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BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS FOR THE CITY OF CHICAGO AS A DULY CONSTITUTED ELECTORAL BOARD

Objections of: Robin Hansen	)	
	)	
	)	
To the Nomination	)	No.: 26-EB-SBD-017
Papers of: Michilla "Kyla" Blaise	)	
	)	
Candidate for the office of	)	
Member of the Chicago Board of Education,	)	
Subdistrict 5B of the City of Chicago	)	

FINDINGS AND DECISION

The duly constituted Electoral Board, consisting of the Board of the Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago, Commissioners Marisel A. Hernandez, June A. Brown and Laura Kotelman, organized by law in response to a Call issued by Marisel A. Hernandez, Chair of said Electoral Board, for the purpose of hearing and passing upon objections ("Objections") of Robin Hansen ("Objector") to the nomination papers ("Nomination Papers") of Michilla "Kyla" Blaise, candidate for the office of Member of the Chicago Board of Education, Subdistrict 5B in the City of Chicago ("Candidate") at the General Election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, having convened on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 800, 69 West Washington Street, Chicago Illinois, and having heard and determined the Objections to the Nomination Papers in the above-entitled matter, finds that:

1. Objections to the Nomination Papers of the Candidate were duly and timely filed.

2. The Electoral Board was constituted according to the laws of the State of Illinois.

3. A Call to the hearing on said Objections was duly issued by the Chair of the Electoral Board and served upon the members of the Electoral Board, the Objector and the

Candidate, by registered or certified mail and by Sheriff's service, as provided by statute or statutory service was waived and service by email was authorized.

4. A public hearing held on these Objections commenced on Wednesday, June 10, 2026 and was continued from time to time.

5. The Electoral Board assigned this matter to Hearing Officer Demetrius Carney for further hearings and proceedings.

6. The Objector and the Candidate were directed by the Electoral Board's Call served upon them to appear before the Hearing Officer on the date and at the time designated in the Hearing Schedule. Appearances were filed by or on behalf of the following persons: the Objector, Robin Hansen, by Attorney MICHAEL J KASPER, ERIC M. DOMIJANCIC and JOHN FOGARTY; and the Candidate, Michilla "Kyla" Blaise, by Attorney ED MULLEN and STEVEN FINE.

7. The Hearing Officer ordered that an examination of the voter registration records be conducted by clerks and agents under the Board's direction and supervision, in accordance with the laws of Illinois and the rules of the Board.

8. The Hearing Officer directed all parties to appear and be present, either personally and/or by their authorized representatives during this records examination.

9. The Candidate and/or the Candidate's duly authorized representative was present during the examination of the registration records or waived their right to do so.

10. The Objector and/or the Objector's duly authorized representative was present during the examination of the registration records or waived their right to do so.

11. The examination of the registration records was completed and the Electoral Board hereby adopts and incorporates by reference the results of the records examination

conducted by its clerks and agents. The written report of the result of the registration records examination is contained in the Board's file in this case and a copy has been provided or made available to the parties.

12. The results of the records examination indicate that:

A. The minimum number of valid signatures required by law for placement on the ballot for the office in question is 500.

B. The number of purportedly valid signatures appearing on the nominating petition filed by the Candidate total 1,453.

C. The number of signatures deemed invalid because of objections sustained as a result of the records examination total 947.

D. The remaining number of signatures deemed valid as a result of the records examination total 506.

13. The Electoral Board finds that the number of valid signatures appearing on the Candidate's nominating petition following completion of the records examination exceeds the minimum number of valid signatures required by law to be placed upon the ballot as a candidate for the office of Member of the Chicago Board of Education, Subdistrict 5B, City of Chicago.

14. Both parties filed motions pursuant to Rule 8 of the Electoral Board's Rules of Procedure ("Rule 8 Motions"). The Hearing Officer conducted a hearing to allow the parties an opportunity to present evidence in support of their Rule 8 Motions objecting to the Board's clerk's findings during the records examination.

15. The Hearing Officer has tendered to the Electoral Board a report and recommended decision. Based upon the evidence presented, the Hearing Officer found that the Candidate's Nomination Papers contained 507 valid signatures, which exceeds the minimum

number of valid signatures required by law to be placed upon the ballot as a candidate for the office of Member of the Chicago Board of Education, Subdistrict 5B, City of Chicago, and that the Candidate's Nomination Papers should be found valid.

