



Illinois African Americans for Equitable Redistricting

Prepared by Valerie F. Leonard
Founder, Nonprofit Utopia, LLC
May 19, 2023

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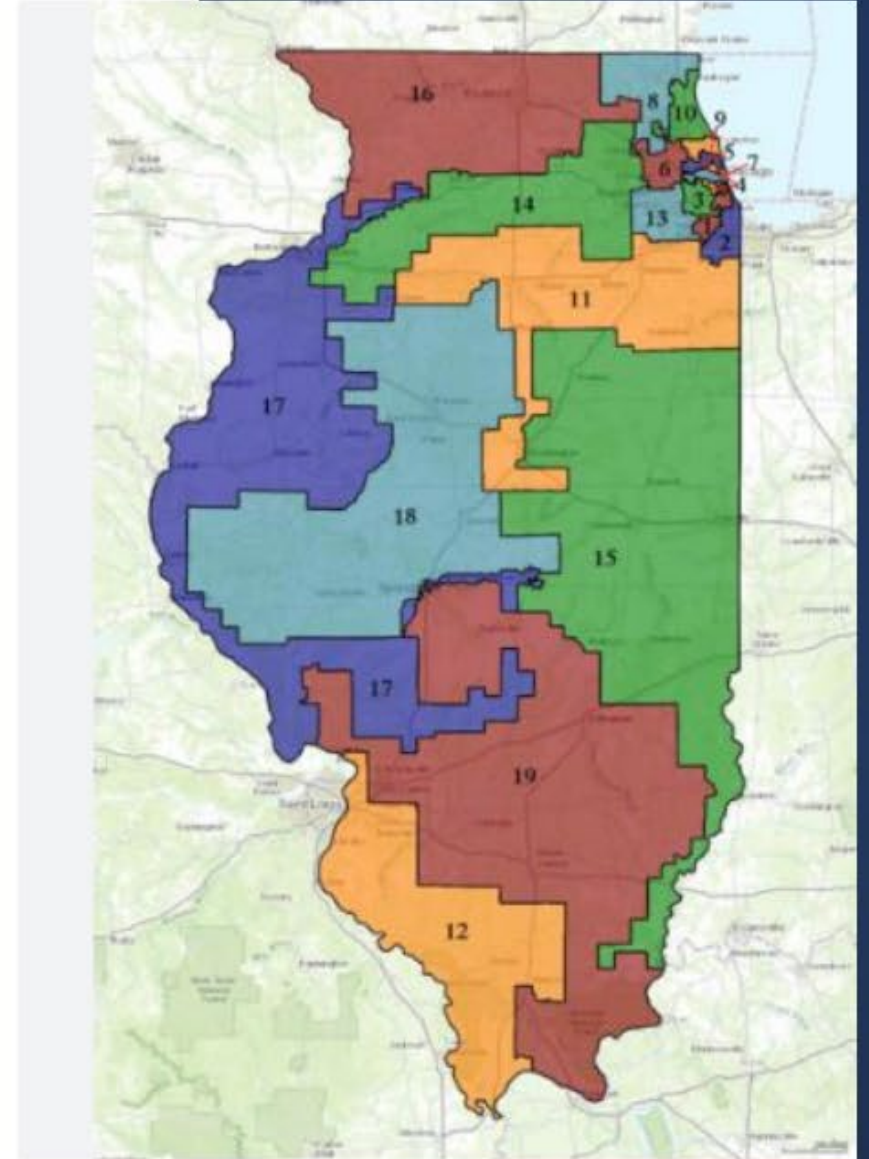
Who We Are

- Illinois African Americans for Equitable Redistricting is an ad hoc group that has come together to ensure that the 2021 redistricting process is implemented taking into account issues of concern to Black people around the State.
- Given that operationalizing the new Elected Representative School Board in Chicago requires drawing electoral districts utilizing apportionment, we are sharing our thoughts on the process.



What We Do

- Provide
 - Education surrounding redistricting issues, policies and programs
 - Oral and written testimony at redistricting hearings on the state and local levels
 - Mapping proposals





What We Have Accomplished This Year

- Provided written and oral testimony at the first hearing held at Westinghouse High School
- Wrote an op-ed for Crain's Chicago Business
- Raised awareness of the issues surrounding the Chicago Elected Representative Board of Education (ERSB)
- Coordinated with over 30 other organizations to write a joint letter to our elected officials outlining our issues and proposals for the ERSB
- Developed a proposal for the creation of a standing committee of the Board of Education which focuses solely on issues of Black CPS students and their families
- Developed a mapping proposal depicting 10 ERSB electoral districts throughout the City of Chicago

