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: Tameka Walton(Write-In Candidate)

School Board District: 10A

Home Address: 935 E. 45t St. Chicago, IL 60653

Employer/Your Title: Restored Hope/Executive Director

Phone Email: 312-734-0997/tamekawaltonforcps@gmail,com

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

Date Print Signature ***Tameka Walton 9/21/2026***

Phone: 224-623-1491

Email

Website https://tamekawalton.com/

a. Have you held or run for public office before, and if so, what office[s] with what results? I have not previously held elected public office. I currently serve as a governor-appointed commissioner on the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission and as a Local School Council member.

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? I currently serve as Founder and Executive Director of Restored Hope, Vice Chair of Chicago Survivors, a Local School Council member at Phillps Academy High School, and a governor-appointed Commissioner on the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission. I have also served as Chair of the Chicago Free School Board, Vice Chair and board member of the Chicago Women's Health Center, an executive member of the Head Start Policy Council, a member of Congresswoman Robin Kelly's Black Women and Girls Task Force, and a United Nations Commission on the Status of Women delegate. I am also a Goldin Institute Chicago Peace Fellow and have spent years organizing around educational equity, trauma-informed care, gender justice, youth development, violence prevention, and community healing.

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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

d. Who has endorsed you and what are your political/stakeholder alliances (if any)?
Chicago Teachers Union
Our School Action Coalition
United Working Families

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*? I am running because I am a parent first, and I understand what is at stake for families navigating our public school system. As a CPS alumna, mother of four, Local School Council member, social worker, and community leader, I have experienced our schools from multiple perspectives and believe families deserve a strong, independent voice on the Board.

I bring experience in nonprofit leadership, school governance, public policy, budgeting, trauma-informed practices, youth development, and community engagement. As the founder and Executive Director of Restored Hope, I have spent more than 15 years building programs, managing partnerships, and advocating for Black and Brown women, children, and families. My service on nonprofit boards and as a governor-appointed commissioner has also prepared me to evaluate policies, oversee public resources, ask difficult questions, and make accountable decisions.

I am the best candidate because I combine lived experience with governance and leadership experience. I know how policies affect students, families, educators, and support staff, and I know how to turn community concerns into responsible action. I will bring a mother’s heart, an independent voice, and a commitment to ensuring every student, every school, and every community receives the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.

f. Please describe your Educational agenda. My educational agenda is centered on ensuring every student, every school, and every community has the resources and opportunities needed to thrive. My priorities include:

- Fully and equitably funding neighborhood schools while protecting educators, support staff, arts, athletics, libraries, and after-school programs.
- Improving literacy and mathematics outcomes through evidence-based instruction, trained specialists, smaller class sizes, and targeted support for English learners and students with dyslexia.
- Strengthening special education by ensuring timely evaluations, appropriate services, accessible facilities, and meaningful transition planning.
- Expanding mental-health services, restorative practices, trauma-informed supports, alternative education, and safe pathways for students to return to traditional schools.
- Increasing career and technical education, dual-credit opportunities, internships, youth employment, and college preparation.
- Holding CPS accountable to the Black Student Success Plan and addressing disparities affecting Black students and other historically underserved communities.
- Protecting immigrant, LGBTQ+, pregnant and parenting, and housing-insecure students so every child feels safe and supported.
- Strengthening Local School Councils and ensuring students, families, educators, and community members help shape decisions before policies are adopted.

I will also prioritize fiscal transparency, responsible budgeting, measurable outcomes, and regular public reporting so families can see whether CPS is delivering on its commitments.

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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)

Yes. I will provide a monthly District 10A newsletter with updates on upcoming Board votes, CPS initiatives, budget decisions, and progress on commitments affecting our schools. I will also hold regular community meetings and office hours, share information through social media and email, and provide surveys or other opportunities for students, families, educators, and community members to give feedback before major decisions are made. For urgent or time-sensitive matters, I will communicate immediately rather than waiting for the monthly update.

2) What measures do you want to put in place to promote transparency in the school board system? I want Board agendas, proposed policies, contracts, budget documents, and supporting materials released early enough for the public to review them before a vote. Information should be presented in plain language, translated into commonly spoken languages, and made accessible to people with disabilities.

