PRESS RELEASES

26 JULY 2023

Chicago Board of Education Announces Changes to Increase Transparency, Student Voice and Public Engagement

Board to Uplift Student Voice, Add Public Posting of Agenda Follow-Ups and Create a Special Education Advisory Committee, Among Other Shifts

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CHICAGO – During the first meeting of the new Chicago Board of Education (BOE), the Board unveiled a series of changes that will improve accessibility and public engagement at future Board meetings. The six changes announced today (July 26, 2023) align with the

– at Board meetings.

The six policy changes were announced shortly after the beginning of today's meeting, which marks the first regular meeting under President Shi and the six Board members appointed by Mayor Johnson.

"At this historic moment in the history of the Chicago Board of Education, it is imperative that the Board promote transparency, accessibility, and authentic community engagement with the students, parents, educators, and community stakeholders we all serve," said President Shi. "As a Board, we want to create more opportunities for the public to access our meetings, provide input on the decisions of the Board, and help shape a district and Board that reflects the core values and beliefs of our community, and these new initiatives will help do just that."

The following initiatives were announced by the Board:

1. **Shifting the Day of the Regular Board Meeting:** Beginning with the August meeting, the Board will shift its regular Board meeting to the **4th Thursday of every month** to avoid existing conflicts with the monthly City Council meeting. This will allow members of the public as well as City Council members and Board members to have the opportunity to attend both meetings. The Board meeting originally scheduled for Wednesday, August 23 will now be held on Thursday, August 24.
2. **Increasing the Number of Registered Speaker Slots:** The Board increased the number of registered speaker slots to 30 speakers per meeting, for a total of 60 speakers across the Agenda Review Committee and the regular Board meeting, beginning with August's Agenda Review Committee. These additional opportunities for public engagement align with the Board's goal of improving equity and opportunities for public participation.
3. **Elevating Student Voice:** This fall, the Board will begin creating opportunities for the honorary student board member (HSBM) to elevate student voices on issues that are important to them and that can help inform Board members' decision-making on agenda items that require Board action. The HSBM, with support from the Board Office and CPS departments, will center student voices at Board meetings by organizing student-facilitated roundtables on topics that fall within the Board's responsibilities. This new student engagement process will help ensure Board decisions are guided by students' lived experiences.

provide valuable feedback to the Board and the District.

5. **Agenda Review Committee Follow-ups Made Public:** Beginning in September, the Board will add an additional layer of transparency by posting to the Board website all unanswered Board member questions from the Agenda Review Committee along with the District's associated responses. This information will be shared publicly so that members of the public are able to view responses to issues that directly impact the CPS community in advance of the Board's consideration.
6. **Special Education Advisory Committee:** The Board, with the full support of Mayor Johnson's administration, announced the creation of the Special Education Advisory Committee. The purpose of this Advisory Committee will be to listen to and prioritize the various needs that our special education community faces. This advisory committee will be led by Board Member Fahey Hughes and consist of CPS parents, special education advocates, CPS educators, and other stakeholders with a broad range of experiences within special education.

CHICAGO BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

The new members of the Board of Education, who were formally seated this month, consist of the following community members who bring unique perspectives and expertise to the Board. Full biographies are available on the Board website.

Board President Jianan Shi

Jianan Shi served as the Executive Director of Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education (RYH) from 2019 until his appointment to the Board in 2023. Prior to RYH, Jianan was a high school science educator at Eric Solorio Academy, a CPS neighborhood high school on the Southwest Side. The highlight of his time at Solorio was being the faculty supervisor of the DREAM Team, a group of undocumented students who advocated for immigrant rights. Shi taught high school biology and neuroscience, led science professional development, and chaired the Senior Committee.

Prior to his time in Chicago, Shi taught for three years at Codman Academy, an expeditionary learning school in Boston. He holds a Master of Education in secondary education in biology from Boston College and was a Donovan Urban Scholar and NOYCE Teaching Fellow. He holds a Bachelor of Science in biology and a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Boston College, as well.

Chicago. Her research and teaching focus on U.S. urban history, African American history, and the history of education. Her work also explores interdisciplinary issues related to racial and economic inequality, education and urban public policy, neighborhood transformation, and civic engagement. Her book, *A Political Education: Black Politics and Education Reform in Chicago since the 1960s*, analyzes transformations in Black politics, shifts in modes of education organizing, and the racial politics of education reform from the 1960s to the present.

Professor Todd-Breland's writing and commentary also appears in scholarly journals, edited volumes, and popular media. A frequent public speaker, Todd-Breland organizes professional development workshops for educators and develops curricula on African American history, urban education, and racial justice. She earned her PhD in History from the University of Chicago. Todd-Breland is a CPS parent. She previously served on a Local School Council and worked with Chicago high school students as a high school social studies instructor and college counselor.

