COAL COALITION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS

Chicago Board of Education
Candidate Questionnaire
for the
General Election - November 3, 2026

The purpose of this candidate questionnaire is to ascertain each candidate's qualifications and preparedness for, and commitment to, participating as a member of the Chicago Board of Education and for President of the Board.

The Coalition of African American Leaders (COAL) encourages an informed community towards casting an informed vote. The goal is to seat a professional, qualified, independent and engaged school board, responsible to the community, that has a laser focus on providing the best K - 12 educational experience for all of the children of Chicago, regardless of family income or zip code; the high quality educational system our children deserve.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please complete and return this fillable pdf candidate questionnaire for the position of Chicago Board of Education member and president, responding to all questions. There are a few yes/no questions which include space to expound on your response. Once completed, please return via email to: publicpolicy@coalchicago.com. **This questionnaire should be returned no later than end of day on September 21, 2026.**

We welcome any query regarding this questionnaire or individual question(s) which will help you provide your best response. Please contact Education Committee co-chairs:

Dr. Kimberly Dulaney at 312.287.4571 / readme4000@aol.com
or
Principal Gerald Morrow at 773.593.5428 / gjmorrow86@gmail.com

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Candidate Information

Name on Ballot: Emma Lozano

School Board District: District 7A

Home Address 2009 W 22nd Place Chicago IL 60608

Employer/Your Title President, Centro Sin Fronteras; Pastor, Holy Ground United Methodist Church (Pilsen)

Phone 773-671-1798 **Email** emma@somosunpueblo.com

Candidate signature attesting to the truthfulness, accuracy, and authorship of this Questionnaire.

9/20/26	Emma Lozano	Emma Lozano
Date	**Print**	**Signature**

[Please feel free to attach primary campaign literature, bio or vita]

Campaign Information

Campaign Manager Sara Walker

Phone 773-580-4000 **Email** lozano4schoolboard@gmail.com

Website N/A

a. Have you held or run for public office before, and if so, what office[s] with what results?

I currently serve as a member of the Chicago Board of Education, appointed by Mayor Brandon Johnson. I have not previously run for elected office. I have served in elected community leadership roles, including as President of the Local School Council at Rudy Lozano School and as LULAC National Vice President for the Midwest.

b. COMMUNITY. In what community roles do you currently serve? Or in what capacity have you served the community in the past? Have you been appointed to any public committees, commissions, task forces?

President of Centro Sin Fronteras since 1987, a grassroots immigrant-rights and education organization. Pastor of Holy Ground United Methodist Church (formerly Lincoln UMC) in Pilsen since 2009. I helped establish Chicago's Local School Councils and served as LSC President at Rudy Lozano School. I am a current member of the Chicago Board of Education, appointed by Mayor Brandon Johnson.

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c. Please list your top three contributors who have donated $1,000 or more, and include the corresponding amounts as reported on your D-3 form (if applicable):

Contributor	Amount
Jack Wuest	$1500.00

d. Who has endorsed you and what are your political/stakeholder alliances (if any)?

Endorsed by: 25th Ward Alderman Byron Sigcho-Lopez; 24th District State Representative Theresa Mah; Hilario Dominguez, candidate for President of the Board of Education; Chicago Teachers Union; Sunrise Movement Chicago; Our Schools Action Slate; 25th Ward IPO; 22nd Ward IPO. My closest alliances are with the immigrant-rights, labor, and community-organizing movements I've worked alongside for decades, including SEIU, the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and the Resurrection Project. My campaign does not accept funding from charter or privatization interests.

Candidate's Plans and Goals for the School Board

e. Why are you running for *this position*? What expertise do you bring to the board? What makes you the best candidate for *the School Board*?

The transition to a fully elected Board is a historic opportunity to make sure the families most affected by decisions about our schools have a real voice in making them. I bring decades of organizing experience: as President of Centro Sin Fronteras, I fought for bilingual education, smaller class sizes, and the creation of Local School Councils so undocumented parents could vote and serve. I've been a leader in the immigrant-rights movement since the 2006 mega marches, and I currently serve on the Board of Education. That combination of grassroots organizing and governance experience, especially around issues facing Black and Latino students, makes me well prepared to represent District 7A.

f. Please describe your Educational agenda.

