

**December 16, 2020 Board Meeting Written Comments**  
**Received between Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**Submitted via Written Comments Form**

1	<p>In a recent document from CPS, it was stated, "CDPH determined in mid-November for CPS to reopen safely, the length of time over which cases double would need to extend by at least 50 percent...to a double time of at least 18 days by the time classes begin."</p> <p>Why was the metric of doubling time chosen over positivity rates? Where can we find the information about the current doubling rate in Chicago? The Chicago COVID dashboard gives information about positivity rates, but the doubling metrics are not immediately apparent. Why is Chicago's travel order based on the positivity rate, but school reopening is not? It would be helpful to hear more about why this decision was made to understand the science behind it.</p>
2	<p>Good morning members of the Board of Education,</p> <p>I would you to acknowledge that the safety of our children is our top priority. Science and our medical leaders has shown us that Covid-19 is a deadly disease and the best way to protect our kids is not to sent them to school, but to continue and strengthen remote learning. The Board can provide more resources to our communities that do not have the same equitable access to fully particiapte in remote learning. Please consider the safety of our kids first and continue to provide remote learning while providing resources to our Black and brown communnites that needs them the most.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Miguel Bautista</p>
3	<p>On behalf of the Whitney Young High School Local School Council, I am writing to ask CPS to reconsider remote learning guidelines until we are able to return to in-person instruction.</p> <p>We are strong advocates for rigorous academic instruction, however, it is becoming increasingly clear that having students online for most, if not all, of the day is not the best learning environment. In fact, it is detrimental to students' mental and physical health with increased reports of anxiety, depression, disengagement, isolation, headaches and eye strain.</p> <p>With the recent announcement that high schools will not return to in-person instruction after February 1, we believe we should have more flexibility with our schedule and the amount of required time online.</p> <p>We believe there are creative ways to engage students, while continuing to providing an academically rigorous education with opportunities that don't include looking at a computer screen from 8 am-3:15 pm every day.</p> <p>For example, working with our students, teachers and administration collaboratively, we would like to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A change in current requirement of 80% synchronous learning to 60-70% synchronous</li> <li>- Flexibility in our bell schedule and the required minutes for lunch and instruction</li> </ul>

- Flexibility to include time for mental health breaks, tutoring, social interaction, club meetings, opportunities to go outside, and creative ways to find joy in learning remotely
- Starting school later (at 9 a.m.) which is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics to improve students' health, academic performance and quality of life

As a Blue Ribbon School that prides itself on academic excellence, we will not let our students fall behind. Unfortunately, the current remote environment with no end in sight is having a harmful effect on their learning experience and we believe we need to take action now in students' best interest.

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Dear Ms. Janice Jackson,

As members of the North River School Local School Council we asking for you and the members of the Board of Education to consider the relocation/co-location of North River School. We are asking for you to consider relocating/co-locating our school to an environment that guarantees our students will have access to amenities considered as standard at other CPS schools. North River School is located in school facility that is leased through the Archdioceses of Chicago and is significantly limited in scope.

We have determined that our current school facility does not meet equal access to supports and services found as common at CPS schools across the city. Secondly, under the current health and safety consideration established, we find our school community is significantly at greater risk due to access to shared spaces and contractual limitations. In essence, our students do not have equal access to a healthy and safe modern learning environment that is designed to help them grow academically, physically and creatively. We are encouraging you to objectively assess our current conditions as we feel confidently that this is an equity issue. We have presented our concerns and have the full backing and support of our Alderman Ms. Sussana Rodriguez of the 33rd Ward.

Please find key bullet points which address our rationale and concerns below.

- The school is not ADA accessible
- There are safety concerns due to multiple access points to the building.
- Significant limitations on implementing Covid 19 Social Distancing Guidelines.
- There are contractual limitations to shared spaces.
- There is no gym- North River uses the "church hall " as a multipurpose room.
- There is limited sports programing due to space and scheduling limitations.
- There is no green space- Recess and outdoor activities are held in the open church parking lot.
- There is no formal auditorium- The school uses the church hall to host assemblies and other auditorium related activities
- There is no playground or green spaces- Student do not have access to any jungle gym or outside playground equipment
- There is limited Mobility- Due to the buildings small size, moving students in classrooms to specials like gym, art, and lunch is difficult due to narrow hallways and stairways
- No available space for supplemental programs such as sensory room for our students in our low incidents program or science labs.
- Limited space for clinicians such as speech, OT and social work to meet or provide support services

Once again, we are asking for you and the members of the Board of Education to

consider and approve the re-location of the North River School to a new school location. The rational is clear and justifiable request on behalf of the North River Local School Council and greater school community. We all look forward to hearing from you and your representatives and are eager to partner with CPS address our concerns.

Respectfully,

North River LSC

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- 5 I feel that my academic and work experience and African American activist background since High School (past 14 year and current membership in Rainbow Push/NAACP and other community organizations) quality's me to make some substantive comments related to the Chicago Public Schools considerations for removing police from schools so that they are not there when or if students ever start back regular attendance, and remote learning. Also, was raised until the age of 16 in a Public Housing Project and involved with a street gang. I feel that my master's degree in Political Science, U. of Michigan, and History, Northeastern Illinois University, teaching in Chicago/Pontiac, Michigan Public Schools (total of 15 years) and 12 years of employment as a Case Manager Therapist for local Mental Health Agencies along with my other levels of experience further qualifies me to comment in a substantive manner.

First, due to the history of discipline problems in schools like Chicago's and other public schools, a preference should be given to online learning to reduce substantially school violence, disruptions, bullying, clowning around and other behavior that impedes learning or academic advancement and helps closing the Educational Achievement Gap between African American / Hispanic students and their White counterparts. Also, White students lag behind many other world nations (not just industrially advanced nations) in their academic achievement as has been documented by various studies and research such as the study, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform is the 1983 report of the U.S. National Commission on Excellence in Education which is considered a landmark report in modern American educational history.

Consequently, White students even the gifted one's are not academically equal to their counterparts in many other nations! Those who feel regular classroom instruction with all of its historic draw backs is preferable to remote learning, particularly for those who prefer remote learning, have apparently given up on correcting or lost sight of these two expressions of a historic educational achievement/school discipline failings on the part of the majority American public schools!

Remote learning in some form should be the wave of the future since because it can substantially reduce distractions to learning it gives the education community an opportunity to enhance overall student academic achievement for the regular general population students. Some form of in-class learning maybe required or preferred for Special Education students particularly if they are very slow achievers.

As for removing police from schools when students are allowed to return to the classroom police or security guards would not have been put in in the first place if there was not a serious issue with guns being confiscated from students and violence against students and staff in and around the schools. These security issues are also is related to lockers being broken into, student property stolen or taken by another student by physical force, or the vandalizing of a staff's vehicle. At Whitney Young a premier advanced learning High School recently in a premier/upscale neighborhood next to the Chicago Police training facility, which is saturated with police, a staff's car was hi-jacked. Some staff no doubt in certain troubled neighborhoods or troubled low performing schools have been robbed or assaulted (maybe even raped as have some

	<p>students) while leaving or going to their car/school over the years. It would be foolish to take unnecessary chances and wait until someone is hospitalized or killed to see the need for both some reliable level of police and CPS security at our schools particularly those in troubled/high crime neighborhoods! Also, advanced schools are not free of discipline problems and some of the students come from privileged economic environments and consequently think they can get away with disruptive behavior because of their or their parents privileged background!</p> <p>Advanced schools, regular neighborhood schools, and troubled under-achieving schools all have to have plans in place due the increase in mass school shootings, and having it known by the public that uniformed and plain clothes police, even undercover police who appear to be regular students, are present at our schools can help impede disruption and allow our students to feel safer and be able to focus more on learning rather than worrying in some instances daily in school and going to and from school as well as in their neighborhood about their security. The police maybe too incompetent and corrupt /racist to protect many of our students in their neighborhoods, but the CPS and other school districts should do more not less and owe it to students to at least make sure they are and feel safe/protected when they are in school or in the school area; This goes for the staff as well.</p> <p>Those who advocate for the removal of police from schools have apparently not taken these matters into consideration. They do not appear to be dealing with reality and are in serious denial about security in our public schools as well as indulging in wishful thinking. There are a lot of fake insincere activist out here! Some are just opportunist who are seeking an issue to exploit to help fund their organizations. They have little if any replicated research to support how removing all police or a substantial number of them from schools will enhance academic achievement and student/staff safety. If the CPS staff who reads this comment has such research available or knows where I can access such research, email it to me at <a href="mailto:djamestgo@yahoo.com">djamestgo@yahoo.com</a>. This email does not include my actual name or personal information.</p>
6	<p>Good morning. My name is Elizabeth Frank. I'm here representing the Chicago Chapter of Veterans for Peace with a petition. The petition asks that the Directory and Recruiter Opt-out Information Sheet (or opt out form) be included with the fall registration materials for all CPS public school students and distributed in the same manner that each school provides families with other forms distributed at the start of the school year. Also that the form be made available in multiple languages. And lastly that the Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet should be posted by the start of school on the district's own Back To School Packets page, along with the December 1st deadline for submission. (NOTE: As of yesterday the form was still not available on the Back to School page. It says "coming soon").</p> <p>The organizations that have signed on to this request include: Chicago Teachers Union, Illinois Families for Public Schools, Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education, Parents4Teachers, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Chicago Veterans for Peace, Pilsen Alliance, SEIU Local #73, Cook County College Teachers Union, Caucus of Rank and File Educators and Northside Action 4 Justice</p> <p>We feel this is really a no-brainer. It's a matter of student privacy. Other schools have been handling the opt out form in this matter for years; in some cases since it became law as part of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001. The letter and related material were forwarded earlier.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
7	<p>It is not safe to return to schools. I take public transportation and do not have a car -- it is not safe for me to be traveling back and forth to school every day.</p>

8	It is irresponsible for CPS to re-open schools at this time given current public health conditions, the lack of feasible, concrete, and safe plans that can be implemented equitably across schools, and the lack of transparent communication with all stakeholders including teachers, students, and parents about the re-opening process.
9	<p>As explained in the CTU document, <a href="https://www.ctulocal1.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CTU-Demands.pdf">https://www.ctulocal1.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CTU-Demands.pdf</a>, I believe safety, equity and trust are all important concerns. I would like to highlight the concerns regarding Trust.</p> <p>TRUST</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bring parents, community members and other groups of employees, such as principals and engineers, to the table. Bargain in good faith.</li> <li>2. Create CTU-CPS Joint Committee on COVID-19 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Include independent experts and can make inspections, investigations, and can issue directives.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Safety committee in each school <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Elected membership that includes delegates, other members, engineers etc.</li> <li>b. Local committee has the ability to stop work if conditions are unsafe.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
10	<p>According to an October CDC report "School studies suggest that in-person learning can be safe in communities with low SARS-CoV-2 transmission rates but might increase transmission risk in communities where transmission is already high." The Chicago Department of Public Health is the expert on whether community transmission is high. Inequities in rates of community transmission within the City should be considered. But given the current Covid surge it may be that most if not all school communities are in a 'high transmission' context. Therefore according to this CDC report, moving to in-person learning now may increase Covid transmission risk. (Quote Source: page 1414 , Leeb RT, Price S, Sliwa S, et al. COVID-19 Trends Among School-Aged Children — United States, March 1–September 19, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1410–1415. DOI: <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6939e2">http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6939e2</a>)</p>
11	<p>Vaccination is important for teachers to return to school. I am unsure if you can require it, but it is essential. Right now, not all adults plan on getting the vaccine. In fact, there are adults that believe it's not necessary because they do not believe the virus is a threat. CPS students are going to parties and vacationing; therefore, sending these students to school could reasonably help spread the virus amongst children who will bring it into a multigenerational home, killing more lives. What CPS is doing by staying remote is essentially SAVING lives. CPS has saved thousands of lives by staying remote. No one knows or understands this. The logic is that children are not at risk, but they are super spreaders. Even with a mask, they will spread the virus during lunch, in the hallways, and in the rest rooms. Please note that there are suburban districts that keep opening and closing because students AND teachers are coming to school unknowingly with the virus. One high school opened for two days with 25% of the students and then immediately shut down. Please follow the science. No one wants the students at home, but health and safety should come before education.</p>
12	see attachment
13	<p>Dewitt Clinton Elementary School Local School Council Resolution Regarding the CPS Proposed Return to In-Person Learning</p> <p>December 15, 2020</p>