Image by Alisa Dyson from Pixabay

Signatories to Our Letter to Elected Officials

- Tina Augustus, Member, Illinois African Americans for Equitable Redistricting
- Clifton Ballard, Founder, Dreamchasers United, NFP
- Matt Brandon, President, Operation Neighborhood Safety
- Karl Brinson, President, Chicago Westside NAACP
- Apriel Campbell, Founder, The Ivy Group
- Michael Cannon, Founder, C.A.N.D.O.R. Enterprises, NFP
- Rosita Chatonda, Founder, CAUSE
- Bernard Clay, Executive Director, Introspect Youth Services
- Willie Cole, Member, Illinois African Americans for Equitable Redistricting
- Cecile DeMello, Executive Director, Teamwork Englewood
- Michelle Dinneen-White, Founder, Play Smart Literacy
- Audrey Dunford, Founder, Be Aud
- Natasha Dunn, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Black Community Collaborative
- Christyn S. Freemon
- Mary Russell Gardner, President, Urban Technicians, LLC, Resident, Austin Community
- Rev. Walter C. Harris, Pastor, Carey Tercentenary AME Church
- Dianne Hodge, South Shore
- Nicole Jeanine Johnson, The Lotus Lair
- Joyce Lane, Resident, Bronzeville
- Valerie F. Leonard, Co-Founder, Illinois African Americans for Equitable Redistricting
- Essie Leonard, Retired Educator, Chicago Public Schools
- Brian Mullins, Founder, Brian Mullins, Citizens for Civic Education, Co-Founder, Black Community Collaborative
- Nonprofit Utopia, LLC 23. Crystal Overton, The Overton Group Consultants
- Dr. Carmen Palmer, PhD, Founder, Educational Village Keepers (EDVK)
- Tanesha Peeples, Executive Director, The Roots Initiative, Co-Founder, Black Community Collaborative
- Mattie J. Phillips, BA, MACM, DD, Senior Pastor, Jesus Word Center Church
- Nachel Pugh, Co-Founder, John Walt Foundation
- Tumia Romero, Resident, Austin Community
- Queen V. ShaRize, Executive Director, BLACK - Building Leadership And Community Knowledge Gloria Smith, Executive Director, the Black Star Project 31. Ruby Taylor, Executive Director, Taproots
- Cata Truss, Resident, Austin Community
- Dwayne Truss, Resident, Austin Community
- Karen Cecile Wallace, Kenwood Oakland Community
- Tawana Watts, Founder, BeBe's Ark
- Kenneth Wesbrooks Founder and Chairman A Work of Faith Ministries, Inc.
- Audrey L. Woodley, Founder, Changing Oasis, Inc.
- Wanda Wright, President South West Area Civic League

Our Proposal

1. Create a standing African American Affairs Committee of the Board of Education to focus on the issues that keep Black children from succeeding in school. As it stands, Black children and their families lag behind every group in indicators of success, including school performance, attendance and graduation. They lead the pack in indicators of trouble, including suspension, expulsion, juvenile arrests and detention, dropout rates and unaddressed mental health issues. Clearly, handling these issues at the administrative and school levels are not enough.
2. Create 10 districts comprised of 5 wards each, clustering districts around communities of interest and racial, cultural and ethnic groups



Benefits of Our Proposal

1. Optimizes potential for Chicago voters to elect Board of Education candidates of choice.
2. Increases accountability of elected school board members and Aldermen on education issues within the purview of each office. Keeping the ward structure intact within each school district boundary will minimize the chances of issues falling between the cracks because only a small portion of an elected school board district falls within a specific ward, and vice-versa.
3. Enables better coordination on issues that impact schools and multiple layers of government.
4. Complies with Voting Rights Act of Illinois and the United States
5. Creates compact, contiguous districts to the extent possible
6. Keeps communities of interest together to the extent possible

Image by [Spike Summers](#) from [Pixabay](#)



Issue #1 The map doesn't follow the law its intended to fulfill.

- The map is drawn with 20 districts.
- For purposes of elections conducted pursuant to subsection (b-5) of Section 34-3, the City of Chicago shall be subdivided into 10 electoral districts for the 2024 elections and into 20 electoral districts for the 2026 elections.





Issue #2. The proposal does not address the structural flaws that we raised last week.

We raised 6 issues regarding the map last week. The only issue that was addressed was our request for data to support the districts drawn in the map.

Issue #3 The map does not indicate how the 20 districts will be utilized to elect 10 people.

The law provides that the Mayor will appoint 11 persons in 2024, including the President, and 1 person from each of the 10 districts. The remaining 10 will need to sit for election. It is not clear how this is possible, given the configuration of the map. We are left with the following questions:

- a. Will the Mayor appoint 10 people to fill the vacancies of 10 districts while 10 of the districts will hold elections in 2024?
- b. Will the 20 districts be coupled, so that we effectively have 10 districts?
- c. If the districts will be coupled, what will that pairing look like?