16. Objector(s) further allege that circulators who circulated for an established party candidate at the March 2026 General Primary are prohibited from circulating for a nonpartisan school board candidate to be elected at the November 2026 General Election and that the signatures gathered by the "dual circulators" are invalid and in violation of Section 10-4 of the Election Code. The Electoral Board, having heard this issue in a separate consolidated proceeding and having considered the pleadings, motions, responses, oral arguments and relevant caselaw, all of which shall remain a part of the record, finds that the decision in *McCaskill v Municipal Officers Electoral Bd. For the City of Harvey, et. al.,* 2019 IL App (1st) 190190, is binding upon the Electoral Board. The Appellate Court unequivocally ruled therein that "[s]imply stated, the dual-circulation prohibition in section 10-4 does not apply to nonpartisan elections." *Id.* at ¶ 45. Accordingly, the objection(s) based upon alleged dual circulation are therefore overruled.

17. The Electoral Board, having considered the evidence and arguments tendered by the parties and the Hearing Officer's report of recommended findings and conclusions of law, hereby adopts the Hearing Officer's recommended findings and conclusions of law and incorporates them herein.

18. For the reasons stated above, the Electoral Board finds that the Candidate has a sufficient number of valid signatures on her nominating petitions and that the Nomination Papers of Michilla "Kyla" Blaise are, therefore, valid.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Objections of Robin Hansen to the Nomination Papers of Michilla "Kyla" Blaise, candidate for the office of Member of the Chicago Board of Education, Subdistrict 5B, City of Chicago are hereby OVERRULED and said Nomination Papers are hereby declared VALID and the name of Michilla "Kyla" Blaise SHALL be printed on the official ballot for the General Election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.

Dated: Chicago, Illinois, Tuesday, August 11, 2026.

Marisel A. Hernandez, Chair

June A. Brown, Commissioner

Laura Kotelman, Commissioner

NOTICE: Pursuant to Section 10-10.1 of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/10-10.1) a party aggrieved by this decision and seeking judicial review of this decision must file a petition for judicial review with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County within 5 days after service of the decision of the Electoral Board.

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO AS THE DULY CONSTITUTED ELECTORAL BOARD FOR THE HEARING AND PASSING UPON OBJECTIONS TO THE NOMINATION PAPERS OF CANDIDATES FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026, FOR THE OFFICE OF MEMBER OF THE CHICAGO BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 5B, CITY OF CHICAGO, STATE OF ILLINOIS

Robin Hansen,
Petitioner Objector

To the Nomination Papers of:

Michilla "Kyla" Blaise,
Candidate for Office of Member,
Chicago Board of Education, District 5B
City of Chicago, State of Illinois

Case No. 26-EB-SBD-017

HEARING OFFICER'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDED DECISION

This matter coming before the Board of Election Commissioners of the City of Chicago (CEB or the Board) on the verified objections (Objection or Objections) of Robin Hansen (Objector or Petitioner) to the nomination papers (Nomination Papers) of Michilla "Kyla" Blaise, candidate for Member of the Chicago Board of Education, District 5B, City of Chicago, State of Illinois (Candidate).

Demetrius E. Carney, Esq., the duly appointed Hearing Officer, hereby makes the following findings of **Fact, Conclusions, and Recommendation:**

1. The Candidate filed Nomination Papers with the CEB for the office of Member of the Chicago Board of Education, District 5B, for the General Election to be held on November 3, 2026.

2. Such Nomination Papers consisted of:

   a. A Statement of Candidacy,
   b. A receipt for the Statement of Economic Interest,
   c. A Loyalty Oath, and
   d. 182 Nominating Petition Sheets containing a total of 1,453 signatures.

3. Objections to the Nomination Papers of the Candidate herein were duly and timely filed. A public hearing (i.e., initial case management conference) on the Objections commenced on June 10, 2026. The Candidate was represented by Counsel – Ed Mullen, Esq., and

Steven Fine, Esq. The Objector was represented by Counsel – John G. Fogarty, Jr., Esq. and Michael J. Kasper, Esq. The Objector and Candidate timely filed their respective Appearance and Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality Agreement.

4. The basis of the Objector's petition – The Candidate lacks the necessary valid signatures to appear on the ballot, based upon line-by-line objections to the petition sheets; and previously circulated nomination papers for candidates of established political parties in the General Primary Election held on March 17, 2026, in alleged violation of Sections 10-3.1 and 10-4 of the Illinois Election Code (the "dual-circulation" objection, set forth in Paragraph 9 of the Objector's Petition).