Whereas the City of Chicago has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including 183,405 cases and 3,812 deaths from COVID-19 as of December 14th, 2020[i], and

Whereas the West Ridge community has been one of the hardest hit in the city,[ii] having had among the highest positivity rates in the city at numerous points throughout the pandemic, and

Whereas the 60659 zip code in West Ridge has experienced 2,676 COVID-19 cases and the 60645 zip code in West Ridge has experienced 3,079 cases,[iii] and

Whereas the month of December thus far has seen the worst case numbers in Chicago since the beginning of the pandemic, and

Whereas countless members of our community have lost loved ones to the pandemic and are grieving these irreplaceable losses, and

Whereas the Chicago Public Schools proposed re-opening plan has not substantially taken into account the voices of teachers, parents or community who have expressed concerns, and

Whereas the Chicago Public Schools has a poor track record for maintaining the cleanliness of its buildings, and

Whereas schools have been well-known spreaders of disease every year prior to this pandemic, with stomach flu and other diseases easily spreading in crowded and often poorly-ventilated school buildings, and

Whereas our community is particularly full of multi-generational households and therefore students who contract COVID-19 at school and infect a parent or grandparent at home may well suffer trauma and grief that could affect them for life, and

Whereas the private school just across the street from Clinton Elementary in our community has already suffered a COVID-19 outbreak that infected 50 students and staff and exposed 360 students[iv] since returning to in-person learning, and

Whereas outbreaks in schools may well lead to additional chains of infection in our community which has already been hard hit by the pandemic, and

Whereas we fear that the Chicago Public Schools re-opening plan may make quality instruction for students who stay remote as well as those who come in-person more difficult given that teachers will have to simultaneously manage a classroom and teach online to students at home, and

Whereas this year has been one of trauma, instability and mourning for many of our young people who need consistency rather than interruption to routines they are just finally getting used to;

Be it therefore resolved that the Local School Council of Clinton Elementary School urges the Chicago Public Schools leadership and Board of Education to halt its plan to return to in-person learning in January and February and instead work together with

Local School Councils, parent and community organizations and the Chicago Teachers Union to create a plan that is safe, equitable and instills trust for all parties.

Be it further resolved that while conditions do not permit a safe return to in-person learning, we urge the district to work with parents and teachers to focus on continuing to improve the quality of remote learning and make the needed investments in technology, staffing and other supports to make the best of a very difficult situation while keeping students, teachers and our community safe.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded on to Dr. Janice Jackson, CEO of Chicago Public Schools, all members of the Chicago Board of Education, 50th Ward Alderwoman Debra Silverstein, and 40th Ward Alderman Andre Vasquez.

Adopted December 15th, 2020 with the support of all parent, community and staff LSC representatives: Blanca Sandoval-Perez (parent), Johnson Nguyen (community), Kwame Williams (staff), Manisha Patel (parent), Matt Ginsberg-Jaeckle (community), Miguel Melchor (teacher), Norma Gomez (parent, LSC President), Rami Faraj (teacher)

[i] <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/latest-data.html>

[ii] <https://blockclubchicago.org/2020/04/07/west-ridge-has-highest-number-of-covid-19-cases-in-city-we-must-take-this-as-a-call-to-action/>

[iii] <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/covid19-statistics>

[iv] <https://www.jta.org/2020/11/17/health/its-knocking-on-everyones-doors-chicagos-jewish-community-is-battered-by-second-wave-of-coronavirus>

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14 December 15, 2020

Chicago Public School Board  
1 N. Dearborn, #950  
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Chicago Public School Board Members:

Currently, I'm active in the SexEd Works Coalition and a supporter and ally to the caregivers, youth, and educators from Chicago's South and West sides who have spearheaded this effort. As a collective, we recommend the Board does not adopt the proposed sexual health education policy scheduled for vote today. A new policy should not pass until it includes overarching recommendations of over 200 people who submitted comments. This is especially critical given the District's history of rampant student sexual abuse. For us, this final draft raises a key question: will this Board listen to their community?

The proposed policy does not respond to our collective feedback that caregivers must have access to resources, like annual curriculum orientation and guidance to support discussion at home. A FOIA of CPS' 2018 comprehensive sex ed compliance showed that 70% of the youth - who live in predominantly black and brown communities - did not "have access" to sex ed as promised in CPS' policy. You can bet that many of those parents did not receive sex ed either. You can't make caregivers the primary educator of sex ed, without resources.

We also note, the policy ignores our ask for educators to receive robust and frequent training. The proposed 90 minute training (a reduction of the current requirement) certifying them to teach sex ed for 4 years is not sufficient. Educators must have up-to-date information, during the current evolution and understanding of gender and sexuality. Remember, only 5 years ago, the Supreme Court struck down the ban against same-sex marriage. Lastly, the policy requires Special Ed instructors. CPS doesn't have enough special ed teachers to meet current IEP minutes, how will they staff these sex ed positions?

If you care about equity, youth, reducing gender-based violence, and improving school performance, then you will listen to your community when we say that this policy as is, should not move forward until it reflects our needs and voices.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Jones  
CPS Parent  
SexEd Works Coalition Member

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- 15 To the Board members who are passionate about the democracy LSCs provide for our city; your leadership is needed at this moment. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, there was an unnecessary burden put on candidates, parents, students and schools. The lack of attention to details has hurt the trust and faith in this democratic process and in the CPS Office of LSC Relations. When forced to grade the district's ability to deliver proper, legal attention and oversight to a public election...The People grade you a D+.

Please see the attached report, submitted as reference documents based on RYH and CLC election support advocacy. This includes community-informed recommendations that we hope the Board will implement to return faith and confidence in the LSC Elections process, going forward.

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- 16 I am submitting these comments, because I believe the reopening plan will fail in its fundamental duty to keep children, staff and teachers safe. The scientific consensus is that COVID-19 transmission is primarily airborne. The reopening plan has not been adapted to reflect that fact. The CDC and EPA both highlight the critical role that MERV-13 or better filters can play in ventilation systems to mitigate airborne transmission. Unfortunately, the Director of Operations -Facilities for CPS has confirmed that upgrading filters in existing mechanical ventilation units is not part of the (un)safe reopening plan and instead they will focus on maximizing air exchanges while not even pursuing increased filtration opens.

The existing filters at my son's school, and across the city do not meet the EPA or CDC recommendations for virus filtration, yet there are no plans to upgrade them. If a detailed assessment of the capabilities of the systems showed they could not handle increased filtration capabilities that would be one thing – but I am aware of no efforts to assess the increased ventilation options in each room. Yes, upon reopening the rooms may have standalone air filters, but consider this scenario which could happen in my son's early childhood classroom during unmasked nap time.

An asymptomatic, Covid+ child, sleeping near the intake of the fixed air handler breathes the virus out which is then sucked into the system, mixed with some outside



air and then distributed back out into the classroom. How many other children will be exposed to the virus until a large percentage of those particles are eventually captured by the standalone air purifier? Wouldn't it be safer and a reasonable precaution to pursue installation of the EPA and CDC recommended filters? If a study has been completed showing the planned approach is as safe as improving filtration, please provide it to the public. Or if some air handlers can't take the better filters, at least tell us and consider not using those rooms. Without that information, we can only assume that shortcuts and cost considerations take precedence over safety.

Would you put your child in that nap room? Would you take the place of the teacher or teacher's aide watching over those children while they nap? CPS claims that every measure possible is being taken with regard to ventilation to ensure for safe classrooms, so why is CPS ignoring the guidance from the CDC and EPA and not even exploring filter upgrades?

There are recommendations from the CDC, the EPA and professional organization of HVAC professionals (ASHRAE). The EPA makes no mention of prioritizing air exchanges while the CDC identifies maximizing air exchanges and upgrading air filters as priorities (I don't believe the preference one over the other). Both the CDC and EPA though, point to ASHRAE guidance and they have a step by step guide for schools to assess their mechanical ventilation to determine if they can handle MERV 13 filters without overly impact pressure and air exchanges. For your reference that guide (published in July 2020) is available here:

<https://www.ashrae.org/file%20library/technical%20resources/covid-19/ashrae-reopening-schools-and-universities-c19-guidance.pdf>

The section on upgrading air filters begins on page 23 and they provide a step by step guide to assess the mechanical ventilation units for schools. Were these steps followed for each of the types of mechanical ventilation units in classrooms and offices across CPS? If every possible measure is being taken to ensure ventilation is adequate, then surely CPS Facilities followed the recommendations of the professional organization specializing in ventilation that both the CDC and EPA link to? So, please provide to the public and the press the detailed results of the litany of tests to evaluate the capabilities of the air handling systems to handle upgraded filters. If these assessments haven't been done, then it is clear that the school system is not taking every measurable precaution and should immediately assess the filter capabilities of each make, model and vintage air handling unit in classrooms and offices to determine if the filters can be upgraded while maintaining adequate air flow.

This is ESPECIALLY vital for the rooms where unmasked 3 and 4 year olds will be napping in close proximity and a staff member will be present. The district owes it to those children, their families and the staff members to go well above and beyond standard air handling measures in those spaces because, again, the children will be unmasked. Every CDC, EPA or ASHRAE scenario assumes masked room occupants. Every measure possible, you say in the fact sheet. Take these measures, at the very least for the rooms where children will be napping. If the nap room air handlers can't handle increased filtration, then consider using rooms that can handle the upgraded filters or consider using multiple standalone air purifiers.

Clearly, there is a lack of trust from teachers, staff and teachers on the due diligence that CPS has or has not done in regards to ventilation upgrades. This is an area where transparency would go a long way to alleviate concerns. So please, either produce the

results of the ASHRAE recommended ventilation assessment or admit that they haven't been done (and then do them).

# ATTACHMENTS

**COUNCIL CHAMBER**

City Hall Room 20  
121 North LaSalle Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60602  
(312)744-6835

**Rossana Rodríguez-Sánchez****Office of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Ward Alderman**

3001 W. Irving Park Rd

info@33rdward.org

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

Ethics

Education and Child Development

Environmental Protection and Energy

Health and Human Relations

Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Rules

October 23, 2020

Chicago Board of Education  
1 North Dearborn  
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Relocation of North Rivers School

Dear Janice Jackson:

I am writing to express my support for the relocation of North River School to a new school site. My office has always prioritized the health and safety of our most vulnerable community members and in this instance we believe that the students of North River School would stand to benefit greatly by a new school location that holds all the amenities necessary for effective learning.

The North Rivers School LSC has brought the following concerns to my attention:

- There are safety concerns due to multiple access points to the building
- There is no gym, auditorium, playground, or green space at North River and students and staff are forced to adapt activities to the church hall and parking lot
- There is no available space for supplemental programs such as a sensory room for students in low incidents program or science labs
- The current location is not ADA accessible and there is limited space for clinicians such as speech, OT and social work to meet or provide support services
- There is limited mobility due to the buildings small size and moving students from classrooms to gym, art, and lunch is difficult due to narrow hallways and stairways

My office is asking for you and the members of the Board of Education to consider and approve the relocation of the North River School to a new school location. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rossana Rodríguez Sánchez  
33rd Ward Alderman

## **Comments to the Chicago Board of Education**

I feel that my academic and work experience and African American activist background since High School (past 14 year and current membership in Rainbow Push/NAACP and other community organizations) qualify's me to make some substantive comments related to the Chicago Public Schools considerations for removing police from schools so that they are not there when or if students ever start back regular attendance, and remote learning. Also, was raised until the age of 16 in a Public Housing Project and involved with a street gang. I feel that my master's degree in Political Science, U. of Michigan, and History, Northeastern Illinois University, teaching in Chicago/Pontiac, Michigan Public Schools (total of 15 years) and 12 years of employment as a Case Manager Therapist for local Mental Health Agencies along with my other levels of experience further qualifies me to comment in a substantive manner.