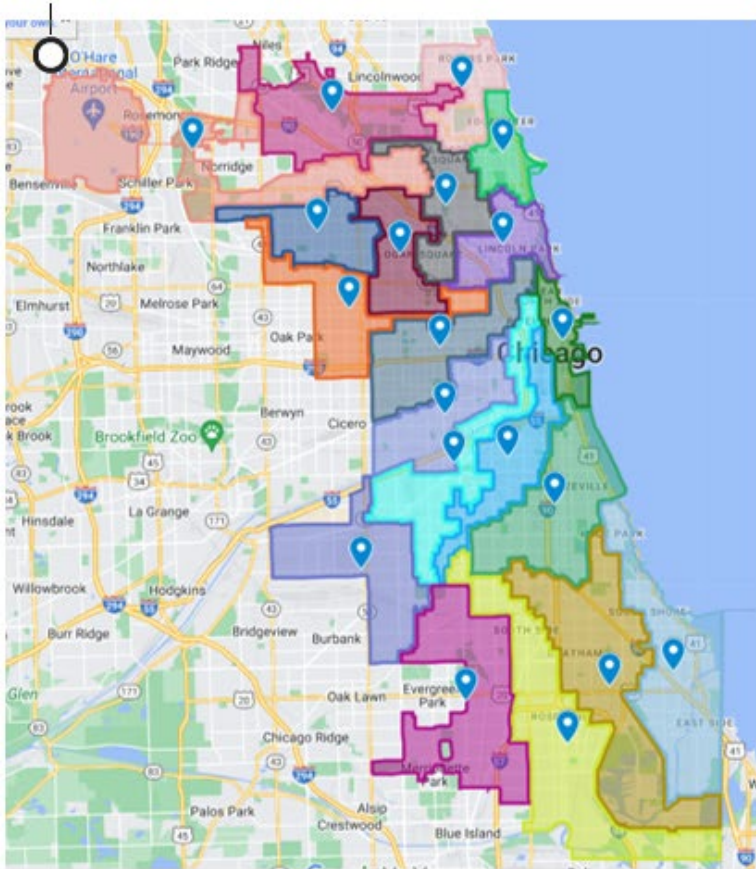
Lawmakers are seeking guidance on whether current law should remain the same and, if so, guidance on the best way to pair the 20 districts into 10 districts. (Press Release 5-18-23)

This is very challenging to do within less than 24 hours time before the final maps will be voted on.

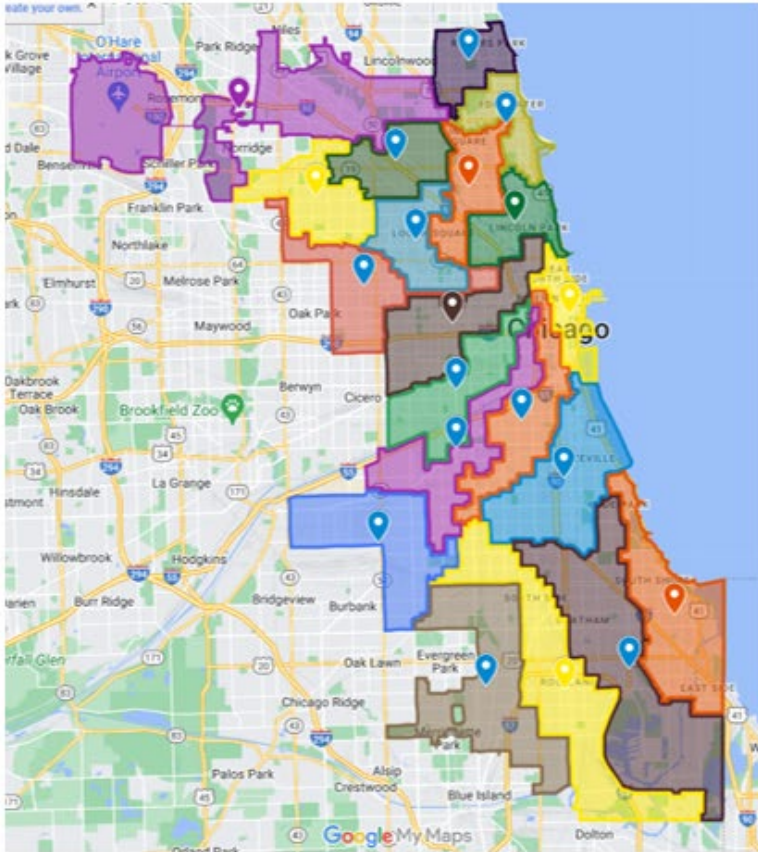
Typically, when the Legislature does its redistricting process, they are working with Representative Districts, nested 2 districts into each Senate district. For some reason, that didn't occur for the ERSB.

