

October 29, 2010

Hon. Richard M. Daley
Mayor, City of Chicago
121 N. LaSalle St., #507
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: Upgrade to CPS After-School Chess Program

Dear Mayor Daley:

As Illinois' chess Grandmasters and International Masters, we are writing to ask your support of the recent proposal of the Illinois Chess Association (ICA) to build a strong program of free after-school chess instruction in Chicago's Title 1 schools. The program has the potential to significantly complement Chicago's after-school programs for kids in all grades and to transform the lives of children in need.

The proposal is the subject of meetings and discussion with Mr. Huberman's deputy chief of staff, J. Terence Patterson. We applaud and support those efforts. ICA has suggested a public announcement of the proposal on November 13th (details appear below). Should that announcement take place, it would be a great honor if you were able to attend.

We know of your support for scholastic chess through events such as the annual chess championship at your Holiday Sports Festival and your recent Chess Day Proclamation. What Chicago needs, in our view, is a stronger free instructional program, which is the focus of ICA's enclosed proposal. Entitled "Why Not Chicago?," it summarizes the research on the benefits of chess for children (including improvements in academic performance, attendance, and behavior) and explains that Chicago lags far behind other major cities, such as New York, Philadelphia and Miami in the number of children receiving chess instruction. While programs in other cities reach 60% to 100% of their Title 1 schools, Chicago's current programs reach only 10% of Title 1 schools.

Chicago has a number of private chess service providers, but they are unable on their own to meet the needs of the vast majority of the city's low-income students. What the city needs is what other cities already have: a robust, centralized city-wide program that is free to students in Title 1 schools and would supplement existing private programs.

We are keenly aware of the fiscal constraints facing Chicago and CPS. ICA therefore plans to seek funds for the program from the private sector. The effort will also be supported by volunteers.

ICA has met with After School Matters, which has supported some high school chess programs in the past. Because of budget reductions, they are unable to play a major role in helping to run the new program but may be able to help train high school students to play key roles in chess clubs in CPS schools.

The November 13th announcement would take place at Whitney Young Magnet High School, the host that day of one of Illinois' premier youth chess tournaments, the Illinois All Grade Chess Championship. The event, being held in Chicago for the first time in its history, is expected to attract 500 or more of the state's top young players, along with their coaches and families. 300 free entries are being offered to students in the free or reduced lunch program.

The proposal is being spearheaded by Tom Sprandel, the president of ICA, and Jerry Neugarten, the chair of ICA's Youth Committee. Your support of this effort, either by letter or your appearance, would be enormously helpful. I am sure Tom and Jerry would appreciate hearing from you. Their contact information appears below.

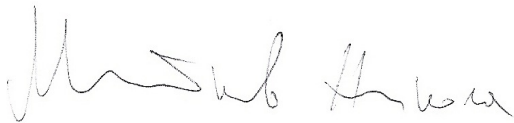
Sincerely,



Mesgen Amanov
Grandmaster



Dmitry Gurevich
Grandmaster



Nikola Mitkov
Grandmaster



Yury Shulman
Grandmaster



Florin Felecan
International Master



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Replies may be addressed to:

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