Fully fund neighborhood public schools and oppose privatization, charter expansion, and school closures/co-location. Protect immigrant and undocumented students and families through strong sanctuary protections. Expand Local School Councils and community governance. Invest in Sustainable Community Schools with wraparound legal, health, and social services. Advance environmental justice through green, healthy school buildings. Center racial equity for Black and Latino students, including full implementation of special education services and a properly staffed Black Student Achievement Committee. Build strong partnerships with labor and support fair wages for all school employees.

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ACCOUNTABILITY / TRANSPARENCY

1) We believe that it will be important for you to communicate with District constituents on a monthly basis. Communications should include, but not be limited to, updates to inform and receive feedback on upcoming CPS votes and initiatives, as well as progress monitoring. Will you commit to implementing some form of monthly communications for your constituents?

YES ☑ **NO** ☐ **(Please provide an example)**

I will hold regular in-person town halls and coffees in District 7A neighborhoods, send translated (English/Spanish) written updates ahead of major Board votes, and use my LSC organizing network to push information out through trusted community messengers rather than relying only on official CPS channels.

2) What measures do you want to put in place to promote transparency in the school board system?

Support public performance benchmarks, vendor oversight, and regular equity audits of district policy and spending. Push for a simplified, real-time 'Dashboard for Democracy' giving LSCs and the public plain-language access to school-level financial and academic data. Require that Board meetings and materials be fully translated and accessible.

3) What methods will you put in place to understand the interests / positions of your constituents, to ensure your Board votes align with your constituents, and not political funders or special interests? **(Please be specific)**

Regular canvassing, house meetings, and town halls in the district. Strengthening Local School Councils and 'Regional LSC Hubs' as a direct line to parent and community priorities. Partnering with grassroots and youth organizations already rooted in the district rather than relying only on top-down outreach.

4) What measures do you suggest the school board implement to ensure that CPS is held accountable and is responsive and transparent to school stakeholders?

Public performance benchmarks, independent audits, transparent vendor oversight with real financial consequences for non-performance, and annual equity reviews of district policy. Strengthened, well-resourced Local School Councils as an ongoing accountability check at the school level.

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5) Will you support a third-party independent audit of Chicago Public Schools? **YES** ☑ **NO** ☐ **(and why?)**

Taxpayers and families deserve confidence that public dollars are being spent well. An independent audit builds public trust and provides the district with a factual baseline for making hard budget decisions, so cuts and revenue asks are driven by evidence rather than politics.

6) Recognizing that parents of CPS students are a critical portion of your constituency, what will you do to build and nurture a relationship with parents in the District?

Strengthen Local School Councils so parents have real decision-making authority, not just an advisory role. Ensure all parent-facing communication and meetings are translated and accessible to bilingual and immigrant families. Expand Sustainable Community Schools so schools become trusted neighborhood hubs where parents already come for services, making it natural to also engage them on school decisions.

BUDGET / FINANCE

7) In what ways should the school district engage Springfield for funding? In what ways will you engage external partners to assist with funding CPS initiatives?

I will actively campaign and advocate at the state level for full implementation of Evidence-Based Funding and for progressive revenue, including a Fair Tax on the wealthiest Illinoisans, so CPS is not left to rely so heavily on local property taxes. I will also partner with unions, community organizations, and local worker cooperatives through a 'Local-First' procurement approach that keeps public dollars circulating in our neighborhoods.

8) What are your ideas to address the School District's consistent $500-$700 million budget gap?

Pursue full state Evidence-Based Funding and progressive revenue, including taxing the ultra-wealthy, rather than balancing the budget through school closures or classroom cuts. I support continuing to raise the property tax levy to the legal limit as one tool CPS cannot afford to give up under current state underfunding, but only as part of a broader progressive revenue strategy, not as the primary solution, since taxpayers should not bear that burden alone. On the cost side: cut wasteful vendor contracts, strengthen procurement oversight, and protect frontline staff.

