



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON CELEBRATES 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF DYETT HIGH SCHOOL HUNGER STRIKE**

*This week represents the 10-year anniversary of Mayor Johnson joining the hunger strikers fighting to prevent Dyett High School from closing.*

**CHICAGO** – Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson celebrates the 10-year anniversary of the Dyett High School Hunger Strike, a 34-day protest of parents and community leaders fighting to prevent the closure of Dyett High School in the Washington Park neighborhood on the South Side. Tonight, Mayor Johnson will join local leaders, along with Dyett High School students and alumni, including those who participated in the hunger strike, for a 10-Year Celebration event hosted at the Chicago Cultural Center.

During the anniversary event, Mayor Johnson will present participants in the hunger strike with an honorary street sign in recognition of their bravery and dedication to the community.

"We fought to save Dyett High School because we still believe in the promise of a quality public education for every single child in Chicago," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "The community, the parents, and the teachers came together to resist the closure of Dyett. The four-year-long fight for Dyett, which culminated in the 34-day hunger strike, is a testament to the importance of strong community-based organizations like the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO) in our neighborhoods. Organizations like KOCO have led the struggle against school privatization since 2004 and built up a base to fight back against school closures. The coalition of community members, educators, and advocates led to the successful struggle to save Dyett, and I am honored to have been a part of that history."

Mayor Johnson joined the hunger strikers on the 24th day of the strike and participated until an agreement was reached to reopen Dyett High School with additional investments from the City.



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**Mayor Johnson** continued, "Today, we continue to fight for fully funded schools and an equitable distribution of resources throughout our city. It is more urgent than ever to come together around a common agenda to make our schools the hubs of our communities."

This year, Mayor Johnson [welcomed](#) student-athletes from Dyett High School to City Hall after their men's basketball team became 2A State Champions. Mayor Johnson spoke to the students about how meaningful it was to see them succeed a decade after the community rallied to reopen the school.

*Photos from the meeting are available [here](#).*

"For then-organizer Brandon Johnson to join the hunger strike how he did was more than a sign of solidarity; it was a showing of true brotherhood," said **Chicago Board of Education Member and hunger striker Jitu Brown**. "I appreciate that we have a mayor who didn't just talk the talk about his willingness to fight for public education. He lived it. It is in those moments of real struggle when you learn where people really stand, and this mayor showed exactly who he is when he joined that hunger strike ten years ago."

"Ten years ago, our community had to put our lives on the line to save Dyett High School. Parents, grandparents, teachers, and neighbors undertook a courageous hunger strike because the city turned its back on us and thought they could close Dyett without a fight. We proved them wrong," said **20th Ward Alderwoman and hunger striker Jeanette B. Taylor**. "As we mark this anniversary, we honor the legacy of those who stood in the gap for our children, and we recommit ourselves to the work ahead. Every young person in our city deserves a fully-resourced school, caring educators, and the opportunity to thrive."

In 2013, Chicago carried out the largest mass school closing in United States history, with 50 schools shuttered, impacted over 17,000 students and 1,500 staff. Dyett was one of several neighborhood schools slated for closure. Today, Dyett is at nearly full capacity and has become a thriving community hub which supports students and their families.

A trailblazer for the Sustainable Community Schools model, Dyett Arts offers wrap-around services that ensure students receive not just an education, but the support systems needed to thrive. Mayor Johnson announced the [largest expansion of Sustainable Community Schools](#) in Chicago's history, almost doubling the participating schools from 20 to 36 in the 2025-26 school year. As part of the contract between Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), the number of Sustainable Community Schools will increase to 70 over the duration of the contract.



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The success of Dyett Arts over the last decade is a testament to the power of public education when its well-funded and fully supported as well as the transformative impact community investment can have in areas that have faced chronic disinvestment.

### **Supplemental Reporting:**

9/14/2015: *New York Times*: [\*A Hunger Strike in Chicago\*](#) [Video]  
9/2015: *Chicago Sun-Times*: [\*Three More Join Dyett Hunger Strike\*](#) [Lauren FitzPatrick]  
9/21/2015: *The New Yorker*: [\*"We Shall Not Be Moved": A Hunger Strike. Education, and Housing in Chicago\*](#) [Eve L. Ewing]  
11/2/2016: *Block Club Chicago*: [\*Dyett Reopens With \\$14.6M Upgrade A Year After Hunger Strike Stops Closure\*](#) [Sam Cholke]  
3/21/2025: *Chicago Tribune*: [\*Once on the brink of closure, Dyett High School wins first ever basketball state championship: 'We're making it worth your fight'\*](#) [Rebecca Johnson]  
3/24/2025: *Block Club Chicago*: [\*10 Years After Hunger Strikers Saved Dyett High School, Boys Basketball Team Wins State Title\*](#) [Mack Liederman]  
3/25/2025: *Chicago Tribune*: [\*Photos: Mayor Brandon Johnson hosts CPS basketball champs\*](#) [Eileen T. Meslar]

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