

# CAUCUS OF RANK & FILE EDUCATORS (CORE) BY-LAWS

(as amended January 2020)

## ARTICLE I – Name.

The name of this organization shall be the Caucus of Rank & File Educators, hereinafter referred to as CORE.

## ARTICLE II – Purpose.

We are a group of dedicated teachers, clinicians, paraprofessional and school-related personnel (PSRPs), retirees, and other champions of public education. We plan to democratize the Chicago Teachers Union, hereinafter referred to as CTU and turn it into an organization that fights on behalf of its members and the students we educate. To that end, CORE establishes a platform upon which all our work is based.

- A. Member Driven Union** – The focus of the caucus is to respond to and represent the voice of the members.
- B. Transparency & Accountability** – All actions, elections and finances shall be open to all members for inspection and as such are open to public debate and discussion within the membership. We shall aggressively seek open governance in the Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Teachers Union, and all organizations that affect public education.
- C. Education for All** – CORE fights for equitable high quality education for all students. To that end, CORE develops quality curricular materials and programs that will raise the social justice consciousness of students, promote an understanding of equity, democracy and human rights, and foster an interest and skills in political engagement. CORE will also seek to establish and maintain partnerships among parents, students, community, and labor organizations for this purpose.
- D. Defense of Publicly Funded Public Education** – Whereas public education is under attack from a well-funded group of business interests, politicians, privatizers and enemies of publicly funded public education, CORE seeks to defend publicly funded public education as the last bastion of democratic expression and hope for students in all public schools across Chicago.
- E. Strong Contract** – A strong Agreement between the Chicago Teachers Union and the Board of Education shall ensure that working conditions and compensation provide for optimal teaching and learning.
- F. Public Education**, especially in black and brown communities and in rural areas, is woefully underfunded. CORE stands for a program of progressive revenue which is essential to give public schools the resources they need to provide every student with the education they deserve. To that end, we support taxes and fees on banks, corporations and the super-wealthy and oppose regressive taxation which further impoverishes those who already pay more than their share in our society.

## **ARTICLE III – Members.**

### **Section 1. Eligibility for membership.**

All Chicago Teachers Union members, and other champions of public education, shall be eligible for membership.

### **Section 2. Classes of Members.**

There shall be the following classes of members:

- A. Regular members.** Regular members of CORE shall be those members of the CTU and of ChiACTS Local 4343 who have paid regular membership dues to CORE. They shall have all the rights of membership. Regular members may vote on any matter before CORE except if the matter pertains to a union local of which they are not a member.
- B. Associate members.** Associate members shall be those members who have paid CORE dues and are not members of the CTU. They may attend CORE meetings and freely participate, at the discretion of the chair, but may neither nominate, vote, nor participate in the election of CORE officers and steering committee members.
- C. Lifetime members.** Lifetime members shall be those members who pay a one-time membership fee. Lifetime members are either Regular or Associate members based on their CTU status and they shall have all rights of membership of that class.
- D. Sustaining members.** Sustaining members shall be those members who donate to the operational budget. Sustaining members are either Regular or Associate members based on their CTU status and they shall have all rights of membership of that class.

### **Section 3. Dues.**

There shall be the following classes of members:

- A. Regular members.** Dues shall be \$35 per year for teachers (as defined in Appendix D of the CTU Collective Bargaining Agreement), \$20 per year for PSRPs (as defined in Appendix D of the CTU Collective Bargaining Agreement) and retirees, and renewable at the annual CORE convention.
- B. Associate members.** Dues shall be \$20 per year and are payable on the last day of the month that the individual became a member.
- C. Lifetime members.** Dues shall be a one-time membership fee of \$1500 and is payable over a 10-month period or once.
- D. Sustaining members.** Contributions shall be a minimum of \$500.

### **Section 4. Maintenance of Good Standing**

In order to be eligible to participate in internal elections for CORE endorsements, members must have joined or renewed their membership by the CORE General Meeting prior to that internal election.

