



**KIDS FIRST  
CHICAGO**

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**Coalition Advocates for Authentic Community Engagement around CPS Policymaking**

*Partners Ask for Mayor Johnson to Urge CPS BOE to Live Up to His Values of Inclusive Engagement*

Today nearly two dozen Chicago community and education partners released a [coalition letter](#) addressed to Mayor Johnson requesting his leadership in committing to authentic community engagement. **Read the [full letter here](#).**

“We are a diverse coalition of community-serving organizations, large and small, working in and adjacent to education, that serve and represent hundreds of thousands of Chicago residents, including families, parents, and youth who are in Chicago Public Schools,” said Daniel Anello, CEO of Kids First Chicago. “We are sharing this letter with the Mayor in an appeal to his leadership and belief in authentic community engagement. We are asking for his support.”

The letter requests several commitments from Mayor Johnson for the Chicago Board of Education, including:

- 1. Require that your Appointed CPS Board authentically engage with a critical mass of all those who will be directly impacted in advance of any major decision.** This should include a broad representation of stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, school administrators, and community leaders, with special attention and effort devoted to hearing from historically underrepresented groups.
- 2. Provide multiple ways to engage in the strategic planning process.** Thus far, the district has only offered a survey and in-person roundtables that have yet to be scheduled.
- 3. Extend the engagement period.** The district has set a very short engagement period to inform the development of a strategic plan that will guide the district’s future over the next five years.
- 4. Schedule regular updates and feedback loops.** Currently, there is only a vague commitment to brief communities on a draft strategic plan in June 2024, and then approve the plan later in summer 2024.

Co-signers hope the letter will encourage the Mayor to intervene and ask the Chicago Board of Education to slow things down and allow for a process that includes the people who will be most directly impacted by their decisions.

“I’ve heard Mayor Johnson talk passionately about engaging with communities and families — particularly those who have been historically marginalized,” said David Wu, Executive Director of the Pui Tak Center. “We agree with the Mayor that this is the right way to govern. Communities need to be given the opportunity to authentically participate and provide input on the direction of our City, including our public schools.”

**Available for questions or comments:** Coalition co-signers are available for interviews and comments. Please contact Kristin Pollock at (312) 853-3697 or [kpolllock@kidsfirstchicago.org](mailto:kpolllock@kidsfirstchicago.org).

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**COALITION CO-SIGNERS** (As of Feb. 20, 2024)



[The Academy Group](#)  
[Association House of Chicago](#)  
[BUILD Inc.](#)  
[Chicago Urban League](#)  
[Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community](#)  
[Education Community Committee of Belmont-Cragin](#)  
[Rev. Michael L. Pfleger, Pastor and The Faith Community of Saint Sabina](#)  
[Hamdard Health Alliance](#)  
[Hanul Family Alliance](#)  
[Illinois Black Advocacy Initiative](#)  
[Instituto de Progreso Latino](#)

[Kids First Chicago & Kids First Chicago Parent Advisory Board](#)  
[LISC \(Local Initiatives Support Corporation\)](#)  
[Little Village Community Council](#)  
[The Middle Eastern Immigrant and Refugee Alliance](#)  
[National Parents Union](#)  
[Northwest Center](#)  
[Pilsen Neighbors Community Council](#)  
[Pui Tak Center](#)  
[The Resurrection Project](#)  
[Something Good in Englewood](#)  
[Storehouse Church and Storehouse Connect](#)  
[Together Chicago](#)