I also support public dashboards tracking spending, contracts, student outcomes, staffing, and progress on major CPS commitments. Board members should clearly explain their votes, disclose conflicts of interest and campaign contributions, and recuse themselves when necessary. Closed-session discussions should be limited to legally permitted matters, with as much information shared publicly afterward as the law allows.

Most importantly, students, families, educators, Local School Councils, and community members must have meaningful opportunities to provide input before decisions are made, not after they have already

been finalized.

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)** I will establish regular listening sessions, school visits, student and parent roundtables, meetings with Local School Councils, community surveys, and monthly office hours throughout District 10A. Before major Board votes, I will share plain-language information, explain the available options, and actively seek feedback from students, families, educators, support staff, and community organizations.

I will maintain public records of meetings with lobbyists and major stakeholders, disclose conflicts of interest and campaign contributions, and recuse myself when appropriate. I will not allow any political organization, union, donor, or elected official to dictate my vote.

While every decision may not reflect every constituent's position, my votes will be guided by community input, reliable evidence, educational equity, fiscal responsibility, and what best serves students. After important votes, I will publicly explain how constituent feedback informed my decision.

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? The Board should require CPS to release agendas, proposed policies, contracts, budget documents, and supporting materials early enough for stakeholders to review them before decisions are made. Information should be presented in plain language, translated into commonly spoken languages, and accessible to people with disabilities.

I support public, school-level dashboards tracking budgets, staffing, contracts, student outcomes, special education services, facilities, and progress on major CPS commitments. The Board should set measurable goals, identify who is responsible for each goal, require regular progress reports, and publicly explain when deadlines or outcomes are not met.

CPS should also establish clear response timelines for questions and complaints from families, students, employees, and Local School Councils. Stakeholders should be able to track the status of their concerns and have access to an independent appeal or ombudsman process when issues remain unresolved.

Before major votes, the Board should hold meaningful listening sessions, provide multiple ways to submit feedback, and publicly explain how community input influenced the final decision. Independent audits, strong Inspector General oversight, conflict-of-interest disclosures, and transparent reporting

on Board votes are also necessary to rebuild trust and ensure accountability.

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5) Will you support a third-party independent audit of Chicago Public Schools? **YES NO (and why?)** Yes. I support a third-party independent audit of Chicago Public Schools. With billions of public dollars at stake, families and taxpayers deserve a clear and unbiased accounting of how funds are spent, whether contracts are delivering results, and where waste or inefficiencies may exist. The audit should be transparent, publicly available, and used to strengthen accountability, not as an excuse to cut essential school staff, programs, or student services.

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? I will make myself accessible to parents through regular office hours, school visits, and community listening sessions. I will also attend Local School Council and Parent Advisory Council meetings throughout District 10A so I can hear directly from parents about what is happening in their schools in real time. Parents should not have to wait until a crisis occurs to reach their elected representative; I will build consistent relationships, communicate regularly, and ensure their concerns help inform my decisions on the Board.

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? CPS and the Board must maintain a coordinated, year-round advocacy strategy in Springfield, not wait until a budget crisis. I will work with state legislators, the Governor's office, other school districts, labor partners, families, and community organizations to advocate for full funding under Illinois' Evidence-Based Funding formula, increased special education and transportation funding, and a fairer approach to pension obligations. We must clearly demonstrate how state funding gaps affect classrooms, staffing, and student services.

I will also pursue responsible partnerships with foundations, universities, health systems, unions, businesses, and community organizations to support initiatives such as mental-health services, after-school programming, career and technical education, internships, arts, athletics, and technology.

External funding should supplement, not replace, stable public investment. Every partnership must include transparency, measurable outcomes, protections for student data, and clear conflict-of-interest rules. Outside funders should not be permitted to dictate curriculum, staffing, procurement, or Board policy in exchange for financial support.

8) What are your ideas to address the School District's consistent $500-$700 million budget gap? CPS cannot solve a recurring $500–$700 million gap through one-time fixes or classroom cuts. I support a multi-year financial plan that begins with a third-party independent audit and a thorough review of central-office spending, outside consultants, vendor contracts, procurement practices, and underperforming programs. We should eliminate duplication and renegotiate contracts before cutting school staff or student services.