In order to maintain good standing in the organization, members must abide by the rules set forth in this Section 4. If an individual member fails to abide by the rules, a majority vote of the Steering Committee will be required to revoke the individual's membership or to suspend said membership for a period of time determined by the Steering Committee. The individual will have the right to move reversal of the Steering Committee's decision at a meeting of the general membership. If the motion fails, the individual will have the right to move to reverse the Steering Committee's decision at the next annual Convention. The Steering Committee shall have the right to rescind previous decisions to suspend or revoke membership based on a later appeal.

When any conflict between CORE members arises that impedes the work of the caucus the members involved may be referred by majority vote of the Steering Committee or of any general membership meeting to the Conflict Resolution Committee. The Conflict Resolution Committee shall oversee a process of restorative justice that seeks a voluntary or cooperative resolution. Upon conclusion of a cooperative resolution, the Conflicts Resolution committee shall report on the actions and plan for the resolution to the Steering Committee. If the conflict cannot be resolved in this manner, then each participant (including the committee) shall write a proposed resolution and submit it to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will then vote on a course of action, which may or may not include any of the sanctions reserved for rule breakers.

**Rule 1:** No CORE member may harass or discriminate against anyone on the basis—real or perceived—of race, religion, creed, ethnicity, age, disability, gender, gender presentation or expression, or sexual orientation.

**Rule 2:** All members eligible for membership in the CTU must make every effort to maintain their union membership in good standing.

**Rule 3:** Whenever a candidate for any office related to the CTU, IFT, AFT or CTPF has been endorsed by the caucus, no member may stand for that position in opposition to the CORE-endorsed candidate. If a member has been nominated for the position prior to CORE's endorsement, the member must withdraw their candidacy for the position.

**Rule 4:** CORE members may not be members of any other caucus constituted for the purpose of electing candidates to CTU, IFT, AFT or CTPF.

**Rule 5:** CORE members may not violate a decision voted on affirmatively by a majority at convention or proposed by the Steering Committee and voted on affirmatively by 2/3 of any membership meeting provided at least one week notice of such vote is given in the call for the meeting.

## **ARTICLE IV – Officers.**

### **Section 1. Officers.**

The elected officers of CORE shall be two (2) co-chairs, a recording secretary, an external communications secretary, a treasurer, a membership coordinator and five (5) at-large members of the Steering Committee.

## **Section 2. Steering Committee.**

**A. Composition.** The Steering Committee shall consist of the six (6) officers and five (5) at-large members to be elected following nomination at CORE's autumn convention in odd-numbered years. Should such Convention be delayed into the winter of the following (even-numbered year), elections shall take place as described above. position on the CORE Steering Committee.

**B. Responsibilities.** The convention and membership meetings are the highest deciding bodies of CORE. The Steering Committee serves as the executive agent and provides guidance to the membership.

1. The proposed agenda for regular meetings of the membership shall be generated by the Steering Committee;
2. The decisions for direct action, campaigns, and other business shall be generated by the convention, membership meetings, and the Steering Committee between membership meetings. The Steering Committee decisions, where possible, shall be voted upon by the membership at Regular Meetings;
3. General communications from CTU, AFT, IFT, AFL-CIO, and all other organizations working with CORE for the improvement of democratic education, as well as bodies such as the CPS that control our members and students, shall be shared with the membership at Regular, Regional and Special Meetings;
4. The Steering Committee is the central location for all communication with members, and thus, must make itself available and open to communication to and from all members.

## **Section 3. Duties of Officers.**

**A. Co-Chairs.** The co-chairs shall:

1. serve as chairs of the Steering Committee;
2. serve as chairs of the fundraising committee;
3. be responsible for maintaining good public relations with the community;
4. have the power to appoint special committees subject to the approval of the Steering Committee;
5. serve as *ex officio* members of all committees except the nominating committee.

