





**IN RE: PENDING SCHOOL BOARD LEGISLATION**

**DATE:**

**April 06, 2023**

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1 IN RE: PENDING SCHOOL BOARD LEGISLATION

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WITNESSES: JEANETTE TAYLOR  
LANESSA YOUNG  
TOMMORROW SNYDER  
NATASSIA BALLARD  
DARREN STEPTOE  
DAVID PETERSON  
AISHA NOBLE  
CHRIS LESUER  
DATE: APRIL 6, 2023  
REPORTER: KORTNEY CHASE

APPEARANCES

SENATORS:

Kimberly A. Lightford, Chair

Robert F. Martwick, Vice-Chair

Mattie Hunter, Member

Celina Villanueva, Member

Seth Lewis, Member

Elgie R. Sims Jr., Member

ALSO PRESENT: Ashley Jenkins, Clerk

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STIPULATION

The hearing was taken at IMANI VILLAGE, 901 EAST 95TH STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60628 on THURSDAY the 6th day of APRIL 2023 at 11:45 a.m. (CT); said hearing was taken pursuant to the ILLINOIS rules of Civil Procedure.

## 1 PROCEEDINGS

2 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, and thank you  
3 for having us here at Imani Village. This is a  
4 wonderful facility, and I appreciate Imani and all  
5 the great work that you've done, and I'm extremely  
6 happy to be here with Alderman Harris and, of  
7 course, my Senate colleague, Senator Sims. I also  
8 would like to acknowledge Alderwoman Jeanette  
9 Taylor, who's also here. And I know Senator Hunter  
10 shares a lot of this space as well, so it's good to  
11 be on the south side. So the special committee on  
12 the Chicago Elected Representatives School Board  
13 shall come to order. Will the clerk please call  
14 the roll?

15 MS. JENKINS: Lewis.

16 SENATOR LEWIS: Here.

17 MS. JENKINS: McConchie. Villaneuva.

18 SENATOR VILLANUEVA: Here.

19 MS. JENKINS: Villivalam. Sims.

20 SENATOR. SIMS: Present.

21 MS. JENKINS: Hunter.

22 SENATOR HUNTER: Here.

23 MS. JENKINS: Aquino. Martwick.

24 SENATOR MARTWICK: Here.

25 MS. JENKINS: Chair Lightford.

1 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Present. We have six  
2 members established. We have a quorum, and we  
3 shall proceed to conduct business on today. The  
4 following credential medias take leave of the  
5 committee to take photos and videos. No med -- no  
6 media is present. So good afternoon, again, and  
7 welcome to the second meeting of the Senate Special  
8 Committee of the Chicago Elected Representatives  
9 School Board. And on behalf of my colleagues, I'd  
10 like to thank Imani Village for hosting us. This  
11 is a special place that really shows how  
12 collaborations can lead to transformation. Before  
13 we begin, I'd like to provide a bit of background  
14 about why we are here today. In 2021, the Senate  
15 and the House passed House Bill 2908, which  
16 required the Chicago Board of Education to become a  
17 fully elected board by 2027. Starting January 15th  
18 of 2025, a two-year hybrid period begins, with ten  
19 members being elected to a four-year term, ten  
20 members also being appointed by the mayor to a  
21 two-year term, and the board presiding being  
22 appointed by the mayor for a two-year term. Then  
23 in 2027, when the mayor appointed terms expire, the  
24 ten members and the elected at-large members will  
25 be elected to a four- year term. The general

1 assembly must comply to the July 1, 2023 deadline  
2 to draw Chicago's school board districts. And  
3 based on Chicago's population, the ten districts  
4 will be comprised of approximately 274,601. And the  
5 20 districts will be comprised of around 137,301.  
6 So those numbers are around 274,601, and then  
7 137,301. And according to the census, the City of  
8 Chicago is 35.9 percent White, 29.8 percent  
9 Hispanic, and 29.2 Black, 7 percent Asian, and  
10 about 11 percent describe themselves as two or more  
11 races. The school code requires that the districts  
12 be compact, contiguous, and substantially equal in  
13 population, and consistent with the Illinois Voting  
14 Rights Act. All of that is to say that we are  
15 entering a new era in community-led education that  
16 will empower families to elect leaders who reflect  
17 their neighborhoods. Already this process has  
18 shown how deep the needs of our schools are. We've  
19 heard about the need to increase violence  
20 prevention, initiate an improved transportation,  
21 about facilities that need to be repaired and  
22 expanded, and ways we can address longstanding  
23 inequalities and how resources are allocated.  
24 Electing leaders who will help us successfully  
25 address those issues began with these hearings,