CPS must also aggressively pursue the state funding it is owed under the Evidence-Based Funding formula, seek greater state support for special education, transportation, and pension obligations, and advocate for additional progressive revenue. I also support responsibly using surplus TIF funds for schools while recognizing that TIF sweeps are not a permanent solution.

We should maximize federal grants and build transparent partnerships that supplement, not replace, public funding. Throughout this process, I will prioritize protecting classrooms, educators, support staff, special education, mental-health services, arts, athletics, and after-school programming. Every proposal should include public reporting, realistic revenue projections, and clear long-term cost estimates.

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?

10) What are your ideas for funding the mental health needs of students, faculty, and staff? I will hold CPS accountable by requiring transparent, school-level reporting that shows how funding is calculated, allocated, and actually spent. The Board should regularly review equity data, require public

explanations for major funding differences, conduct equity-impact assessments before budget decisions, and establish a clear appeals process for principals and Local School Councils when allocations do not reflect student needs.

Funding should be driven by need, not distributed equally without considering existing disparities. CPS must prioritize schools serving greater numbers of students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, low-income families, and communities affected by long-term disinvestment. Every school must first receive the staffing and resources necessary to provide a strong educational foundation, including reasonable class sizes, qualified educators, support staff, special education services, libraries, arts, athletics, mental-health care, and safe, accessible facilities.

I will also push CPS to monitor outcomes throughout the year and adjust funding when enrollment or student needs change. Equity requires more than a fair formula on paper; the Board must ensure resources reach students and produce measurable improvements.

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? Closing disparities for Black students requires addressing the opportunity and resource gaps that produce them. As a mother raising Black children and a candidate in a district serving many Black students, I will push CPS to fully implement the Black Student Success Plan with measurable goals, school-level data, dedicated funding, and regular public progress reports.

My priorities include evidence-based literacy and mathematics instruction, early intervention, smaller classes, tutoring, and access to experienced educators and specialists. Black students must also have equitable access to gifted programs, advanced coursework, arts, athletics, career and technical education, dual credit, and extracurricular opportunities.

CPS must recruit and retain more Black educators, expand culturally responsive curriculum, reduce exclusionary discipline, and provide restorative practices, mental-health services, and trauma-informed support. We must also examine disparities by gender, disability, income, and neighborhood rather than treating Black students as one uniform group.

Families, students, educators, and community organizations must help define success and shape solutions. I will hold CPS leadership accountable for closing gaps in resources, opportunities, experiences, and outcomes, not simply reporting the same disparities each year.

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? Closing the opportunity gap requires ensuring Black students have multiple well-supported pathways to success, not a single definition of what comes after high school. Every student should have access to college preparation, dual-credit and Advanced Placement courses, career and technical education, apprenticeships, paid internships, entrepreneurship, the arts, public service, and pathways into union trades.

CPS should begin career and college exposure before high school and provide every student with consistent access to trained counselors, mentors, financial-aid assistance, and partnerships with colleges, universities, HBCUs, labor organizations, and responsible employers. Transportation costs, program fees, technology needs, and unpaid opportunities should not prevent low-income students from participating.

I will push CPS to publicly track access, participation, completion, and postsecondary outcomes by race, gender, disability, income, school, and neighborhood. The Board must identify where Black students are being excluded or underserved, direct resources to close those gaps, and hold leadership accountable for measurable progress.

13) What are your thoughts and/or ideas on **policies** to address the mental health needs of students, faculty, and staff? As a social worker and somatic practitioner, I do not view mental health as an afterthought or something to address only during a crisis. I would take a proactive approach because the well-being of students, educators, and support staff directly affects learning, safety,

attendance, and school climate.

I support policies that ensure every school has appropriate access to social workers, counselors, psychologists, nurses, and community-based mental-health partners. CPS should establish reasonable caseloads, strengthen early-intervention and referral systems, expand trauma-informed and restorative practices, and provide culturally responsive services without stigmatizing students.

Faculty and staff also need confidential mental-health resources, wellness supports, manageable workloads, training to recognize signs of distress, and clear procedures for responding to crises. The Board should track staffing levels, service wait times, referrals, and outcomes to ensure mental-wellness policies are properly funded and implemented in every school.

