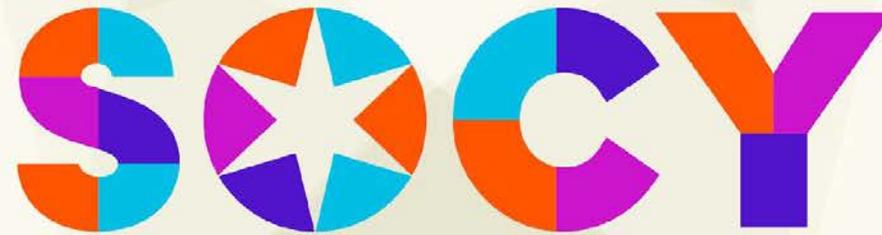


2020



STATE OF  
CHICAGO YOUTH



**Mikva**  
**Challenge**

A BETTER  
CHICAGO



# Mikva Challenge

**Mikva Challenge** is a non-partisan, not for profit founded on the premise that youth voice and participation matter, and that our civic and political life will be stronger when youth participate and help shape their own destinies.

## MISSION

To develop youth to be empowered, informed, and active citizens who will promote a just and equitable society.

## VALUES

1. By intentionally reaching out to under-resourced communities and schools, we create opportunities for youth to elevate the issues that are important to them and their community.
2. Policymakers make better decisions when youth voice is included in decision-making.
3. Community involvement is an essential experience for young people to have a voice in their future.
4. By remaining non-partisan, we make space for young people to form their own opinions and choose the candidates and issues they want to support.

Visit us at [mikvachallenge.org](http://mikvachallenge.org).

# A BETTER CHICAGO

**A Better Chicago** is changing how Chicago fights poverty by investing in bold ideas that create opportunity for Black and Latinx youth.

## MISSION

To build a more equitable city for our young people and future generations. We know that giving kids the support they need to thrive—a great education, a wage that can sustain a family, the ability to buy a home and live in a safe community—can lead to breaking the cycle of poverty.

## MODEL

**100% Impact.** Every dollar donated directly supports Chicago's high-impact nonprofits.

**Diligence.** We do the homework for you and build a portfolio of high-potential, high-impact organizations and leaders.

**Partnership.** We invest financial and intellectual capital to help our grantees succeed.

**Results.** We carefully track our portfolio's performance and share results.

Visit us at [abetterchicago.org](http://abetterchicago.org).



