



For Immediate Release:

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STATEMENT FROM ILLINOIS LATINO AGENDA:

Call for Transparency Amid Chicago Board of Education Resignations

New short-term board members will have the authority to make long-term decisions – including budgeting and CTU contract negotiations – until a hybrid elected school board forms in January

media interviews available

CHICAGO – The Illinois Latino Agenda (ILA) joined together today with nonprofit leaders, Chicago City Council members, former CPS principals and CPS parents, urging the City to work in the best interest of students following news that the entire Chicago Board of Education will resign.

The group specifically called for extra care around budgeting decisions and ongoing contract negotiations with the Chicago Teachers Union, as CPS is in the middle of contract negotiations with CTU.

The following are statements from ILA members who spoke during today’s press conference:

Raul Raymundo, ILA steering committee member and CEO of The Resurrection Project:

“ILA is a coalition of Latino-led organizations and civic leaders that advocates for Latino communities throughout Illinois. It is through that mission and our belief that every child should have the opportunity to thrive that we are here today.

“The resignation of the entire Chicago Board of Education is an unprecedented moment in our city’s history. This crisis puts at risk the stability of Chicago Public Schools, potentially having a harmful impact on CPS students – nearly half of whom are Latino. It also creates an incredible amount of uncertainty for any handpicked short-term board members to deal key decisions for the long-term stability of the system, including ongoing contract negotiations between CTU and CPS leadership.

“This manufactured chaos must stop, and all stakeholders involved need to operate in the best interest of CPS students. Chicago deserves better accountability, more transparency and stability for the future of CPS students.

“We all agreed in principle that educational opportunities for our children and more resources are needed to bring a world class education to our students and their families.

“As a CPS graduate and as the parent of CPS high school graduates, I know strong public schools give children the skills, confidence, and knowledge they need to thrive. Currently we are on the right track as CPS has outpaced the nation – including well-funded suburban districts – in academic growth. Graduation rates have improved from less than 50% to over 85%. And we have posted some of the strongest academic recovery rates in the wake of COVID. This progress has been driven by students from under-resourced families, Black students, and Latino students, is a testament to everyone’s collective efforts and should fill us with pride and optimism for the future.

“Let's work together as a united community to invest in the best interests of CPS students, teachers, and their families.”

Sylvia Puente, ILA Steering Committee Member and President & CEO of the Latino Policy Forum:

“As you can see by the folks we have convened today, we share common interests with the diversity that makes our city one that we love.

“Let me start by saying I believe in my heart of hearts that we all want what is best for our children and the families in Chicago. We all want them to have a quality education. And to that end all children deserve a committed qualified teacher to teach them. They all deserve to have a nurse in their school, a library full of books, a librarian in that school, and all our children deserve to have counselors and mental health support and to be safe in the classroom and out. We want a system that works for everyone. We want all our children to reach their full potential.

“But we also know that schools cannot do this alone. We need families, communities, social services organizations, philanthropy, and our social and business sectors, as well as our various units of government to come together to support our students and school communities. We ask a lot of our schools and teachers, but they cannot do it alone. So, we need to broaden this conversation and importantly act to be responsive to what our children need.

“Having said that, we have heard today about the need for accountability, responsibility, transparency, and good government. We have heard about the need for stability, and stable leadership in our schools. We call on our mayor, the new school board, and all sectors of our city to engage in a constructive dialogue. **We call on the new school board to take the time to get up to speed on the tremendous decisions that are in front of them.**

“Many things have contributed to our progress as a city and in our schools. The challenging work of teachers and counselors. More resources at the school level. And a focus on what works instructionally. CPS has committed to using the highest quality curriculum, to training

teachers and principals in strong instructional practice, and to creating an environment where schools can make independent staffing decisions and provide consistent, high-quality instruction and programming. Importantly, how will the new CPS board continue to ensure that our students continue to make academic progress and get the support that they need?

“We have become aware that there are provisions in the proposed new contract that merit additional visibility to determine their impact on progress that has been made to date. We call for a deeper, focused look at some of the provisions that are in the proposed contract. It is critical to slow down and ensure that all contract provisions impacting schools, principals, local school councils and most importantly students receive the attention and engagement they deserve.

“When it comes to learning, details matter. We, the collective we, need to ensure that we go beyond the fiscal aspects of the CPS situation and ensure that our school leadership, teachers, parents and LSC members retain the progress that has allowed CPS and our students to outpace their peers. That we retain progress at a time when our students continue to struggle with the after-effects of a massive and disruptive pandemic.

“So, we call for productive dialogue and cooperation. We call for transparency and accountability to see what new leaders and Board members prioritize when it comes to school and classroom stability and instruction.

“There are many eyes on our City at this moment. Watching will be our state’s leaders, and it is not far fetched to say that many in the country are watching this situation unfold. Right now, they are witnessing what happens when we let politics interfere with children and learning.

“We urge the new school board to be deliberative in their decision making and to be transparent and accountable in their process. We urge this for the sake of our children.”

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The Illinois Latino Agenda (ILA) is a coalition that advocates for the representation of Latinos across all sectors and works to advance the economic, political and social prosperity of Latino communities throughout Illinois. [Previous statements and press releases from ILA are available on their website.](#)