



April 17, 2018

The Importance of Local School Councils (LSCs)

I am a strong supporter of Article X of the Illinois Constitution, and I believe that, by law, Illinois must provide a free and efficient system of high-quality public educational institutions and services. Local School Council (LSC) members are strong leaders in the community. We must increase the number of students meeting and exceeding state standards, the number of students reading at or above grade level, and the number of students graduating and moving on to higher education. With the support of the community and other elected officials, Local School Councils can be empowered to reshape the failing schools in our community.

LSCs were established in 1988 when the Chicago School Reform Act was passed. By law, LSCs play a role in decision-making at the local school level. . LSCs members have the responsibility of working on school improvement, school budgets, principal evaluations, and principal retention and selection. These are the keys to quality of each school.

This week, Chicago Public School parents, neighbors and school staffers will elect Local School Council members from more than 5,000 candidates. The 2018 local school council elections in Chicago will take place on Wednesday, April 18, 2018 for elementary schools and Thursday, April 19, 2018 for high schools. The term is for two years starting on July 1, 2018.

According to the Chicago Sun-Times, more than half of the schools will have at least one empty seat after votes have been cast. Some 290 CPS schools, or 57 percent, don't have enough candidates to fill the 12 positions on a typical LSC — 6 parents, two community members, two teachers, one staffer who isn't a teacher — plus the principal.

And 241 of those schools, about 47 percent of the total, couldn't attract enough parents to run for the council. Please check with your local schools to inquire about any vacancies. It's still possible after the election to fill a vacancy at your community school.

In 2014, it was my honor to be elected as Community Representative and to serve a two year term on the Local School Council of George Rogers Clark Elementary School in the South Austin. Our LSC worked hard to support the principal, teachers, and staff to improve the quality of education at Clark School.

LSCs play a major role in shaping the future of schools and communities. If we are going to allow them to continue to run our schools, we have to support them and demand progress. Let's turn out to vote and to support our schools by electing great people for our LSCs, or run yourself and help your local school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LSK', written in a cursive style.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District