1 where we will gather public input about potential  
2 district boundaries and needs of specific  
3 communities. Chicago's strength is in its  
4 diversity, and our goal during these committees is  
5 to hear from a wide variety of stakeholders,  
6 including parents, education advocates, and  
7 community groups in communities across the city.  
8 If you know someone who wants to testify but could  
9 not make it today, there will be additional public  
10 hearings, and we encourage you to spread the word.  
11 They are as follows: Next week on April 12th from  
12 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Cope -- Coperni --  
13 Copernicus. Tongue twister for me -- Copernicus  
14 Center. It's at 5216 West Lawrence. 5216 West  
15 Lawrence in Chicago. The following day on April  
16 13th will be a later night. We're -- we're giving  
17 different timeframes, so that we can meet you where  
18 you're at, will be April 13th, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.,  
19 as well, at the National Museum of Mexican Art,  
20 1852 West 19th Street. 1852 West 19th Street, and  
21 then we'll have a virtual hearing. We want to hear  
22 from everyone. The virtual hearing will be on  
23 April 17th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and the  
24 virtual hearing you can log onto [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov).  
25 [Ilga.gov](http://Ilga.gov). In addition to participating in these

1 public hearings, we encourage you to visit our  
2 website. That's [www.ilsenate -- S-E-N-A-T-E --](http://www.ilsenate-redistricting.com)  
3 [redistricting -- R-E-D-I-S-T-R-I-C-T-I-N-G --](http://www.il-senateredistricting.com)  
4 [redistricting.com](http://www.il-senateredistricting.com). So that's [www.il -- Illinois --](http://www.il-senateredistricting.com)  
5 [senateredistricting.com](http://www.il-senateredistricting.com), where there is a page that  
6 is dedicated to implementing new Chicago school  
7 board districts. At that webpage, anyone can draw  
8 up and submit proposed communities of interest and  
9 upload district boundaries. Soon, members of the  
10 public will also be able to draw up their own  
11 district boundaries as well. All maps submitted  
12 through the portal will be reviewed as part of the  
13 public record. On a personal note, I am so proud  
14 to help lead this process, which is a continuation  
15 of my life's work to improve education for  
16 children, not just in Chicago, but across Illinois.  
17 I've fought to make sure our students have the most  
18 qualified teachers, provide nutritious food at  
19 schools, prevent bullying and violence on school  
20 grounds, and to ensure Black and Brown children  
21 have the same access to a quality education as  
22 everyone else. And you'll be hearing from your  
23 Senators on the work that they've done as well, in  
24 the education space. The importance schools play  
25 in our children's future cannot be understated.

1 With so much at stake, it will not be easy to  
2 balance various desires and perspectives, but we  
3 are committed. We are committed to uplifting  
4 voices, that too often go unheard, in crafting a  
5 product our city can be proud of. With all that  
6 said, I'll now turn it over to our vice chair,  
7 which is Senator Martwick, sitting to my left, for  
8 a few remarks before we turn to Senator Sims and  
9 Senator Hunter. Senator Martwick.

10 SENATOR MARTWICK: Thank you, Leader  
11 Lightford, and thank you for setting the stage for  
12 these hearings. I want to add to your point about  
13 this process empowering families. It's been an  
14 honor to part with -- partner with you and so many  
15 of the -- of our fellow members in the general  
16 assembly who improve our system of education by  
17 supporting educators and investing in students.  
18 Well, I'm incredibly proud to have sponsored the  
19 legislation that created the elected representative  
20 school board in Chicago. I must acknowledge all of  
21 those who came before and never gave up, even when  
22 the fight seemed impossible. We're here today  
23 because this was truly a grassroots advocacy effort  
24 that started on the ground and worked its way up.  
25 And it was students, parents, community groups,

