

## **Statement from the Council of Urban Boards of Education on the Decision to Keep Its Annual Conference in Atlanta**

The steering committee of the National School Boards Association's (NSBA) Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) has voted to keep its annual conference, scheduled for September 16-18, in Atlanta. CUBE's annual conference gathers hundreds of urban school board leaders who are focused on learning and sharing effective lessons for addressing the unique challenges that exist in our nation's urban centers.

"The decision to continue our plans to hold the CUBE 2021 Annual Conference in Atlanta required careful analysis and contemplation," said Dr. Steve Gallon III, Chair of CUBE and School Board Member and Vice-Chair of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the nation's 4th largest school district. "For more than 50 years, CUBE has served as a strong, unified voice for educational equity and opportunity for underserved and underrepresented children and families across this country. After analyzing and discussing the issues in Georgia, our leadership unanimously agreed that remaining in Atlanta would support our mission of dismantling elements of systemic racism that vex the learning and lives of Black, Brown, and poor children in urban districts across the nation, and further advance our collective commitment to social justice. Thus, we are looking forward to working with Atlanta's local leaders and grassroots organizations in formulating strategies that not only improve the education of students, but also support protecting and strengthening voter rights for the people in Georgia and throughout the nation."

"We live in a democratic society and stand firm in our commitment and belief in every individual's right to vote," said Erika Mitchell, Vice Chair of CUBE and a member of the Atlanta Board of Education. "We also recognize that moving our conference would impact the lives and jobs of Georgians, especially residents of Atlanta. So while we will continue to oppose any efforts to disenfranchise voters, we do not want to add to the pain already being felt by Georgia's hard-working families. Being the first and only Atlanta Public School Board Member to serve on CUBE and elected as Vice Chair, I am excited for my school district and the city of Atlanta to host CUBE and its mission to create educational opportunities for urban school board leaders to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to serve as effective local education policymakers and as advocates for equity in public education."

"We are thankful that the Council of Urban Boards of Education made the decision to keep its annual conference in Atlanta," said Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms. "Education is the cornerstone of our Administrative Order to combat the intended ill effects of SB 202 on voters. Voting is a constitutional right and I am confident that educating our voters about how to safely and effectively cast their votes is how we can fight back against intimidation and other efforts to diminish the vote."

"I look forward to convening in Atlanta with our CUBE members not just for a conference, but for a cause," said Dr. Viola M. Garcia, NSBA President and member of the Aldine Independent School District Board of Trustees. "A cause with a united voice that believes that education, like voting, is a civil right. One that stands in solidarity with those working to ensure that all individuals have a stake in our democracy. And one that is passionate about ensuring that all students receive the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to succeed in our democratic society—one that is shaped by the value of individual rights and the principle of one person, one vote."

"As we begin to recover from a pandemic that has disproportionately impacted students who were already facing great challenges in their lives, I look forward to working with CUBE members and local leaders to address these inequities and ensure that all children have access to a great education," said Anna Maria Chávez, NSBA Executive Director & CEO.

Individuals interested in submitting a proposal for the CUBE conference can do so via [this link](#).