# 110 YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Teen Health Council (THC)**

**CPS Student Advisory Council (SAC)**

**Chicago Housing Authority Youth Council (CHA)**

**Juvenile Justice Council (JJC)**

**Youth Safety Advisory Council (YSAC)**

**Ivie Aiwuyo**  
Brooks HS

**Margo Cicero**  
Whitney Young HS

**Trinity Colon**  
George Washington HS

**Jermaine Davis**  
Noble - Academy HS

**Mikaela Ewing**  
Univ. of Chicago Lab School

**Jackson Forsythe**  
Amundsen HS

**Daniel Gutierrez**  
Whitney Young HS

**Aja Halbert**  
Brooks HS

**Emanuel Hernandez**  
Whitney Young HS

**Kelly Hernandez**  
John Hancock College Prep

**Jada Middleton**  
Whitney Young HS

**Gremarianne Mosquera**  
Northside College Prep HS

**Nancy Murillo**  
Westinghouse HS

**Kiley Neals**  
Brooks HS

**Natalia Perez**  
Whitney Young HS

**Yesenia Posada**  
George Washington HS

**Wendy Quizhpi**  
Lane Tech HS

**Natalia Sevilla**  
Lake View HS

**Kazi Stanton-Thomas**  
Latin School of Chicago

**Alexandra Torres**  
Phoenix Military HS

**Clare Vogel**  
Jones HS

**Jada Webb**  
South Shore Intl HS

**Delaiah Amerson**  
Devry HS

**Omolara Atoyebi**  
Wendell Phillips HS

**Owen Charles**  
Jones HS

**Jakee Elliott**  
Harlan HS

**Lissette Estrella**  
Prosser HS

**Sofia Fatima**  
Amundsen HS

**Xavier Garza**  
Ogden HS

**Tia Hawthorn**  
Lane Tech HS

**Meredith Joncha**  
Lindblom HS

**Luz Mayancela**  
Westinghouse HS

**Katelyn McBride**  
Kennedy HS

**Amoni Midderhoff**  
Goode HS

**Layan Nazzal**  
Taft HS

**Cassius Palacio**  
Brooks HS

**Guadalupe Quinones**  
Northside College Prep HS

**Yarelis Ramos**  
John Hancock College Prep

**Jorge Saldana**  
Curie HS

**Corrinne Salter**  
Whitney Young HS

**Javier Silva**  
Von Steuben HS

**Judai Smith**  
Kenwood HS

**Matthew Sung**  
Northside College Prep HS

**Erica Taylor**  
Morgan Park HS

**Astarte Abbott**  
King HS

**Julian Barber**  
Disney II HS

**Asiah Cooke**  
Ogden HS

**Imani Davis**  
Nole - Muchin HS

**Jalayla Dotson**  
Prosser HS

**Tyler Drew**  
Mount Carmel HS

**Dayeliz Franco**  
Noble - Golder HS

**Prince Holman**  
YCCS - Innovations

**Shania Johnson**  
Crane Medical HS

**Angelo Lopez**  
Curie HS

**Tyshay Moore**  
YCCS - Innovations

**Tianna Osborne**  
Morgan Park HS

**Elijah Strange**  
Lane Tech HS

**Byonce Velez**  
Noble - ITW Speer HS

**Tanzania Walker**  
Marshall HS

**Keondra Williams**  
Alan B. Shepard HS

**Kyrie Adams**  
Kenwood HS

**Oluwatobiloba Akingbesote**  
Gage Park HS

**Xavieon Anderson**  
Morton West HS

**Marco Avila**  
John Hancock College Prep

**Miah Bertrand**  
Thornridge HS

**Edgar Casco**  
George Washington HS

**Dariah Clark**  
YCCS - Chatham

**Angela Cuevas**  
Lane Tech HS

**Treashur Duff**  
North Lawndale College Prep

**CJ Gordon**  
Whitney Young HS

**Daymien Gutierrez**  
Clemente Community Academy

**Jalen Hunt**  
North Lawndale College Prep

**Micah Johnson**  
YCCS - Innovations

**Nia Johnson**  
Providence St. Mel Development

**Andrianna Laye**  
Christ the King Jesuit College Prep

**Sarah Lerner**  
Whitney Young HS

**Grace Miller**  
Walter Payton HS