**B. Recording Secretary.** the recording secretary shall:

1. be responsible for taking accurate minutes of all meetings;
2. be responsible for distribution of the minutes to all members via email and/or post;
3. have other duties as prescribed by the Steering Committee;
4. have ability to appoint a vice, assistant, or an undersecretary to fulfill duties in case of inability.

**C. External Communications Secretary.** The external communications secretary shall:

1. be responsible for all contacts with the press;

2. coordinate dissemination of all literature, materials and information about CORE;
3. serve as chair of the external communications committee;
4. serve as co-editor of the monthly newsletter;
5. have ability to appoint a vice, assistant, or an undersecretary to fulfill duties in case of inability.

**D. Treasurer.** The treasurer shall:

1. be responsible for the receipt and deposit of dues, contributions, and income into accounts at such banks as the steering committee directs;
2. keep accurate records of monies received and expended;
3. make a financial report at each steering committee meeting;
4. submit a yearly budget for adoption by the steering committee;
5. make a financial report at regularly-scheduled meetings;
6. have ability to appoint a vice, assistant, or an undersecretary to fulfill duties in case of inability.

**E. Membership Coordinator.** The membership coordinator shall:

1. be responsible for the collection of dues;
2. chair the membership committee;
3. keep an up to date membership list;
4. encourage new membership list;
5. devise means of retaining current members;
6. work in coordination with the external communications committee and other committees to develop a membership package;
7. have ability to appoint a vice, assistant, or an undersecretary to fulfill duties in case of inability.
8. make a report of the membership totals at regularly scheduled meetings and at the CORE Convention.

**F. At-Large Steering Committee Members.** The at-large Steering Committee members shall:

1. chair or serve on standing and special committees as needed;
2. work to increase the visibility of CORE within and outside CPS.

## **Section 4. Procedures for Nominations and Elections of Steering Committee Members**

**A. Nominations for Steering Committee positions.** Nominations will be open for all eleven (11) positions in odd years.

1. Nominations at the convention shall be made by members at large during discussion, and seconded by voice at the convention.
2. The current Rules and Elections committee shall oversee the nominations.
3. At the request of the membership at the annual convention, nominations will remain open after the convention for a period to be determined by the Rules and Elections committee.

4. Nominees should submit a short biography, in writing, to the Rules and Elections committee within one (1) week of nomination to signify their desire to run for the office.

**B. Elections of Steering Committee Members.** The Steering Committee Members shall be elected by secret ballot in odd numbered years. They shall take office following the adjournment of the meeting at which they are ratified. Elected officers shall serve a term of two (2) years unless they resign their position prior to the end of said term. No member may serve more than three (3) consecutive terms in the same office.

1. A quorum is required at the ratifying meeting. If there is no quorum at the intended meeting, then the ratification must be delayed until the next meeting at which there is a quorum;
2. A plurality of those voting in the election is required to elect Steering Committee Members;
3. Elections for Steering Committee shall be carried out by the Rules and Elections Committee.
4. Candidates for all steering committee positions may run for one position only.

## **Section 5. Vacancies in Office.**

**A. Temporary Vacancies.** In the event that a member becomes ill, or is otherwise unable to serve temporarily, the other members of the Steering Committee can appoint a member to serve in the interim.

**B. Resignations.** Steering Committee members may resign by doing so in writing at least ten (10) days before the regularly scheduled meeting. Vacancies in office shall be filled within thirty (30) days by a designee of the Steering Committee and shall serve until the next convention at which time all open positions will be filled by regular election. The exception to this appointment of Officers by the Steering Committee shall be as follows:

1. If Steering Committee members resign within thirty (30) days of the annual CORE convention, the vacant positions shall be filled per Section (3)A and Section (3)B above. Offices filled in this manner shall be held until the next scheduled election in odd numbered years.