Sample district from 2021

Chicago Elected Representative School Board District Proposals Drafts 1 and 2



Draft 1



Draft 2

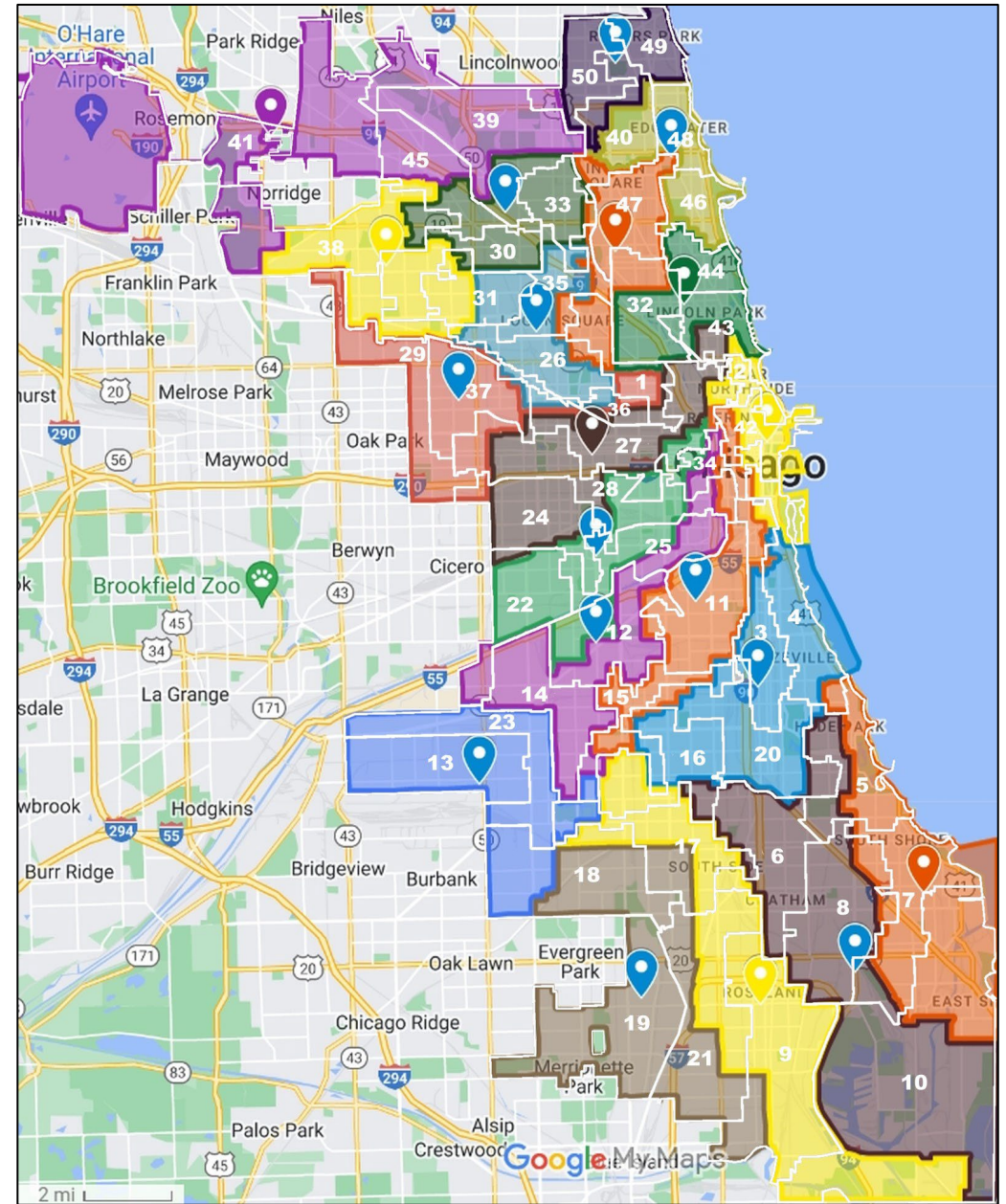
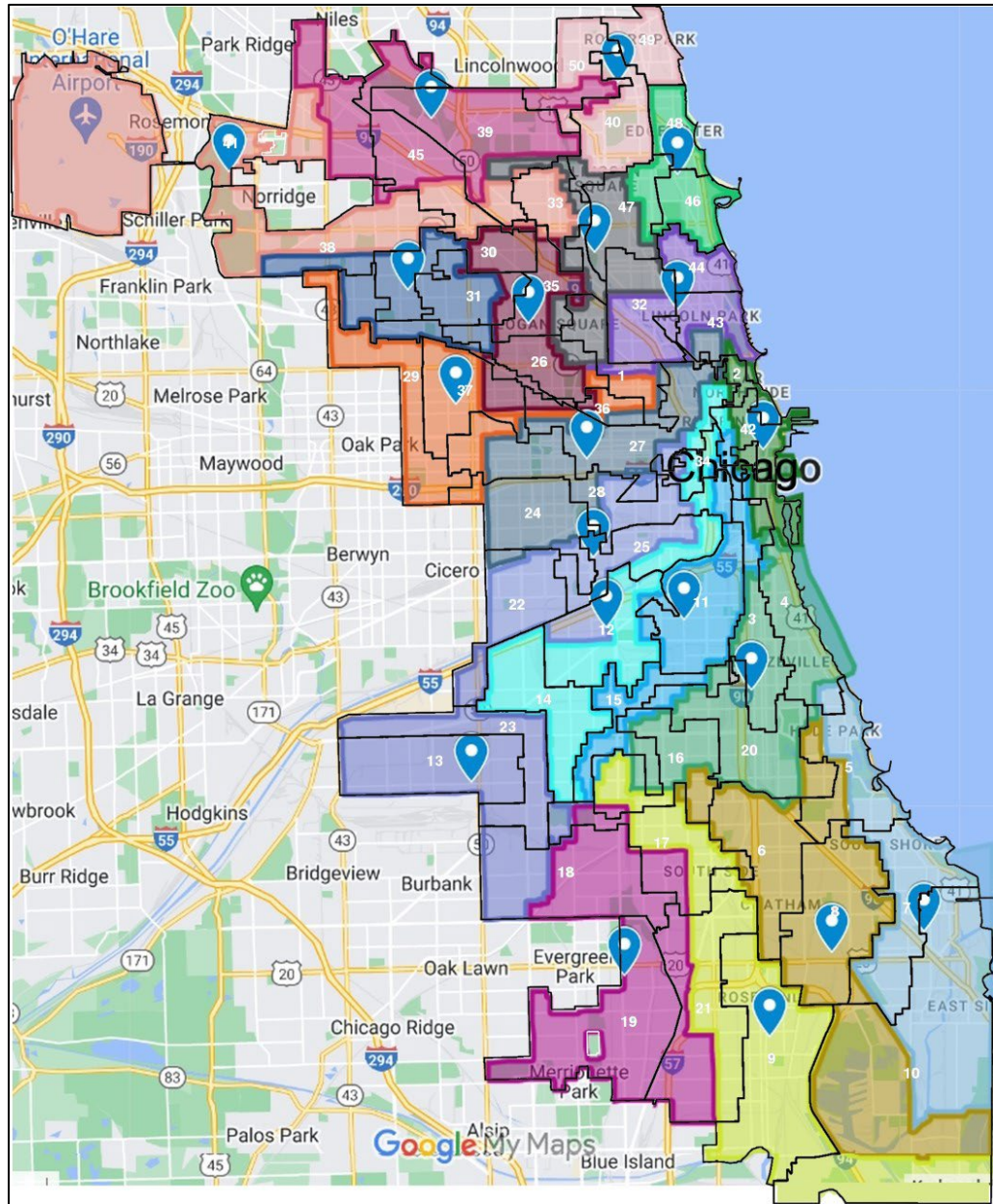
**Issue #5 Only 11
of 50 (22%)
Chicago wards
have their
boundaries fully
contained within
the school district
boundaries that
the Legislature
proposed. (Draft
1)**