**Tonimesha Neal**  
North Lawndale College Prep

**Julian Nieto**  
Lane Tech HS

**Octavio Perez**  
Von Steuben HS

**Anita Rao**  
North Shore Country Day School

**Heaven Riley**  
Brooks HS

**Heaven Riley**  
Brooks HS

**RaMaje Scales**  
Homewood Flossmoor HS

**Sean Skoog**  
Whitney Young HS

**Ahide Soriano**  
Roosevelt HS

**Asata Young**  
Kenwood HS

**Amori Balogun**  
Schurz HS

**Serenity Cross**  
Walter H. Dyett HS for the Arts

**Donell Davis**  
South Shore Intl HS

**Eric Garcia**  
Lane Tech HS

**Mamayan Jabateh**  
Chicago Math & Science HS

**Aysia James**  
Westinghouse HS

**Hannah Lawrence**  
Lane Tech HS

**Alexis Mata**  
John Hancock College Prep

**Anthony Mocny**  
John Hancock College Prep

**Shelia Murphy**  
Holy Trinity HS

**Monique Petty-Ashmead**  
Brooks HS

**Destiny Phillips**  
Holy Trinity HS

**Julia Rademacher-Wedd**  
Whitney Young HS

**Brianna Sirdich**  
Walter Payton HS

**Sabrina Sirdich**  
Chi Arts HS

**Keviyonna Staton**  
Noble - UIC HS

**Gabriel Stonor Saunders**  
Whitney Young HS

**Deen Syed**  
Amundsen HS

**Jaelan Vanable**  
Harlan HS

**Bella Watts**  
Walter Payton HS

**Erica Yang**  
Kelly HS

## MIKVA CHALLENGE CITYWIDE YOUTH COUNCILS\*

The councils strengthen youth participation in the formation, implementation and evaluation of public policy in city government through the creation of issue-based youth councils. Councils serve as a mechanism for a broader base of Chicago youth to have input on key city policy decisions that significantly impact youth. Participation is open to all Chicago students in 9th-12th grade.

### Teen Health Council (THC)

Through collaboration with the Chicago Department of Public Health and CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness, The THC works to improve the physical, mental, and sexual health of youth in Chicago. THC works with Lurie Children's Hospital to learn about and inform their peers on the impacts of stress and trauma on mental and physical wellbeing.

### CPS Student Advisory Council (SAC)

In partnership with Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools, Dr. Janice K. Jackson, SAC advises on the youth perspective of all school-related policies and issues.

### Chicago Housing Authority Youth Council (CHA)

Young CHA residents serve as a youth advisory body to the CEO of the Chicago Housing Authority and provide recommendations on policies and practices to improve the lives of all CHA residents.

### Juvenile Justice Council (JJC)

In partnership with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and the Justice Advisory Council, JJC serves provides diverse youth perspectives on policies and programs involving youth and the justice system, with particular emphasis on reducing rates of incarceration and recidivism among youth in Cook County.

### Youth Safety Advisory Council (YSAC)

In partnership with the Chicago Police Department (CPD), YSAC works to increase positive interactions between police and Chicago youth, integrating authentic youth voice in every police district.

\*Also includes inter-councils Chicago Youth Response Team (CYRT) and Young Women's Leadership Council (YWLC).

# RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Teen Health Council (THC)	CPS Student Advisory Council (SAC)	Chicago Housing Authority Youth Council (CHA)	Juvenile Justice Council (JJC)	Youth Safety Advisory Council (YSAC)
<p><b>1: New CPS Sexual Health Policy</b></p> <p>For CPS's new sexual health policy we recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transparent curriculum</li><li>• No parental opt-out for identity based lessons</li><li>• New lesson on rights and resources</li></ul> <p><b>2: CDPH Youth Mental Health Services</b></p> <p>We recommend that the Chicago Department of Public Health provide mental health services to youth through text messaging and in-person sessions that follow the appropriate COVID-19 guidelines for safety.</p> <p><b>3: CPS Healing Centered Framework</b></p> <p>We recommend that Chicago Public Schools include weekly after school support groups led by a social worker in all high schools as a part of the new Healing Centered Framework for schools.</p> <p><b>4: COVID-19 Youth Mask Design Competition</b></p> <p>We recommend that the Chicago Department of Public Health create and promote a citywide, youth-focused face mask design competition, with several prizes for winners to encourage the use of masks for the youth of Chicago.</p>	<p><b>1: Curriculum Equity Initiative (CEI)</b></p> <p>In order to promote student participation and advocacy, the CEI Team should allow students to take part in modifying and editing the new CEI rubric before it is finalized.</p> <p><b>2: Student Code of Conduct (SCC)</b></p> <p>Students will work with the Office of Social and Emotional Learning to revise the current guidelines of effective discipline of the Student Code of Conduct, minimizing ambiguous and/or criminalizing language that allows space for personal biases to occur.</p> <p><b>3: School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP)</b></p> <p>The SQRP policy should shift from a numerical system into a more qualitative rating system that comprehensively evaluates the multiple components that make up school quality.</p>	<p><b>1: CHA Youth Speak!</b></p> <p>The CHA Youth Opportunities Team should partner with the CHA Youth Council to develop a youth-centered virtual newsletter targeted to all CHA residents aged 13-24.</p> <p><b>2: Professional Development and Workforce Readiness for a Greater Range of Youth</b></p> <p>Expand the existing Workforce Development programs to youth (ages 16-18) in order to prepare for and expose them to job readiness and workforce development.</p>	<p><b>1: Addressing Barriers to Reentry</b></p> <p>Cook County should host a digital forum on a roadmap to re-entry created in partnership with the Juvenile Justice Council and other potential partners.</p> <p><b>2: Addressing Barriers to Reentry</b></p> <p>The Juvenile Justice Department, Chicago Public Schools, and partners in the Alternative School Network such as Nancy B. Jefferson, should build a coalition with the Juvenile Justice Council that assists in the navigation of challenges of e-learning and disparities in educational level upon re-entry.</p> <p><b>3: Aftercare and Post Release Services</b></p> <p>Probation officers should connect with youth virtually during the pandemic by moving services to virtual platforms like Zoom.</p> <p><b>4: Aftercare and Post Release Services</b></p> <p>To align with the County's longstanding goal of reducing recidivism and supporting young people throughout the re-entry process, probation officers should combine the current trauma screening tools with the distribution of a comprehensive re-entry guide developed by the Juvenile Justice Council.</p>	<p><b>1: CPD Community Center for Youth</b></p> <p>The Chicago Police Department (CPD) should create a community center for youth.</p> <p><b>2: Mandatory, Local Based, Ongoing, and Youth Integrated SRO Training</b></p> <p>The Chicago Police Department (CPD) should mandate the implementation and attendance of community focused School Resource Officer (SRO) training sessions.</p>

# TEEN HEALTH COUNCIL



**Ivie Aiwuyo**

Brooks HS

**Margo Cicero**

Whitney Young HS

**Trinity Colon**

George Washington HS

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Lake View HS

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Latin School of Chicago

**Alexandra Torres**

Phoenix Military HS

**Clare Vogel**

Jones HS

**Jada Webb**

South Shore Intl HS

# TEEN HEALTH COUNCIL

**The Teen Health Council (THC)**, through collaboration with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Student Health and Wellness, works to improve the physical, mental, and sexual health of youth in Chicago. THC also works with Lurie Children's Hospital to learn about and inform their peers on the impacts of stress and trauma on mental and physical wellbeing.

## FRAMING QUESTION

**How can we incorporate youth voices into trauma-informed policy at CDPH and CPS?**

## SUMMER SNAPSHOT

The Teen Health Council works to educate and discuss public health and health disparities in order to bring awareness on these issues and promote health equity, through the power of youth voice and action. The framing question for this summer's Teen Health Council is: How can we incorporate youth voices into trauma-informed policy at CDPH and CPS? Each of the recommendations presented address this question; however, due to the myriad of events occurring, both nationally and locally, we decided to incorporate a section to emphasize the significance of racial inequities and their impact on public health. Thus, we investigated the ways in which racial inequities impact the health of various demographic groups within Chicago.

***Dr. Arwady consults regularly with the Mikva Teen Health Council to provide public health guidance and technical assistance to support the Council's projects. The youth voice is critical to the work of the Chicago Department of Public Health, and Dr. Arwady values the perspective and wisdom shared by the experts on the Council.***

