



ANALYSIS: PROPOSED ELECTED SCHOOL BOARD MAPS MAY 2023

Kids First Chicago analyzed the proposed maps for Chicago's future elected school board, released for public review on Friday, May 5, and public testimony from hearings convened by the Illinois General Assembly through Saturday, May 6, 2023. Our review, produced on May 9, 2023, follows.

On Friday, May 5, 2023, Illinois House and Senate Democrats released their initial 20 district elected school board map for Chicago. According to a news release from Illinois House and Senate Democrats, these maps reflect feedback gathered from about a dozen citywide public hearings, and, in their words include, “requests to keep communities of interest as whole as possible and to ensure the maps reflect the diversity of Chicago.”

First, let's not forget that this has never been done before, making this an unprecedented opportunity for our state legislators to pave the way for more equitable systems of government. Typically, the authority to create school governance structures lies within the public school district itself and gets approval by the Illinois School Board of Education – and, importantly, does not involve the Illinois General Assembly. That makes this process extraordinary in its own right.

Many parents, teachers, community members, and organizations have participated in these public hearings. Themes raised at these hearings included compensating board members so working class Chicagoans can pursue a school board seat and, for some, revising the law so any Chicago resident can vote or run in Chicago school board elections, regardless of immigration status. The most common theme, however, was a request to legislators to create districts that give more representation to minority communities, with many testimonies emphasizing approximating the CPS student population – which is [47% Latinx/a/o/e, 36% Black, and 11% White](#).

Feedback Analysis from the Public Hearings

- In analyzing the Senate hearings (transcripts and written testimony are [available online](#) in the public record), racial representation came up in 87 (72%) of the 121 total testimonies (including co-signers).
- By comparison, and being very generous by including any testimony that referenced the law stating that “each district must be compact, contiguous and substantially equal in population and consistent with the Illinois Voting Rights Act,” keeping “communities as whole as possible,” only came up in about half of the testimonies. Therefore, the current map does not capture what was shared in the majority of testimony across these hearings.

Overall takeaway: Springfield is proposing a map that sets the table for a majority White board that governs the outcomes of BIPOC students and families.

Hidden in plain sight is a map that not only provides a White plurality for 7 districts, but also has the White voter population as the second most prominent block for all but four of the districts. Comparatively, Black district plurality exists in 7 districts, but they have less than 20% of the voting base in the other 13 of the 20 districts. White voter population is only below 20% in 4 of the 20 districts, meaning they have voting power as a racial block in 80% of the districts.

If Chicago were to replicate districts where the populations mirrored public school enrollment, the 20 districts' plurality would look as follows: 9-10 Latinx, 7-8 Black, 2 White, and 0-1 Asian.

Latinx voting population is the plurality in only 6 districts, while Latinx students comprise nearly half of CPS. In 11 of the districts, they have less than 20% of the voting population. Moreover, despite having plurality in 6 districts, in one district they still only have 40% of the voter base. Voting Age Population by definition includes non-citizens. While non-citizens can certainly be found in the Black and White populations, the fact is that non-citizens are a much higher percentage of the Latinx populations, which means that the percentages of Voting Age Population for Latinx overstate the actual percent of the population who can participate in the elections without a change to the law. What does that mean? It could easily mean that in a district where Latinx have a plurality of 40% and White voters have 25% (district M), the actual voting population for Latinx is much closer to the White voter population.

District	Total Population	Voting Pop White %	Voting Pop Black %	Voting Pop Asian %	Voting Pop Hispanic %		Voting Pop White %	Voting Pop Black %	Voting Pop Asian %	Voting Pop Hispanic %
A	137,199	59%	3%	16%	18%		1	4	3	2
B	137,614	51%	3%	9%	34%		1	4	3	2
C	136,813	47%	16%	13%	19%		1	3	4	2
D	136,805	60%	13%	11%	12%		1	2	4	3
E	137,111	28%	10%	3%	56%		2	3	4	1
F	137,265	25%	3%	3%	67%		2	4	3	1
G	137,735	22%	54%	2%	19%		2	1	4	3
H	137,181	29%	54%	3%	11%		2	1	4	3
I	137,338	76%	4%	7%	9%		1	4	3	2
J	137,208	63%	4%	7%	23%		1	4	3	2
K	137,238	27%	5%	11%	54%		2	4	3	1
L	137,120	15%	11%	6%	66%		2	3	4	1
M	137,040	25%	8%	25%	40%		3	4	2	1
N	137,967	68%	7%	15%	6%		1	3	2	4
O	138,044	26%	6%	1%	66%		2	3	4	1
P	136,875	25%	64%	0%	9%		2	1	4	3
Q	136,824	8%	76%	4%	9%		3	1	4	2
R	137,875	3%	85%	0%	10%		3	1	4	2
S	138,108	13%	58%	4%	22%		3	1	4	2
T	137,028	4%	88%	2%	3%		2	1	4	3