- Given there are 50 wards and 20 districts, one would expect an approximate ratio of 2.5 wards to each district. In other words, ideally, 40 of 50 wards (80%) should have their boundaries fully contained in a school district, given 20 districts.



Issue #6 The Map Breaks Up Communities

- The Legislature's proposal completely disregards existing wards as communities of interest. The proposal effectively dismantled 39 of 50 established communities in favor of 10 electoral school districts that have been untested.
- The map calls for some wards to be spread over 3 districts, some to be spread over 4 districts, and some over 6 or 7 districts.
- One result is the map presents several instances in which little pockets of voters are pulled away from the center of gravity of their wards, into a school district where they couldn't begin to make an impact on the outcome of the election because their area is too small.
- The chances of being heard by their elected officials on educational issues is significantly reduced.



Issue # 7 The Map Leaves Many Unanswered Questions

- The land mass of most wards is spread across several school board districts. It could be as few as three or as many as five. It's not clear what will happen when we as voters go to the polls.
- Will we have to vote for candidates in multiple school board electoral districts, or will we only see candidates on the ballots whose districts have some land mass in our ward?
- What happens to those of us who live in areas where we happen to be separated from the rest of our wards, and are only a very small section of a larger school district that is culturally and politically different from our wards?
- Your proposal clearly does not provide every voter in Chicago equal opportunity to elect candidates of their own choosing.



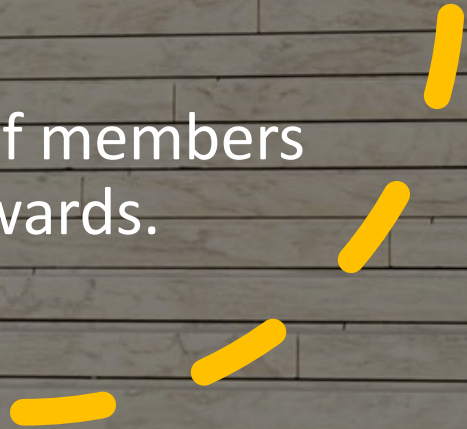
Issue 8 The proposal does not encourage collaboration a between elected aldermen and board of education members, or accountability.

With so many seemingly unrelated boundaries, service requests are bound to slip between the cracks.

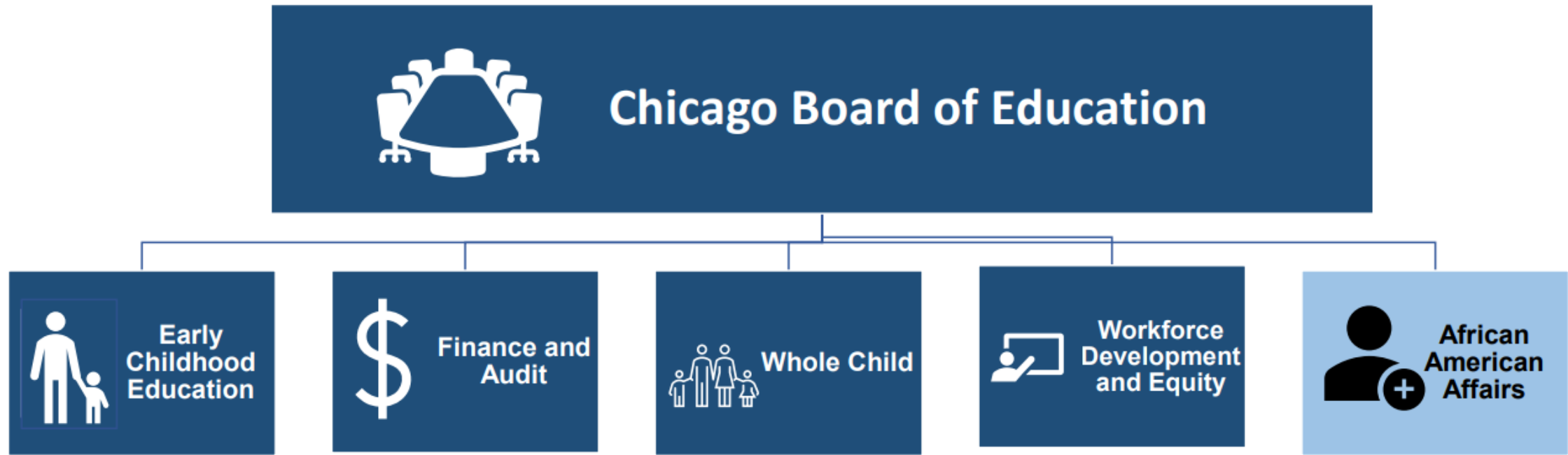


IAAFER Has A Better Idea

If You're Going to Change The Law, Do This:

- Draw 10 Districts With 5 Wards nested within
 - Elect 1 representative from each district, as outlined by law
 - Have the Mayor appoint 1 representative from each district and the President
 - Create a Standing African American Affairs Committee of the Board of Education
 - Keep the same 10 districts you use for 2024 for 2026 and allow election of 10 open seats, keeping the number of Board of Education members at 20.
 - Alternatively, expand the number of members to 25, and have 25 districts with 2 wards.
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Proposed Chicago Board of Education Structure

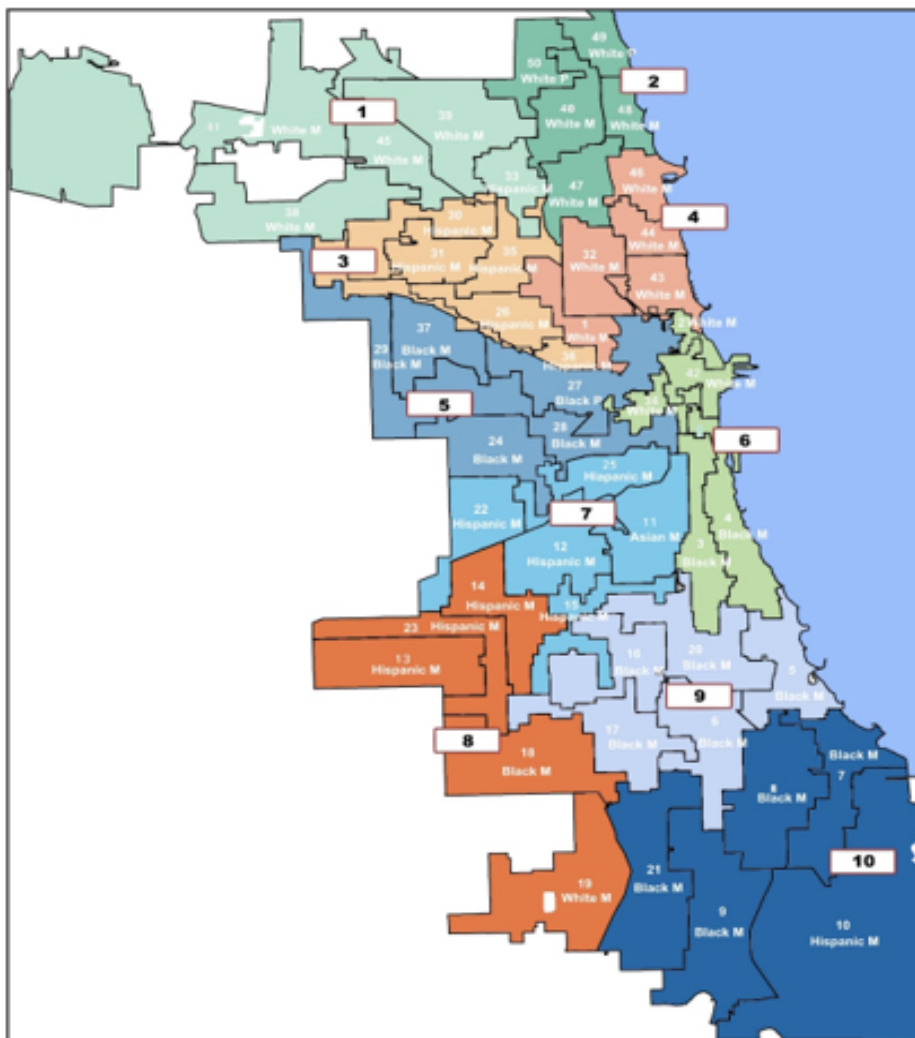


Legend

- Existing Board Committee
- Proposed Board Committee



Illinois African Americans
For Equitable Redistricting



District 1
41 st Ward 38 th Ward 45 th Ward 39 th Ward 33 rd Ward
District 2
50 th Ward 49 th Ward 40 th Ward 48 th Ward 47 th Ward
District 3
30 th Ward 31 st Ward 35 th Ward 26 th Ward 1 st Ward
District 4
48 th Ward 44 th Ward 32 nd Ward 43 rd Ward 1 st Ward
District 5
29 th Ward 37 th Ward 27 th Ward 28 th Ward 24 th Ward

District 6
2 nd Ward 42 nd Ward 34 th Ward 3 rd Ward 4 th Ward
District 7
22 nd Ward 12 th Ward 25 th Ward 11 th Ward 15 th Ward
District 8
14 th Ward 23 rd Ward 13 th Ward 18 th Ward 19 th Ward
District 9
16 th Ward 20 th Ward 6 th Ward 5 th Ward 17 th Ward
District 10
21 st Ward 8 th Ward 7 th Ward 9 th Ward 10 th Ward