**C. Removal from Office.** Any Steering Committee member who misses two (2) consecutive Steering Committee meetings without prior notification shall be considered derelict in duty and the office declared vacant. Any steering committee member who is otherwise derelict in their duties may be removed by the steering committee. These vacancies shall be treated as other vacancies per Section (4)B-1.

## **ARTICLE V – Meetings.**

### **Section 1. Regular Meetings.**

Regular meetings shall be scheduled, communicated and held monthly from August through May, except that the Steering committee may substitute up to four non-consecutive regular meetings each calendar year with regional meetings or actions.

### **Section 2. Special Meetings.**

**A. Regional Meetings.** Regional Meetings shall be held on dates decided by the Steering committee. No binding vote on any motion that would impact the caucus as a whole may be taken at a regional meeting. A summary of any advisory vote, issues, or ideas for initiatives coming out of a regional meeting will be communicated to the entire CORE membership at the next general meeting. Whenever possible, Regional Meetings shall be focused around a particular campaign or issue.

**B. Special Meetings.** Special Meetings of the membership shall be called by petition -- online or in writing -- of ten percent (10%) of the membership, provided that notice of such meetings shall be delivered to members at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting. Notice shall include the specific business to be conducted at the meeting.

### **Section 3. Conventions.**

Member only CORE conventions shall be held once a year for purposes of reviewing and setting goals and policy and renewing memberships.

### **Section 4. Quorum.**

**A. Membership Meetings.** The quorum for regular meetings and any special meetings of the membership shall be ten percent (10%) of the total membership in good standing.

**B. Steering Committee Meetings.** A quorum for meetings of the steering committee shall be a majority of the members then in office.

### **Section 5. Steering Committee meetings.**

Regular steering committee meetings shall be held monthly. The Steering Committee shall provide a summary report of its meetings to the general membership at each general meeting.

### **Section 6. Special Steering Committee meetings.**

The co-chairs or any three members may call special meetings of the Steering Committee. Notice of the special meeting shall be sent to members at least three days prior to the date of the meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI – Committees.**

### **Section 1. Standing Committees.**

There shall be the following standing committees: Bylaws, Membership, Research, Budget, External Communications, Fundraising, Campaigns, Public Outreach, House of Delegates, Rules and Elections, Pension and Retirement, Conflict Resolution, and Slating.

### **Section 2. Duties of the Committees.**

The duties of the committees shall be to consider member proposals, draft appropriate resolutions, and communicate to the steering committee for placement on CORE general meeting agenda. Committees must report regularly to the Steering Committee.

Duties shall also include:

- A. By-laws.** The By-laws committee shall be responsible for reviewing the by-laws and submitting amendments to the membership.
- B. Membership.** The membership committee shall encourage new membership; devise means of retaining current members and shall work in coordination with the external communications committee and other committees to develop a membership package.
- C. Research.** The research committee shall maintain in a central place, information on CPS past practices, alternative compensation programs and other pertinent data relevant to the five CORE principles.
- D. Budget.** The budget committee shall concern itself solely with the CPS budget in order to inform the 5 CORE principles. The budget committee chair and members must cover all summer budget hearings and be prepared to ask questions.
- E. External Communications.** The external communications committee shall produce all newsletters, print and digital, fliers and press packages. Any publications to be used for the purposes of recruitment, campaigns and elections must be approved by this committee.
- F. Fundraising.** The fundraising committee shall be responsible for all fundraisers including planning, obtaining venues and publicity. The co-chairs shall chair this committee.
- G. Campaigns.** The campaigns committee shall be responsible for all direct actions including petitions, signage, and security.
- H. Public Outreach.** The public outreach committee shall be responsible for outreach to organizations that champion publicly funded public education.
- I. House of Delegates.** The House of Delegates (HoD) committee will develop questions for delegates to ask during the HoD meetings and will work with the external communications and campaigns committees to develop and disseminate fliers and petitions as needed.