First, due to the history of discipline problems in schools like Chicago's and other public schools, a preference should be given to online learning to reduce substantially school violence, disruptions, bullying, clowning around and other behavior that impedes learning or academic advancement and helps closing the Educational Achievement Gap between African American / Hispanic students and their White counterparts. Also, White students lag behind many other world nations (not just industrially advanced nations) in their academic achievement as has been documented by various studies and research such as the study, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform is the 1983 report of the U.S. National Commission on Excellence in Education which is considered a landmark report in modern American educational history. Consequently, White students even the gifted one's are not academically equal to their counterparts in many other nations! Those who feel regular classroom instruction with all of its historic draw backs is preferable to remote learning, particularly for those who prefer remote learning, have apparently given up on correcting or lost sight of these two expressions of a historic educational achievement/school discipline failings on the part of the majority American public schools!

Remote learning in some form should be the wave of the future since because it can substantially reduce distractions to learning it gives the education community an opportunity to enhance overall student academic achievement for the regular general population students. Some form of in-class learning maybe required or preferred for Special Education students particularly if they are very slow achievers.

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troubled low performing schools have been robbed or assaulted (maybe even raped as have some students) while leaving or going to their car/school over the years. It would be foolish to take unnecessary chances and wait until someone is hospitalized or killed to see the need for both some reliable level of police and CPS security at our schools particularly those in troubled/high crime neighborhoods! Also, advanced schools are not free of discipline problems and some of the students come from privileged economic environments and consequently think they can get away with disruptive behavior because of their or their parents privileged background!

Advanced schools, regular neighborhood schools, and troubled under-achieving schools all have to have plans in place due the increase in mass school shootings, and having it known by the public that uniformed and plain clothes police, even undercover police who appear to be regular students, are present at our schools can help impede disruption and allow our students to feel safer and be able to focus more on learning rather than worrying in some instances daily in school and going to and from school as well as in their neighborhood about their security. The police maybe too incompetent and corrupt /racist to protect many of our students in their neighborhoods, but the CPS and other school districts should do more not less, and owe it to students to at least make sure they are and feel safe/protected when they are in school or in the school area; This goes for the staff as well.

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December 7, 2020

**TO:** Tony T. Howard, III

Executive Director of Education Policy and Procedures, Chicago Public Schools

42 W. Madison St.

Chicago, IL 60602

**CC:** Janice Jackson

CEO Chicago Public Schools

42 W. Madison St.

Chicago, IL 60602

Chicago Board of Education Members:

Miquel Del Valle

Sendhil Revuluri

Luisiana Melendez

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Lucino Sotelo

Elizabeth Todd-Breland

Dwayne Truss

We the undersigned respectfully request that beginning with the 2021/2022 school year, the **Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet** be included with the fall registration materials for all CPS public school students and distributed in the same manner that each school provides families with other forms distributed at the start of the school year. Also that the form be made available in multiple languages. And lastly that the Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet should be posted by the start of school on the district's own Back To School Packets page, along with the December 1st deadline for submission. (NOTE: As of December 2 the form was still not available on the Back to School page).

Included with this cover letter: the Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet from the current school year; background and timeline related to this issue.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Frank

Veterans for Peace – Chicago Chapter

(773) 206-4945

Organization	Name
Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education	Jianan Shi
Illinois Families for Public Schools	Cassie Creswell
Chicago Teachers Union	Jesse Starkey
Logan Square Neighborhood Association	Juliet De Jesus Alejandro
Cook County College Teachers Union	Tony Johnston
Parents 4 Teachers	Erica Clark
Caucus of Rank and File Educators	Jackson Potter
Northside Action 4 Justice	Marc Kaplan
Pilsen Alliance	Moises Moreno
SEIU Local #73	Science Meles
Veterans for Peace – Chicago Chapter	Natasha Erskine

## Timeline and Background:

The **Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet** (or opt-out form) is produced by the CPS Department of Educational Process and Procedures every year. The form is sent via District-wide email communications. It is distributed via the weekly protocol that goes to school administration. The deadline for receiving completed forms is December 1. Completed forms are collected at the school level and the information is entered into an online database.

When I inquired last year about the distribution of the opt-out form after finding out many parents were unaware of its existence, I was told by Ms Jefferson who is Deputy Chief of Staff for Janice Jackson – “CPS does send the form each year through our Network Support weekly bulletin and also posts it on internal systems for principals and teachers. The expectation is that High Schools print the form and distribute it to juniors and seniors at the beginning of the year.”

However, when I inquired about including the opt-out form as part of the regular registration material, this is the response I received from Ms Jefferson: “The form only applies to juniors and seniors and we don't have a special back-to-school folder exclusively for them. We think the best way to ensure that juniors and seniors actually receive the form is to send the email at the beginning of each school year.”

I contacted Ms Jefferson in July of this year with the same request and she said “We decided not to include in our registration materials but to push out to juniors and seniors this year again. We will also specifically reach out to junior and senior counselors. “

What I have discovered since then is that, in fact, some schools do include the opt-out form with the fall registration materials. The screen print below is from Lane Tech High School. What you will also notice, unfortunately, is that the opt-out form is wrong. It only gives two options: either block all information or release it to both college and military recruiters. They corrected the error but it's unclear how many incorrect opt out forms were completed before it was brought to Lane's attention.

Student Name:  
Student ID Number (8 digits): This is required.  
School: DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to any external party without my prior consent.

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR AND SENIOR STUDENTS ONLY You may block the release of your contact information specifically to military recruiters, colleges and universities, or both by checking the boxes below.

DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to military recruiters without my prior consent.

DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to colleges and universities without my prior consent. Signature below: Name Relationship to Student (Circle One: Self -- Parent Guardian)

☒ I do not ☐ I do

agree that my child's directory information may be provided to recruiters and external parties by CPS upon their request.

**MARK PAGE COMPLETE** (This button will become active when you've completed all the information for the page.)



It should also be pointed out that the physical exam form is in every registration packet, even though you are only required to complete it for a few grades.

The form is not exclusively for public high school students. As stated in the first paragraph, the form is to be used to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Illinois School Student Records (ISSRA) and the Chicago Board of Education Policy 706.3. These apply to all students; regardless of grade level.

Another concern is the system for collecting the opt-out forms. I was told by Brendan Perry, Policy and Procedure Specialist, that completed forms are collected at the school level and the information is entered into an online database. When an outside agency requests the student contact information, a spreadsheet is generated from the online database. But it's unclear how this is coordinated with forms being distributed to juniors and seniors, posted on the CPS website and included at some schools in the online registration process.

It only makes sense to include the opt-out form with the fall registration materials thus avoiding confusion and potential errors. The current system seems haphazard and thus prone to error.



## Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet

This Information Sheet for Students and Parents provides instructions on how you can use the “Directory and Recruiter Information Opt-Out Form” to prevent the release of your child’s student directory information. An Opt-Out Form is enclosed for your convenience.

*The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Illinois School Student Records (ISSRA), and Chicago Board of Education Policy 706.3 Parent and Student Rights of Access to and Confidentiality of Student Records* require that Chicago Public Schools (CPS) obtain your written consent before disclosing personally identifiable information from your child’s education records, with certain exceptions. **The Chicago Public Schools may disclose “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the District that you do not want the information shared by using the form attached.** This form is to be turned in at time of enrollment.

### Who will have access to this information?

CPS may share directory information with third parties (such as city agencies or educational service providers) who have an educational interest in the information and request it. All requests from external parties related to research are reviewed by the CPS School Quality Measurement & Research or the CPS Office of College and Career Success to ensure the request is in the interest of students.

### What is directory information?

Directory information is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. CPS has designated the following as directory information: student’s name; home address; home telephone number.

### How do I complete the CPS Directory Information Opt-Out Program Process?

A parent/guardian or student age 18 or older **must complete this form and return it to the school clerk annually at time of enrollment/registration.** If you have more than one child attending CPS, you must submit a separate request for each child. The Opt-Out Form requires a student identification number. **Please make sure you record the 8-digit ID number on the form accurately.**

### **For parents/guardians of JUNIORS and SENIORS ONLY:**

By law, if military recruiters request contact information (name, address, phone number) for 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students, CPS is required to provide that information **unless you choose to block it.** Colleges and universities also may request student information. Using the Chicago Public Schools Opt-Out form, you may block the release of your contact information to military recruiters, or to colleges and universities, or to both.

Having your name placed on the Opt-Out list does not in any way limit your ability to request your school to send a transcript or any other material on your behalf to a college or university, a military recruiter, or others, upon request.

### Questions or Concerns?

If you have questions about CPS policy related to the release of student information to third parties, recruiters, or universities please contact Brendan Perry at [bperry8@cps.edu](mailto:bperry8@cps.edu).



## Directory and Recruiter Information Opt-Out Form

**Dear Student, Parent or Guardian:**

You have the right to inspect and copy your student's records, challenge the contents of such records, and limit your consent to the designated records or designated portions of information within the records.

If you DO NOT want directory information disclosed, complete this form and return it to the school clerk at time of enrollment/registration. If you do not submit a completed Opt-Out Form, your child's directory information may be provided to recruiters and external parties by CPS upon their request. **If you submit this form but do not check at least one box, your child's directory information may be provided to recruiters and external parties upon their request. If you have more than one child attending CPS, you must submit a separate request for each child.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number (8 digits): 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 This is required.

School: \_\_\_\_\_

☐

**DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to any external party without my prior consent.**

### **FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR AND SENIOR STUDENTS ONLY**

You may block the release of your contact information specifically to military recruiters, colleges and universities, or both by checking the boxes below.

☐

**DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to military recruiters without my prior consent.**

☐

**DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to colleges and universities without my prior consent.**

**Must have an original signature; an electronic signature is not acceptable.**

Signature below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Student (*Circle One: Self -- Parent Guardian*)

# The CTU demands a safe and equitable reopening based on trust and dialogue



CHICAGO  
TEACHERS  
UNION

**C**PS is trying to move people back into school without being clear about their safety standards. **We don't trust them.** They have misrepresented their safety preparations, ignored arbitrators' orders, and appear to be more focused on the mayor and her political considerations than the

well-being of us and our students.

**The CTU is putting forward a safe reopening plan that undercuts CPS' ability to lie about us being the people who are hurting education. We will go back to in-person school when CPS can demonstrate that they have taken our concerns seriously.**

Our key demands concern **Safety, Equity, and Trust.** While the list that follows is **not exhaustive**, it represents our key demands that come out of hundreds of meetings with members, parents and community stakeholders, and bargaining sessions since March. The union will ratify our full demands soon.

## SAFETY

### 1. Establish clear public health criteria

- Re-open CPS facilities for all students and personnel at less than 3% positivity rate.
- If number is higher, all personnel, including clerks and tech cos, work remotely.
- Neighborhood school site shutdowns if zip code positivity rate is above 3%; citywide attendance boundary school site shutdowns if citywide positivity rate is above 3%.

### 2. Enforce safety protocols in schools

- Masks,
- Cleaning,
- Screening,
- PPE,
- Social Distancing,
- Proper ventilation, including training for teachers and staff to verify air quality standards are being met,
- Workspaces for all bargaining unit employees, including clinicians and nurses, shall meet therapeutic, instructional, and safety needs.

### 3. Testing, tracing, and vaccination

- Test all staff on a rotating basis (25%/week, target high positivity areas),
- Contact trace positive cases,
- Target vaccine to most needed areas (as opposed to those with best healthcare coverage/most able to pay).

## EQUITY

### 1. Immediately improve remote learning

- Reduce screen time by 1 hour/day, during which time students engage in asynchronous activities, teachers have time for preparation and PD.
- Provide families with equipment and support for RL including headphones, devices, vision screening, etc.

### 2. Better plan for hybrid learning

- No to "simultaneous instruction,"
- Place limitations on number of cohorts for specials,
- Continue to provide services remotely where appropriate.

### 3. Provide the support services that our students/parents need in neighborhoods

- Work with the city to ensure homeless student services,
- Sustainable Community Schools,
- Social-emotional supports for traumatized students,
- "Counselors not Cops,"
- Rent abatement.