Board Member Mariela Estrada

Mariela Estrada was born in Guerrero, Mexico, raised on the Southwest Side of Chicago, and is both a CPS graduate and the mother of a CPS student. Estrada is currently the Director of Community Engagement at United Way of Metro Chicago, where she supports neighborhood networks across the south and west side communities all making collaborative impact. She previously was the first Community Engagement Coordinator for the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG). Estrada was also previously the Director of Organizing for Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC).

Estrada earned her B.A in sociology from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a minor in Latin American and Latino Studies. Estrada is a trained Spanish/English interpreter through the DuPage Language Access Center and was a participant of the Latino Policy Forum's Leadership Academy. She also served two terms as a Local School Council parent member on the southwest side of Chicago. In addition, she has worked with various coalitions throughout the city focused on increasing the minimum wage, early childhood education, immigrant rights, voter engagement, health care access and mental health access advocate.

Board Member Mary Fahey-Hughes

disabilities, she has the lived experience of navigating special education on behalf of her children and, as a special education advocate, she has a deep knowledge of ongoing areas of weakness and the need for systemic improvements to special education procedures and services.

Fahey-Hughes began her special ed advocacy work in 2007 as the Founder and Director of 19th Ward Parents for Special Education, a parent support and advocacy group on the far southwest side. She also served on the Office of Special Education and Supports Parent Advisory Committee and was a Parent Advocate for the Illinois Parent Educator Partnership (PEP) Program, where she provided direct support to parents navigating CPS Special Education. Fahey-Hughes was one of the founding members of The Special Education Advocacy Coalition of Chicago (SPEACC). As special education parent liaison for Raise Your Hand, she led parent and academic research volunteers to investigate, report on, and make recommendations to address inequities against students with disabilities in the CPS High School Application and Placement process and to help improve nursing services at the school level.

Board Member Rudy Lozano Jr.

Rudy Lozano is an Executive Director with Global Philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase & Co. He is Head of The Fellowship Initiative. Rudy is a leader in youth development and community education. He has held positions with nationally-recognized organizations: The Association House of Chicago, Instituto Del Progreso Latino, and Enlace Chicago. Rudy's diverse experiences include mentoring youth, teaching in alternative high schools, coordinating community schools programs and directing statewide citizenship programs. He is an alum of Public Allies, Leadership Greater Chicago, and the Surge Fellowship.

Rudy is a CPS graduate and parent. He earned his Bachelor's degree in youth and community organizing from Northeastern Illinois University and his Master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Rudy is a proud husband, father and life-long resident of the Little Village neighborhood.

Board Member Michelle Morales

Michelle Morales is the President of Woods Fund Chicago, a local foundation which supports community organizing and advocacy. She is a first-generation U.S.-born Puerto Rican. Prior to Woods Fund, she led the Illinois chapter of the Mikva Challenge. Michelle's

addition, Michelle was a community organizer for 16 years in Chicago's Puerto Rican community, organizing against police brutality and gentrification, and for community-informed economic development and educational justice.

She received a BA in Latin American/Latino Studies from DePaul University, a Master's in special education from UIC and a Master's in educational leadership from Northeastern Illinois University. Michelle currently serves on the Board of Trustees at Northeastern Illinois University and on the advisory committee for the Latin American/Latino Studies program at DePaul University. Most recently, she was appointed co-chair of Mayor Johnson's Transition Committee.

Board Member Tanya Woods

Woods is a licensed attorney in the State of Illinois who oversees all the operations, strategic direction and vision for the Westside Justice Center, and a holistic legal aid clinic in Chicago. She has served as the Executive Director for the Westside Justice Center almost since its inception in 2016. She is a certified Mediator and Trainer at the Center for Conflict Resolution and volunteers as a mediator in the most underserved courtrooms in the Circuit Court of Cook County. Once a public school Reading Specialist and Librarian, Woods is now an Adjunct Professor at Loyola University, School of Law. As a seasoned professional, and before her career in the law, Woods enjoyed successful tenures in higher education, government, tech, and non-profit sectors. Woods is a proud alumna of Trinity High School, Northwestern University and Loyola University School of Law.

She marries her profession with her passions by dedicating herself to availing communities with much needed resources, illuminating pathways to reinvest in historically-divested communities, advocating for basic human rights, and shining a light on systemic and structural racism. To date, she counts her most valuable contribution as that of a widowed mother of two adult children: both products of the Chicago Public School system and now socially conscious trailblazers in their chosen professions.

Chicago Public Schools

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