Proposed Boundaries

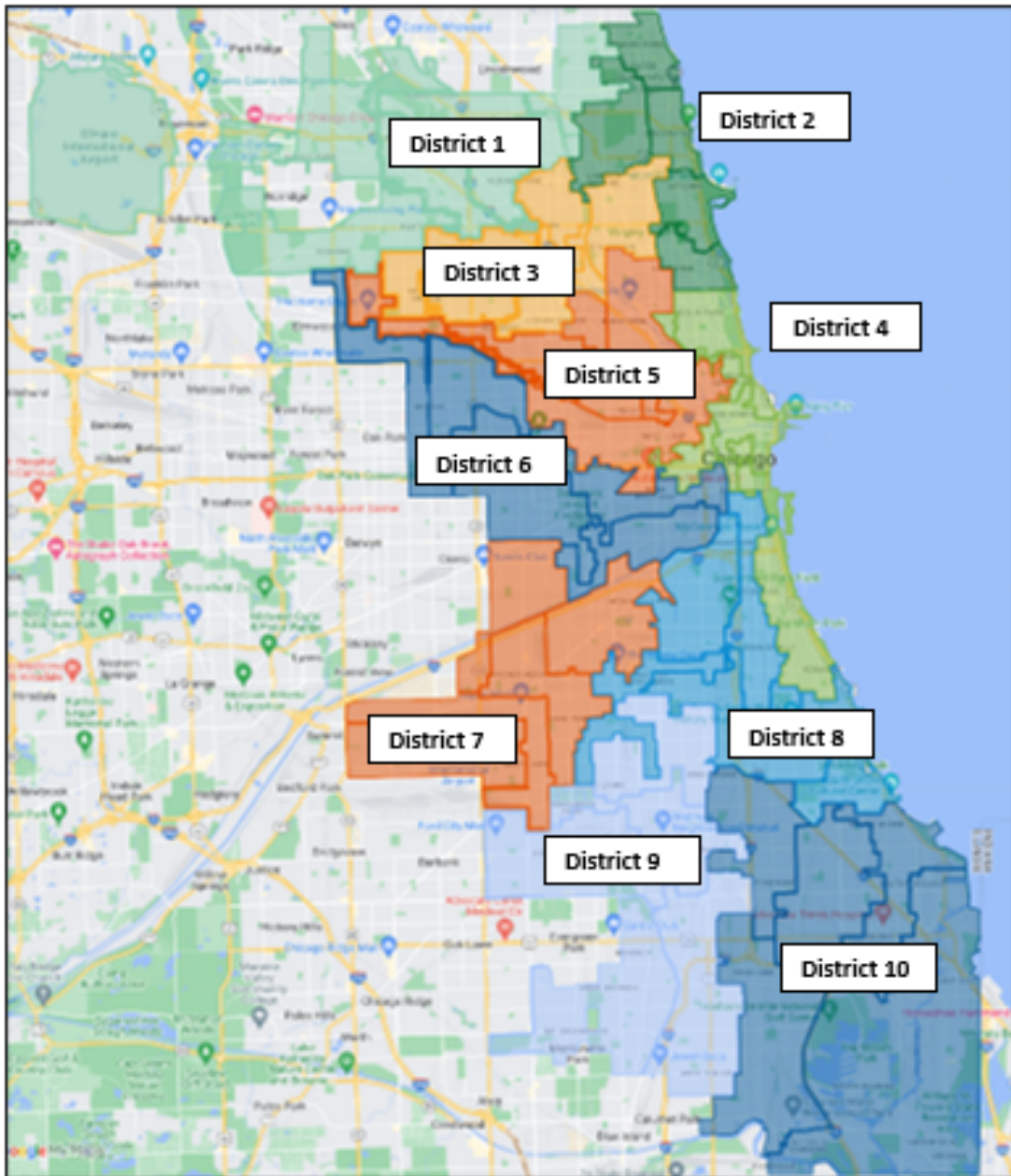
Proposed boundaries are aligned with specific wards for greater accountability and coordination with members of the City Council while maintaining racial equity and balance.

Ward boundaries were vetted for compliance with the VRA during the most recent redistricting process.

Author: Craig Wimberly, President COAL Chicago.
Data Sources: City of Chicago, U.S. Census Bureau

This map was drawn to align CPS Elected School Board districts with specific wards for greater accountability and coordination with members of the City Council while maintaining racial equity and balance. Ward boundaries were vetted for compliance with the VRA during the most recent redistricting process.