1 activists, who believe in the importance of the  
2 democratic process and fought for a greater say in  
3 how our schools are run, and that starts now. You  
4 know your neighborhoods best, and we're relying on  
5 you to provide input on what the new school  
6 district boundaries should look like so that your  
7 communities are properly represented. So please  
8 invite your neighbors to one of these meetings.  
9 Tell your friends to go to our website and submit  
10 commentary, draw your own map. The more people who  
11 weigh in, the better. And so, again, thank you to  
12 everyone who came here to speak today. I'm really  
13 grateful for this turnout. It's wonderful to be  
14 here with you on this lovely day and I -- I'm  
15 really looking forward to doing the work, so thank  
16 you everyone. And now I'll turn it over to Senator  
17 Sims.

18 SENATOR SIMS: Thank you so much, Senator  
19 Martwick, and thank you Chair Lightford and  
20 chair -- Vice Chairman Martwick. First, let me  
21 thank my partner in progress, Alderwoman Michelle  
22 Harris, who is here and has joined us today, but  
23 also the Imani Village for allowing us to utilize  
24 this wonderful edifice for today's hearing, and  
25 the -- the number of community leaders who have

1 joined us. I want to thank you on behalf of the  
2 amazing and powerful residents of the 17th  
3 District, it is my honor to welcome you to Chicago  
4 South Side. We have talked about the elected  
5 school board for a long time, so it's a great honor  
6 to represent the people of this community and we're  
7 happy to hear from you to learn directly from our  
8 community about their hopes and desires regarding  
9 these new Chicago school board districts. So often  
10 our work can seem far away, especially when we  
11 spend so much time at the capital in Springfield.  
12 But we should never forget that all of our work  
13 starts and ends right here at home. By giving our  
14 community ability to choose the leadership of our  
15 school district, we can build stronger  
16 neighborhoods that will make our children receive  
17 the -- make sure our children receive the education  
18 that they need to succeed. Working together, we can  
19 break the cycles of poverty and disinvestment that  
20 have scarred our neighborhoods and stunted futures  
21 for far too long. Again, I appreciate the  
22 opportunity to hear directly from you and the work  
23 that you are doing in our community to make it  
24 better. I appreciate bringing -- the committee  
25 bringing its work here. I look forward to the

1 discussion. Thank you so much.

2 SENATOR HUNTER: Thank you, Senator Sims.

3 Good morning, everyone. I'm State Senator Mattie  
4 Hunter, representing the 3rd Legislative District,  
5 and I'd like to thank Leader Lightford, Vice Chair  
6 Martwick, Alderman Harris for having us here. And  
7 I also would like to acknowledge my -- Alderman  
8 Taylor for being here, as well as the Imani  
9 Village, as -- and the residents here. So good to  
10 see some of you-all. I haven't seen many of  
11 you-all in a long time, so it's always good to see  
12 old friends. I'd like to join Senator Sims in  
13 welcoming you all to the South Side. We're not too  
14 far away from the 3rd District, which I've been  
15 blessed to represent for the past 20 years. And  
16 during that time, my focus has been on increasing  
17 public safety, creating economic opportunities for  
18 families, and bringing more resources to our  
19 community. And you know what, all of that starts  
20 in our schools. It starts in the classrooms. It  
21 starts with quality teachers. It starts with  
22 sparking an interest in our students about a life  
23 beyond the streets. And it starts with community  
24 members who are -- who are finally being given a  
25 say-so in the process that's -- as it's taking

1 place, and it's getting ready to take place. And  
2 that's you. This process will help hold CPS  
3 leadership accountable so we can make sure  
4 decisions are made in the best interests of our  
5 children, not us, but our children. I look forward  
6 to what the future holds. And thank you very much.

7 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, senators. I'd  
8 also like to introduce Senator Lewis for  
9 introduction. Senator Lewis.

10 SENATOR LEWIS: Good morning, everyone. I'm  
11 Senator Seth Lewis residing from DuPage County.  
12 It's an honor to be here on the South Side with  
13 Alderman Harris, Senator Sims, and Leader  
14 Lightford. Thank you very much for your  
15 participation.