**- Dr. Allison Arwady, Commissioner of Chicago Department of Public Health**

# TEEN HEALTH COUNCIL

## FORWARD

Despite ranking as one of the most diverse cities in the US, Chicago also holds the title as one of the most segregated. As such, Chicago possesses one of the most inequitable distribution of resources within the country, closely tying racial and ethnic identification to inaccessibility and greater health risks. Areas predominantly populated by minority groups, especially Chicago's South and West sides, suffer from limited access to healthy food options, high quality health care, preventive education, and mental health services and digital resources. This leads to overrepresentation in unemployment, homelessness, teen pregnancy, preventable STDs, alcoholism and drug use, chronic and mental illnesses and higher rates of overall death. As part of Mikva Challenge, we are aware of the breadth of inequity and how it affects numerous aspects of life in our city, with each council taking on issues related to housing, education, juvenile justice, and policing. Thus as the Teen Health Council, we decided to narrow our focus upon the following topics: sexual education, mental health, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

**COVID-19 has shined a light on the continued prevalence of racial disparities and racial inequities within Chicago, and it has further generated the racial-wealth gap between various communities.** We have seen minority groups lack transportation and food access, and subsequently face risking their health with spikes in cases within their communities and/or losing their livelihood. Moreover, due to these circumstances we have seen spikes of racist aggression against certain racial and ethnic groups.

**Another one of the major issues emphasized by our council includes the relationship between the BIPOC communities and health care systems.** Often, due to inadequate insurance, lack of medical services in minority communities, and racially charged assumptions by health care professionals, minority communities contract significantly more preventable diseases than their white counterparts. In a conversation with West Side United's director, Tenisha Jones, we discussed the lack of access for residents, particularly surrounding Chicago's major healthcare institutes. Lack of adequate treatment paired with a history of racial stigma leads to mistrust in the healthcare system, and a reduction in the overall health of BIPOC communities.

**In mental and sexual health, the stigmas embedded within older generations of racial minority groups create a barrier from providing and receiving proper care and education,** which in turn often prevent them from seeking help. Moreover, generational trauma within households further strengthens these stigmas. These traumas often occurred from malpractice, racial bias, and for mental health specifically, the falsification of mental illnesses which leads to instances such as desensitization, higher rates of aggression, and substance abuse. The following recommendations outline ways to increase health equity for youth throughout the Chicagoland area.

# TEEN HEALTH COUNCIL

## Recommendation 1: New CPS Sexual Health Policy

### TRANSPARENT CURRICULUM

We recommend a general syllabus to present what students must be taught prior to instruction. We recommend that transparent and open access to the sexual education curriculum be added into the Curriculum Equity Initiative and for it to be prominently shown on the Chicago Public School's (CPS) website.

- The syllabus should be distributed via email to all parents/guardians/CPS Community and available on the CPS website prior to instruction.
- The syllabus should include a checklist of all the mandatory lessons that are required to be taught across all CPS schools at each level.
- Students and parents should be able to keep teachers accountable for covering all lessons listed by having a method for reporting fallacies or inconsistencies in their school's sexual health delivery.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

For students to receive the complete understanding of the curriculum, students and families have to see it firsthand. Teachers also need to be held accountable for any potential prejudices or lack of capacity to teach sexual health topics. A transparent curriculum will allow the CPS community to reasonably catch any false information being taught, enforce proper sexual health education, and advocate for any changes.

### PARENTAL OPT-OUT

CPS's current sexual health policy gives parents the option to opt their child out of certain lessons for the curriculum. **We recommend** that parents should *not* be given the option to opt-out of the lessons that explain gender and sexuality identities because it contradicts CPS' anti-bullying and anti-discriminatory policies. We believe that opting out of those two topics leads directly to prejudice.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Center of American Progress' data showed that in 2016, 1 in 4 people who identified as being LGBTQ reported they experienced acts of discrimination in their lives. Opting out of identity based curriculum can aid in creating a negative environment for students due to ignorance, and can directly aid in the spread of prejudice.

According to the 2019 YRBS survey, LGBT students were twice as likely to report bullying in school and even miss school due to the feeling of being unsafe. CPS needs to work towards dismantling cis and heteronormativity in their system if they are truly anti-bullying/prejudice/discrimination. By requiring these lessons to be taught, we expect more students will learn to understand one another and the rates of bullying will decrease.

### AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

Sexual health resources need to be available to all students. **We recommend** that if schools are unable to provide aid past what is required, they should provide network specific resources. Additionally, a section of the CPS health curriculum should be based around informing youth of where to access resources and what their rights are when it comes to sexual health.

This should include but is not limited to:

- Locations of queer (LGBTQIA+) specific resources (Center on Halsted, Howard Brown, etc.)
- BIPOC specific resources/locations
- Locations of Sexual Health Aid (i.e. Planned Parenthood, etc.)
- Directory of contacts for students to report incidents to (specifically in cases of discrimination, abuse, as well as when a teacher is not teaching Sex Ed to the full capacity of the curriculum [ex:skipping sections])

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In order to make health equitable for all communities and to ensure the safety of CPS students, these resources need to be brought to schools. According to 2019 YBRBS data, 22.57% of LGBT students have missed school due to feeling unsafe compared to the 10% of Cisgender Heterosexual students. If students can't get the support and safety at school, they need to be able to get support/safety at verified locations for youth.

# TEEN HEALTH COUNCIL

## Recommendation 2: CDPH Youth Mental Health Services

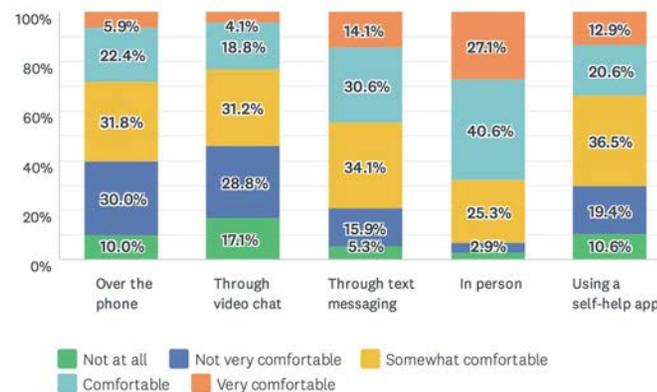
We recommend that the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) provide mental health services to youth through text messaging and in-person sessions that follow the appropriate COVID-19 guidelines for safety. We also recommend that CDPH spreads awareness of these services through social media platforms.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

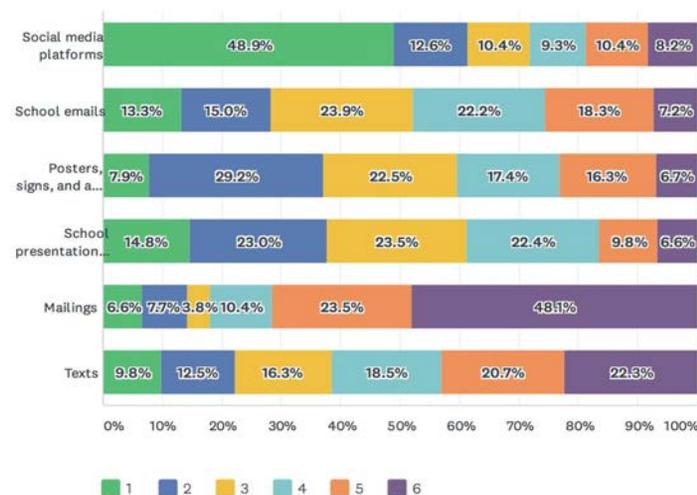
In order to get the most accurate and beneficial resources in place, policymakers need to hear the voices of those affected. Therefore, it is essential to have the voices of youth in policies that pertain to them. We surveyed youth in Chicago to find the best way to deliver mental health services and inform them of said services. It asked about the services already existing in their schools/communities, how it could be improved, who they would prefer to talk to, and their preferred method of communication. Over the course of a week, close to 200 people responded. We used these statistics to form a recommendation for the Chicago Department of Public Health. This survey broadened the scope of youth voice the Teen Health Council has by reaching out to a variety of Chicago youth.