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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?
I believe these opportunities should be part of a well-rounded public education, not privileges determined by a student's ZIP code. I will push CPS to establish a districtwide baseline guaranteeing recess, physical education, working equipment, nutritious and culturally appropriate meals, arts education, technology, career and technical courses, and foreign-language instruction.

The Board should require a school-by-school assessment showing which programs, staff, equipment, and facilities are available and where gaps exist. That information must guide budgeting, with additional resources directed to schools affected by long-term disinvestment. These programs should also be protected from becoming the first cuts made during budget shortfalls.

CPS can expand access by investing in qualified teachers, upgrading facilities and equipment, creating shared programs where appropriate, and partnering with community arts organizations, labor unions, colleges, cultural institutions, and responsible technology partners. External partnerships should supplement, not replace, permanent CPS staff and sustainable public funding.

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?)** Yes. The African American community must have a strong voice and meaningful authority in selecting members of the Black Student Achievement Committee. A committee created to improve outcomes for Black students cannot be effective if Black students, parents, educators, school leaders, and community organizations are merely consulted after appointments have already been decided.

I will support a transparent nomination and selection process that includes community-nominated seats and representation from across Chicago's Black communities. Membership should include Black students, parents, educators, Local School Council members, researchers, advocates, and professionals with expertise in early childhood education, literacy, special education, discipline, mental health, and postsecondary pathways.

The committee must have dedicated staff, including policy and data analysts, community-engagement personnel, administrative support, and access to CPS financial and academic data. It also needs a defined budget, clear authority, measurable systemwide goals, timelines, and regular public reporting.

I will work to ensure the committee is not symbolic. Its recommendations should receive formal Board consideration, and CPS leadership should be required to respond publicly, identify responsible departments, and report progress toward closing gaps in resources, opportunities, experiences, and outcomes for Black students.

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? AI, Career and Technical Education, computer science, and emerging technologies should expand opportunity, not deepen inequality or replace educators. Every student should learn how to use technology responsibly, understand how AI systems work, recognize bias and misinformation, and protect their privacy. Staff should receive ongoing professional development so these tools

strengthen instruction and reduce administrative burdens without replacing professional judgment.

CPS must establish clear guardrails governing student data, cybersecurity, academic integrity, algorithmic bias, accessibility, age-appropriate use, and the evaluation of technology vendors. AI should support teaching and learning, not make high-stakes decisions about discipline, special education, grading, or student placement without meaningful human review.

CTE and computer science should be available across the district, beginning with early exposure and leading to advanced coursework, industry-recognized credentials, dual credit, paid internships, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, college pathways, and union careers. Programs should reflect emerging industries while also preparing students for established trades and professions.

Access must be equitable. CPS should provide devices, reliable internet, qualified instructors, accessible technology, and modern equipment so these opportunities are not limited by a student's school, neighborhood, disability, or family income.

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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 were created to give parents, educators, students, and community members meaningful authority over their schools. The Board should not override an LSC simply because it disagrees with a lawful local decision. Its role should be to provide accurate information, training, resources, and technical support so LSC members can govern effectively.

For example, if an LSC follows the required process to select or renew a principal, the Board should respect that decision rather than substitute its own preference. Intervention should occur only in exceptional circumstances, such as a violation of law, student civil rights, financial requirements, or an immediate safety concern and CPS should clearly explain the legal basis, provide due process, and work with the LSC to resolve the issue.

18) LSCs are responsible for principal selection; should CPS be required to obtain LSC review to remove a principal? **YES NO (and why?)** Yes. Because Local School Councils are responsible for selecting and evaluating principals, they should be formally consulted before CPS removes a principal. LSC members are closest to the school community and can provide important context about the principal's leadership, performance, and relationships with students, families, and staff.

CPS should present the reasons and supporting evidence, allow the LSC to review and respond, and document how its input influenced the decision. An exception may be necessary when there is an immediate safety concern or a legal requirement for urgent action, but CPS should still inform the LSC

promptly and provide a transparent explanation. Requiring meaningful LSC review protects local governance, due process, and public trust.