16 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Senator. Thank  
17 you for being here as well, all the way from DuPage  
18 County. So again, thank you to all of you who took  
19 your time to be here today, and I look forward to  
20 hearing today's testimonies. So while I know  
21 passions run high when we talk about our kids and  
22 education, I want to urge you to please stick to  
23 the topic at hand as we focus on a successful  
24 implementation of this transaction. We just want  
25 to be successful in getting this right. So I would

1 like to now invite our first individual for  
2 testimony, which will be Alderman Jeanette Taylor  
3 of the 20th Ward. Alderwoman, if you would please  
4 come up to our lovely table here, beautiful chair  
5 with the microphone, and all of those who will  
6 follow her will be seated right there. All right,  
7 Alderman.

8 ALDERMAN TAYLOR: Good morning. How are you?

9 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Good, thank you.

10 ALDERMAN TAYLOR: Good morning, Senators.  
11 Good morning, folks. To our Senator -- Senator  
12 Hunter, thank you for inviting me. Senator  
13 Martwick, I'm pretty sure you've seen me before  
14 7:00 a.m. some of those times you -- Senator Sims  
15 said. Senator Celina for the selected school  
16 board. I was a local school council member for 23  
17 years, and so this is near and dear to me. And my  
18 baby is 18 and will be graduating in June, and so I  
19 don't ever have to go to another one of the board  
20 meetings, but that's not going to happen. And so,  
21 I'm here to just really talk about the importance  
22 of having this elected school board, and how we  
23 should make sure that local school council  
24 members -- parents and young people -- are involved  
25 in the process. And so, imagine being on the local



1 school council at your school and your baby writes  
2 his name in the same book your name is. That --  
3 that -- that was my reality. Imagine being on  
4 school probation for 20 years. While I was in  
5 elementary, I was on probation for 20 years. It  
6 wasn't until we got a -- just a different outlook,  
7 and we decided hey, these are the things that we're  
8 going to do to get out of probation, and it  
9 actually happened. We never really got the  
10 resources that we need to make the school the  
11 school it could have been. So this was not  
12 unengaged parents. This was not teachers who  
13 didn't care. This was an administration who didn't  
14 care. We just did not get the resources, and so  
15 understand that there are what, 300 school  
16 districts, and there was only one without an  
17 elected school board, and it just happened to be  
18 Chicago. And it just seems like that -- that's  
19 been wrong. And so, even before I decided to get  
20 in the fight, they've been fighting for an elected  
21 school board for 40 years. And so, for me, it's us  
22 taking the time, because we're behind the eight  
23 ball. Other districts have an elected school board  
24 and we don't, and so how do we make sure everybody  
25 is engaged and that we're having these

1 conversations locally? And so, I appreciate you  
2 all having these meetings in the evening, because  
3 parents work. I -- I happen to have an employer  
4 that I don't got to clock in and out. But there --  
5 that's not everybody's reality, and so I want to  
6 make sure that these meetings are in the evening  
7 time and that we host them either at the city  
8 colleges, or even at the elementary school level,  
9 because we want people to really be involved and  
10 engaged in this process. It is easy for people to  
11 think that this is going to be the magic bullet to  
12 fix things. It's not. That is not how this works,  
13 because we're dealing with centuries of  
14 disinvestments in -- in our schools in Chicago.  
15 And so, I appreciate you-all having this  
16 conversation with us by making sure that we do  
17 this. It's -- it's -- it's going to take a lot of  
18 work, and I don't want people to think that we'll  
19 have a couple of meetings and it's end all, because  
20 that's not what's going to happen. And so, I thank  
21 you all today for this -- this conversation. I  
22 actually brought a young person with me who I've  
23 known since she was 16 years old. She worked on my  
24 first campaign when I was elected. She worked on  
25 the second campaign. She is now 21, and I brought

1 her here, because she's actually on the local  
2 school council. And so, how often do you leave  
3 school and then decide you want to get on the LSC,  
4 because that's not what I wanted to do. My mother  
5 made me get on the LSC and be a PTA mom. I  
6 didn't -- I didn't want it. I -- I -- I loathed  
7 it. I was like that is not what I want to do.  
8 Those are a bunch of folks that are not listening  
9 to the people who are actually impacted by the  
10 decisions you make, and so I didn't want to do it  
11 and so I don't take it easily. I don't take for  
12 granted that I had a parent that pushed me to do  
13 that. And so, I brought Lane today so she could  
14 kind of tell you her experience. Thank you-all for  
15 allowing me to talk.