5. At the initial hearing, the Candidate indicated an intention to move to strike the dual-circulation allegation, and the parties agreed that the line-by-line signature objections should be referred to a Records Examination (Records Exam) pursuant to Electoral Board Rule 6.

6. On June 10, 2026, the Electoral Board issued a directive consolidating the dual-circulation legal issue across all applicable Chicago Board of Education cases for a single hearing before the full Electoral Board.

7. On June 11, 2026, the Candidates' Combined Motion to Strike, applicable to all consolidated cases and seeking to strike the dual-circulation objection, was filed. On June 15, 2026, the Objectors filed their Consolidated Response opposing the Motion.

8. On June 17, 2026, the Objector's counsel filed a Request for Subpoenas seeking witness testimony and the production of documents relating to the dual-circulation allegations, which request was served on the Hearing Officer for review under Electoral Board Rule 19. On June 29, 2026, the Hearing Officer filed with the Electoral Board a Recommendation on the Objector's Subpoena Request, finding the request timely and procedurally compliant under Rule 19(c).

9. On June 30, 2026, at a duly noticed open public meeting, the full Electoral Board heard oral argument from counsel on the dual-circulation legal issue. At the conclusion of argument, the Electoral Board unanimously voted to enter a preliminary finding and decision that the Illinois Appellate Court's opinion in *McCaskill v. Municipal Officers Electoral Board for the City of Harvey*, 2019 IL App (1st) 190190, is binding upon the Electoral Board, and that the dual-circulation prohibition in Section 10-4 of the Election Code does not apply to nonpartisan elections. The ruling was memorialized in a written Notice of Preliminary Ruling and served on all parties, with the Board's stated intention to overrule all objections based upon the dual-circulation legal issue.

10. On July 1, 2026, the Electoral Board entered an Order on the Rule 19 Subpoena Request DENYING the Objector's subpoena request as moot considering the Preliminary Ruling. The Order was filed and served on the parties.

11. The Records Examination was completed on July 8, 2026. The Final Petition Summary Report disclosed 2,339 objections ruled upon, of which 947 were sustained and 185 were overruled, and certified that the Candidate's Nomination Papers contain 506 valid signatures – six (6) signatures over the minimum threshold requirement of five hundred (500) signatures to qualify for the ballot for the office sought.

12. On July 9, 2026, the Objector and the Candidate each timely filed a Motion for an Evidentiary Hearing pursuant to Rule 8 of the Board's Rules of Procedure. On July 14, 2026, the Objector filed a Motion for a Hearing Officer's Directive under Rule 19 seeking the production of registration records and related materials.

13. The parties appeared on July 15, 2026, for the purpose of addressing the exchange of disclosure documents, and a schedule was established. Disclosure documents to be exchanged by 1:00 p.m. on July 16, 2026, and the evidentiary hearing to commence at 11:00 a.m. on July 17, 2026.

14. Rule 8 evidentiary hearing was convened on July 17, 2026. Both parties appeared by counsel, presented evidence, examined witnesses, and made offers of proof as to matters excluded from evidence. The records sought by the Objector's directive motion had not been produced when the hearing was convened. During a recess, the Assistant Director of Registration confirmed that the request as transmitted had been understood as a request to confirm signatures rather than a request for official certified records. By agreement, the Objector rested its case, so that the official records could be obtained, and certified copies were produced later in the proceeding.

15. Upon the Objector's Rule 8 Motion, and upon certified records admitted at the hearing, the following objections previously overruled in the Records Examination were **SUSTAINED**:

180/4 – Christopher Jackson – signer not registered in the district;

180/6 – Candace Stigler – signer not registered in the district;

128/1 – Joe Murdock – address of record differs and signer not registered in the district.

16. Upon the Candidate's Rule 8 Motion, and upon notarized affidavits of the individual voters together with the testimony of circulator Johnny Anderson, the following objections previously sustained in the Records Examination were **OVERRULED**, and the signatures below are restored as valid:

138/9 – Mary Kemp;

151/8 – Steven Kenny;

165/1 – Larissa Henderson;

166/8 – Naneka Henderson;

179/4 – Mya (Myra) Burks.

Since the Hearing Officer was not a handwriting expert, the Hearing Officer relied upon the sworn affidavits of the signers. The Objector preserved its objection that the signatures are not sufficiently similar to the signatures of record.

17. Group Exhibits were received: the Candidate's Group Exhibit 6 (remaining voter affidavits, offered as a proffer) and the Objector's Group Exhibit I (certified copies of registration records).