19) What are your thoughts on establishing an independent review board for terminations within CPS? I support establishing an independent review process for CPS terminations to promote fairness, consistency, and due process. Employees should have an impartial opportunity to challenge decisions that may involve discrimination, retaliation, inconsistent discipline, or failure to follow established procedures.

The review body should include members with expertise in education, employment law, labor relations, civil rights, and school operations. It should operate under clear standards, firm timelines, conflict-of-interest protections, and confidentiality requirements. CPS should also publish anonymized data on termination patterns by job category, race, gender, disability, and school or department so the Board can identify inequities.

This process should complement, not replace or weaken, collective-bargaining rights, contractual grievance procedures, or other legal protections. The goal is accountability and fairness for employees while preserving CPS's ability to act promptly when student safety or serious misconduct is involved.

OPERATIONS / POLICY / PERFORMANCE

20) What is one challenge or area of growth you see within CPS? What are your solutions for addressing this challenge? One significant challenge is declining enrollment, which is closely connected to families leaving Chicago, uneven access to high-quality programs, and a loss of trust in the district. When enrollment falls, schools can lose funding and programming, making it even harder to retain families.

I would address this by investing in neighborhood schools rather than closing or consolidating them. CPS should work with families and Local School Councils to identify what each community needs, then expand programs such as early childhood education, arts, athletics, dual-language instruction, career and technical education, advanced coursework, after-school opportunities, and mental-health services.

The district must also improve special education, school safety, transportation, facilities, and family communication. CPS should track why students leave, publicly report enrollment trends, and create school-specific stabilization plans. Families will return and remain when they trust that their neighborhood school is safe, welcoming, well-resourced, and capable of meeting their children's needs.

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 guardrails are necessary because school choice programs use public funds and directly affect students, families, and neighborhood schools. Choice should expand access to high-quality education, not reduce transparency, encourage exclusion, or destabilize communities.

Financial oversight should include independent audits, public reporting of budgets and contracts, disclosure of related-party transactions and conflicts of interest, and clear consequences for mismanagement. CPS should also examine the systemwide financial impact of opening or expanding programs when enrollment is declining.

Academic oversight should evaluate student growth, graduation, attendance, discipline, student retention, school climate, and postsecondary outcomes. Schools must also demonstrate that they equitably serve students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, and students requiring additional support.

Guardrails should include transparent admissions and enrollment practices, protections against

counseling students out, consistent renewal standards, and meaningful family and community input. Families deserve choices, but every publicly funded option must be accountable, equitable, and educationally sound.

22) What are your thoughts on school closings and consolidation? I do not support closing or consolidating schools.

23) What criteria should be used to identify which schools should be considered for closure/consolidation? I do not support closing or consolidating schools. Chicago has already seen the harm school closures cause, particularly in Black and Brown communities, including longer and less safe commutes, disrupted relationships, overcrowding, and the loss of schools that serve as neighborhood anchors.

Low enrollment, test scores, or budget challenges should lead to increased support and investment, not closure. CPS should work with families, educators, Local School Councils, and community organizations to strengthen programming, attract families, share space with community services, and expand options such as early childhood education, career and technical education, arts, mental-health services, and adult education.

My priority is to improve and stabilize neighborhood schools, not close or consolidate them.

24) What existing CPS policies would you like to change, or what new policies would you like to implement? Yes, with equal accountability and funding based on student need. Every Chicago student deserves equitable public investment, whether they attend a district-operated or charter public school. Funding formulas should consider the actual needs of students, including special education, English-language services, homelessness, poverty, and social-emotional support.

Parity should not mean providing identical amounts without considering differences in facilities, centralized services, pensions, transportation, or other costs covered directly by CPS. Those differences must be calculated transparently so comparisons are fair and public dollars are not counted twice.

Any school receiving public funding must also meet consistent standards for financial transparency, academic performance, equitable enrollment, discipline, special education, and student retention. Equity must apply to both the resources schools receive and the responsibilities they carry.

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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?)**

Yes, with equal accountability and funding based on student need. Every Chicago student deserves equitable public investment, whether they attend a district-operated or charter public school. Funding should account for students' actual needs, including special education, English-language services,

homelessness, poverty, and mental-health support.

Parity does not necessarily mean identical dollar amounts because CPS may directly cover facilities, pensions, transportation, and centralized services for some schools. Those costs must be calculated and reported transparently to ensure fair comparisons and prevent double funding.