9) How will you hold CPS accountable for ensuring equitable funding for all schools? And how should the Board / CPS prioritize to ensure funds are allocated where needed?

Prioritize investment in schools on the South and West Sides that have faced generations of disinvestment. Use transparent, needs-based funding formulas rather than one-size-fits-all per-pupil allocations. Require public reporting on where facilities, staffing, and program dollars actually go, with community and LSC input into those decisions.

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10) What are your ideas for **funding** the mental health needs of students, faculty, and staff?

Fight for progressive state revenue and full Evidence-Based Funding so hiring more counselors, social workers, and nurses doesn't depend on local budget cuts elsewhere. Direct any new state or local funding toward staffing ratios first, before administrative or vendor spending, and pair that with restorative-justice and trauma-informed care investments through the Whole School Safety Plan.

EDUCATION / STUDENTS

11) Achievement Gap: The data show persistent disparities in measures of educational performance among subgroups of students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity and gender. How do you plan to address/close the intransigent achievement gap for African American students?

Ensure the board-level Black Student Achievement Committee is fully staffed and resourced, with the Black community having real autonomy in selecting its members. Invest in culturally responsive curriculum, recruit and retain Black educators and administrators, and reduce class sizes in historically under-resourced schools. Treat this as a funding and staffing issue, not just a curriculum issue. Having spent my life working to close achievement and opportunity gaps in the Latine community, I stand in complete solidarity with the African American community in doing the exact same for Black students.

12) Opportunity Gap: The disparities in providing access points and multiple pathways to position students for post-secondary success. How do you plan to address/close the opportunity gap for African American students?

Expand career and technical education and vocational pathways, including in the growing green-jobs and renewable-energy sector, in neighborhood high schools. Adopt a 'Local-First' procurement policy prioritizing South and West Side worker cooperatives and businesses for CPS contracts, so public dollars build economic opportunity and keep families rooted in their communities. Expand early childhood access as the foundation for later opportunity.

13) What are your thoughts and/or ideas on **policies** to address the mental health needs of students, faculty, and staff?

Fully implement the Whole School Safety Plan: restorative justice, trauma-informed care, and social-emotional learning instead of relying on policing and discipline. Increase staffing of counselors, social workers, and clinicians district-wide, with enforceable staffing ratios. Oppose returning School Resource Officers as the default safety response.

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14) How will you work towards all schools providing recess and physical education equipment, healthy food offerings, and classes in the arts, shop, and technologies, as well as foreign languages?

Every neighborhood school should offer recess, PE, healthy food, arts, shop/CTE, technology, and foreign language instruction as a baseline, not an extra that depends on a school's budget. That means fully funding neighborhood schools so these programs aren't the first thing cut, and using Local-First procurement and CTE partnerships to build out shop, trades, and green-workforce programming district-wide.

15) The elected representative school board legislation includes the establishment of a board-level *Black Student Achievement Committee*, to develop actionable strategies to close the achievement gap for Black students. What actions will you take to ensure that this committee is staffed appropriately to give it its best chance of achieving measurable improvements in the education of Black students, system-wide? And, importantly, will you commit to the African American community having a strong voice / autonomy in the selection of Black Student Achievement committee members? **YES** ☑ **NO** ☐ **(and why?)**

The Black Student Achievement Committee needs real staffing, a clear budget, and measurable benchmarks. I commit to the African American community having a strong, autonomous voice in selecting its members, because a committee imposed from the top down will not have the trust or accountability needed to actually close the achievement gap.

GOVERNANCE

16) What are your thoughts on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Career and Technical Education (CTE), Computer Science (CS), and other emerging technologies in education for students, faculty, and staff?

I strongly support expanding CTE and computer science access, especially pathways into renewable energy, green construction, and the skilled trades, so Black and Latino students are prepared for the future workforce rather than left behind by it. Students also need real fluency in today's major technologies, including AI, so they graduate knowing how to use these tools effectively and responsibly rather than encountering them for the first time in college or the workplace. On AI, I support clear guardrails: protecting student and staff data privacy, training teachers and staff before tools are deployed, and never using AI to justify cutting counselors, social workers, or other frontline staff.

