

Good afternoon committee members and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Claiborne Wade. I am the father of four CPS students, I live in Sen. Lightford's district, and I am here today representing Kids First Chicago's parent-led Elected School Board Task Force.

Some of our Task Force members have had the pleasure to speak with some of you about this issue already, including Sen. Lightford, Sen. Martwick, and Sen. Villanueva. Kids First Chicago is hosting a town hall and panel discussion next Wednesday, April 12 at 6pm. This conversation will focus on Chicago's transition to an elected school board, parent priorities, and district creation. Committee members have been sent invitations and we hope that you or your staff can join to hear from hundreds of parents about their priorities for the transition to an elected school board. We have already received responses from some of you that someone from your office will attend.

Kids First Chicago's Elected School Board Task Force, a group led by CPS parents, believes the following principles are essential for State lawmakers to follow as they set out to create Chicago's school board districts.

1. **Transparency and inclusivity.** Districts should be drawn and presented to the public, alongside relevant data, with sufficient time for the public to provide feedback and for revisions to be made.
2. **Fair racial representation.** As much as possible, and consistent with legal and constitutional requirements, the districts should be created in a way that takes into account the racial makeup of CPS students and families.

We believe that if lawmakers adhere to these two core principles, then CPS families will be better represented and better served by the future Elected School Board – leading to better outcomes for CPS students.

The demographics of Chicago and CPS are very different – CPS is nearly 90% students of color, while Chicago is roughly one-third white. The Black and Latino populations are both at risk of being severely underrepresented compared to their share of the student population.

Lawmakers should try to maximize the number of districts that are favorable for Black and Latino candidates to win, while adhering to constitutional guidelines about compactness. We have created a prototype set of district maps that aims to achieve this goal and serve as a model that it can be done fairly. We will be submitting these districts through the Special Committee's map portal and they should be available to view online soon. We encourage lawmakers to look at this example before beginning to draw your own district maps.

I thank you for your time today. Again, we hope you or your staff can attend the virtual town hall next Wednesday, April 12 at 6pm. Registration is available at www.kidsfirstchicago.org/townhall.

Claiborne Wade