

COORDINATING COMMITTEE:

National

Alliance for Education Justice

Washington, DC

Empower DC

Chicago, IL

Kenwood Oakland Community Organization

Baltimore, MD

Baltimore Algebra Project

Detroit, MI

*Keep the Vote, No Takeover
Black Parents for Quality Education*

Newark, NJ

Parents United for Local School Education

New York, NY

*Alliance for Quality Education
Urban Youth Collaborative*

Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Student Union

MEMBERS:

National

Leadership Center for the Common Good

Oakland, CA

Oakland Public Education Network

Los Angeles, CA

Labor Community Strategy Center

Hartford, CT

Parent Power

Atlanta, GA

Project South

Miami, FL

Power U

Chicago, IL

Action Now

Wichita, KS

Kansas Justice Advocates

New Orleans, LA

*Concerned Conscious Citizens Controlling
Community Changes*

Coalition for Community Schools

Boston, MA

*Boston Youth Organizing Project
Boston Parent Organizing Network*

Detroit, MI

Detroit LIFE Coalition

Minneapolis, MN

Neighborhoods Organizing for Change

Eupora, MS

Fannie Lou Hamer Center for Change

Camden, NJ

Camden Education Association

Englewood, NJ

Citizens for Public Education

Jersey City, NJ

*Parent Advocates for Children's Education
Concerned Citizens Coalition*

Paterson, NJ

Paterson Education Organizing Committee

Philadelphia, PA

Action United

Youth United for Change

ALLIED MEMBERS

National

*American Federation of Teachers
Annenberg Institute for School Reform*

Chicago, IL

Teachers for Social Justice

Journey for Justice

"A National Grassroots Education Alliance"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2013

PRESS RELEASE

**CITYWIDE EDUCATION COALITION CALLS FOR
CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOYCOTT**

***Demands Made Of Mayor Emanuel, CPS & State Legislature To
Stop Destabilization & Divestment Of Low-Income Communities of Color***

CHICAGO – Chicago parents, students and advocates impacted by budget cuts and school closings showed their support at a press conference today for a citywide **"Education is a Human Right" one-day boycott of Chicago Public Schools (CPS)**. Parents and community members cited concerns for safety in sending displaced students to receiving schools as the reason for supporting the CPS boycott, as well as dismay over the destabilization and divestment in low-income communities of color resulting from mass school closings and layoffs.

"Despite research showing that closing public schools does not improve student test scores or graduation rates, an appointed Chicago Board of Education issued the largest mass school closing in U.S. history which has served to destabilize the lives and futures of thousands of youth and residents of low-income communities of color in Chicago," said **Irene Robinson, parent at recently closed Overton Elementary School**. "While CPS claims that displaced students will be sent to higher-performing schools, the reality is that the majority of students are being transferred to schools with no better performance than their closed school and many must risk their safety by crossing neighborhood and gang lines to reach their receiving school."

Thousands of Chicago-area students, parents, advocates and community representatives are expected to join in the **"Education is a Human Right" boycott on Chicago Public Schools and rally on Wednesday, August 28, 2013 in front of the Chicago Board of Education and march to City Hall**.

The **"Education is a Human Right"** day will be held on the third day of school and coincides with the **50th anniversary of the March on Washington** to highlight the lack of progress since this landmark movement sought to end segregation and job discrimination. Chicago will join 24 cities across the country in a series of actions demonstrating continued injustice in the education system and divestment in low-income communities of color.

CPS PRIVATIZATION PLANS SHOW FURTHER DIVESTMENT IN LOW-INCOME, MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The Chicago Board of Education has cited budget issues as one of the primary reasons for the mass closings and layoffs enacted this year. The District has touted it will save \$43 million in operating expenses by closing schools, but reports have shown the savings will be negated by the debt it will take on, borrowing \$329 million to pay for improvements to receiving schools.

Further, on the heels of mass discriminatory closings and divestments made in low-income communities of color, CPS has released an RFP to open 11 new charter schools in "priority communities". Federal policies have incentivized this move to privatize schools but research has shown that privatization is coming at a price of divestment. Schools serve as a stabilizing factor in neighborhoods overly subjected to volatile housing markets, gentrification, high mobility, stress due to poverty, violence and unemployment, and closing these schools destroys the hub of many vital community resources.

"Privatization of schools embodies education strategies which continue to perpetuate racial and class bias, support inequality in the quality of education and signals complete divestment in areas targeted for gentrification," said **Analia Rodriguez, parent organizer with ENLACE Chicago**. "This announcement on new charter school plans, made so quickly after the mass closings and layoffs, continues to fuel the fire of citywide frustration with the discriminatory school closings."

Journey for Justice

"A National Grassroots Education Alliance"

COALITION DEMANDS EQUITY, COMMUNITY VOICE & APPROPRIATE RESOURCES

The citywide education coalition organizing *Education is a Human Right* also announced at the press conference a list of specific local demands to stop the destabilization of Chicago communities of color and restore the human and civil right to a quality and safe education for all children.

Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization representative, **Jitu Brown**, presented local demands at the press conference on behalf of the citywide education coalition which includes **Action Now, Albany Park Neighborhood Council, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, ENLACE Chicago, Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization, Northside Action for Justice, Parents 4 Teachers, Pilsen Alliance, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Teachers for Social Justice**

Demands included:

- **Moratorium on all school closings, turnarounds, phase outs and charter expansions to be replaced by our proposal for Sustainable School Transformation to address the needs of struggling schools.**
- **Local legislation to create an elected representative school board in Chicago.**
- **Allocation of Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) funds and a financial transaction tax at the Mercantile Exchange in Chicago to re-open schools.**

"These measures are necessary to ensure equity and community voice in decisions about the education of our children as well as parity in the allocation of resources to schools that serve as the heart of our communities," said **Rico Gutstein, Teachers for Social Justice**.

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