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May 18, 2023

To; Senate Dem Committee ERSB

Re: Witness Slip Confirmation for Senate Special Committee on the Chicago Elected Representative School Board on 5/18/2023

Dear Illinois Senate Committee,

Valerie Leonard is providing a formal response on behalf of IAAFER; I am providing a few additional observations concerning the proposed Chicago Electoral school Board Districts Map released on the evening of May 17, 2023:

1) Although the legislation calls for the City to be divided into 10 districts for the 2024 election of 10 school board members, the state has never created a 10 district map, nor explained why it hasn't. Is there an intent to change the legislation that we are not privy to?

2) The 20 district map that has been released has never, to our knowledge, been accompanied by any explanation of what criteria was used to develop the 20 districts. What are the key drivers for how the boundaries have been drawn?

3) We overlaid the state's proposed map with a map of the City's 50 wards (this overlay follows) with these concerning results:

- The 27th Ward crosses 5 school board districts, the 15th ward crosses 4 school board districts, the 4th, 12th, and 34th wards cross 3 school districts, and the 36th ward, as you might guess based on how skewed it is, crosses 4 school board districts, whereas with the IAAFER proposed map, all of these wards, even the 36th, remain wholly within a school board district. **IAAFER believes** that keeping wards whole within a school district boundary creates a less confusing and more collaborative school district from the residents and voters perspective, for all 50 wards.
- Viewing the map from the reverse angle, one of the State's school board districts, District I, appears to have parts of wards 10, 9, 21, 6, 16, 17 and 18, whereas District D contains all of Ward 49, with parts of wards 40 and 50. Clearly there is some manner of imbalance here. **IAAFER believes** its proposed school board district map, with 5 complete wards in each of the 10 districts, represents

parity and balance in both population and wards per district, as well as in the relationship of residents to school board member to alderperson.

4) The Senate committee charged with this effort should consider voting on a map with 10 districts, which is required for the 2024 election and which gives it time to consider how best to move to 20 districts, which are not required until 2026. Interestingly, we may find that 10 districts is sufficient and that 2 board members per each of the 10 districts may better serve residents and prove less costly administratively. The bottom line is that we have time, between now and 2026, to finalize a 20 district School Board map.

5) Finally, IAAFER understands that there are different approaches to drawing school district boundaries, however, transparency of process, clean lines of communication, simplifying boundaries, and most importantly, drawing districts with residents' and voters' interests in mind, their ability to elect school board members in an easily comprehended manner, should be of primary consideration.

Please see the attached graphic of the Illinois Senate proposed map overlaid with Chicago's 50 wards.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

Craig Wimberly
President



773.350.9315

craig.wimberly@coalchicago.com

www.coalchicago.com