Any school receiving public dollars must also meet consistent standards for financial transparency, academic performance, equitable enrollment, discipline, student retention, and special education. Equity must apply to both the resources schools receive and the responsibilities they carry.

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. Funding for student support services should be allocated equitably according to student need, regardless of whether a student attends a district-operated or charter school. Students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, and students requiring academic, behavioral, mental-health, or social-emotional support deserve appropriate services in every publicly funded school.

Yes. If a school accepts public funding to educate a student, it should be responsible for serving that student throughout the school year. Schools should not counsel students out, use exclusionary discipline to remove students with greater needs, or transfer responsibility after receiving funding connected to that student.

There may be limited situations in which a transfer is appropriate or legally required, but families must receive due process, transparent information, and a coordinated transition plan. CPS should monitor midyear transfers, expulsions, disciplinary removals, and enrollment patterns across district and charter schools to identify potential student pushout. Funding should also be reconciled fairly when enrollment changes so public dollars follow the student and support the school actually providing the education and services.

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? Charter schools can play a role in providing families with educational options, particularly when they offer a specialized model or supportive school culture that meets students' academic, social, emotional, or cultural needs. I respect the decisions Black and Brown parents make for their children. Families should not be blamed for seeking the best available opportunity when their neighborhood schools have experienced years of disinvestment.

Meaningful choice must also include district-operated options that meet students where they are. Schools such as Simpson Academy, which serves pregnant and parenting students, and alternative or reengagement schools serving young people who have left school or need a different pathway to graduation are essential. These students deserve strong academics, childcare and parenting support, counseling, credit recovery, career preparation, and a clear pathway back into traditional schools or toward graduation and postsecondary success.

At the same time, families should not have to leave their neighborhood school to receive a quality education. CPS must invest in strong neighborhood schools while preserving access to responsible charter schools, magnet programs, dual-language education, arts, career and technical education, alternative schools, and other specialized programs.

Every publicly funded school must meet strong standards for academics, financial transparency, discipline, special education, equitable enrollment, and student retention. My goal is not to take options away from families, but to ensure every option is high-quality and that every family has an excellent public school available in their community.

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? Charter renewals should be based on clear, consistent, and publicly available standards, not treated as automatic approvals. The Board should examine academic outcomes, financial management, enrollment and discipline practices, special education compliance, staff stability, and whether the school serves all students equitably.

I support multi-year renewals for schools with a strong, sustained record of academic performance, responsible financial practices, legal compliance, and community trust, huge on the community trust. Schools with significant concerns should receive shorter, conditional renewals with measurable improvement requirements and regular public progress reports.

The Board can make the process more efficient by reviewing complete materials in advance and using standardized public scorecards. However, saving meeting time should never come at the expense of meaningful oversight, family input, or responsible decision-making.

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.** Charter and district-operated schools receive public funds and serve Chicago's children, so they should be held to the same core standards for academic performance, financial transparency, student outcomes, special education, discipline, safety, and equitable access.

Evaluations may account for differences in each school's mission, instructional model, grade levels, and student population. However, those differences should not create a lower standard of accountability. All schools must demonstrate that public dollars are being used responsibly and that every student, including students with disabilities, English learners, and students requiring additional support, is being served fairly.

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? My vision is for one accountable public education system in which every student receives a high-quality education, regardless of whether they attend a district-run or public charter school. Charter schools receiving public funds should meet the same standards for transparency, academic performance, special education, student discipline, financial oversight, and labor protections as traditional CPS schools.

Over the next five years, CPS should prioritize strengthening neighborhood schools rather than approving charter expansion that duplicates programs or further destabilizes enrollment. Charter renewals should be based on clear evidence, with meaningful input from students, families, educators, and affected communities.

When a charter closes, CPS must provide an organized transition plan that protects students from disruption and connects them to well-resourced schools and appropriate services. District and charter schools should also share successful practices, while remaining equally accountable for serving English learners, students with disabilities, and other historically underserved students. The goal must be cooperation, fairness, and better outcomes for every Chicago public school student.

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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

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COAL is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in Illinois, USA. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by U.S. law.