16 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: And what was her name? I  
17 don't know that I have her --

18 ALDERMAN TAYLOR: It's -- it might say  
19 Lanessa.

20 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Anesia Young?

21 ALDERMAN TAYLOR: Lanessa, yeah.

22 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay. Okay. Good. I  
23 will -- I will definitely have Lanessa come up.  
24 Lanessa Young, would you like to approach? Hi.

25 MS. YOUNG: Hello everyone. My name is

1 Lanessa Young. L-A-N-E-S-S-A. I am 21 years old.  
2 I am a third year at UIC for urban planning and  
3 public policy, but I'm also a former CPS student at  
4 Hyde Park Academy. I graduated high school in  
5 2020, and I'm here to just push forward and uplift  
6 the work that activists and young organizers have  
7 done to push for elected school boards. I am a  
8 part of the Hyde Park local school council, and  
9 being a part of the Hyde Park local school council  
10 I've seen a lot of adults making decisions for  
11 young people, and have not been able to show the  
12 real strength of student voices and what student  
13 voices is, and what students really believe and  
14 want in school. So I believe that pushing for a  
15 local school council will only not -- not only  
16 apply pressure to the local school -- I mean, for  
17 elected school board will only apply pressure to  
18 the local school councils to do more for the  
19 students, but most importantly do more for the  
20 communities. I am wanting to uplift that -- the  
21 way that LSC boundaries are drawn is -- I'll use a  
22 polite word -- not right. It's just unjust. And I  
23 want you all to look at that when you look at how  
24 you are mapping for the elected school boards. I  
25 want you all to pay attention to the communities

1 that are poverty stricken. I want you to pay  
2 attention to the communities that don't have the  
3 voice and advocacy where there are forgotten  
4 blocks, there are forgotten students. And also the  
5 South Side, where there are schools, there are  
6 unforgotten schools like Hyde Park, Paul Revere,  
7 James Madison, those schools of that nature, that  
8 people have severely defunded. And so, in this  
9 space, I just want to uplift the work that students  
10 have done, but most importantly, apply pressure to  
11 you- all to make sure that you are still continuing  
12 to do the great work to make sure that everything  
13 is done right and successfully. Thank you.

14 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Lanessa. Very  
15 good. You just make me smile. Thank you. Further  
16 testimony, Tomorrow Snyder, Stand for Children.  
17 Good morning.

18 MS. SNYDER: Good morning.

19 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Good morning.

20 MS. SNYDER: Good morning. My name is  
21 Tommorrow Snyder. I don't know if you need me to  
22 spell it, but I will. It is T-O-M-M-O-R-R-O-W,  
23 Snyder, S-N-Y-D-E-R. I am the community and family  
24 partnerships director at Stand for Children  
25 Illinois. And my daughter is a proud CPS graduate,

1 many, many years ago. So I had to write this down.  
2 When talking about the new CPS elected school  
3 board, the single most important priority for the  
4 board is to manage the school system and to provide  
5 safe, equitable, stable, high-quality schools for  
6 all Chicago children. We need schools that  
7 families are excited to send their children to.  
8 Schools that provide excellent educational  
9 opportunities for all kids to learn, to be both  
10 strong leaders and empathetic human beings, above  
11 all. We need this new system -- we know that this  
12 new system is the future of CPS, and it will  
13 happen, and I'm very thankful for that. We want to  
14 make sure it works as best as possible for all  
15 Chicago kids and families. As we said in the  
16 beginning, the mo -- new map should look like  
17 Chicago. It should look like this panel of people  
18 up here, and more. Representation on the board is  
19 just as important as representation in the  
20 classroom, and the workplace, and the world. This  
21 will help raise community voices and help ensure  
22 that it works for Chicago kids and families.  
23 Parents with children in CPS schools should sit on  
24 the board, just like they sit on their LSCs. I'm a  
25 former LSC chairperson. That said, after

1 discussions with parents and community members that  
2 I work with, the 21- member size of the board is  
3 problematic. 21 members will make the board  
4 messier and more political. It will turn the CEO's  
5 job from managing the school system under the  
6 oversight of the board, to managing politics and  
7 factions within the board with one hand, while  
8 running the school system with the other. A  
9 smaller board would be meaningfully supported by  
10 the district and allow for a more direct line to  
11 the CEO. Just as importantly, a smaller board  
12 would make it more affordable to provide  
13 compensation to members. We must pay board members  
14 to truly value their time and work, and open doors  
15 to some community members who might not be able to  
16 do so if there is no payment. Not many folks can  
17 give up their time for no compensation. That's  
18 something that we should remember. I thank you for  
19 your time and attention to this vital issue that  
20 impacts all Chicago students.

