



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2022

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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES NEW MEMBERS TO THE CHICAGO BOARD OF EDUCATION

Michael Scott Jr., Sulema Medrano Novak and Paige Ponder join the Board of Education with decades of experience over the course of their careers

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced former Alderman of the 24th Ward, Michael Scott Jr. Sulema Medrano Novak, and Paige Ponder as the new members who will be joining the Chicago's Board of Education.

“Selecting a member for the Chicago Board of Education is a decision that will impact thousands of students and must be made carefully,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “I am confident that Michael Scott Jr., Sulema Medrano Novak, and Paige Ponder will be great additions to the board. Their collective years of experience and dedication will be a great asset to our board and will benefit our students and teachers for years to come.”

Former Alderman Michael Scott Jr. has been announced as one of the incoming members of the Chicago Public School Board of Education. After more than seven years serving Chicago residents of the 24th Ward, being a committed public servant from the start of his career as a Chicago Park District as Park Supervisor between 2000 through 2005, and as an Area Manager from 2007 to 2015, while also being a City Wide Sports Coordinator with the Chicago Public Schools for years in 2005 - 2007, he has accomplished an exceptional career in public service and education for more than 20 years. His experience and humble dedication to Chicago's youth, made Michael Scott Jr. one of the most outstanding candidates for this position. Michael Scott Jr. received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Government in 1998 from Morehouse College.

“I'm honored and humbled to take on this new role with the Board of Education and serve students, families and staff of Chicago Public Schools,” said Michael Scott Jr. “This is an extraordinary opportunity to build on my father's legacy with CPS and



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



the continued drive to improve and expand student opportunities, experiences and outcomes. I'm eager to get started with the Board of Education”

The second incoming member is Sulema Medrano Novak. Sulema is an accomplished and award-winning trial lawyer with extensive experience leading trial teams to verdict, most recently as a partner at Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP. Sulema is also an active advocate for women and diverse members of the legal community. She is a first-generation college graduate and has a deep belief in the power of education to change lives. Sulema is currently serving on the City's Human Resource Board. As a new member of the Chicago Public Schools Board of Education, Sulema has agreed to resign from the Human Resource Board in order to devote her time and commitment to her new role. Sulema graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Art from James Madison Honors College at Michigan State University and received her Juris Doctrine from Chicago Kent College of Law.

"I am honored to be appointed as the new member of the Chicago Public School Board of Education. This role is critical in the empowerment of students and teachers," said Sulema Medrano Novak. "I am ready to listen to our school communities and ensure that every student has the resources and support they need."

Lastly, Paige Ponder will join be joining the board. Paige Ponder is the visiting Senior Advisor, Pritzker Tech Talent Labs. Paige is CEO of One Million Degrees (OMD), an organization dedicated to supporting and accelerating low-income community college students along their pathways to upwardly mobile careers.

In the last six years at OMD, Paige has led the organization through a period of dramatic growth, increasing the number of scholars served each year by eight times. Paige joined OMD in 2012 after leading Project Exploration, a dynamic youth STEM organization. Prior to Project Exploration, Paige was Officer of Student Support and Engagement at Chicago Public Schools (CPS). While at CPS, Paige designed and led initiatives to systematically drive up the number of freshmen students on track to graduate by developing early warning indicators and disseminating promising practices for high schools to better support freshmen during this transitional year.

"Becoming a member of such a historic board is not just an honor but a privilege. For years, I have had the pleasure of working with institutions that have prepared me for this role and I'm excited to support and find new strategies to represent our school communities," said Paige Ponder.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



In addition, Paige was appointed to the Illinois Community College Board and is a 2019 Fellow with Leadership Greater Chicago. But Paige's commitment to education continues as she serves on the Steering Committee of the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, the Advisory Council for the Urban Education Institute's To&Through Project, the Advisory Council of National Louis University's Harrison Professional Pathways Program, and the Advisory Committee for the Illinois Postsecondary Education Report Card.

Paige is a member of the Economic Club of Chicago. Paige graduated from Princeton University with a degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. She earned an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. Paige lives in Andersonville with her husband and their three children.

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