Alternative 1



District 1

- 41st Ward
- 38th Ward
- 45th Ward
- 39th Ward
- 50th Ward

District 2

- 40th Ward
- 49th Ward
- 48th Ward
- 46th Ward
- 44th Ward

District 3

- 30th Ward
- 31st Ward
- 35th Ward
- 33rd Ward
- 47th Ward

District 4

- 43rd Ward
- 2nd Ward
- 42nd Ward
- 34th Ward
- 4th Ward

District 5

- 36th Ward
- 26th Ward
- 1st Ward
- 32nd Ward
- 27th Ward

District 6

- 29th Ward
- 37th Ward
- 28th Ward
- 24th Ward
- 25th Ward

District 7

- 22nd Ward
- 12th Ward
- 14th Ward
- 23rd Ward
- 13th Ward

District 8

- 11th Ward
- 3rd Ward
- 20th Ward
- 5th Ward
- 15th Ward

District 9

- 16th Ward
- 17th Ward
- 18th Ward
- 19th Ward
- 21st Ward

District 10

- 6th Ward
- 8th Ward
- 7th Ward
- 9th Ward
- 10th Ward

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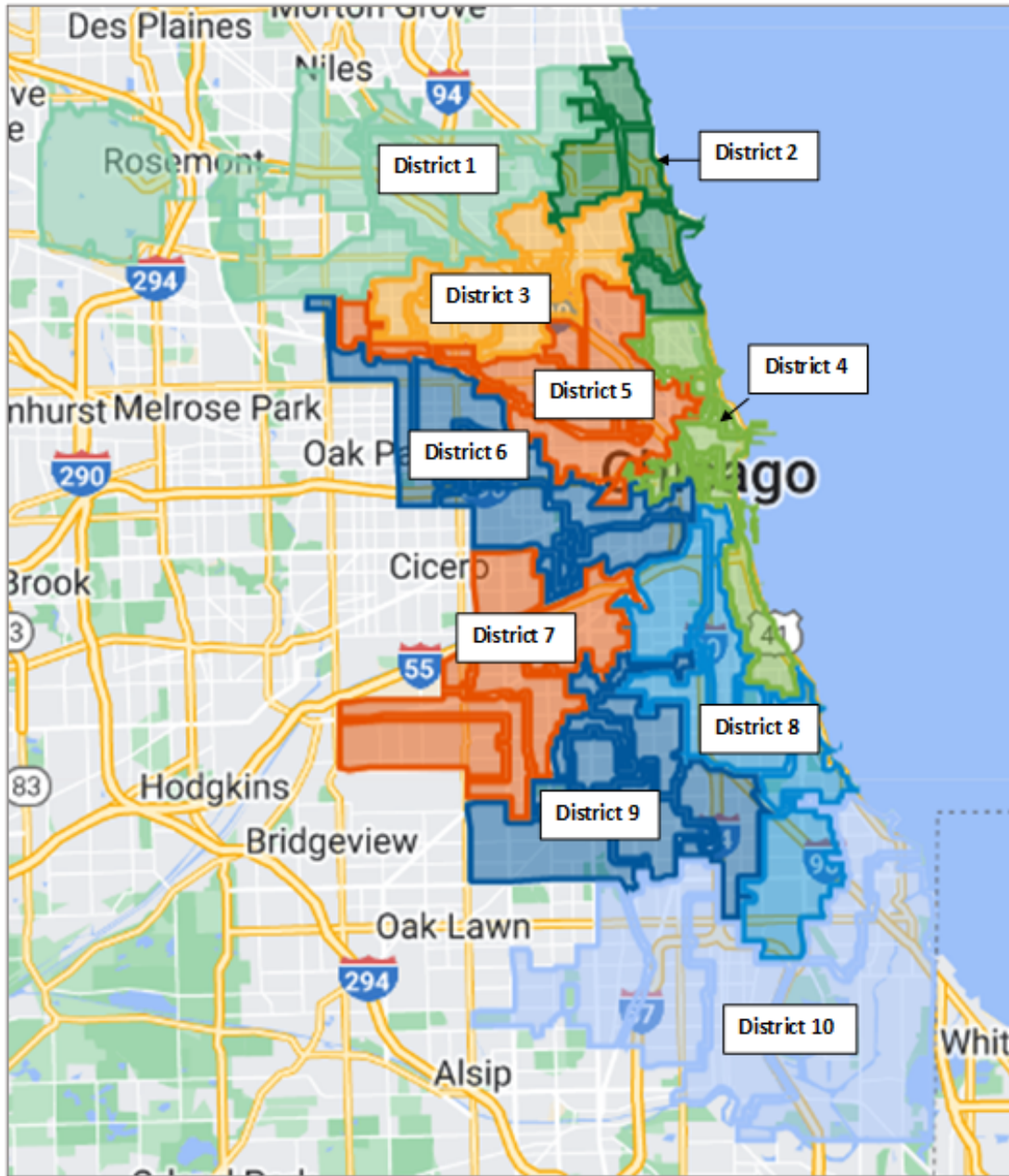
Districts in blue were generally developed using boundaries for wards that are majority or plurality Black.

Districts in orange or yellow were generally developed using boundaries for wards that are majority or plurality Latino.

Districts in green were generally developed using boundaries for wards that are majority or plurality White.

A link to the map on Google My Maps is found below.
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1p6oaDMbREAJXzekNERRgdtLgJrHMySk&usp=sharing>

Alternative 2



District 1
41st Ward
38th Ward
45th Ward
39th Ward
50th Ward

District 2
40th Ward
49th Ward
48th Ward
46th Ward
44th Ward

District 3
30th Ward
31st Ward
35th Ward
33rd Ward
47th Ward

District 4
43rd Ward
2nd Ward
42nd Ward
34th Ward
4th Ward

District 5
36th Ward
26th Ward
1st Ward
32nd Ward
27th Ward

District 6
29th Ward
37th Ward
28th Ward
24th Ward
25th Ward

District 7
22nd Ward
12th Ward
14th Ward
23rd Ward
13th Ward

District 8
11th Ward
3rd Ward
20th Ward
5th Ward
8th Ward

District 9
15th Ward
16th Ward
17th Ward
18th Ward
6th Ward

District 10
19th Ward
21st Ward
9th Ward
10th Ward
7th Ward

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Alternative 3

Questions?

Questions regarding this presentation
may be addressed to

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Photo: Atlanta Speech Therapy