21 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. Thank you,  
22 Ms. Snyder, and thank you Stand for Children, for  
23 participating in this process. We can also hear  
24 from Nastassia Ballard, also from Stand for  
25 Children.

1 MS. BALLARD: Good morning.

2 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Good morning.

3 MS. BALLARD: My name's Nastassia Ballard.

4 N-A-S-T-A-S-S-I-A. I'm a Payton parent fellow for  
5 Stand for Children Illinois. I'm actively engaged  
6 with my children's education, also being a former  
7 LSC chairperson. As others have said before me, it  
8 has become important that this new elected school  
9 board is managing school systems to provide safe,  
10 stable, and highly qualified schools for our  
11 children. I want to make sure that this new system  
12 works best for all children, mine, including  
13 Chicago's students. It must be said that this  
14 21-member size -- I'm sorry, this 21- member sized  
15 board is problematic, one reason being  
16 accountability. It is important for our community  
17 members to know their board members, who they are,  
18 and who to hold accountable. Constituents try --  
19 oh, I'm sorry, constituents continuing to navi --  
20 sorry. Constituents trying to navigate board  
21 poli -- politics will need to be especially  
22 politically savvy. Every person should know -- I'm  
23 sorry, every -- everyday people should be able to  
24 attend the board meetings and contribute their  
25 perspectives without needing to -- a lobbyist or a



1 political science degree. A 21-member board is  
2 also problematic for accessibility reasons. It is  
3 a double-edged sword. We understand proponents of  
4 21-member boards have good intentions in wanting to  
5 create a smaller geographic ar -- geographic area  
6 to produce representatives that truly understand  
7 and represent their communities. A smaller board  
8 would mean for more meaningful support by the  
9 district and allow more direct communications line  
10 with the CEO. For equity reasons, a smaller board  
11 would make it easy to pay board members. We  
12 believe that we must pay board members, to value  
13 their time and their work, and allow open doors for  
14 Chicagoans who might not be able to participate  
15 without payment. Not many -- not many people can  
16 give their time for no compensation. A smaller  
17 school board will also help ensure more meaningful  
18 support for students and families across Chicago.  
19 Thank you for your time, and I hope that this  
20 process continues to be an open one, a transparent  
21 one, and that we can continue to have meaningful  
22 opportunities for communities and be back involved  
23 in. Thank you.

24 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. Appreciate  
25 your time and your testimony. Darren Step --

1 Steptoe from Educators for Excellence.

2 MR. STEPTOE: Chairman Lightford, members of  
3 the committee, thank you for allowing me to speak  
4 today. My name is Darren Steptoe. That's  
5 D-A-R-R-E-N, S-T-E-P- T-O-E, and I represent  
6 Educators for Excellence. We ensure that teachers  
7 have a leading voice in the policies that impact  
8 their students and the profession, and that this  
9 Chicago chapter represents 7,500 CPS members. So  
10 it's been said before, but we -- we are proponents  
11 of reducing the size of the school board, and also  
12 to -- for the new elected school board to receive  
13 compensation. So at 21 seats, the CPS board would  
14 be significantly larger than every other district  
15 nationally. You know, among the 100 districts --  
16 largest districts in the country, 91 have boards  
17 between four and nine members. Only in New York  
18 City, they recently expanded to a 23-seat board,  
19 but their board is more of an advisory capacity,  
20 and doesn't -- doesn't work with the budget or  
21 anything like that. So that would make CPS the  
22 third -- three times larger than any other board.  
23 That -- the size of that board would be hard for  
24 taxpayers in that currently, the budget for the  
25 board office is about \$1.5 million, so that lands