**Combined with our research, we believe our recommendation embodies the best informed resolution.** Contrary to CDPH's initial plan for youth to use video chat services, our results showed that it is the least preferred method, with 45.9% of respondents answering they would not be comfortable with this. Additionally, we found that most people were comfortable with text messaging and in-person sessions, with 93% of people comfortable with in-person sessions and 78.8% of people comfortable with text messaging (see top right graph). One respondent said, "Having a computer didn't help at all, it just made me feel more alone...what I find helps most is having someone talk back and feeling like someone actually cares." If it is decided to move forward with text or call services, it should be with a licensed professional, as 88.2% of respondents said this would be comfortable for them. This allows for specialized treatment where the person can feel more connected with the attention they're receiving. In order to best make these resources known to youth, they should be shared through social media as 48.9% of respondents rated it most effective (see bottom right graph). We believe the CDPH should employ these statistics into their decision making process and provide mental health services to youth through in-person services that follow safety guidelines. In the case that in-person is not available, services through text messaging should be the next area of focus.

Q11 How comfortable are you with each of the following methods of talking about mental health?



Q8 What is the best way to share information about mental health services with youth? Please rank the following methods of communication by effectiveness (most effective = 1 to least effective = 6).



# TEEN HEALTH COUNCIL

## Recommendation 3: CPS Healing Centered Framework

**We recommend that Chicago Public Schools (CPS) include weekly after school support groups led by a social worker in all high schools as a part of the new Healing Centered Framework for schools.**

We recommend that CPS adds after school programs in high schools that will act as a peer support group, administered by a social worker who is culturally representative of each unique CPS high school. These social workers should have specific training on intersectional issues such as race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. These support groups will be open to all students. The main focus of these groups is to support students in becoming agents of their own healing and wellbeing. This will provide all CPS students an opportunity to share personal experiences and feelings with peers, while also receiving guidance and support from a professional.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In 2016, the Teen Health Council made a similar recommendation to ours. For their recommendation, they surveyed over 200 young people across Chicago and found that 71% of respondents felt most comfortable talking about mental health with their friends. We have not seen any results from their recommendation, so we are bringing this back with updated information as to why peer-support programs are even more crucial now, especially with the new CPS Healing-Centered Framework. To back up our mental health related recommendations, we created a new survey to see how comfortable youth feel talking about mental health.<sup>1</sup> In our survey this year, we found similar results to the survey in 2016. Our survey showed that 70% of students said they would feel comfortable or very comfortable talking to a friend or peer their age about personal mental health. About only 27% of students surveyed said they would feel comfortable or very comfortable talking about their mental health to an adult family member, and about only 15% said they would feel comfortable or very comfortable talking to a teacher. This is why we support the idea of having PEER support groups in every CPS school.

According to the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, one in five youth experience mental health issues during their school years. In Chicago, many students and their families get most of their resources from CPS, which is why it is important we also extend the mental health services provided in each school. By implementing support groups in every school, students can come together to share personal stories and express emotions. These support groups will benefit students in many ways, such as decreasing loneliness and feelings of isolation.

We also believe that social workers should be the ones leading these after school support groups, and as much as possible, those social workers should represent the communities that they serve. Students of color need to see representation in their group's social workers as they will understand their diverse cultures and unique experiences in a way that white staff may not. With professionals leading these programs, it will ensure that our students are not only sharing their emotions, but also actively learning about wellbeing, mindfulness, healthy coping strategies, and any other resources outside of school that they might need.

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<sup>1</sup> See Recommendation 2 for more info on our survey and methodology.

# TEEN HEALTH COUNCIL

## Recommendation 4: COVID-19 Youth Mask Design Competition

We recommend that the Chicago Department of Public Health create and promote a citywide, youth-focused face mask design competition, with several prizes for winners to encourage the use of masks for the youth of Chicago.

