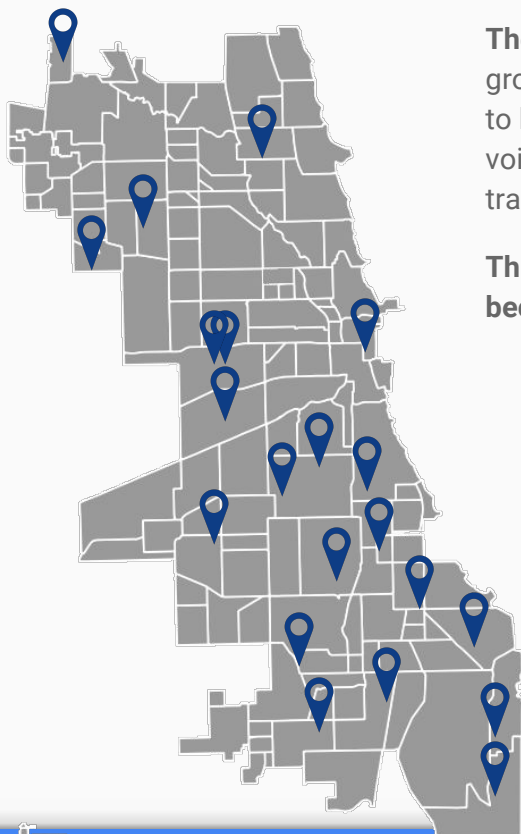


How might the City of Chicago support and prepare all students for post-high school success?

**Mikva**  
Challenge

Research by  
Mikva Challenge Mayoral Youth Commission

Summer 2017



**The Mikva Challenge Mayoral Youth Commission (MYC)** is a diverse group of students who come from all over the City of Chicago. Our goal is to bridge the gap between decision makers and youth by providing a voice where one lacks. In the past, we have worked on issues such as transportation, violence, employment, and access to technology.

**This year, youth-police relationships is a relevant and important issue because it affects everyone in Chicago.**

#### OUR METHODS:

- Met with experts
- Surveyed over **200 youth**
- Read and researched articles
- Researched National models

Our recommendations support two main strategies in supporting and preparing CPS high school students for post-secondary success:

**Stakeholder Engagement:** How do we inform, excite, and support stakeholders for post-secondary success?

1. Keeping Parents Informed
2. Student Input
3. Supporting Counselors

**Strengthening Pathways:** How do we increase exposure of and support for post-secondary pathways?

4. Enhancing OSC Job Opportunities
5. Mentorships from Nonprofits and Alumni
6. Supports through College

# REC 1

## Keeping Parents Informed:

Provide parent tools that are accessible to everyone, and that is also parent friendly

**ISSUE:** Not all CPS parents are fully informed about post-secondary options for their children.

**SOLUTION:** Involve parents in planning students' post-secondary high school plans by creating more communication between schools and families and making information more accessible. Help parents be more knowledgeable of different options for their children's future careers.

- Include information and milestones for post-secondary pathways in the Student Code of Conduct, so all students and parents are encouraged to review materials at the start of a student's high school career.
- Include an easy to read calendar of a students' individual learning plan from 8th-12th grade. This information can be found on the Naviance portal and can serve as a guide of different stages students should think about in order to be on track for their career plans after high school.
- Create a passport for all CPS students to keep track of their graduation requirements. The passport should highlight students' milestones to stay on track for post-secondary planning from freshman through senior year. Each high school will have different milestones because each school is different.

Help parents understand the Learn.Plan.Succeed (LPS) policy and different post-secondary pathways students may take.

- CPS should support schools in hosting meetings and workshops to inform them about the policies and pathways.
- CPS should create **videos** giving a brief overview of the LPS policy in general, and segments following each post-secondary option. Videos should be brief (2-5 minutes), and available in different languages. Videos should include relevant links to more information (ie. Informational video on FAFSA, seeking scholarships, applying trade programs, etc.)

### **SUPPORTING RESEARCH: Strategies**

- ["Some parents face significant barriers to involvement in their school community: language barriers, transportation and scheduling difficulties, and practical constraints to providing educational materials and supports. The socio-economic strain faced by families living in or near poverty compounds these barriers."](#)
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# REC 2

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## Student Input:

Include students input throughout the Learn.Plan.Succeed.policy would improve understanding and confidence.