## TRUST

### 1. Bring parents, community members and other groups of employees, such as principals and engineers, to the table. Bargain in good faith.

### 2. Create CTU-CPS Joint Committee on COVID-19

- Include independent experts and can make inspections, investigations, and can issue directives.

### 3. Safety committee in each school

- Elected membership that includes delegates, other members, engineers etc.
- Local committee has the ability to stop work if conditions are unsafe.

The pandemic has closed schools. By not meeting these needs, CPS is keeping them shut. If CPS would provide trust — by bargaining in good faith and permitting independent verification of their safety claims by CTU, parents and safety experts — we could agree on safe ways to return to in-per-

son learning. We are the ones with a comprehensive plan that can restore public trust and reopen schools safely. But if CPS insists on pushing us back without bargaining or taking our demands seriously, we will not sacrifice our lives or the lives of our students for their political goals.

# El sindicato de maestros de Chicago exige una reapertura segura y equitativa basada en la confianza y el diálogo



Las Escuelas Públicas de Chicago (CPS) están tratando de traer a las personas de regreso a la escuela sin estar claros acerca de sus protocolos de seguridad. No confiamos en ellos. Ellos han tergiversado sus preparativos de seguridad, han ignorado las órdenes de los árbitros y parecen estar más enfocados en la alcaldesa y sus consideraciones políticas que en el bienestar de no-

sotros y de nuestros estudiantes.

La Unión de Maestros de Chicago (CTU) está presentando un plan de reapertura segura que socava la capacidad de CPS de mentir acerca de nosotros y de decir que nosotros somos las personas que estamos perjudicando la educación. Volveremos a la escuela en persona cuando CPS pueda demostrar que se han tomado nuestras preocupaciones en serio.

Nuestras exigencias claves se enfocan en la seguridad, equidad y confianza. Si bien la lista a continuación no es exhaustiva; esta lista representa nuestras exigencias claves que salieron de cientos de reuniones con miembros, padres y partes interesadas de la comunidad, y de sesiones de negociación desde marzo. La Unión pronto ratificará todas nuestras exigencias.

## SEGURIDAD

### 1. Establecer criterios claros de salud pública

- Reabrir las instalaciones de CPS para todos los estudiantes y personal mientras haya una tasa de positividad de menos de 3%.
- Si el número es más alto, todo el personal, incluyendo los empleados de las oficinas y el personal de tecnología, deben trabajar de forma remota.
- Las escuelas en los vecindarios se cerrarán si la tasa de positividad del código postal está por encima del 3%; cierres de sitios escolares de límites de asistencia en toda la ciudad si la tasa de positividad en toda la ciudad está por encima del 3%.

### 2. Hacer cumplir los protocolos de seguridad en las escuelas

- Mascarillas,
- Limpieza,
- Chequeo,
- Equipo de protección (PPE),
- Distanciamiento social,
- Ventilación apropiada, incluyendo la capacitación para los maestros y el personal,
- Los espacios de trabajo para todos los empleados de la unidad de negociación, incluyendo los terapeutas y enfermeros, deberán satisfacer las necesidades terapéuticas, educativas y de seguridad.

### 3. Pruebas, rastreo de contactos y vacunas,

- Hacerle pruebas a todo el personal de forma rotativa (25% por semana, enfocándose en áreas de alta positividad),
- Hacer rastreo de contactos de casos positivos,
- Elegir como objetivo para la vacuna áreas con más necesidad (en lugar de aquellas áreas con mejor cobertura de atención médica o más capacidad para pagar).

## EQUIDAD

### 1. Mejorar inmediatamente el aprendizaje remoto

- Reducir el tiempo de pantalla a 1 hora al día, durante el tiempo en el cual los estudiantes participan en actividades asíncronas, los maestros tienen tiempo para la preparación y el desarrollo profesional.

- Proveerle a las familias equipo y apoyo para RL, incluyendo audífonos, equipo, exámenes de visión, etc.

### 2. Un mejor plan para el aprendizaje híbrido

- No a la “instrucción simultánea,”
- Poner límites en cuanto al número de cohortes de especiales,
- Continúe prestando servicios de forma remota cuando sea necesario.

### 3. Proporcionar los servicios de apoyo que nuestros estudiantes/padres necesiten en los vecindarios

- Trabajar con la ciudad para garantizar los servicios para estudiantes sin hogar,
- Escuelas Comunitarias Sustentables,
- Apoyo socioemocional para estudiantes traumatizados,
- “Consejeros no policías,”
- Reducción del alquiler.

## CONFIANZA

### 1. Invitar a padres, miembros de la comunidad y otros grupos de empleados, como directores e ingenieros, a la mesa de negociación. Negociar de buena fe.

### 2. Crear un Comité Conjunto entre CTU-CPS sobre el Covid-19

- Incluir expertos independientes y poder realizar inspecciones, investigaciones y poder emitir directrices.

### 3. Comité de seguridad en cada escuela

- Membresía electa que incluya delegados, otros miembros, ingenieros, etc.
- Un comité local que tenga la capacidad de parar el trabajo si las condiciones no son seguras

La pandemia ha cerrado las escuelas. Al no cumplir con estas necesidades, la CPS las mantiene cerradas. Si la CPS nos proporcionara seguridad y confianza —negociara de buena fe y permitiera la verificación independiente de reclamos relacionados con la

seguridad por parte de la CTU, los padres y los expertos en seguridad—podríamos estar de acuerdo de regresar con una manera segura para aprendizaje en persona. Nosotros somos los que tenemos un plan integral que puede restaurar la confianza

pública y reabrir las escuelas de forma segura. Pero si la CPS insiste en empujarnos sin negociar o tomar nuestras exigencias seriamente, no vamos a sacrificar nuestras vidas ni la de nuestros estudiantes por sus objetivos políticos.

# COVID-19 Trends Among School-Aged Children — United States, March 1–September 19, 2020

Rebecca T. Leeb, PhD<sup>1</sup>; Sandy Price<sup>1</sup>; Sarah Sliwa, PhD<sup>1</sup>; Anne Kimball, MD<sup>1,2</sup>; Leigh Szucs, PhD<sup>1</sup>; Elise Caruso, MPH<sup>1</sup>; Shana Godfred-Cato, DO<sup>1</sup>; Matthew Lozier, PhD<sup>1</sup>

*On September 28, 2020, this report was posted as an MMWR Early Release on the MMWR website (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr>).*

Approximately 56 million school-aged children (aged 5–17 years) resumed education in the United States in fall 2020.\* Analysis of demographic characteristics, underlying conditions, clinical outcomes, and trends in weekly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) incidence during March 1–September 19, 2020 among 277,285 laboratory-confirmed cases in school-aged children in the United States might inform decisions about in-person learning and the timing and scaling of community mitigation measures. During May–September 2020, average weekly incidence (cases per 100,000 children) among adolescents aged 12–17 years (37.4) was approximately twice that of children aged 5–11 years (19.0). In addition, among school-aged children, COVID-19 indicators peaked during July 2020: weekly percentage of positive SARS-CoV-2 test results increased from 10% on May 31 to 14% on July 5; SARS-CoV-2 test volume increased from 100,081 tests on May 31 to 322,227 on July 12, and COVID-19 incidence increased from 13.8 per 100,000 on May 31 to 37.9 on July 19. During July and August, test volume and incidence decreased then plateaued; incidence decreased further during early September and might be increasing. Percentage of positive test results decreased during August and plateaued during September. Underlying conditions were more common among school-aged children with severe outcomes related to COVID-19: among school-aged children who were hospitalized, admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU), or who died, 16%, 27%, and 28%, respectively, had at least one underlying medical condition. Schools and communities can implement multiple, concurrent mitigation strategies and tailor communications to promote mitigation strategies to prevent COVID-19 spread. These results can provide a baseline for monitoring trends and evaluating mitigation strategies.

School-aged children were stratified by age into two groups: children aged 5–11 years and adolescents aged 12–17 years. Confirmed COVID-19 cases were identified from individual-level case reports submitted by state health departments for the weeks beginning March 1–September 13, 2020.<sup>†</sup> Confirmed cases had a positive real-time reverse transcription–polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test result for SARS-CoV-2, the virus

that causes COVID-19. COVID-19 case data for all children were analyzed to examine demographic characteristics, underlying conditions,<sup>§</sup> hospitalization, ICU admission, and death. Trends were analyzed using CDC report date<sup>¶</sup> to calculate a daily 7-day moving average, aggregated by week. Analyses are descriptive; statistical comparisons were not performed.

To examine trends in laboratory testing volume and percentage of positive test results, data from COVID-19 electronic laboratory data were used. SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR test results were obtained for the weeks beginning May 31–September 13, 2020 from COVID-19 electronic laboratory reporting data submitted by state health departments (37 states); when age was unavailable in state-submitted data, information from data submitted directly by public health, commercial, and reference laboratories (13 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of

<sup>†</sup> During the COVID-19 pandemic, CDC receives both aggregate and individual (i.e., line-list) counts of cases and deaths from reporting jurisdictions. CDC official counts of cases and deaths, released daily at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html>, are aggregate counts from reporting jurisdictions. Some jurisdictions electronically submit standardized information for individual cases of COVID-19 to CDC using the Human Infection with 2019 Novel Coronavirus Case Report Form (COVID-19 Case Report Form) developed for the CDC COVID-19 response (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/reporting-pui.html>) or the CDC National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) (<https://www.cdc.gov/nndss/covid-19-response.html>). Individual-level case report data were available for approximately 69% of the aggregate number of confirmed cases. Cases reported without sex or age data and in persons repatriated to the United States from Wuhan, China, or the Diamond Princess cruise ship were excluded from this analysis.

<sup>§</sup> Underlying conditions were defined based on the categories included in the COVID-19 Case Report Form including diabetes mellitus, hypertension, severe obesity (body mass index [BMI]  $\geq 40$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>), cardiovascular disease, chronic renal disease, chronic liver disease, chronic lung disease (asthma, emphysema, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [COPD]), other (specified) chronic diseases, other (specified) underlying condition or risk behavior, immunosuppressive conditions, autoimmune conditions, being a current or former smoker, substance abuse or misuse, disability (neurologic, neurodevelopmental, intellectual, physical, vision or hearing impairment, and psychological/psychiatric condition). Although obesity in children is not generally defined using BMI, these data are drawn from the NNDSS case report form in which severe obesity is defined as noted.

<sup>¶</sup> CDC report date is the date the case was reported to CDC by the state health department. If CDC report date was missing, report date was populated with the earliest date in a series of variables submitted by the jurisdiction, including hospital or ICU admission and discharge date, diagnosis date, symptom onset and resolution dates, and positive specimen dates. As of August 9, 2020, approximately 10% of reported COVID-19 confirmed cases in the 50 states and District of Columbia had no available date information; it cannot be estimated when these were reported to CDC during May–August 2020 (the analytic period for this study).

\* <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>.



Columbia) were used.\*\* Data represent test results, not number of persons tested; specimen collection date or test order date was used for analysis.†† The weekly percentage of positive SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR test results was calculated nationally for each U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Region§§ as the number of positive test results divided by the sum of positive and negative test results.

During March 1–September 19, 2020, a total of 277,285 laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school-aged children were reported in the United States, including 101,503 (37%) in children aged 5–11 years and 175,782 (63%) in adolescents aged 12–17 years (Table). Overall, 50.8% were in females (aged 5–11 years = 49.4%; aged 12–17 = 51.6%). Among 161,387 (58%) school-aged children with COVID-19 and complete information on race/ethnicity, 42% were Hispanic/Latino (Hispanic), 32% were non-Hispanic White (White), and 17% were non-Hispanic Black (Black). Hispanic children accounted for 46% of cases among younger children and 39% among adolescents; White children accounted for 26% of cases in younger children and 36% in adolescents.¶¶ Weekly incidence among school-aged children increased from March 1, peaking at 37.9 cases per 100,000 the week of July 19

(aged 5–11 years = 25.7; aged 12–17 years = 51.9), plateaued at an average of 34 per 100,000 during July 26–August 23, decreased to 22.6 per 100,000 the week of September 6, and rebounded to 26.3 per 100,000 the last week for which data are available (Figure 1) (Supplementary Figure 1, <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/94150>). Trends in incidence were similar among both age groups. Incidence among adolescents was approximately double that among younger children throughout the reporting period. During May–September, average weekly incidence among adolescents was 37.4 cases per 100,000 compared with 19.0 per 100,000 for younger children.

