



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | JANUARY 16, 2025

**KIDS FIRST
CHICAGO**

Contact: Kristin Pollock

Kids First Chicago | kpollcock@kidsfirstchicago.org | 847-830-0866

Promise in Practice: A New Chapter in Chicago's School Board Governance

New report offers suggestion for how new hybrid school board can work with community stakeholders

Chicago, IL – Today, Kids First Chicago (K1C) released a new report, [*Promise in Practice: A New Chapter in Chicago's School Board Governance*](#), presenting practical, parent- and student-vetted suggestions for the new 21-member hybrid Board of Education to consider as it begins its official business this month. By the number of its members, Chicago's Board of Education is now the country's largest governing board.

The recommendations – grouped into five categories – are designed to help the Chicago Board of Education create more effective governance and inclusive operating practices. Drawing on national best practices, conversations with former CPS board members and staff, and direct input from families, these ideas were reviewed and endorsed by K1C's Fair Governance Task Force.

“As a former CPS board member, I wish I had these recommendations when I started. Even with my background in education, board service for CPS brings significant new responsibilities, and every member needs support to lead effectively,” said Dr. Luisiana Melendez of the Erikson Institute. “CPS's success depends on the board's commitment to setting a higher standard for authentic, two-way collaborative process of family and community engagement. I urge new members to review this report and commit to implementing these practical, common-sense changes.”

Suggestions are grouped into five categories:

- 1. Governance**
- 2. Inclusive Engagement Structures**
- 3. Board Training and Support**
- 4. Transparency and Communication**
- 5. Relationship Building**

“We understand that these ideas cannot be implemented on day one but hope they provide a blueprint for how the incoming board members might work together and with their community stakeholders to face the important issues ahead for CPS,” said Jessica Cañas, Chief of Community Engagement at Kids First Chicago. “Parents and students are eager to be active partners with their newly elected and appointed board leaders.”

Kids First Chicago CEO Daniel Anello stressed the importance of learning from others across the country. “Chicago will be joining the majority of American school districts with an elected school board. The promise of the new board lies within its embrace of more inclusive, accessible, and transparent governance practices.”

The Square One Foundation supported the research for this report. **Read the full report** at kidsfirstchicago.org/promise-in-practice.

###

ABOUT KIDS FIRST CHICAGO

Kids First Chicago's mission is to dramatically improve education for Chicago's children by ensuring their families are the respected authorities on what their kids need and decision-makers in their kids' education. We do this by partnering with families to support them in gaining the resources, access, and voice they need to achieve their vision for their children. K1C provides transparent and rigorous education analysis to families, educators, and policymakers alike to inform data-driven and inclusive decision-making about the future of Chicago's public schools. Visit kidsfirstchicago.org.