4 out of 5 children of color, Black, Latinx, and Asian, enroll in CPS as compared to just over 1 out of every 2 White children. Whether unintentional or not, these maps significantly advantage White candidates for a school system where only 1 in 10 children are White. **This map is good for preserving political power, but does little to forward racial equity or fairly represent the diversity of CPS families – not the “diversity of Chicago.”**

While one cannot assume a district that is plurality one group will not vote for a representative of a different background, this is statistically less probable. More importantly, the current law makes no accommodations for wealth disparities. Without campaign limits and board member compensation, many people of color, the vast majority of whom subscribe to CPS (nearly 9 in 10 students), will not have equitable opportunities to serve on this new Board.

Wealth distribution in Chicago has roots in redlining, discriminatory housing policy, and other systemically racist policies of our past. The legislature’s first draft map will perpetuate many of the racial inequities they claim to oppose. Working class and lower-income parents of color will struggle to compete for representation against wealthy well-connected candidates. And when White Chicagoans have a disproportionate share of wealth and access to powerful networks, with this map, we can anticipate they will likely dominate the Board, and will certainly hold far more seats than the 11% White children make up in CPS and than the 33% of the population they are today.¹

Is that necessarily an issue? Perhaps not. But when we talk about how critical inclusion and representation of lived experience is, and we look at what people, Black, White, Latinx, Asian, etc. raised in the public hearings, it is hard to look at this map and not feel this misses the mark by a long way. This map continues to shut out non-White Chicagoans from legitimate decision-making seats.

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/chicagocityillinois>

APPENDIX: ANALYSIS OF ESB HEARINGS

Analysis of ESB Hearings					
Senate Special Committee on the Chicago Elected Representative School Board					
Public Hearings	Testimonies	Racial representation or district representing a particular race	Community intactness	Noncitizen participation	Compensation
All Hearings	53	36	12	8	17
<i>April 5, 2023 Hearing - Westinghouse College Prep</i>	6	6	1	1	1
<i>April 6, 2023 Hearing - Imani Village</i>	8	3	2	0	5
<i>April 12, 2023 Hearing - Copernicus Center</i>	6	3	0	0	2
<i>April 13, 2023 Hearing - National Museum of Mexican Art</i>	6	3	0	2	2
<i>April 17, 2023 Hearing - Virtual Hearing</i>	27	21	9	5	7
Public Submissions (excluding repeats from Hearings)	36	19	17	1	3
Signatures on IAAER Letter (excluding repeats from Hearings and Public Submissions)	32	32	32	0	0
Total	121	87	61	9	20
Percent		72%	50%	7%	17%
***Note: All House Executive Committee - CPS Work Group Public Submissions - are represented above. Included in this list are testimonies from 4 different people (Valerie Leonard, Eli Brotzman, Melanie Lopez, and Miriam Bhimani)					

Testimonial Links:

- **Hearings (Marked up by K1C):**
 - April 5, 2023 Hearing - Westinghouse College Prep: [Link to original](#) - [Link to K1C markup](#)
 - April 6, 2023 Hearing - Imani Village: [Link to original](#) - [Link to K1C markup](#)
 - April 12, 2023 Hearing - Copernicus Center: [Link to original](#) - [Link to K1C markup](#)
 - April 13, 2023 Hearing - National Museum of Mexican Art: [Link to original](#) - [Link to K1C markup](#)
 - April 17, 2023 Hearing - Virtual Hearing: [Link to original](#) - [Link to K1C markup](#)
- **Senate Special Committee on the Chicago Elected Representative School Board - Public Submissions:** [Link here](#)
- **House Executive Committee - CPS Work Group Public Submissions:** [Link here](#)