

October 31, 2018

Tony Manno
Senior Planner
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, Illinois 60606



Dear Tony,

On behalf of Chicago Public Schools, I am pleased to submit this letter in support of Kids First Chicago's application to CMAP's Local Technical Assistance program.

Since 2004, Kids First Chicago has been a valuable partner for Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in creating quality education options for Chicago students and implementing solutions to families' pain points when it comes to education in the city.

In September 2018, CPS released the Annual Regional Analysis (ARA), developed in partnership with Kids First, which presents a transparent, unified fact base on school quality, quantity, choice, and programmatic trends to the public for the first time. The ARA pulls data from a variety of sources into one access point. While it provides a useful starting point for conversations about school investment and decision-making, the data does not tell the full story or draw any conclusions. Instead, it has made clear several areas where further research is necessary.

Transportation is one of these areas. The ARA showed us that students in many high-need, high-minority regions are traveling significantly further to school each day than their peers in more affluent communities, but it doesn't tell us why, nor does it tell us how this travel is affecting student experiences and outcomes. This is where Kids First Chicago's data expertise comes in: CPS requires an independent intermediary to help explore these questions fully and provide potential solutions to this inequity.

CPS would welcome the chance to explore students' transportation and associated access challenges with CMAP, Kids First and other thought leaders. If you have any questions about this project, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration of Kids First Chicago's application.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Dispensa", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

James Dispensa
Director, Demographics and Planning, Chicago Public Schools



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November 2

Tony Manno
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Dear Tony,

As a long-time West Englewood resident and Alderman of Chicago's 16th Ward, I am pleased to submit this letter in support of Kids First Chicago's application to CMAP's Local Technical Assistance program.

My ward is located in Chicago's South Side region, home to nearly 29,000 students, 99% of whom are African American or Latino. According to Chicago Public Schools' and Kids First Chicago's Annual Regional Analysis, elementary and high school students in our region travel, respectively, 1.9 and 4.2 miles to school each day, significantly further than the district average. We now seek to understand why and how they are traveling this far each day, and how this travel is affecting student experiences and outcomes.

We cannot improve the current transportation infrastructure for students without first understanding it. Kids First Chicago's project is the first step towards building this understanding and improving access for all students in all regions of the city.

I welcome the opportunity to partner with Kids First Chicago, CMAP, and other thought leaders in exploring students' transportation and access challenges. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions in regards to this project. Thank you for considering Kids First Chicago's application.

Regards,

Toni L. Foulkes
Alderman 16th Ward

TLF/aus