Weekly SARS-CoV-2 laboratory test volume among school-aged children more than tripled, from 100,081 tests performed during the week beginning May 31 to a peak of 322,227 during the week beginning July 12, then decreased to approximately 260,000 during August and rebounded in September; test volume was higher among adolescents than younger children (Figure 2) (Supplementary Figure 1, <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/94150>) (Supplementary Figure 2, <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/94151>). The percentage of positive SARS-CoV-2 laboratory test results increased for both age groups from May 31 and peaked during the week beginning July 5; percentage of positive test results then decreased among both age groups. Since August 23, the percentage of positive SARS-CoV-2 laboratory test results plateaued at 7% among adolescents and continued to decrease among younger children.

HHS Regions 6, 4, and 9 had the highest weekly percentage of positive test results, peaking during the week of July 5 at 24% (Region 6), 18% (Region 4), and 17% (Region 9), and all declined to approximately 8% the week beginning September 13 (Supplementary Figure 2, <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/94151>). In Region 1, weekly percentage of positive tests decreased from 8% during the week beginning May 31 to <2% during the week beginning September 13. In Region 9, the percentage of positive test results was similar over time in both age groups; in Regions 5 and 7, although the percentage of positive test results were initially similar in both age groups, beginning in early June (Region 7) and mid-June (Region 5), the percentage of positive test results in adolescents exceeded that among younger children.

Among school-aged children with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, 58% reported at least one symptom, 5% reported no symptoms, and information on symptoms was missing or unknown for 37% (Table). Overall, 3,240 (1.2%) school-aged children with COVID-19 were hospitalized, including 404 (0.1%) who required ICU admission. Fifty-one (<0.01%) school-aged children died of COVID-19. Among school-aged children with complete information on race/ethnicity who were hospitalized (2,473 [76%]) or admitted to an ICU (321 [80%]), Hispanic ethnicity was most commonly reported (45%

\*\* COVID-19 Electronic Laboratory Reporting data submitted by state health departments from all laboratories performing SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR testing were used for 37 states (Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin). SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR testing data from a subset of public health, commercial, and reference laboratories were used for the District of Columbia and 14 states/territories (California, Delaware, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wyoming). The data from the public health, commercial, and reference laboratories represent approximately 50% of all tests. The data might not include results from all testing sites within a jurisdiction (e.g., point-of-care test sites) and therefore reflect the majority of, but not all, SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR tests in the United States. The data represent laboratory test totals, not individual persons tested, and exclude antibody and antigen tests.

†† For COVID-19 electronic laboratory reporting data, state was assigned using the state health department reporting the test (available for 100% of tests), and specimen collection date was used to assign date (available for approximately 98% of tests); those with missing specimen collection date were excluded. Within data submitted directly by public health, commercial, and reference laboratories, state was assigned using patient location for 96% of tests; provider location was substituted for 1%, and records with both location fields missing (3%) were excluded; order date was used for 80% of tests, specimen collection date was substituted for 19%, and records with both date fields missing (1%) were excluded.

§§ The HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs hosts 10 regional offices that directly serve state and local organizations. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/iea/regional-offices/index.html>.

¶¶ In 2018, children of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity comprised 26% of children aged 5–11 years and 24% of adolescents aged 12–17 years; children of non-Hispanic Black race comprised 14% of children aged 5–11 years and 14% of adolescents 12–17 years; and children of non-Hispanic White race comprised 50% of children aged 5–11 years and 52% of adolescents aged 12–17 years in the United States. <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/customreports/1/8446>.

**TABLE. Demographic characteristics and underlying conditions among school-aged children aged 5–11 years and 12–17 years\* with positive test results for SARS-CoV-2 (N = 233,474) — United States, March 1–September 19, 2020**

Characteristic	Age group, no. (%)		
	All (N = 277,285)	5–11 yrs (n = 101,503)	12–17 yrs (n = 175,782)
<b>Sex†</b>			
Female	140,755 (50.8)	50,096 (49.4)	90,659 (51.6)
Male	136,530 (49.2)	51,407 (50.6)	85,123 (48.4)
Median age, yrs	13	8	15
<b>Symptom status</b>			
Yes	161,751 (58.3)	56,917 (56.1)	104,834 (59.6)
No	12,806 (4.6)	5,985 (5.9)	6,821 (3.9)
Missing/Unknown	102,728 (37.0)	38,601 (38.0)	64,127 (36.5)
<b>Race/Ethnicity§</b>			
Hispanic/Latino	67,275 (41.7)	27,539 (45.9)	39,736 (39.2)
White, non-Hispanic	52,229 (32.4)	15,503 (25.8)	36,726 (36.2)
Black, non-Hispanic	27,963 (17.3)	11,315 (18.8)	16,648 (16.4)
A/PI, non-Hispanic	4,541 (2.8)	1,932 (3.2)	2,609 (2.6)
AI/AN, non-Hispanic	3,044 (1.9)	1,342 (2.2)	1,702 (1.7)
Multiracial/Other race	6,335 (3.9)	2,421 (4.0)	3,914 (3.9)
Unknown¶	115,898 (N/A)	41,451 (N/A)	74,447 (N/A)
<b>Underlying condition</b>			
Any	7,738 (2.8)	2,396 (2.4)	5,342 (3.0)
Chronic lung disease**	4,214 (54.5)	1,441 (60.1)	2,773 (51.9)
Disability††	714 (9.2)	251 (10.5)	463 (8.7)
Immunosuppression	526 (6.8)	193 (8.1)	333 (6.2)
Diabetes mellitus	476 (6.2)	88 (3.7)	388 (7.3)
Psychological/Psychiatric	445 (5.8)	60 (2.5)	385 (7.2)
Cardiovascular disease	363 (4.7)	128 (5.3)	235 (4.4)
Current/Former smoker§§	334 (4.3)	11 (0.5)	323 (6.0)
Severe obesity (BMI ≥40 kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	315 (4.1)	70 (2.9)	245 (4.6)
Chronic kidney disease	116 (1.5)	47 (2.0)	69 (1.3)
Hypertension	94 (1.2)	13 (0.5)	81 (1.5)
Autoimmune	87 (1.1)	16 (0.7)	71 (1.3)
Chronic liver disease	64 (0.8)	14 (0.6)	50 (0.9)
Substance abuse/use	34 (0.4)	0 (0.0)	34 (0.6)
Other¶¶	1,326 (17.1)	419 (17.5)	907 (17.0)
<b>Outcome</b>			
Hospitalized***	3,240 (1.2)	1,021 (1.0)	2,219 (1.3)
ICU admission†††	404 (0.1)	145 (0.1)	259 (0.1)
Died§§§	51 (<0.1)	20 (<0.1)	31 (<0.1)

**Abbreviations:** A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander; AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native; BMI = body mass index; COVID-19 = coronavirus disease 2019; ICU = intensive care unit; N/A = not available.

\* Age was missing for 1.9% of all persons with positive test results; the proportion aged 5–17 years cannot be determined.

† Among 281,116 persons aged 5–17 years with COVID-19, sex was missing, unknown, or other for 3,831 (1.4%).

§ Persons for whom ethnicity was missing (i.e., not reported as either “Hispanic” or “non-Hispanic”) were categorized as having missing race/ethnicity.

¶ Missing data were excluded from the denominator for calculating percentage of each racial/ethnic group. Missing rates did not differ by age group. Multiracial/other race includes persons reported as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, multiracial, and persons of another race without further specification.

\*\* Chronic lung disease includes asthma, emphysema, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

†† Disability includes neurologic and neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., seizure disorders, autism spectrum disorders, and developmental delay), intellectual and physical disabilities, vision or hearing impairment, genetic disorders and inherited metabolic disorders, and blood disorders (e.g., sickle cell disease and hemophilia).

§§ Checked the box on the case report form for either “current smoker” or “former smoker.”

¶¶ Other includes conditions not listed elsewhere, conditions with no specific autoimmune etiology, endocrine disorders other than diabetes (e.g., polycystic ovarian disease, hypothyroidism, and hyperthyroidism), gastrointestinal disorders (e.g., gastritis or gastroesophageal reflux), obstructive sleep apnea, allergies/atopy, anemia (etiology not specified), history of cancer in remission, and other conditions that did not fall under the specified categories.

\*\*\* Hospitalization status. 5–11 years: missing/unknown = 44,300 (43.6%); 12–17 years: missing/unknown = 79,411 (45.2%).

††† ICU admission status. 5–11 years: missing/unknown = 90,405 (89.0%); 12–17 years: missing/unknown = 154,662 (88.0%).

§§§ Mortality status. 5–11 years: missing/unknown = 47,006 (46.3%); 12–17 years: missing/unknown = 83,479 (47.5%).

and 43%, respectively), followed by Black (24% and 28%, respectively) and White (22% and 17%, respectively) races.

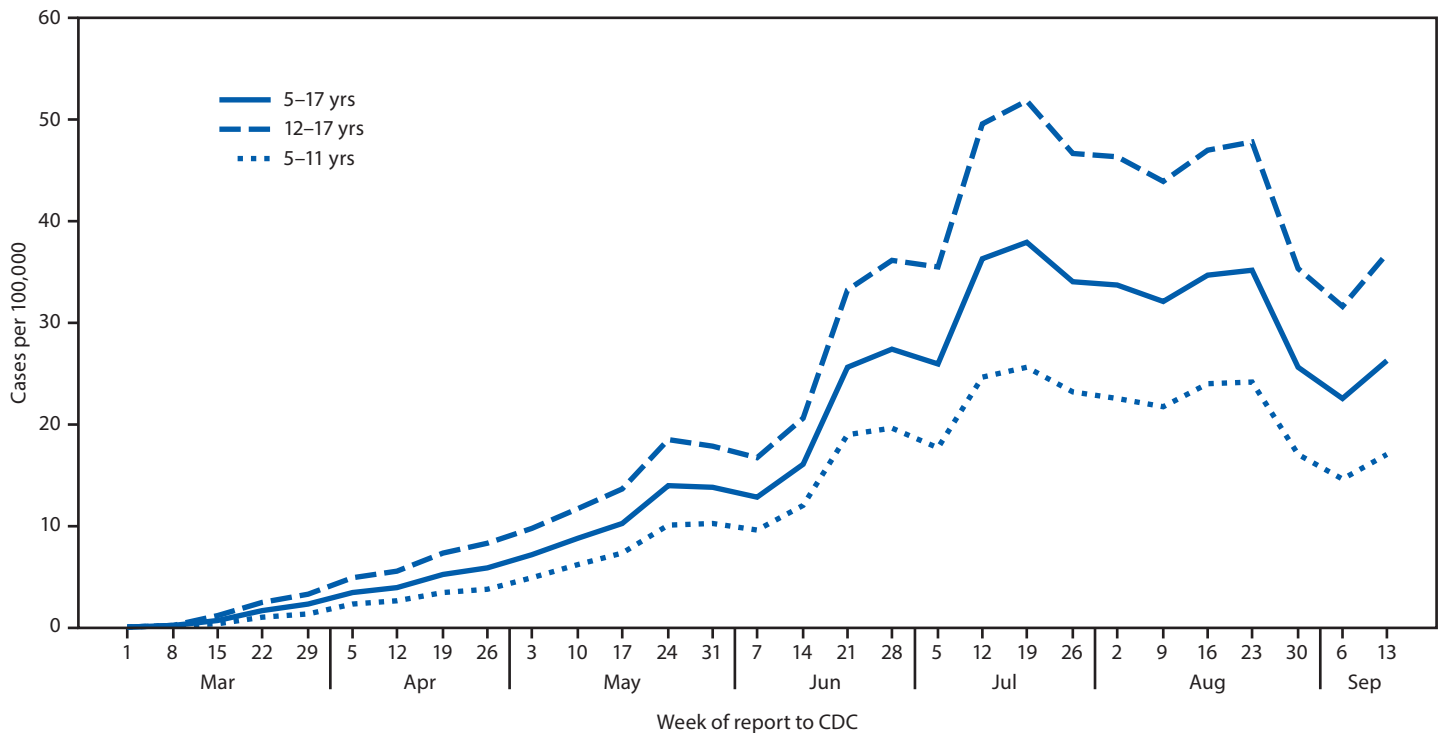
Among school-aged children with COVID-19, at least one underlying condition was reported for 7,738 (3%), including approximately 3% of adolescents and 2% of younger children.

