



CORE Members Lead

As we wind down the 2017-18 school year, this is a good time to reflect on what we have done, and consider our goals going into the next year.

Special Education

This school year, the Special Education Taskforce, led by CORE activists including Sarah Chambers, Natasha Carlsen, and Katie Osgood, turned a long-term goal of organizing teachers and parents into very real wins for everyone involved with the Chicago Public Schools.

Anyone who knows anything about special education knows that CPS accelerated their assault on special education services during the last few years. Special Ed educators have had their workloads (and caseloads) drastically increased – in an attempt by CPS to dissuade educators from documenting the special needs of our kids. Administrators have been

encouraged to change IEPs – without the knowledge or consent of affected parents. And thousands of students have been cheated out of their much-needed individualized instruction.

Due to pressure from the Special Ed Taskforce and reporting by WBEZ, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) was forced to hold hearings on the atrocious behavior of the Chicago Public Schools. Because we exposed CPS' illegal and immoral behavior, ISBE voted unanimously to appoint an Independent Monitor to oversee special education services at CPS.

That fight is not over and will require educators to continue organizing and documenting around this issue. One independent monitor is bound to be overwhelmed by the abuses of CPS. We will need to help this inspector with investigations and setting priorities. And we must continue this fight for justice in Springfield. This issue clearly demonstrates that we need an Elected School Board.

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Elected Representative School Board

As the scandals and incompetence of CPS continue to be exposed (by our members), there is a growing demand for a genuine, representative school board for Chicago.

CORE members and CTU activists led the way in exposing the utter incompetence of CPS. Michael Shea and his colleagues at Kenwood high school have worked for years to document the neglect and disrepair of their building. Erin Lynch and her colleagues at Mollison elementary school made headlines by exposing the rat infestation at their school. We forced CPS to hire more janitors (as a short-term solution) and have exposed their indecent neglect of our schools.

Our team in Springfield, led by CORE members, Stacy Davis-Gates and Kurt Hilgendorf, have worked tirelessly to educate our elected officials and bring equity and justice to the Chicago Public Schools. We put the idea of an elected school board on the ballot in 37 wards during the Chicago Municipal Election of 2015, and proved that Chicagoans wanted an elected school board by more than a 4-to-1 margin. A bill to that effect passed the Illinois House of Representatives by a vote of 110-4 in 2016, and again passed the Illinois House and Senate in 2017, by similar margins. Continued pressure (especially on Senate President, John Cullerton) should open the way for an Elected Representative School Board for Chicago soon.



Our political work has not only increased our chances at winning an elected school board and regaining bargaining rights, we have also encouraged an upsurge in progressive candidates at the local, state, and national levels.

We elected one of our own, Sue Garza, a former counselor and CORE activist, to the Chicago City Council in 2015. Just this year, we endorsed another CTU member, Aaron Ortiz, for the Illinois House. With our help, he beat incumbent Dan Burke in the March primaries, and is expected to win that seat in November. Aaron ran on a slate with Chuy Garcia, and every progressive candidate on the slate is expected to win in November. Chuy will likely be representing the progressive values of Chicagoans in the United States House of Representatives by 2019.

We anticipate that several CTU members and allies will run for the Chicago City Council in 2019, including CORE members Erika Wozniak and Diane Daleiden. Look for ways to support our people.

In addition to using our growing power to demand an elected school board, we should demand that CPS open up their contracts with outside vendors to the scrutiny of the CTU. Other districts include these issues in their contracts. We should, too.

Contract Campaign 2019

CORE members have led our efforts to reach out to the membership of the CTU, asking for contract demands – and priorities. We must accomplish two goals while gathering contract demands: (1) make sure that every CTU member’s voice is heard; and (2) decide which issues are so vital that we will strike – or continue striking – over them.



Katie Osgood, a delegate, EBoard member, and long-time CORE activist, has led an effort to bring the idea of “open bargaining” to our negotiations for the next contract. Imagine a bargaining session in which we demand smaller class sizes, wraparound services, and opening the Aramark contract – and then the Board is forced to tell us “No!” in front of parents and community members.

Expect a whirlwind of activity leading up to the end of this current contract (June of 2019). Prepare your colleagues for a strike. Members need to start a strike fund – if they haven’t already. And solidarity in your building is vital in the coming year.

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The budget that is being debated and discussed today may also determine whether we are financially prepared for a contract battle – and potentially a strike. CORE members on the Executive Board have demanded that we prioritize our ability to defend the contract we have, while organizing members so that we are a lean, fighting Union.

Organizing Nationally

Michelle Gunderson, Tammie Vinson, and Debby Pope, all strong leaders in CORE, have been at the forefront of organizing a national network of activist unions. That network is called UCORE and came into being a few years ago, modeling itself on CORE tactics and principles.

UCORE has helped activists across the country organize their own unions. Activists in Philadelphia, battling school closings and a moribund union, organized their own Working Educators caucus (calling themselves WE). UCORE members have helped lead many of the “red state” teacher uprisings in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, and most recently, North Carolina.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Special Ed Taskforce Meeting

Tuesday, June 5th @ 4:30pm

CTU Offices [1901 W. Carroll St.]

Camaraderie at Output Lounge

Wednesday, June 6th

Output Lounge [1758 W. Grand Ave.]

after the House of Delegates

LGBTQIA+ Committee Meeting

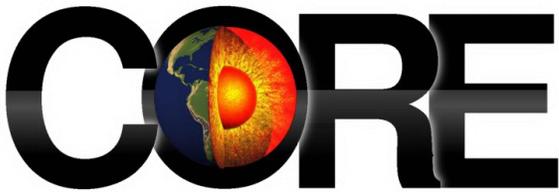
Tuesday, June 12th @ 4:30pm

CTU Offices [1901 W. Carroll St.]

CORE End-of-Year Party

Thursday, June 21st @ 5:00pm

[1321 W. Chase Ave.]



Caucus of Rank-and-File Educators
COREteachers.org

JOIN CORE!

Help the CTU continue to take on corporate privatizers and the Board's dirty tricks. Join at **COREteachers.org** or mail \$35 (working CTU teachers) or \$20 (CTU PSRPs, retirees, displaced, and associates*) to:

CORE
P.O. Box 47687
Chicago, IL 60647-7217

*Associates are supportive CPS parents and community members. They have speaking

Name _____

E-mail _____

Phone _____

Street _____

City, State Zip _____