

October 15, 2020

The Members of the Chicago Board of Education

Janice Jackson, Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools

Guillermo “Willy” Montes de Oca, Director of Local School Council Relations

Dear Members of the Chicago Board of Education, and Chicago Public Schools Leadership,

“The mission of the Board of Education – as it relates to the Local School Council electoral process – is to uphold the letter and intent of the School Reform Act. That important responsibility includes conducting fair citywide elections, providing consistent procedures that foster public trust, and promoting broad-based candidate and voter participation through the city.” - CPS [2020 Local School Council Election Guide](#)

We, as members of the LSCs.4.ALL coalition, as Local School Council (LSC) representatives, parents, school stakeholders and community members, urge the CPS LSC Relations office to produce and make publicly available information about how CPS will conduct the upcoming LSC elections.

With only 34 calendar days to go, the public has very little information about a citywide election. CPS has a constitutional obligation to hold free and equal LSC elections. But the current implementation of LSC elections has not fostered public trust or promoted broad-based candidate and voter participation through the city. In fact, we are not clear on the specific dates or processes that would allow candidates, parents, school community and public to exercise their constitutional rights to engage in the democratic LSC election process.

We understand the COVID-19 global health pandemic presents unprecedented challenges for the entire district. It is why we’ve been engaged with district leadership and sought reliable information about this process since Spring 2020; we’ve offered suggestions, recommendations and supportive best practices. And above all, we understand this important process demands a level of attention that should feel democratic, fair and with clear information, transparency and consistent communication.

Today, we are faced with many unknowns. Many sitting LSC members do not have access to information to inform their school communities, creating confusion and tension at the local school level. Withholding this information from LSCs prevents them from fulfilling their statutory obligation to publicize this information as necessary to maximize the involvement of all eligible voters. In accordance with [\(105 ILCS 5/34-2.1\)](#), and constitutional requirements, CPS must publicly release specific election timeline dates and all relevant information about how it plans to ensure that all eligible voters may participate in the process, including but not limited to:

- Open and accessible Candidate Forums for every school
- A list of candidates running at their local schools

- Candidate literature distribution days
- Means for equitable access to parent and community voting whether in-person, mail-in ballot or hybrid options, including:
 - Measures to make elections safe for in-person voting
 - If there is mail in balloting, measures to ensure safe and equitable access to voting such as secure drop boxes and pre-paid postage
 - Community input about feasibility of voting options
 - Safeguards to maintain election integrity and racially equitable access to voting options
- Election day poll watchers, how end of vote counts and announcements will be made etc...

The public deserves to hear a full LSC election plan by Monday October 19th, a month from the LSC election. We stand ready to support this process and develop communication strategies to maximize input as the city commemorates this 30th year of Local School Councils.

Respectfully submitted,

Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights
Lugenia Burns Hope Center
Blocks Together
Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education
Chicago Teachers Union
Chicago United for Equity
Northside Action for Justice
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization
Pilsen Alliance
Representative Theresa Mah