Among those with an underlying condition, chronic lung disease, including asthma, was most commonly reported (55%), followed by disability\*\*\* (9%), immunosuppressive conditions

\*\*\* Disability included neurologic or neurodevelopmental disorders, intellectual or physical disability, and vision or hearing impairment.



**FIGURE 1. COVID-19 incidence\* among school-aged children aged 5–11 years (N = 101,503) and 12–17 years (N = 175,782), by week — United States, March 1–September 19, 2020†**



**Sources:** CDC COVID-19 case report form. <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss/covid-19-response.html>. CDC National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System. <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss>.

**Abbreviation:** COVID-19 = coronavirus disease 2019.

\* Incidence = cases per 100,000, calculated using 2018 population from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>.

† Data included through September 19, 2020, so that each week has a full 7 days of data.

(7%), diabetes (6%), psychological conditions (6%), cardiovascular disease (5%), and severe obesity (4%). At least one underlying condition was reported for 16% of school-aged children who were hospitalized for COVID-19, 27% of those admitted to an ICU, and 28% of those who died.

### Discussion

As education resumes and some schools begin in-person learning for the 2020–21 academic year, it is critical to have a baseline for monitoring trends in COVID-19 infection among school-aged children. Since March, a period during which most U.S. schools conducted classes virtually or were closed for the summer, the incidence among adolescents was approximately double that in younger children. Although mortality and hospitalization in school-aged children was low, Hispanic ethnicity, Black race, and underlying conditions were more commonly reported among children who were hospitalized or admitted to an ICU, providing additional evidence that some children might be at increased risk for severe illness associated with COVID-19 (1–4).<sup>†††</sup> Acute COVID-19 and

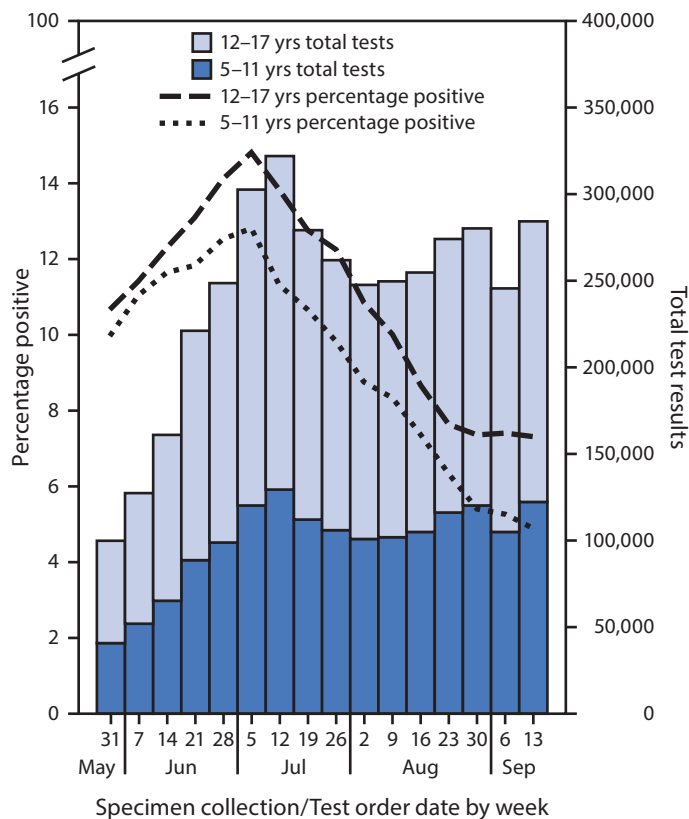
multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) have been reported to disproportionately affect Hispanic and Black children (3,4). Implementing multiple, concurrent mitigation strategies and tailored communications about the importance of promoting and reinforcing behaviors that reduce spread of COVID-19 (e.g., wearing masks, maintaining a social distance of ≥6 feet, and frequent handwashing) can reduce COVID-19 spread in schools and communities.

Monitoring trends in multiple indicators of COVID-19 could inform mitigation measures to prevent COVID-19 spread.<sup>§§§</sup> COVID-19 incidence increased from March to July, and SARS-CoV-2 test volume and weekly percentage of positive test results among school-aged children increased from late May to July. During March through May, widespread shelter-in-place orders were in effect, and most U.S. schools transitioned to online learning. In June and July, when community mitigation measures were relaxed in some areas, incidence increased more rapidly. Recent evidence that monthly COVID-19 incidence increased approximately threefold among persons aged 0–19 years since May and was highest

<sup>†††</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/other-at-risk-populations.html>.

<sup>§§§</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/indicators.html>.

**FIGURE 2. Percentage of SARS-CoV-2 reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests positive and test volume, by week for school-aged children aged 5–11 years and 12–17 years — United States, May 31–September 19, 2020\***



**Abbreviation:** COVID-19 = coronavirus disease 2019.

\* From COVID-19 electronic laboratory reporting data submitted by state health departments for 37 states and from data submitted directly by public health, commercial, and reference laboratories for 13 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, using specimen collection or test order date. The data represent percentage of tests, not of individual persons, with a positive result and include RT-PCR tests but not antigen or point-of-care tests.

among young adults aged 20–29 years during July, suggests that young persons might be playing an increasingly important role in community transmission (5,6). The percentage of positive test results in school-aged children also varied within and across HHS regions. Variations in percentage of positive tests might indicate differences in community transmission rates. School studies suggest that in-person learning can be safe in communities with low SARS-CoV-2 transmission rates<sup>§§§</sup> (7) but might increase transmission risk in communities where transmission is already high.<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>

The findings in this report are subject to at least four limitations. First, these data might underestimate the actual incidence of disease among school-aged children, because testing was frequently prioritized for persons with symptoms, and asymptomatic infection in children is common (8). These data

### Summary

#### What is already known about this topic?

Children aged <10 years can transmit SARS-CoV-2 in school settings, but less is known about COVID-19 incidence, characteristics, and health outcomes among school-aged children (aged 5–17 years) with COVID-19.

#### What is added by this report?

Since March, 277,285 COVID-19 cases in children have been reported. COVID-19 incidence among adolescents aged 12–17 years was approximately twice that in children aged 5–11 years. Underlying conditions were more common among school-aged children with severe outcomes related to COVID-19. Weekly incidence, SARS-CoV-2 test volume, and percentage of tests positive among school-aged children varied over time and by region of the United States.

#### What are the implications for public health practice?

It is important for schools and communities to monitor multiple indicators of COVID-19 among school-aged children and layer prevention strategies to reduce COVID-19 disease risk for students, teachers, school staff, and families. These results can provide a baseline for monitoring trends and evaluating mitigation strategies.

are also from a single reporting system and therefore might not represent the total number of cases and deaths in school-aged children reported in the United States (1). Second, findings on race/ethnicity, symptom status, underlying conditions, and outcomes should be interpreted with caution; these data had high rates of missing or unknown values. Third, because of delays in reporting, trend data might lag behind actual disease transmission dates. Because of missing symptom onset and specimen collection dates, COVID-19 cases are presented by the date each case was reported to CDC, and surveillance artifacts can exist as a result of batch reporting by states.<sup>††††</sup> Finally, laboratory data presented here underrepresent the volume of laboratory tests reported in some states, because state reporting of laboratory data and case surveillance is not uniform.<sup>§§§§</sup>

These findings can provide a baseline for monitoring national trends. Monitoring at the local-level could inform decision-makers about which mitigation strategies are most effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in schools and communities (6,9). CDC's considerations for schools outline important mitigation strategies for safer reopening for in-person learning.<sup>¶¶¶¶</sup> Schools and communities should

<sup>††††</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/faq-surveillance.html>.

<sup>§§§§</sup> Percentage positive for laboratory data for some states relied on data reported directly to CDC from public health laboratories and a sample of six large commercial laboratories.

<sup>¶¶¶¶</sup> Four cross-cutting strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are outlined in CDC's Community Mitigation Framework: promote behaviors that prevent spread, maintain healthy environments, maintain healthy operations, and prepare for when someone gets ill. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/community-mitigation.html>.

<sup>§§§</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/community-mitigation.html>.

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2006.14158.pdf>.

implement multiple concurrent preventive strategies and adjust mitigation depending on local levels of transmission to reduce COVID-19 disease risk for students, teachers, school staff members, families and the community.

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<sup>1</sup>CDC COVID-19 Response Team; <sup>2</sup>Epidemic Intelligence Service, CDC.

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CPS Board Meeting  
December 16, 2020  
Evelyn Field, Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights

Hello, my name is Evelyn Field. I am an attorney with Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights. I'm here to discuss the 2020 Local School Council Elections.

In the weeks and months leading up to the LSC elections, we worked with community partners in advocating for a safe, fair, and accessible election process. Among other things, we asked CPS to clearly communicate its election plans to the public, and to address obstacles to mail-in voting. Through our non-partisan voter protection hotline, we heard of multiple issues with voting on November 18th and 19th. For example, several schools had no-show election judges without a backup plan. Ineligible staff or untrained persons filled in for election judges, creating further problems.

On December 1st, when ballots were counted, our hotline again lit up. At one school, the election judge rejected an overwhelming majority of the ballots cast. We understand that CPS later instigated a recount for less than half of these ballots. However, the rest were never reexamined, for reasons that are unclear. Voters were not notified or given due process to challenge the rejection. We don't know how many voters were disenfranchised because of rejected mail-in ballots citywide, because our FOIA requests were denied.

We appreciate CPS' efforts to adopt mail-in ballots and widespread curbside voting during a pandemic. Mail-in ballots are a crucial tool for making voting more accessible. We urge CPS to improve the process with clear rules that follow best practices for other Illinois elections. Improving the way Election Judges are assigned and trained can also prevent many issues we saw this year. Finally, transparency and public communication are key to building public trust in these elections. This, in turn, will encourage participation in future elections. Thank you.

**LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL**  
**of DEWITT CLINTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**Dewitt Clinton Elementary School Local School Council**  
**Resolution Regarding the CPS Proposed Return to In-Person Learning**

December 15, 2020

Whereas the City of Chicago has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including 183,405 cases and 3,812 deaths from COVID-19 as of December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020<sup>[iii](#)</sup>, and

Whereas the West Ridge community has been one of the hardest hit in the city,<sup>[iii](#)</sup> having had among the highest positivity rates in the city at numerous points throughout the pandemic, and

Whereas the 60659 zip code in West Ridge has experienced 2,676 COVID-19 cases and the 60645 zip code in West Ridge has experienced 3,079 cases,<sup>[iii](#)</sup> and

Whereas the month of December thus far has seen the worst case numbers in Chicago since the beginning of the pandemic, and

Whereas countless members of our community have lost loved ones to the pandemic and are grieving these irreplaceable losses, and

Whereas the Chicago Public Schools proposed re-opening plan has not substantially taken into account the voices of teachers, parents or community who have expressed concerns, and

Whereas the Chicago Public Schools has a poor track record for maintaining the cleanliness of its buildings, and

Whereas schools have been well-known spreaders of disease every year prior to this pandemic, with stomach flu and other diseases easily spreading in crowded and often poorly-ventilated school buildings, and

Whereas our community is particularly full of multi-generational households and therefore students who contract COVID-19 at school and infect a parent or grandparent at home may well suffer trauma and grief that could affect them for life, and

Whereas the private school just across the street from Clinton Elementary in our community has already suffered a COVID-19 outbreak that infected 50 students and staff and exposed 360 students<sup>[iv](#)</sup> since returning to in-person learning, and

Whereas outbreaks in schools may well lead to additional chains of infection in our community which has already been hard hit by the pandemic, and

# LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL

## of DEWITT CLINTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Whereas we fear that the Chicago Public Schools re-opening plan may make quality instruction for students who stay remote as well as those who come in-person more difficult given that teachers will have to simultaneously manage a classroom and teach online to students at home, and

Whereas this year has been one of trauma, instability and mourning for many of our young people who need consistency rather than interruption to routines they are just finally getting used to;

Be it therefore resolved that the Local School Council of Clinton Elementary School urges the Chicago Public Schools leadership and Board of Education to halt its plan to return to in-person learning in January and February and instead work together with Local School Councils, parent and community organizations and the Chicago Teachers Union to create a plan that is safe, equitable and instills trust for all parties.