18. The parties stipulated on the record that the blank line at Sheet 177, Line 6 is not a signature and was removed from the total count of signatures and that the crossed-out signature at Sheet 119, Line 10, which was initialed but not carried onto the certification of deletions, was counted as valid signature. Upon confirmation with the assistant manager of voter registration, the total signatures count was amended to 1452.

19. Both parties acknowledged on the record that, even if every remaining certified-record objection of the Objector was sustained, the Candidate would remain above the 500-signature minimum. The dual-circulation objection was not litigated at July 17, 2026, evidentiary hearing; it was reserved in light of the Board's Preliminary Ruling.

20. On July 24, 2026, the Objector filed a Motion for Leave to Make an Offer of Proof as to the dual-circulator objection. On July 25, 2026, the Hearing Officer issued a Notice of Motion setting the Candidate's response deadline at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, July 27, 2026. The Candidate timely filed no objection to the Motion.

Signature Tally:

Applying the rulings entered on July 17, 2026, evidentiary hearing to the certified results of the Records Examination:

Valid signatures certified in the Final Petition Summary Report	506
Less blank line at Sheet 177, Line 6 (not a signature)	(-1)
Less objections sustained upon the Objector's Rule 8 Motion	(-3)
Plus, objections overruled upon the Candidate's Rule 8 Motion	(+5)
Total valid signatures	**507**

The Candidate's Nomination Papers therefore contain 507 valid signatures, seven (7) signatures more than the statutory minimum of five hundred (500).

Relevant Issue:

As a result of the Records Examination and the Rule 8 evidentiary hearing, signature sufficiency was conclusively established and no longer at issue. The Candidate was shown to have valid signatures more than the statutory minimum of five hundred (500), and both parties acknowledged on the record that no remaining line-by-line objection, individually or in the aggregate, can reduce the count below that minimum.

The sole remaining issue is the Objector's dual-circulation objection: whether the Nomination Papers are invalid because certain petition sheets were circulated by persons who previously circulated nomination papers for established party candidates in the March 17, 2026, General Primary Election.

Legal Reference:

McCaskill v. Municipal Officers Electoral Board for the City of Harvey, 2019 IL App (1st) 190190; 10 ILCS 5/10-4; 10 ILCS 5/10-3.1.

McCaskill holds that the dual-circulation prohibition in Section 10-4 of the Illinois Election Code does not apply to nonpartisan elections. The office of Member of the Chicago Board of Education is a nonpartisan office to be voted upon on November 3, 2026, in the General Election.

Closing Discussion:

The line-by-line signature objections were resolved through the Records Examination conducted pursuant to Electoral Board Rule 6 and through the evidentiary hearing conducted pursuant to Rule 8 on July 17, 2026. Three of the Objector's objections were sustained upon certified records; the Objector's remaining preserved objections were overruled for want of expert testimony or other competent evidence as required by Board Rule 6(b)(3). The five objections previously sustained in the Records Examination were overruled upon presentation by the Candidate of notarized voter affidavits and the testimony of the circulator. **The resulting count leaves the Candidate above the 500-signature minimum, and signature sufficiency is therefore established as a matter of record.**

With respect to the dual-circulation objection, the Electoral Board, following consolidated oral argument on June 30, 2026, unanimously entered a preliminary finding and decision that *McCaskill* is binding upon the Electoral Board and that the dual-circulation prohibition in Section 10-4 does not apply to nonpartisan elections. Because the office of Member of the Chicago Board of Education is a nonpartisan office, the dual-circulation objection fails as a matter of law, and the Board has directed that all objections based upon the dual-circulation legal issue be overruled. Consistent with the Board's Preliminary Ruling, the Objector's dual-circulation objection should be overruled.

The Objector's Motion for Leave to Make an Offer of Proof as to the dual-circulator objection seeks only to preserve the evidentiary record on an issue the Board has resolved as a matter of law. Granting leave neither disturbs the Preliminary Ruling nor alters the disposition recommended herein and preserves the record for review. The Motion was granted and the offer of proof will be entered into the record for preservation purposes only.

Conclusion:

The Candidate's Nomination Papers contain valid signatures more than the statutory minimum, and the Objector's remaining objection fails as a matter of law under the Electoral Board's June 30, 2026, Preliminary Ruling.

THEREFORE, it is my recommendation that the name of the Candidate **Michilla "Kyla" Blaise SHALL BE** printed on the ballot for the office of Member of the Chicago Board of Education, District 5B, at the General Election to be held on November 3, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,

Demetrius E. Carney, Hearing Officer
July 30, 2026