**ISSUE:** While most students feel that counselors do an adequate at informing them about postsecondary options and supporting them in the process. Increased student input in the CCAC would increase confidence about the Learn.Plan.Succeed policy.

**SOLUTION:** Having student input in the Chicago College Advising Credential would help improve the effectiveness, productivity, and overall youth-friendliness of the counselors because it has the expertise of students: the people the counselors serve. In addition, the counselors would be more equip to support the student in any pathway they choose.

- Create paid/credit/Service Learning Hour opportunities for students who decide to help CCAC with their input
  - Staff of Chicago Public Schools Office of College and Career Services will meet with focus groups comprised of youth that have applied via One Summer Chicago
  - A method of feedback could be attending the training themselves, as well as sitting down with counselors with and without the Credential.
- Partner with City Colleges of Chicago to give counseling/education credit for those who help with the student input of CCAC
- In addition, students can also provide feedback and revisions on the post-secondary planning tool Naviance, as we recommend that counselors the thoroughly trained in that.

## SUPPORTING RESEARCH:

- Counselor Interviews
  - “After high school is either college or workforce and I don't think the city of Chicago is preparing our students well for either...” -Jasonni Washington, Legal Prep Charter Academy
- Surveys given to students
  - 32% of respondents feel like their school don't currently provides them enough to help them succeed after high school
  - 39% of respondents feel like Learn. Plan. Succeed. won't be effective in ensuring post-secondary success.

# REC 3

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## Supporting Counselors:

Increase support for counselors so they can better serve students

**ISSUE:** Not all students develop their post-secondary plan with advice from their counselors, due to understaffing and lack of personalized attention

**SOLUTION:** Increasing the amount of individual support students can get from counseling staff & Increase counseling support.

- Create a listening tour where counselors give their input on the help they need.
- Implement a pilot program in the CPS school with the highest counselor: student ratio to equalize the resources with the CPS average, 330:1
- Invest money in counselors, which will result in saving money in the long run.
- When the student to counselor ratio allows for more personalized attention:
  - Require counselor to individually check in with all students a minimum of once during the school year and once during the summer
  - Require counselors to help every student find at least one career exploration opportunity (field trip, lecture, fair, or summer program) per year.

### SUPPORTING RESEARCH:

- [The CPS average is 330:1 and the recommended average is 250:1](#)
- [The map of Chicago shows the counselor to student ratio in different geographic networks](#)
- [The state of Colorado spent 16 million dollars on counselors and has predicted to save 300 million dollars in safety net services](#)
- [In a survey of 4 Hispanic-majority CPS high schools, 27% of juniors had never met their counselor.](#)
- [This article about summer melt emphasizes that a main cause is lack of accessibility of counselors over the summer. Counselors do not make themselves accessible over the summer because they are overworked during the school year and need a break.](#)

# REC 4

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## Enhancing OSC Job Opportunities:

Build and enhance One Summer Chicago features by including trades, entry level opportunities and job descriptions.

**SOLUTION:** To build and enhance features of OSC by creating an option to get redirected to a common application that can be sent to different corporations through the already existing One Summer Chicago application.

- Create an additional application for entry level positions using the one summer application as an model. While One Summer focuses on city agencies, we would like to incorporate entry level positions as another choices of employment for the youth.
  - Identify 3 employers to create and agree to a shared application.
- Additionally, create a separate common application that is focused on trade jobs. For this application, work with existing trade unions throughout the city.
- Generate resume guides that help students identify what positions they would be interested in, and what they have accomplished:
  - Identify all the different available job/positions within One Summer Chicago, so that the youth could know what their possible job consists of.
  - Create a simple resume outline that outlines and specifies what information will be on the actual resume.
  - Create job descriptions for each of the different possible positions so students can pick which one they want to apply to based on their personal preference.
  - After students complete OSC program, OSC auto-generates a resume that students can view what they accomplished, and also be able to transfer job description info to other future work resumes.