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17) Do you think the school board should have autonomy to override LSC decisions that are made at the local level? **YES** ☐ **NO** ☑ Please explain your answer with an example.

No. Local School Councils are one of Chicago's most successful models of community democracy, and undocumented and working-class parents fought hard to win a real vote on them. The Board should support and resource LSCs, not override their decisions. For example, LSC principal-selection decisions should stand except in cases of documented legal or safety violations, handled through a transparent, independent process, not a unilateral Board override.

18) LSCs are responsible for principal selection; should CPS be required to obtain LSC review to remove a principal? **YES** ☑ **NO** ☐ **(and why?)**

Yes. If LSCs are trusted to select a principal, they should be part of the decision to remove one. Requiring LSC review protects against removals driven by central-office politics rather than school-level performance, and keeps the community that knows the school best in the decision-making process.

19) What are your thoughts on establishing an independent review board for terminations within CPS?

I support establishing a clear, independent review process for CPS staff terminations that bypasses central-office bureaucracy. Frontline staff need to be able to raise concerns about building conditions, safety, or workplace treatment without fear of retaliation, and an independent review board provides a fair check against terminations driven by retaliation rather than performance.

OPERATIONS / POLICY / PERFORMANCE

20) What is one challenge or area of growth you see within CPS? What are your solutions for addressing this challenge?

The most persistent challenge I see is chronic underfunding, especially in schools on the South, West and Southwest Sides, which drives every other problem: overcrowded classrooms, understaffed special education and mental health services, and aging buildings. My solution is to pursue full state Evidence-Based Funding and progressive revenue, expand Sustainable Community Schools so schools can offer wraparound services, and use transparent, needs-based budgeting so resources actually reach the schools that need them most.

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21) What are your thoughts on the financial and academic oversight of school choice, and do you believe guardrails should be put in place? If so, why?

Yes, strong financial and academic guardrails are needed. Any school receiving public dollars, district-operated or charter, should be held to the same transparent academic, financial, and operational reporting standards, with real consequences for schools that underperform or mismanage funds. Oversight should never be weaker for privately operated schools than for our neighborhood public schools.

22) What are your thoughts on school closings and consolidation?

I stand in firm opposition to the closure, consolidation, or co-location of neighborhood public schools. Past school actions have disproportionately harmed Black and Brown communities and destabilized neighborhoods. I support continuing the moratorium on school closings and investing in fully funded, appropriately staffed neighborhood schools as the alternative to downsizing.

23) What criteria should be used to identify which schools should be considered for closure/consolidation?

I don't believe closure or consolidation should be on the table as a budget strategy. Where enrollment challenges exist, the district should invest in the school, strengthen programming, and engage the LSC and community in a transparent, public process, rather than applying closure criteria that have historically targeted Black and Brown neighborhoods.

24) What existing CPS policies would you like to change, or what new policies would you like implement?

End school closures, consolidations, and co-locations. Fully implement the Green New Deal for CPS to modernize school facilities and improve air and water quality. Move CPS cleaning standards away from commercial BOMA standards toward health-first, education-specific cleanliness standards with real vendor accountability. Adopt a Local-First procurement policy. Strengthen sanctuary-school protections and staff training. Implement the 'Dashboard for Democracy' to give LSCs real-time academic and financial data.

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CHARTER SCHOOLS

25) Funding Equity: Chicago Public Schools provides funding to both district-operated and charter public schools. Do you support funding parity between charter public schools and district-operated schools? **YES** ☐ **NO** ☑ **(and why?)**

No. Charter schools are not governed by the same democratic, community-accountable structures as neighborhood public schools, most notably Local School Councils, so I don't support treating them identically when it comes to funding priority. I do support holding every school that receives public dollars, charter included, to the same academic, financial, and operational accountability standards described in Question 21.

