollars away from public schools.

During his tenure at CPS, Vallas oversaw what would become a model for conservative education policy around the nation, including increased standardized testing and the privatization of public schools through charters. As CEO of the Philadelphia and New Orleans school districts, he decimated public education. In Philadelphia in particular, his big plans resulted in the highest-poverty schools getting the least support; the entire district was left with no stable, reliable funding to meet student needs. His last job as schools chief in Bridgeport, Connecticut ended with a costly court battle over whether he had the credentials needed to serve as a superintendent in that state.

Q What's Paul Vallas' record on pensions?

A Under Vallas, Chicago Public Schools stopped making regular payments into the teachers' pension. With the district facing an anticipated \$1.4 billion deficit, Vallas trimmed the budget by eliminating staff and cut spending from special education according to Chicago Magazine.

The same state law that gave former mayor Richard Daley control of the schools also changed the tax levy that directly funded the Chicago teachers' pension system, allowing Daley and Vallas to use money earmarked for pensions to help cover operating costs, said Chuck Burbridge, former executive director of the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund from 2015-2020.

According to Burbridge, the legislation only required district leaders to make pension contributions if the fund fell below 90 percent of full funding.

The district began making payments again in the early 2000s, but a "pension holiday" approved amid the great recession further contributed to the Fund's current condition.

CPS teacher pensions are currently under 50% funded, according to a recent report.

Q Who is supporting him?

A As a Republican, Paul Vallas has courted and received support from right-wing hate groups like Awake Illinois, a group that has been criticized for its transphobic and homophobic rhetoric. Vallas has been endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and has campaigned with John Catanzara, an apologist for the January 6 insurrectionists.

Paul Vallas has received large sums of money from conservative contributors and prominent Republicans. His largest donor is golf course developer Michael Keiser, who has given him \$700,000. Keiser also previously contributed \$11,200 to Trump. Vallas has taken money from John Canning, a Chicago private equity executive who has given to many politicians locally but also national Republicans, and Noel Moore, who has given to Trump and Texas Republican U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz.

Vallas also took \$25,000 from Ron Gidwitz, Trump's 2016 Illinois finance chairman, who served as finance co-chair of the National Republican Senatorial Committee and ran as a Republican for governor in 2006.

Major donor to Republican causes Craig Duchossois, for instance, has given \$10,000 to Vallas and was a major supporter of Richard Irvin for governor.

Q What does Paul Vallas believe about teaching Black history in schools?

A As a guest on a right-wing podcast, Vallas revealed his personal beliefs about Black people and teaching Black history. He expressed dehumanizing and discriminatory views about Black children in Chicago Public Schools. In the episode, Vallas repeatedly dismissed the value of African American history, suggesting it harms the relationship between students and parents. He also implied that teaching Black history gives Black youth justification to lead a life of crime.

Paul Vallas said: Teaching African American history "distracts from quality instruction" and, as a result, "our standards suffer." (22:11)

"When you introduce a curriculum that is not only divisive but further undermines the relationship of children with their parents, that's a dangerous thing. . . . For white parents, how are you going to discipline your child when your child comes home and has been told that their generation, race, grandparents have discriminated against others." (22:50)

"If you're a Black child, how do you go home and listen to your parent when your parent has failed to be successful in addressing these racist institutional obstacles?" (23:21)

Listen to the entire podcast beginning at the 20:43 mark.