



Illinois African Americans For Equitable Redistricting

May 25, 2023

Honorable Don Harmon
Senate President
309-G Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Honorable Emanuel “Chris” Welch
Speaker of the House
300 State House

Members of the Illinois House Executive Committee
State Capitol Building
401 S 2nd St.
Springfield, IL 62701-1727

Members of the Illinois Senate
Special Committee on the Chicago Elected
Representative School Board
State Capitol Building
401 S 2nd St.
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We have read Public Act 102-0177, which not only enables the creation of the Chicago Elected Representative School Board, but, it provides for a Non-Citizen Advisory Board to provide the necessary academic supports for Non-Citizen children throughout their entire CPS experience as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/34-18.68 new) Sec. 34-18.68. Chicago Board of Education Non-Citizen Advisory Board. HB2908 Enrolled LRB102 14123 SMS 19475 b Public Act 102-0177 (a) The Chicago Board of Education Diversity Advisory Board is created to provide non-citizen students with maximum opportunity for success during their elementary and secondary education experience. (b) The Chicago Board of Education Non-Citizen Advisory Board is composed of individuals appointed by the Mayor to advise the Chicago Board of Education on but not limited to the following issues: (1) Appropriate ways to create an equitable and inclusive learning environment for non-citizen students; (2) Strengthening student, parent, and guardian privacy and confidentiality in school-related issues; (3) Establishing appropriate communication methods between the district and non-citizen students to maximize interactions between the student's school, parents, and guardians; (4) Ensuring principals and other district leaders learn and disseminate information on resources available to non-citizen students and their families; (5) Developing appropriate methods by which non-citizen students are encouraged and supported to continue their education at an institution of higher education; and (6) Providing the perspective of non-citizen families and students who are affected by Board actions, governance, policies, and procedures.

As we have shared in excruciating detail in prior testimonies, given the challenges Black CPS students and their families face on a daily basis, Black children in CPS remain on the bottom for every indicator of academic and social success—behind Latinos, Asians, Whites and some English Language Learners. At the same time, we lead the pack on those indicators of academic social failures. Yet, the House and Senate Committees charged with creating the Chicago ERSB neglected to create any mechanisms to help Black children who are Citizens of this country. We fail to understand how the Legislature can prioritize the needs of Non-Citizen children while leaving our children to “die on the vine”, so to speak.

We respectfully request the creation of the Chicago Board of Education African American Affairs Committee as follows:

Chicago Board of Education African American Affairs Committee

- (a) The Chicago Board of Education African American Affairs Committee (AAAC) shall be a standing committee of the Board, with a purpose of providing Black students with maximum opportunity for success during their elementary and secondary education experience in Chicago Public Schools.
- (b) The two AAAC co-chairs shall be selected by the Mayor of Chicago and President of the Board of Education for a two-year term commencing in 2024. Once the Board of Education transitions from a hybrid board to a fully elected board, the AAAC co-chairs shall be selected by the President of the Board of Education for a two-year term. The remaining members of the AAAC shall each serve two-year terms and be recruited from a pool of applicants drawn from Chicago's Local School Councils (LSCs), Community Action Councils (CACs), Parent Advisory Councils (PACs), and Chicago's civic, business, religious and nonprofit communities. The membership shall be diverse with respect to gender, geography, skills, socio-economic background, etc.
- (c) With technical assistance provided by senior of CPS staff and accomplished educational and organizational development professionals, the AAAC shall develop a data-driven strategic management plan designed to help Black CPS students and their families move the needle on some of their most entrenched problems. The AAAC shall make monthly written and oral progress reports to the board and community stakeholders. CPS shall fund AAAC activities at a level that will enable AAAC to function effectively.

The AAAC shall advise the Chicago Board of Education on a number of issues, including, but not limited to the following:

- (1) Appropriate ways to create an equitable and inclusive learning environment for Black students, and a welcoming environment for their parents and families;
- (2) Strengthening student, parent, and guardian privacy and confidentiality in school-related issues;
- (3) Establishing appropriate communication methods between the district and Black students to maximize interactions between the student's school, parents, and guardians;
- (4) Ensuring principals and other district leaders learn and disseminate information on resources available to Black students and their families;
- (5) Developing appropriate methods by which Black students are encouraged and supported to continue their education at an institution of higher education; and
- (6) Providing the perspective of Black families and students who are affected by Board actions, governance, policies, and procedures.

Sincerely,

Valerie F. Leonard
Chairperson, IAAFER

Craig K. Wimberly
President, COAL

Members of the IAAFER Strategy Committee Include:

Tina Augustus, Founder, Westside Chamber of Commerce
Natasha Dunn, Founder, Black Community Collaborative Illinois
Crystal Overton, Founder, The Overton Group
Dr. Carmen Palmer, PhD, Founder, Educational Village Keepers (EDVK)
Dwayne Truss, Founder, PACE

**cc: Members of the Senate Special Committee On the
Chicago Elected Representative School Board:**

Hon. Mattie Hunter, Senator, 3rd District
Hon. Elgie R. Sims, Jr., Senator, 17th District
Hon. Ram Villivalam, Senator, 8th District
Hon. Celina Villanueva, Senator, 12th District
Hon. Dan McConchie, Senator, 26th District
Hon. Seth Lewis, Senator, 24th District

Members of the House Executive Committee:

Hon. Robert "Bob" Rita, 28th District
Hon. Elizabeth "Lisa" Hernandez, 2nd District
Hon. Ryan Spain, 73rd District
Hon. Kam Buckner, 26th District
Hon. John M. Cabello, 90th District
Hon. Christopher "C.D" Davidsmeyer, 100th District
Hon. Marcus C. Evans, Jr., 33rd District
Hon. Norine K. Hammond, 94th District
Hon. Theresa Mah, 24th District
Hon. Natalie A. Manley, 98th District
Hon. Aaron M. Ortiz, 1st District
Hon. Nicholas K. Smith, 34th District