26) Equitable Access to Resources: Do you believe funding for student support services should be allocated equitably to all students, regardless of whether they attend a district operated or charter school? Yes or No If a school accepts public funding for a student should it also be responsible for continuing to serve that student the entirety of the year? **YES** ☑ **NO** ☐ **(Please explain in detail.)**

Yes to both. Funding for support services like special education, counseling, and bilingual instruction should follow the student and be equitable regardless of school type. And yes, a school that accepts public funding for a student should be responsible for serving that student for the entirety of the year. Students, particularly those with disabilities or behavioral needs, should never be pushed out mid-year onto another school's rolls.

27) Parent Choice and Educational Options: Well-to-do families have the resources to afford the type of education they want for their children. Many Black and Brown families who may be unable to afford private or parochial schools, choose charter schools because they believe those schools best meet the educational, social, emotional, or cultural needs of their children. What role do you believe charter schools should play within the Chicago Public Schools system, and how would you ensure families continue to have meaningful educational choices?

Families deserve real educational options, and the way to provide them is by fully resourcing neighborhood public schools with strong bilingual programs, arts, CTE, and wraparound Sustainable Community School services, so that a high-quality option exists close to home for every family, not just those who can afford private school or navigate a charter lottery. I don't support further charter expansion, but any existing charter school should be held to the same accountability standards as district schools and never used as a substitute for investing in the neighborhood school itself.

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28) Charter Renewal Stability: School board meetings can involve lengthy discussions on charter renewals. What are your thoughts on charter school renewals, including multi-year renewals?

I'm skeptical of multi-year charter renewals that limit ongoing public oversight. Renewals should require rigorous, regular evaluation against clear academic, financial, and operational standards, with real opportunity for community and LSC-equivalent input, rather than being extended for years at a time with less scrutiny.

29) Accountability and Student Outcomes: Should charter schools and district-operated schools be evaluated using the same academic, financial, operational, and student-outcome standards?
YES ☑ **NO** ☐ Where might they differ?

Yes, the academic, financial, operational, and student-outcome standards themselves should be the same. Where they may need to differ is governance and transparency requirements: charter operators should be required to meet the same public-reporting, open-meetings, and community-engagement standards that Local School Councils provide for neighborhood schools, since that democratic accountability doesn't currently exist in the same way for charters.

30) Long-Term Vision: What is your vision for the relationship between Chicago Public Schools and public charter schools over the next five years, and how would your policies support improved outcomes for all Chicago public school students?

Over the next five years, I want to see CPS stop expanding charter schools and instead redirect that energy and public investment into fully funding and modernizing neighborhood public schools. Any charter schools that remain should be held to the same accountability, transparency, and reporting standards as district-operated schools. The goal is a system where every family's default, high-quality option is a fully resourced neighborhood public school.

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Thank You

for your response

COAL COALITION
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS

About COAL
COAL is an umbrella organization founded by 13 of Chicago's historic African American mens clubs. COAL's overarching mission is to identify, examine, illuminate and find resolution to issues impacting the greater community. We strive to use our collective experience, expertise and resources to improve the quality of opportunity, quality of preparedness and the quality of outcomes (expressed as 'quality of life') for our community.

What We Believe
The Coalition of African American Leaders believes that it is important to examine the critical issues confronting the African American community where injustice, inequality and the absence of access and opportunity continue to prevail, thereby negatively impacting us as a people. COAL is an assemblage that advocates and organizes for appropriate and responsible public policy change, system behavior change and equality of opportunity. We aim to achieve for all of our people the fullness of the life experience without any form of racism or exclusion as a deterrent. We believe we must prepare ourselves for the opportunity of this full participation, thereby achieving the necessary education and training to participate.

Founding Member Organizations
100 Black Men Of Chicago ■ Chicago Assembly ■ Chicago Connection ■ Druids Club ■ Frogs Club ■ Lunch Bunch ■ New Committee ■ Original 40 Club Of Chicago ■ Rat Pack ■ Royal Coterie Of Snakes ■ Saints ■ Sigma Pi Phi Beta-Boule ■ UIC Male Forum / Chicago Good Health Group

WWW.COALCHICAGO.COM publicpolicy@coalchicago.com
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