**J. Rules and Elections.** The Rules and Elections committee will convene in odd years to determine fair and appropriate procedures (beyond those outlined in this document) for steering committee elections and when special elections or referenda are required.

The Rules and Elections Committee will also oversee elections for CORE candidates in CTU elections. For purposes of these elections, there will be three subcommittees, 1) Slating, 2) Ballot Access, 3) Campaign, or additional subcommittees if needed.

**Slating Committees.** The slating committees shall facilitate recommendations, nominations, and election of CORE-endorsed candidates to various elected positions within the CTU, IFT, AFT, and additional candidacies related to fulfilling the mission of our CORE By-Laws. The Steering Committee shall propose a slating subcommittee and members at a subsequent general meeting must vote on the proposal. This slating committee shall collaborate to coordinate a process that adheres to the CORE By-Laws. In order for a candidate to be endorsed for any office related to the CTU, IFT, AFT, or CTPF, such endorsement shall only be made with the participation of the membership through electronic, on-line voting. CORE members running for a CORE endorsement may not serve on the slating subcommittee responsible for that office, except in the case of IFT/AFT delegates.

Separate slating committees shall be appointed for the following responsibilities:

1. **Interim Slating Committee** – established to fill vacancies that occur between CTU election cycles, including retirements from the Chicago Public Schools, AFT and IFT elected offices, and Chicago Teachers Pension Fund trustees.
2. **Slating Committee for CTU Officers and Trustees** – established to coordinate the process to determine CORE endorsements for the CTU elected positions with a greater level of responsibility, including CTU President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, and CTU Trustees.
3. **Slating Committee for CTU Executive Board** – established to coordinate the process to determine CORE endorsements for all other elected Union positions, including CTU Functional Vice Presidents, CTU Area Vice Presidents, and AFT and IFT delegates and alternates.

**K. Pension and Retirement.** The Pension and Retirement committee shall meet to discuss issues and policies pertaining to retirement for Chicago educators.

**L. Restorative Practices.** The Restorative Practices committee employs a restorative justice framework to seek the resolution of any conflicts arising between CORE members that impede the work of the caucus and proposed proactive methods of improving cooperative work.

**M. Member Communications.** The Member Communications committee shall encourage the productive use of the CORE listserv in order to inform topics for discussion and debate at regular meetings. The CORE listserv shall be indexed by topic, with members receiving indexed digests daily.

### **Section 3. Special Committees.**

Special committees may be appointed by the Steering Committee or the membership as needed.

## **ARTICLE VII – Parliamentary Authority.**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern CORE in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order CORE may adopt.

The Steering Committee shall promulgate a standard order of business for all meetings.

## **ARTICLE VIII – Amendments.**

These by-laws may be amended in the following ways:

**A. Special Meetings called for the purpose of Constitutional Amendment or the**

**Convention.** To enact By-laws changes twenty percent (20%) of the voting membership must attend. 2/3 vote of attending members must approve the amendment;

**B. Referendum.** By-laws changes may be enacted by Referendum. To call such a vote, proposed amendments must be submitted as a petition signed by no fewer than twenty percent (20%) of voting members to the Steering Committee.

**C. Electronic Voting** The Rules and Elections Committee will oversee Electronic Elections via the internet. A current member list shall be circulated prior to an online election to verify that all regular members have access to the method of voting. The online ballot shall be accessible for no fewer than 2 days. Twenty percent (20%) of ballots must be returned in order to close online voting. In the case that twenty percent (20%) is not reached within 5 days, the Steering Committee can, by unanimous vote, direct the Rules and Elections Committee to close the Electronic Election. A 2/3 vote is necessary to adopt the amendment;

**D. Notification Requirements for Constitutional Amendments Outside of the**

**Convention.** Any proposed changes to the By-laws outside the convention must be submitted in writing to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall then provide notice to the membership at least one (1) month in advance of the Special Meeting or Referendum.