



Jitu Brown, Chicago Board of Education Member District 5A

Jitu Brown, who is married and has one child, is the National Director for the Journey for Justice Alliance, a network of grassroots organizations in over 30 cities organizing for community-driven school improvement. He was formerly the education organizer for the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO). Born and raised in the Rosemoor neighborhood on the far South Side of Chicago, Brown is a product of Chicago Public Schools. He studied at Eastern Arizona College and Northeastern Illinois University, majoring in communications with a minor in Spanish.

Brown started volunteering with KOCO in 1991, became a board member in 1993 and for several years served as the organization's board president. He joined the staff as education organizer in 2006. He has organized in the Kenwood Oakland neighborhood for over 22 years bringing community voices to the table on school issues. He helped develop the Mid-South Education Association, a grassroots advocacy group made up of administrators, parents, teachers, young people and local school council (LSC) members to meet the needs of schools in the area. They were the first group to certify parents as LSC facilitators, which has become a model being replicated across the city of Chicago. KOCO has served as a resource for organizations nationwide, dealing with school closings and the elimination of community voice from the decision-making process. In 2015, He was the organizer and participant in the historic Dyett High School Hunger Strike, which lasted for 34 grueling days, and resulted in the re-opening of Dyett as an open-enrollment, neighborhood school with over \$16 million in new investments.

For 10 years, Brown taught African-American history at St. Leonard's Adult High School, the only accredited high school in the nation that exclusively serves people who have been formerly incarcerated. He has been published in the national education magazine Rethinking Schools, the Washington Post, New York Times, and appeared in Ebony magazine and on several national and local talk shows. He is a Public Voices Fellow for the Ford Foundation's OpEd Project and a Senior Fellow for Racial Equity with the Atlantic Institute.