1 at \$220,000 per board member. So providing the  
2 same level of support for 21 board member -- or a  
3 21-member board would, conservatively, lead to a  
4 total of about 4 to \$5 million. So employing  
5 additional staff for each of the 21 members would  
6 be a significant expense, and additionally, the  
7 capital expenditure needed to support this larger  
8 board are estimated at around ten to 15 million.  
9 So we -- we are big proponents of lowering the size  
10 to something more manageable, and also allow  
11 compensation, to allow people who would otherwise  
12 not be able to participate in, you know, the -- the  
13 school board, to participate. Thank you very much  
14 for your time.

15 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. Appreciate  
16 your testimony, Mr. Steptoe. David Peterson, Far  
17 South Chicago Coalition, welcome.

18 MR. PETERSON: Good day. How are you doing?  
19 Thank you guys for having us today. I stand here  
20 today in solidarity with Senator Sims, Senator  
21 Hunter, of course yourself, and everybody else, to  
22 show support for this on behalf of the Far South  
23 Chicago Coalition and the A. Philip Randolph  
24 Pullman Porter Museum, the world's first and only  
25 Black labor history museum. As we are at the cusp

1 of creating the world's first and only Black labor  
2 tourism district with a Jesse White Labor Research  
3 Library, we want to make sure that the elected  
4 official -- the elected school board has a strong  
5 emphasis on labor history, Black history, women's  
6 history, and railroad history, which our museum  
7 entails. With that, we -- we want to make sure that  
8 that's important, because you know, that diversity  
9 in terms of education is what will make us have  
10 well-rounded students, and in addition to that, we  
11 want to make sure students have access to secondary  
12 education, such as trades, entrepreneurship  
13 training, et cetera. As a CPS alumni from William  
14 H. Ray and Kenwood Academy, I think that this is an  
15 excellent idea. I think that this is a great  
16 initiative and we're excited about it. And again,  
17 I just want to show community support, again, on  
18 behalf of FSCC and our tourist and transportation  
19 committee and economic development workforce,  
20 development committee, and the Phillip Randolph  
21 Pullman Porter Museum. Thank you guys.

22 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Mr. Peterson.  
23 Is there anyone else to give testimony -- oral  
24 testimony at this time? You may come forward and  
25 state your name and what organization you're a part

1 of. No?

2 MS. NOBLE: Thank you. Hi.

3 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Hi.

4 MS. NOBLE: My name is Aisha Noble. I am a  
5 CPS parent from Edgewater. It just happened that I  
6 learned about the hearing in the press last week,  
7 and had the ability to be here, and I echo a lot of  
8 the sentiments that were shared already by  
9 Alderwoman Taylor and the others that testified.  
10 At my child's school, who is in second grade, I  
11 was an LSC chair as well as a community rep, and I  
12 was -- I had the fortunate ability to be a  
13 stay-at-home, full-time parent. So in addition to  
14 doing that, I looked at my role in the LSC as a  
15 full-time job for the school of 1100 kids. In  
16 order to stay engaged in my community, it was my  
17 full-time job besides being mom, and I echo the --  
18 the other folks that testified about providing some  
19 type of compensation for the folks that are going  
20 to be on the elected school board. There's a huge  
21 deficit coming, we're aware of that, in the next  
22 couple of years. I believe the estimate is 628  
23 million, and we need people to be all hands on deck  
24 and not multi-tasking with other jobs, and also  
25 opening the opportunity from an equity perspective

1 that the elected school board is representative of  
2 the school district, and not the parents that can  
3 afford to give up the time to volunteer. The other  
4 questions that I came up for -- you guys probably  
5 saw me on the laptop, was just -- I'm curious what  
6 protections are going to be to ensure that the maps  
7 are not codifying segregation, for the segregation  
8 in the city, and if there's going to be an  
9 independent review going forward, and what the maps  
10 will look like in the future as the communities, as  
11 demographics change, to ensure that we are adhering  
12 to the Illinois Voting Act, which was shared that  
13 it's -- the districts are appropriately compact,  
14 contiguous, and substantially equal and consistent  
15 with that act. Those -- those were my comments  
16 that I wanted to share as a -- I am -- my mother  
17 was a CPS teacher; I am a CPS graduate. My -- my  
18 8-year-old is a CPS student. I am fully invested  
19 all in -- on CPS and ensuring that we have what we  
20 need to be an even brighter beacon. I want our  
21 school district to be the model for this country.  
22 That's -- that's my hope, and the elected school  
23 board is going to help put us on that path, but we  
24 need all hands on deck to make sure that that can  
25 happen. Thanks.

