

**Ron Huberman**  
Chief Executive Officer

We are pleased to announce the new Chief Area Officers, pending final Board approval. The Chief Area Officer (CAO) position replaces the former Area Instructional Officer (AIO) position, and is a critical component of the District's strategy for taking school improvement to the next level.

The CAO's primary responsibility is to strategically support schools in their work to increase student outcomes. CAOs will be accountable for specific student outcomes, including ensuring that elementary students are high school ready and increasing the number of students who both graduate and attend college. The role of Central Office will be to support area priorities as determined by the CAO and to ensure that the right accountability measures are in place for the District as a whole.

There will be 15 elementary areas, and 6 high school areas. Areas 8 and 12 have been consolidated into other areas, and the high school areas have been reconfigured, based on curriculum and geography. In addition, there will be a new area for special education schools. The Office of Turnaround, AMPS, and the Office of New Schools will continue to be distinct offices in this reorganization.

We conducted a nationwide search for effective leaders, receiving over 500 applications and interviewing 60 candidates. The new CAOs will be a strong mix of new talent, former AIOs, former principals, and Central Office leaders. I am confident that with their leadership we will continue to improve student outcomes and the educational opportunities for Chicago children.

A brief biography for each new CAO is included below. Please join me in welcoming them to CPS.

### **Elementary Schools**

#### **Area 1:**

**Joe Kallas** has been the AIO for Area 1 since 2007, where he helped implement Richard Elmore's Instructional Rounds framework with area principals and teachers. Prior to that, he was the principal of Peterson Elementary, where he developed and implemented a middle school-within-a-school model and saw 50% of his graduates accepted to selective enrollment high schools. Joe is a graduate of Loyola University and received his Master's Degree in Education Administration from Northeastern Illinois University.

#### **Area 2:**

**Deborah Esparza** has been the AIO for Area 2 since 2005, where composite ISAT scores for the area increased 19% during her tenure. Deborah was previously the principal of Stockton Elementary School, where she presided over substantial gains in reading and math scores on the ITBS. Deborah is a graduate of the University of Illinois-Chicago, received her Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Roosevelt University, and an Ed.S. in Educational Administration from Northern Illinois University. She is currently working on her Ed.D. at National Louis University.

### **Area 3:**

**Annette Gurley** has been the AIO of Area 3 for the past 2 years. In her first year as AIO, Area 3 achieved the second highest gains on the ISAT district-wide. Prior to serving as AIO, Annette was the principal of Michelle Clark High School, where she presided over 7 years of consecutive achievement gains and guided the school to full International Baccalaureate status. Annette was also a teacher for 14 years, and is a recipient of the Milken Family Foundation National Educators Award. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois, and obtained her Master's Degree in Administration and Supervision from Concordia University.

### **Area 4:**

**Pedro Martinez** has served as Chief Financial Officer in Chicago Public Schools for 6 years, helping to guide the District as its financial leader. He recently completed the Broad Superintendent Academy, a one-year training program with national experts on best practices in education leadership. Prior to joining Chicago Public Schools, he was the Director of Finance and Technology at Catholic Charities and an audit manager at Deloitte & Touche and PricewaterhouseCoopers. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in accounting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from DePaul University.

### **Area 6:**

**James Cosme** has been the AIO for Area 6 since 2006, where he pioneered a disaggregated ISAT data report that identified subgroup performance patterns, and implemented Elmore's Instructional Rounds model. Before this, James was the principal of Otis Elementary School, where he designed ESL courses in conjunction with Dominican and Northeastern Illinois Universities. James is a graduate of Southern Illinois University, and received his Master's Degree in Education from DePaul University.

### **Area 7:**

**Denise Little** has been the AIO of Area 7 since 2007, and saw the highest gains district-wide on ISAT composite scores in the first two years of her tenure. For thirteen years prior to serving as an AIO, Denise was the principal of Hefferan Elementary School. Under Denise's leadership, Hefferan received recognition from ISBE for producing 7 years of consecutive growth on ISAT scores. Denise graduated from Chicago State University, and holds a Master's Degree in Education from Governors State University.

### **Area 9:**

**Jennifer Cheatham** comes to CPS from San Francisco, CA, where she directed a not-for-profit partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District that focused on impacting the learning of ELL students. Prior to that, she was the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the San Diego Unified School District. Jennifer started her educational career as language arts teacher, and has additional experience leading teachers, principals, and district leaders in reform efforts. Jennifer is currently completing the Urban Superintendents Program at Harvard, and she will soon receive her Doctorate in Education, Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from Harvard University.

#### **Area 11:**

**Isabel Mesa-Collins** has been the AIO for Area 10 since 2007 and has presided over recent area-wide increases in reading and math scores. In this capacity, Isabel also managed the Cluster 4 Middle Grades Program and founded the Area 10 Middle School Articulation Committee to create better coherence among efforts to improve on-track rates between middle and high schools. Previously, Isabel spent 12 years as the principal of Drummond Montessori Magnet School. Isabel received her Bachelor's and Ed.D. Degrees from DePaul University, and also holds a Master's Degree in Education from Governors State University.

#### **Area 12:**

**Janie Ortega** was most recently an Executive Principal in the Austin School District, where she supervised and improved the performance of six under-performing high schools. Prior to that, as an Assistant Superintendent in the Boston Public Schools, she supported and supervised 45 principals. Janie was formerly a principal at two schools, one of which was recognized as a National Title I Distinguished School. Janie received both her Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction and her Doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of Texas, Austin.

