

February 4, 2021

Dear Mayor Lightfoot:

Like most Chicagoans, we have deep interest in the Chicago Public Schools' return to in-person learning. Our core principles for such a return should be to serve the broadest group of students, to avoid unnecessary risk for students and staff, and to make in-person school as safe as possible. While we have seen improvements in the case rates and hospitalizations, the pandemic continues to hit particular neighborhoods hard, and COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on Black and Latinx families across the city. We owe it to our constituents to balance the desire for a return to in-person instruction with the real danger the pandemic continues to pose. We ask that you do the same with regard to returning to schools.

We understand that three main points of contention remain in reaching an agreement with the Chicago Teachers Union: accommodations for CPS staff who live with vulnerable household members, a vaccination plan for educators, and a phased-in return to in-person school.

We have similar requests as City Council Members who wrote you last month:

1. We request that you reach an agreement on a safe return to in-person school with the Chicago Teachers Union.
2. To provide sufficient time to reach an agreement, we request that educators continue to have access to their remote teaching and working platforms and that no teachers be locked out of remote work platforms prior to an agreement being reached. It is our belief that there should be no in-person return to learning prior to the second semester's start on February 8 and that a return to in-person learning be phased in.
3. We request that the CPS accelerate and expand a staff vaccination program to ensure that schools can reopen for in-person learning safely.
4. We request that parents (perhaps LSC parent representatives) and community partners who already work with a school are included in the health and safety committees.
5. We request that CPS adopt remote learning best practices, as more than 200,000 students remain fully remote and remote learning comprises 60% of hybrid learning.

We know that educators want to be working with their students in a safe environment. We also know that an agreement is possible and we hope and trust you will reach one soon.

Best regards,

State Representative Jaime Andrade
State Senator Omar Aquino
State Representative Kam Buckner
State Representative Kelly Cassidy
State Representative Lakesia Collins
State Representative Marcus Evans
State Representative Edgar Gonzalez

State Representative Will Guzzardi
State Representative Greg Harris
State Representative Sonya Harper
State Representative Lindsey LaPointe
State Representative Theresa Mah
State Senator Robert Martwick
State Representative Aaron Ortiz
State Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas
State Senator Robert Peters
State Representative Delia Ramirez
State Representative Lamont Robinson
State Representative Denyse Stoneback
State Representative Andre Thapedi
State Senator Ram Villivalam
State Senator Celina Villanueva
State Representative Ann Williams