Be it further resolved that while conditions do not permit a safe return to in-person learning, we urge the district to work with parents and teachers to focus on continuing to improve the quality of remote learning and make the needed investments in technology, staffing and other supports to make the best of a very difficult situation while keeping students, teachers and our community safe.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded on to Dr. Janice Jackson, CEO of Chicago Public Schools, all members of the Chicago Board of Education, 50<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderwoman Debra Silverstein, and 40<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Andre Vasquez.

**Adopted December 15th, 2020 with the support of all parent, community and staff LSC representatives:**

Blanca Sandoval-Perez (parent), Johnson Nguyen (community), Kwame Williams (staff), Manisha Patel (parent), Matt Ginsberg-Jaeckle (community), Miguel Melchor (teacher), Norma Gomez (parent, LSC President), Rami Faraj (teacher)

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[i] <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/latest-data.html>

[ii] <https://blockclubchicago.org/2020/04/07/west-ridge-has-highest-number-of-covid-19-cases-in-city-we-must-take-this-as-a-call-to-action/>

[iii] <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/covid19-statistics>

[iv] <https://www.jta.org/2020/11/17/health/its-knocking-on-everyones-doors-chicagos-jewish-community-is-battered-by-second-wave-of-coronavirus>



# LSC Election 2020

## Community Feedback & Recommendations

Prepared by Raise Your Hand for  
Illinois Public Education & Chicago  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights



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## Introduction/Summary

CPS Office of Local School Relations (OLSCR) 2020 Election Guide: *"The mission of the Board of Education – as it relates to the LSC 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."*

We commend and congratulate every candidate who dared to step up and run for LSC during a global health pandemic with devastating effects across Chicago. This year's rise in interest came amid this summer's SRO votes. Shout out to all of the first-timers who were recently elected. There is so much work to do before our schools are equipped and ready to safely welcome our children back into the building. **It is a disappointment that the district did not meet this moment with the level of seriousness, integrity and transparency LSC elections deserve.**

RYH conducted a week-long survey: **the word confusing was mentioned 32 times.** That is a reflection of the severe lack of clear and consistent communication and guidance throughout the election process. The lack of training, scant staffing and failures to follow CPS policy caused great stress and anxiety across the city. This was avoidable; thousands of stakeholders attempted and failed many times to offer support and recommendations to the CPS Office of LSC Relations.

**To the Board members who are passionate about the democracy LSCs provide for our city; your leadership is needed at this moment.** Despite the challenges of COVID-19, there was an unnecessary burden put on candidates, parents, students and schools. The lack of attention to details has hurt the trust and faith in this democratic process and in the CPS Office of LSC Relations. When forced to grade the district's ability to deliver proper, legal attention and oversight to a public election...The People grade you a D+.

Parents across the district consistently said that with proper and adequate oversight, clear communication and consistent guidance/training, multiple avenues for voting are necessary to welcome full access to the ballot box. OLSR must adopt LSC Elections policies and practices that clearly detail ethical obligations in accordance to the laws which govern the process. **We urge CPS to adopt the community-informed recommendations and best practices found in our report for the next LSC Election in 2022 and beyond.**

1. New Communication Plan and Procedures
2. Democratize LSC: Create a More Transparent LSC District
3. Overhaul and Expand Access to All Voting Methods
4. Increase Transparency and Trust with Ballots
5. Expand Election Judge Recruitment, Training, Assignments
6. Adhere to FOIA/OMA issues as outlined in Illinois law and school code
7. Increase Oversight and Training



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## Who We Are

[Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education](#) ("RYH") is a grassroots citywide parent organization that informs, engages and organizes parents around systemic issues in education, including LSCs. This year, RYH held over 45 LSC workshops around elections, effective LSC practices, and the SRO vote. Throughout the election cycle, RYH has consistently advocated for improvements with CPS. RYH also is part of the LSCs.4.ALL coalition, a community and labor coalition that focuses on creating equitable LSC policies and effective LSC members.

[Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights](#) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization of civil rights lawyers and advocates working to secure racial equity and economic opportunity for all since 1969. Local School Council Elections relate to two of our primary organizational priorities: education equity and voting rights. Chicago Lawyers' Committee's education equity work protects and promotes access to education by addressing the individual and systemic barriers that disproportionately impact historically disadvantaged communities. In voting rights, Chicago Lawyers' Committee works to eliminate barriers to voting and civic participation, especially in communities of color and low-income communities, to ensure that each citizen is able to cast a ballot and make their voice heard. Chicago Lawyers' Committee uses a community lawyering approach - that is, we collaborate with community leaders, advocacy organizations, and attorneys to craft and implement community-based solutions and policy reform.

## Methodology

[Survey](#) (12/5-12/12, Spanish and English)

We received 219 responses from 162 different schools (>30% of CPS with LSCs). Out of the responses, there were 82 parent candidates (at 57 schools), 47 community candidates (at 42 schools), 22 teacher candidates, 3 non teaching candidates and 1 student candidate. We also received feedback from 172 voters at 102 different schools. Respondents were asked to rank how supportive and effective the district was with a scale of 1 (no support) to 5 (excellent support) on a number of topics such as candidate forum or mail in voting. They were also asked to provide qualitative feedback in the forms of the good, the bad, the ugly and recommendations. Respondents gave the district an overall grade for the LSC election process (calculated by averaging the responses (A=95, B=85, C=75, D=65, F=55). On average, respondents gave CPS a C- (69.7%) with the majority of responses (76 respondents) giving the district a "D". CPS LSC received 7 "A"s, 34 "B"s, 60 "C"s, 76 "D"s, and 45 "F"s. When asked to rank the support and effectiveness of CPS District on 12 topics (ranging from candidate forum to poll watching to general communication), the two most frequent responses were "1" (no support) or "2". The highest average was 2.6 for the nomination process.

## Chicago Lawyers' Committee Hotline

Chicago Lawyers' Committee set up a free, non-partisan voter protection hotline for the LSC elections this year. We also trained non-partisan poll watchers to help respond to on-the-ground election issues. Leading up to and after the LSC elections, hotline volunteers (primarily Chicago Lawyers' Committee staff) fielded calls, texts and emails from voters, candidates and polls watchers. We received 63 total contacts to the hotline on and after the election days, including about 50 contacts on November 18 and 19 and a number of questions on December 1 about how ballots would be processed and counted. In all, voters contacted our hotline about elections at 31 different schools, including serious issues -- like misprinted ballots, electioneering, or high percentages of ballots being rejected -- occurring at several of these schools.

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## Post Election Debrief (12/5)

73 LSC members, candidates and supporters met to debrief the LSC election process. We heard from parents, the Chicago Teachers Union's LSC person, and about the Chicago Lawyers' Committee LSC hotline experience. The debrief was organized into 4 sections of discussion: the good, the bad, the ugly and recommendations.

## **Before Election Day**

### Advocacy Efforts

In the 6+ months between the postponement of the spring 2020 elections and the November election dates, Chicago Lawyers' Committee, Raise Your Hand, and other community partners (including the LSCs.4.All coalition) advocated for CPS to improve voter access and safety measures. CPS has a constitutional obligation to hold free and equal LSC elections, but the absence of public information about election processes threatened to undermine public trust and candidate and voter participation. In [multiple letters to CPS](#) in October and early November, we urged CPS to take needed measures to ensure safe and equitable access for parent and community voting during the pandemic, including:

- Expand public communications & transparency about the election process
- Adopt a more realistic timeline for mail-in ballots, consistent with other IL elections
- Give clear instructions & assurances of security for dropped-off mail-in ballots
- Offer eligible voters a way to request mail-in ballots, including community voters and parents who did not receive mail-in ballots
- Provide meaningful opportunities to distribute candidate information
- Create clearer procedures for accepting & processing ballots (including ways to verify ballot acceptance)

Many of these measures are standard procedures for other Illinois elections. And CPS agreed to make some positive changes, such as extending the deadline for receipt of mail-in ballots. But many issues we identified in our letter-writing efforts went unaddressed. This oversight resulted in distrust, confusion and low participation.

### Communication to Candidates

Stakeholders felt that there were numerous simple ways that the district could have supported candidates as things continually changed in response to COVID-19.

#### **The Basics**

- The OLSCR website was not updated with clear information and election timeline. Official CPS guidance & documents (eg. election guide & timeline) were not current or updated to reflect new dates and/or procedures due to COVID.
- Schools failed to keep stakeholders and voters aware of relevant elections data. Use of website, email, robocall and other channels were not equally used.

#### **Updates**

- CPS failed to keep candidates briefed on current changes in a timely fashion. Many candidates learned updates via social media.
- At least twice, inconsistent and erroneous data was released to candidates by CPS.
  - *"Everything was so confusing and I really wish there had been planning involved as soon as the initial decision to postpone elections was made. It seemed like things were changing on the fly, as people were told one thing and then got angry about it"*

---

### **Support (rated 2.2/5 on survey)**

- Little communication and/or delayed responses to stakeholders; namely parents, community and current LSC members across the days leading up to voting days.
  - *"None of my emails were responded to and my facilitators voicemail was full and not accepting calls for 2 entire weeks!"*
  - *"My LSC facilitator's voicemail has been full for weeks."*
- Lack of education: many first-time candidates felt unsupported and confused.

### **Candidate Awareness: Forum and Literature Distribution**

Schools were not set up to succeed; many stakeholders felt that it was too hard to find information on candidates. This area felt particularly inequitable as those that were more well resourced were able to provide more access to democracy.

- Inconsistent public candidate forums across the city (rated 2.45 out of 5 in survey). Many school forums were never added to school websites or shared with parents.
  - CPS miscommunication caused schools to hastily host forums within 2 days, giving little warning. Frustrated, some withdrew their candidacy.
  - Some school administrators made up rules as they went along.
- CPS delayed notifying the public of the candidate literature deadline.
  - When it was finally advertised; candidates had only 48-hours notification.
- Consistently, across schools, finding info on candidates was difficult (rated 2.17/5).

### **Communication to The Public (rated 2.2 out of 5)**

- Lacked promotion and awareness via citywide, district wide channels.
  - *"As a community member who pays attention I saw almost NO publicity at all about the LSC elections."*
  - *"I heard nothing about LSC's from the city of Chicago, my Alderman or local media-all information about candidates and voting processes."*
- Schools failed to keep stakeholders and voters aware of relevant elections info.
  - Use of website, email, robocall and other channels were not equally used.

### **The Good**

- All residents could participate in local democracy - *"As an immigrant it was the first time I could vote in an election. I love that there's no citizenship status requirement"*
- Some schools stepped up - *"our school was able to come together to come up with solutions in house because of the lack of support from the district."* and *"our school admin promoted LSC election date, candidate forum date and link to candidate letters on its school website or through a weekly newsletter."*
- *"It's over."*

## **Election Day**

78,919 voted in the 2020 LSC Elections

### **Mail In Ballots (rated 2.3 out of 5 on survey)**

One of the big alarms we raised was CPS' lack of due process to notify and give voters an opportunity to respond if their mail-in ballot faced rejection for a name mismatch. Instructions on mail-in ballot envelopes told voters to write a name and address, but did

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not say that they needed to exactly match those in CPS' records. But CPS instructed election judges to reject mail-in ballots if the names or addresses on their envelopes did not match their list, and did not issue clear instructions about what to do if names or addresses did not exactly match.