### SUPPORTING RESEARCH:

- “Youth have said at past forums that jobs offer income and exposure to opportunities that demonstrate an alternative to the illegal activities happening outside their doorsteps” - Chicago tribune
- Organizations: One Summer, Starbucks, 100k Opportunities(Job Fair)
- Consult w/ Howard Schultz on piloting the application
- Other option, talk to other CEO’s to implement the app.
- Educational retention rates are directly correlated with unemployment rates. The unemployment rate amongst kids who do not receive a high school is almost 7 times higher than people who received a bachelor’s degree.
- [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0Bwxwkcd\\_Zcq-ampCVmlhTVczV1E?ths=true](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0Bwxwkcd_Zcq-ampCVmlhTVczV1E?ths=true)

# REC 5

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## Mentorships from Nonprofits and Alumni:

CPS schools should partner with nonprofits and coordinate high school alumni networks to offer more mentorships.

**ISSUE:** Students need more one-on-one relationships outside of academic settings to help stabilize their post-secondary success.

**SOLUTION:** CPS schools should partner with nonprofits and coordinate high school alumni networks to offer more mentorships.

### Partnerships with Non-Profit:

- Connect all Non-Profit organizations to talk to each other in order for them to give each other schools that they can't assist
  - Connect with the schools with the highest dropout rate/highest student to counselor ratio using cps networks and prioritize
- Connect with the administrative staff in order for them to understand what they need to do
  - We get the administration staff that want to partner with programs, but if those programs are full and hold a seminar to explain other non-profit organization
- Once we have programs connected with the schools make sure that both of them create an MOU to fit their environment

### Alumni Groups within Schools:

- Create a pilot program for chosen schools to participate
  - The Pilot Program will follow strategies that make certain nonprofit organizations strong and it will be applied to selected individuals from those chose schools.
  - The individuals will be alumni from the school that have executed their post secondary plan
- The school will partner those alumni with incoming freshman that have similarities to each other
  - The alumni will mentor the freshmen throughout their college career
  - They will have one mandatory meeting every month to check in with each other

### SUPPORTING RESEARCH:

- [http://www.onegoalgraduation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FY16-Annual-Report\\_Digital.pdf](http://www.onegoalgraduation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FY16-Annual-Report_Digital.pdf)
- <https://www.cityyear.org/about-us/annual-report>



# REC 6

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## Supports through College:

Increase awareness by incentivizing students to connect more with City College students.

**ISSUE:** Students are not fully aware of options/planning for college as a post-secondary pathway.

**SOLUTION:** Increase awareness by incentivizing students to connect more with City College students.

- Create a **toolkit** with CPS alumni and high school teachers to present college facts, such as campus life, financial aid, dual credit, etc. Toolkit will support CPS alumni to return to their high schools in order to share facts, statistics and experience transitioning to college
- Provide **access to** City College/university **facilities** for CPS students. High school students, if partnered with the school (City Colleges dual credit), could be granted access to the facilities that the college/university has, such as computers, libraries, etc.
- Build awareness of Chicago City Colleges dual credit classes by removing barriers to enrollment:
  - City Colleges should fund fee waivers for classes and textbooks
  - The City should offer free public transportation for CPS high school students taking dual enrollment classes
  - Create a bring-a-buddy program that encourages students to bring peers and friends to dual credit open house—incentivize students with gift cards or City College swag

### **SUPPORTING RESEARCH:**

According to recent reports: “Increasingly....researchers have shown that college readiness entails much more than academic achievement alone (Conley 2014; Duckworth et al. 2007). At least as important are students’ knowledge about college itself (e.g., how to plan and pay for it, how to choose an appropriate school and degree program, and how to navigate the complex bureaucracies of higher education).”

[http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Beyond-Academic-Readiness\\_020217.pdf](http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Beyond-Academic-Readiness_020217.pdf)

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#### Stakeholder Engagement:

1. **Keeping Parents Informed:** Provide parents tools that are accessible and parent-friendly.
2. **Student Input:** Student input throughout the Learn. Plan. Succeed. policy would improve understanding and confidence.
3. **Supporting Counselors:** Increase support for counselors so they can better serve students

#### Strengthening Pathways:

4. **Enhancing OSC Job Opportunities:** Build and enhance One Summer Chicago features by including trades, entry level opportunities and job descriptions.
5. **Mentorships from nonprofits and alumni:** CPS schools should partner with nonprofits and coordinate high school alumni networks to offer more mentorships.
6. **Supports through College:** Increase awareness by incentivizing students to connect more with City College students.

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