1 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. Is there any  
2 other testimonies? Seeing none. Is there any  
3 discussion from members? Is -- are you coming for  
4 testimony?

5 MR. LESUER: Yeah, I haven't signed though. Is  
6 that okay?

7 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Okay.

8 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Yeah, you can go  
9 ahead and sign it after.

10 MR. LESUER: Okay.

11 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Just state your name and  
12 affiliation for the record.

13 MR. LESUER: Sure. My name is Chris Lesuer.  
14 I'm policy manager for the Chicago Public Education  
15 Fund. Chair Lightford, senators, thanks for having  
16 this meeting here today. You received a memo that  
17 funds one of the signatories on -- just want to  
18 quickly walk you through that. Many of the points  
19 have been brought up already. One is that the size  
20 of the board, at 21 members, is pretty  
21 unmanageable, and pretty unprecedented across  
22 the country, so we would ask that the size be  
23 reduced to a number that's going to be more  
24 manageable. As -- as has also been brought up, the  
25 compensation piece, we've seen examples from

1 elsewhere in the country that if allowed, you know,  
2 former educators and other folks who are not sort  
3 of in law or advocacy, to take positions on the  
4 school boards when compensation is provided. So we  
5 think that that's something worth looking into. I  
6 just want to make clear that both of these changes  
7 would require changes in the law. There is still a  
8 chance to do that, of course, before the end of the  
9 session. And if not, I'm a former legislative  
10 staffer. I -- I recognize that look, Chair, I know  
11 that it's a heavy lift, but just wanted to, you  
12 know, make that clear, that this -- this would  
13 require changes other than just drawing the maps.  
14 The fund and other organizations are here to  
15 support anything that you would need in getting  
16 these -- these changes made. So I just wanted to  
17 come up and testify to -- to put that in front of  
18 you-all, and please, if you have any questions,  
19 I'll be happy to take those now or at a later time.  
20 Thank you.

21 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you. Thank you for  
22 your testimony. Did my face say something?

23 MR. LESUER: I couldn't speak to that.

24 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you for your  
25 testimony to share your information. And back to



1 members, if they'd like to say a few words, Senator  
2 Martwick.

3 SENATOR MARTWICK: I just wanted to echo,  
4 again, thank you so much everyone for coming out,  
5 and your testimony today, and -- appreciate it.  
6 Please encourage your -- your friends and family  
7 to -- and -- and your constituents and your  
8 neighbors, to get involved in the process so that  
9 we can draw maps that reflect the interests of the  
10 community itself. So thank you everyone, and  
11 thanks for coming out. Appreciate it.

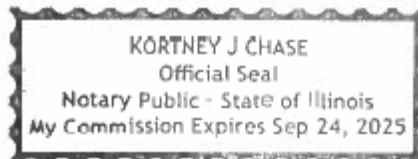
12 SENATOR LIGHTFORD: Thank you, Senator. Thank  
13 you-all for joining us and making your voices  
14 heard. Our next meeting is scheduled for next week,  
15 April 12th, 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at Copernicus  
16 Center -- Copernickers -- Coper -- oh, I did have  
17 it right? I did -- okay. I'm putting that O like  
18 an I. Okay. At 5216 West Lawrence Avenue in  
19 Chicago. There being no further business to come  
20 before the Senate Special Committee on the Chicago  
21 Elected Representative School Board, we are  
22 adjourned. Thank you.

23 (HEARING CONCLUDED AT 12:24 P.M. (CT))  
24  
25

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF ILLINOIS

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4 I do hereby certify that the hearing in the foregoing  
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12 that I am in no way interested financially, directly or  
13 indirectly, in this action.



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19 *Kortney J Chase*  
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22 KORTNEY CHASE

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24 MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: 09/24/2025

25 SUBMITTED ON: 04/14/2023

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