With CPS offering mail-in ballots to certain voters for the first time, there were many contacts from mail-in voters who didn't get clear instructions, didn't receive ballots, or received bad information. Through our hotline, we heard reports of mail-in ballots being rejected for minor compliance issues such as lacking a first name, even where the last name and address on the envelope matched the master list; listing a new address, even where the name matched and where the new address could be found elsewhere in CPS records; or listing the student's name instead of the parent's. Most concerning, CPS failed to provide a way for people to verify whether their ballot was received or counted, and did not offer a due process opportunity for voters to correct or challenge the reason their ballot was rejected.

### On Site Voting

Through the hotline, we heard about late-opening polling places, inadequate signage, misprinted ballots, and voters who were improperly turned away by election judges.

- Stakeholders reported inconsistent election judges and coordinator procedures. This included ID/address verification and health procedures - 1 voter went to 4 schools and experienced 4 different health procedures.
- Person tried to vote at 5pm at 2 south side elementary schools and couldn't get in.

### Access Issues

Many stakeholders reported issues with language access and curbside voting; both of which are essential to democracy for many populations in CPS at this time.

- *"Curbside voting was a joke - parents who tried to do curbside voting and didn't get anyone and another parent also mentioned curbside did not work, was made to come into the building"* This was repeated multiple times during our post election program.
- Based on the hotline calls, language access issues occurred at many schools that predominantly served students of color and low-income learners.

### Voting Intimidation, Suppression and Electioneering

At some polling sites, voters felt intimidated because teachers and school security staff were serving as election judges, a violation of CPS LSC election procedures that led to specific concerns about electioneering and improper handling of ballots. Issues of trust and safety with their vote were expressed in the hotline, survey and post election program.

- Appearance of influence, lack of integrity leading to loss of confidence
  - School admin managing the process by counting, handling ballots
  - Unprofessional conduct or electioneering by school administrators
  - Principal-approved candidates were allowed to electioneer in the school
- Lack of election judge training, acute failure to follow policy and protocols

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- Lack of language translation on ballots and during in-person voting
  - Inconsistent implementation of ID policy and safety protocol guidance across schools
  - Lack of ballot security, curing and verification of received mail-in ballots
  - Schools with ALSCs were not supported throughout the process and voting days
    - Parents at some ALSC schools did not receive mail ballots whatsoever
    - Some schools did not have paper ballots for in-person voting
    - Some schools refused to say how they held elections for parents to vote

## **Ballots**

Ballot instructions should have been more explicit and accurate to the process established during the pandemic. As ballots arrived via drop off or USPS they should have been time stamped by the school office and all of these ballots should have counted. Possible backlash/retaliation was a real concern particularly for parents & teachers who could not really remain anonymous.

- *"I believe the district could have done a better job of clarifying that the name on ballot envelopes was only to authenticate parent affiliation w school but that once verified the ballot itself would be counted separately from the exterior envelope."*
- *"I brought my ballot the day of in an envelope with no address. The poll watcher told me I needed to add the date to the envelope and said nothing about there not being an address. So my vote wasn't counted."*
- Ballots should be sent earlier. Some parents did not receive or received from the wrong school.

## **Spoiled Ballots**

*"...130 spoiled ballots. (Heard this from a poll watcher.) Principal sent an email with results but the next day 75 ballots were found w/o post mark (probably dropped off by parents as opposed to using USPS), some other ballots were found w/o envelope, some "spoiled" b/c of the marking used for vote. Worried about the integrity of the election & that so many parent voices were not going to be heard. If we did not address this issue at our school, trust erodes, parents become further disengaged. Candidates contested the election, filed the paperwork." -2020 Parent Candidate*

During our post election program, one member reported that the database used to print the envelopes didn't match the database the school was using. As a result, mail-in ballots may have been rejected for a name or address that did not match the school's database, even though the voter listed the exact same information printed on their envelope.

We also heard concerns about election judges discarding ballots from voters who marked their preferences with markings other than an "X" or intersecting lines. This concern is particularly relevant for mail-in ballots being completed at home, without election judges available to instruct voters on this formality. In cases where a voter makes an honest effort to indicate their choice, a voter should not be disenfranchised by having their ballot discarded.

## **After the Election**

In pre-election communications, advocates repeatedly asked CPS for outreach and public communications that would offer clear guidance about election processes and

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help to build public trust in a secure election. Many of the issues faced by voters could have been prevented had CPS used its resources to ensure that information pertinent to the election reaches as many voters as possible. For example, CPS agreed to extend the deadline for mail-in ballot submission but did not widely disseminate this information to parents, who received printed ballots with the old deadline. As a result, many parents who were unable to drop off their ballots by election day may have been dissuaded from participating in the election altogether.

### Transparency Concerns

Post-election, concerns about a lack of transparency and public communication remain. A significant number of stakeholders intended to file post election challenges; however, many were unaware of the process (rated 2.1/5 on survey). Those that did reported concerns for improper vote counting, valid ballots being spoiled or not counted and lack of fairness and integrity.

CPS did not publicly release guidance about how election judges would match names or addresses on mail-in ballots, leading to widespread confusion and inconsistency in processing these ballots. For example, we have heard reports that election judges at some schools only checked for a name match, while others required that both the name and address match exactly to the CPS-provided list. Even efforts to gather records for transparency purposes have been rebuffed.

Voters have expressed concerns about not knowing whether their ballot was counted, or the number of ballots rejected at their school. Through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Chicago Lawyers' Committee requested public records from CPS about the numbers of ballots that were processed or rejected, but CPS rejected the request on the grounds that these records were not yet finalized -- even though the vote tallies have already been certified by the schools. This lack of transparency creates additional obstacles to building public trust in election processes moving forward.

### Fingerprinting

On December 15th, newly elected or re-elected and appointed LSC members were directed to report in-person to fingerprinting sites before January 11, 2021 in order to submit to a fingerprint-based background check. To preserve public safety, CPS should postpone this requirement for LSC members until the pandemic is under control. It is unreasonable to require over 4000 parents and community members to get fingerprinted during the middle of a pandemic, especially as LSC business is currently virtual and CPS is not providing their fingerprinting services ([document of CPS sites in email](#) are for August). CPS has the legal authority to postpone this requirement: Although state law typically requires that these background checks take place upon election or appointment of the LSC member, the state legislature passed a law that allows CPS to "make any necessary modifications" to the 2020 LSC election process to comply with health and safety guidance from the CDC and Department of Public Health. CPS has [not always enforced this requirement](#), which has been subject to widespread criticism by parents and community members that it chills participation by undocumented parents without a tangible safety benefit. CPS should exercise its legal authority and postpone the fingerprinting process until it is safe to do so.



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## Recommendations and Next Steps

Across the board, there was consensus that expanded access to mail-in, curbside and in-person voting options should remain the norm for future elections. Parents across the district consistently said that with proper and adequate oversight, clear communication and consistent guidance/training, multiple avenues for voting are necessary to welcome full access to the ballot box. We urge CPS to adopt these community-informed recommendations and best practices for the next LSC Election in 2022 and beyond.

### 8. New Communication Plan and Procedures

- a. More accessible, transparent, up to date, clear and consistent communication and outreach to voters and candidates.
- b. District needs to provide more support to principals and local coordinators

### 9. Democratize LSC: Create a More Transparent LSC District

- a. All available candidate literature and forums are uploaded onto a District run LSC page
- b. As elected officials, LSC members' contact info (ex. CPS email) needs to be publicly available. Currently only physical addresses are provided.
  - i. This creates stronger collaboration between members and provides a way for the school community to be able to reach their representative.
- c. Support LSCs with continued virtual meetings (past the pandemic)
- d. District provides more support with language access (during regular meetings and elections), ballot printing, and outreach

### 10. Overhaul and Expand Access to All Voting Methods

- a. Improve communication to ensure ballot accuracy by clear instructions
- b. Provide mail-in voters adequate time and opportunity to correct issues
- c. Work to ensure mail-in ballot access is provided to all eligible voters
- d. Ensure adequate staffing and training for curbside voting

### 11. Increase Transparency and Trust with Ballots

- a. Improve ballot processing guidance using best practices from other election jurisdictions
- b. Include ways to verify ballot receipt and/or cure rejected ballots
- c. Pragmatize the process; reduce the number of spoiled ballots by removing archaic disqualifications such as check marks vs X's.

### 12. Expand Election Judge Recruitment, Training, Assignments

- a. Overhaul the election coordinator and judge training
- b. Develop clear and consistent training for all election workers
- c. Consult with Chicago Board of Elections for best practices and training

### 13. Adhere to FOIA/OMA issues as outlined in Illinois law and school code

### 14. Increase Oversight and Training

- a. Implement oversight by LSC Advisory Board, CPS and possibly outside entities with experience in election best practices
- b. Create ways for community-involvement and collaboration in the planning, training and supports needed for fair and safe elections

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## Reflections from CPS Stakeholders

"Voter suppression at every turn. Even if parent contact info was correct in Aspen, parents in the same household were missing one or both ballots. Suggestions on how to remedy this are ignored by OLSCR. Instructions should have been included in the ballot envelope with an infographic demonstrating how to vote. OLSCR could employ the same efforts utilized to contact families for re-opening and apply them for LSC election awareness. It is clear CPS has no desire to participate willingly in the democratic process."

"All LSC members should be required to have a fundamental understanding of equity and anti-racism training annually. Equity should be the lens through which all LSC work is done and it should be a required and official committee of EVERY LSC. There needs to be accountability for schools that do not offer sexual health minutes at every grade level, do not provide inclusive curriculum, etc. NO school should have a 1+ rating with this much cultural toxicity and oppression."

"Communication was abysmal. Dates and procedures were constantly changing, we received a flurry of emails with conflicting information, and the LSC website was never up to date. As if they had not seen the implications of the pandemic back in the spring or summer, there was a mad scramble in the fall on the part of OLSCR to figure out how to do mail-in voting. For my daughter's school, both my partner and I received ballots in the mail. For my son's school, only my partner received a ballot."

"This entire LSC Elections is a reflection of leadership. There is no other way to describe the complete letdown from the Office of LSC Relations and district communications. Amid COVID, they had the capability to cure miscommunication, mass confusion and disconnects between schools and stakeholders...yet they failed at every turn. This sort of dysfunction is cause for an internal review of procedures and whether there's efficiency in holding citywide elections."

"Except for a few brief announcements about election nomination and voting day, there wasn't much information shared about the election. There was no education about LSC, who could vote, etc. I didn't see any efforts to encourage community members to vote. There was no information about the need for volunteers to poll watch the polls. Judges didn't seem trained to do their work. I don't think there was curb voting offered."

"The fact of the election was good, but CPS proved incapable of adjusting effectively to the pandemic environment and unresponsive to concerns raised by community members, teachers, and administrators. The result in our school was an election marred by low engagement, misinformation, and lack of transparency regarding impact on numbers of votes cast and counted"

"The election was a mess. We were given very little notice about when the candidates' forum had to take place. my partner did not receive a mail-in ballot. mail-in ballots were rejected if someone didn't write their name on the envelope (thus it was not actually a secret ballot, and principals could easily see who people voted for). The rejection of checkmarked rather than x'd ballots is disenfranchising and ridiculous. cps told the election workers the school staff two different start times, so the poll watchers waited at the school from 5:30-6:30 and thought the school staff were late (and could well have given up and left)."

"Would be nice to have gotten some confirmation of receipt of vote, but I don't have any reason to believe my ballot was not received or not counted."

"Administration counting ballots (teachers wouldn't participate because they felt there was a lack of privacy."

"Barely any communication with CPS regarding the election process; inconsistent voting arrangements (no VBM for community); last minute changing plans with little to no communication (candidate forums)."

"When LSCs first started, over 90 organizations such as Chicago Association of LSCs, PURE and Designs for Change, supported members."



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"Since CPS has done the training, its turned into a joke" - 25 yr LSC vet and former trainer