#### **Area 13:**

**Shawn Smith** has worked for CPS since 2008 as the Deputy Officer for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment in the Autonomous Schools Office. Prior to that, Shawn spent five years in elementary school administration in Hermosa Beach, CA and Elgin, IL. While Shawn was principal of Huff Elementary School in Elgin, he oversaw substantial gains in ISAT scores, leading to selection of Huff in 2008 as a Model School by the International Center for Leadership in Education. Shawn is a graduate of Carthage College, holds a Master's Degree in Middle School Education from California State University, and received his Doctorate in Education from the University of Southern California.

#### **Area 14:**

**Adrian Willis** has been the AIO of Area 14 since 2008. For 7 years prior to serving as AIO, Adrian was the principal of Keller Magnet and the turnaround principal at Earle Elementary, which saw 11% gains in one year. Adrian is a graduate of Chicago State University, and obtained his Master's Degree in Educational Administration from Northeastern Illinois University.

#### **Area 15:**

**Judith Coates** was previously the Vice President of Academics for the Cristo Rey Network, supervising 25 new college preparatory high schools. Prior to that, she was the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction in Flagstaff, Arizona. Judith also served as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction in Skokie, IL, where she created the first district-wide data-driven school improvement plan. Judith obtained her Doctorate in Education Leadership and Policies, as well as a Master's and Bachelor's Degree, from Loyola University.

#### **Area 16:**

**Karen Saffold** has been the AIO of Area 16 since 2006, and in 2008 had the second highest value-added scores in reading district-wide. She was previously the principal at Vanderpoel Humanities Academy, where she implemented a school-wide literacy program and presided over increased test scores. Karen is a graduate of Illinois State University; she received her Master's Degree in Administration and Supervision from Roosevelt University and her Doctorate in Education from Nova Southeastern University. Karen is currently enrolled in the Superintendent Program at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

### **Area 17:**

**Geraldine Middleton** was most recently the Superintendent of Halifax County Schools in North Carolina, an area where she once taught and was also a principal. Prior to that, Geraldine was the Deputy Superintendent of Instruction and Curriculum for Ann Arbor Public Schools, where she focused on closing the achievement gap.. During her tenure as principal, she improved her school's status from State Take Over to a state-recognized School of Distinction. Geraldine is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Educational Administration and Policy Studies from Wayne State, and has obtained her Doctorate in Educational Administration and Supervision from East Carolina University.

### **Area 18:**

**Lynda Williams** has spent the last 9 years at American Quality Schools in Chicago, where most recently she served as the Regional Manager in charge of supervising and mentoring multiple elementary school leaders. Prior to that, she served as their Director of Academic Programs and as principal of Chicago International Charter School – Washington Park. Prior to joining American Quality Schools, Lynda taught at the elementary school level for 15 years. Lynda is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Organizational Change from Roosevelt University and obtained her Master's Degree from Xavier University.

## **High Schools**

### **Area 19:**

**Akeshia Craven** was most recently the Senior Manager of the Instructional Leadership Council in CPS where she worked with high school AIOs to use data to raise student achievement and freshman on-track rates. Prior to that, she spent two years as a Project Manager for the CPS High School Transformation initiative. Akeshia is a graduate of North Carolina State University and received her MBA from the Kellogg School of Management.

### **Area 21:**

**Sean Stalling** was previously the principal of Manley High School. During his tenure, Manley reduced its drop-out rate by 8.1% and saw an increase in the number of seniors accepted into post-secondary education. Sean also spent 8 years at Hales Franciscan High School in Chicago, serving as the Director of Admissions, Dean of Students, and Director of Athletics and Student Activities. Sean is a graduate of the New Leaders for New Schools Principal Training Program. He received his Bachelor's degree from Truman State University and his Master's Degree in Education Leadership and Supervision from National-Louis University.

### **Area 23:**

**John Thomas** has been principal at Carver Military Academy since 2000, overseeing several years of significant gains on the PSAE. Prior to serving at Carver, John worked for six years in CPS' Human Resources Department. John is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Administration and Supervision from Roosevelt University, and received both a Master's and Bachelor's Degree in Management from Alabama A&M.

### **Area 24:**

**Jerryelyn Jones** has been the AIO for Area 24 since 2007. Jerryelyn spent 18 years teaching in CPS at Lindblom High School and Curie High School, the latter of which she also led as principal for eight years. Jerryelyn is a graduate of Chicago State University, where she also received her Master's Degree in Education Administration.

**Area 25:**

**Jon Reinhard** was most recently the National Director of the Academy of Engineering for the National Academy Foundation in New York, where he designed and implemented a national STEM program to increase the representation of women and minorities in science programs. In addition to 10 years of experience as a principal and assistant principal in Ohio, and 7 years of experience as a teacher, Jon has worked internationally as an educational consultant. Jon has received Doctorate, Master's, and Bachelor's Degrees in Education from the University of Cincinnati.

**Area 26:**

**Rick Mills** has worked with the military schools in CPS since 2001, first as the Director of the Department of Military Schools and JROTC, and most recently as AIO for the Area Office of Military Schools. In that capacity, Rick supervised the performance of the City's 6 military academy high schools and all JROTC and middle school cadet programs. Rick is a retired Lieutenant Colonel of the U.S. Army, and prior to joining CPS spent over 20 years in the military. Rick is a graduate of Indiana University, and holds a Master's Degree in National Security Affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School and an MBA from Webster University.

**Area 27 (Special Education):**

**Richard Smith** has been the principal of the Frederick Stock School in Chicago since 1990, and during that time transformed the school from a special education facility of 80 students into a model early childhood development center serving over 250 students. Among other accomplishments, he has won the Outstanding Principal School Leadership Award, served as an Assistant Professor for Special Education at Northern Illinois University, and served on the Kohl-McCormick Early Childhood Teaching Awards Selection Committee. He received his Bachelor's Degree and Doctorate in Education from Northern Illinois University and his Master's Degree in Special Education from National Lewis University.