In the City of Chicago, youth and young adults are the main demographic with rising COVID-19 cases. We recommend that the City of Chicago host a mask design competition to promote mask wearing among young adults. This mask competition will be for Chicago youth to express their creativity and will ultimately lead to a mass production of their design on masks to be distributed in an equitable manner to the different areas of Chicago on a need basis, thus increasing youth input in mask-wearing and encouraging mask use by youth. Our recommendation for the details of the competition are as follows:

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Marketing

We have created a sample poster to promote this competition (see right). We recommend that posters be displayed around the city where Chicago youth can see them. In addition to posters, we recommend a social media campaign to market this competition to youth across Chicago. Using hashtags can be especially helpful to spread the word and promote participation due to their accessibility and catchiness (i.e. #MaskOn).



**Chicago Mask Designing Competition**

**Mikoa Challenge**

**1ST** \$ we want (you)th to participate in the years FIRST EVER mask designing competition. You get one disposable mask and your head and heart .

**2ND** \$ Creativity from all over the city of Chicago is welcomed!

**3RD** \$

**#MaskOn**

**CDPH**  
Chicago Department of Public Health

**SHARE**

**Guidelines listed below:**

- You must create something ORIGINAL
- You have the option of making a 3-5 minute video about mask safety and the importance of youth wearing masks in our day and time or write a 500 word essay with the same topic
- No inappropriate or discriminatory content
- You have to live in the city of Chicago in order to submit your art
- Most importantly have fun and let your artistic skills erupt :)

**SPREAD THE WORD** \*\*\*Along with the top three winners receiving prize money every participate will be added to a raffle to win smaller but just as exciting prizes

# TEEN HEALTH COUNCIL

## (Continued) Recommendation 4: COVID-19 Youth Mask Design Competition

### Action Step 2: Entry Submission

Contestants should be given the option to submit either a 500-word essay or an informational video along with their mask design. The essay or video must include the following: an explanation of the contestant's mask design, the youth's thoughts on the importance of wearing a mask, instructions on how to properly wear a mask, and how they as young people will practice/encourage others to social distance and wear masks. Additionally, with the consent of the participants, the city of Chicago should compile some of the video submissions into service announcements and use them to encourage mask wearing among youth. Teenagers and other young adults are better encouraged by others their age, so using our peers as informants of social distancing and safe/correct mask wearing will encourage others to be safe.

### Action Step 3: Selection Process + Prizes

In order to both eliminate inappropriate mask designs and to avoid being overwhelmed by competition entries, we recommend that those involved in judging the competition narrow finalists down to 10 masks. From there, the final decisions should be left up to an online poll open to youth in order to maximize the youth voice. An active and advertised online poll could help publicize the mask competition and give youth a sense of voice in the masks they wear. Additionally, everyone who enters a design into the competition will automatically be entered into a raffle for a gift card. First, second, and third place will also win a gift card. To keep the theme of social distancing alive, gift cards for Spotify, Visa, Amazon, and Steam could be used, all of which can be used from the comforts of social distancing at home.

### Action Step 4: Mask Distribution

Upon completion of the competition, masks should be mass produced, then equitably distributed throughout the Chicago area. Masks should be easily accessible for free in schools, parks, community centers, food pantries, and any public health institution. Furthermore, the distribution of masks should be based on COVID-19 positivity rates in the ninety Chicagoland zip codes. The ninety zip codes will be split into three tiers based on COVID-19 positivity rates with tier 1 having the highest number of cases, and tier 3 will be the lowest. Forty percent of the distributed masks will be given to tier 1, thirty-five percent of masks will be distributed to tier 2, and twenty-five percent of masks will be distributed to tier 3. This method will allow people in higher COVID risk neighborhoods to be more protected as well as lowering the disparities of minority neighborhoods in the fight against COVID-19.

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

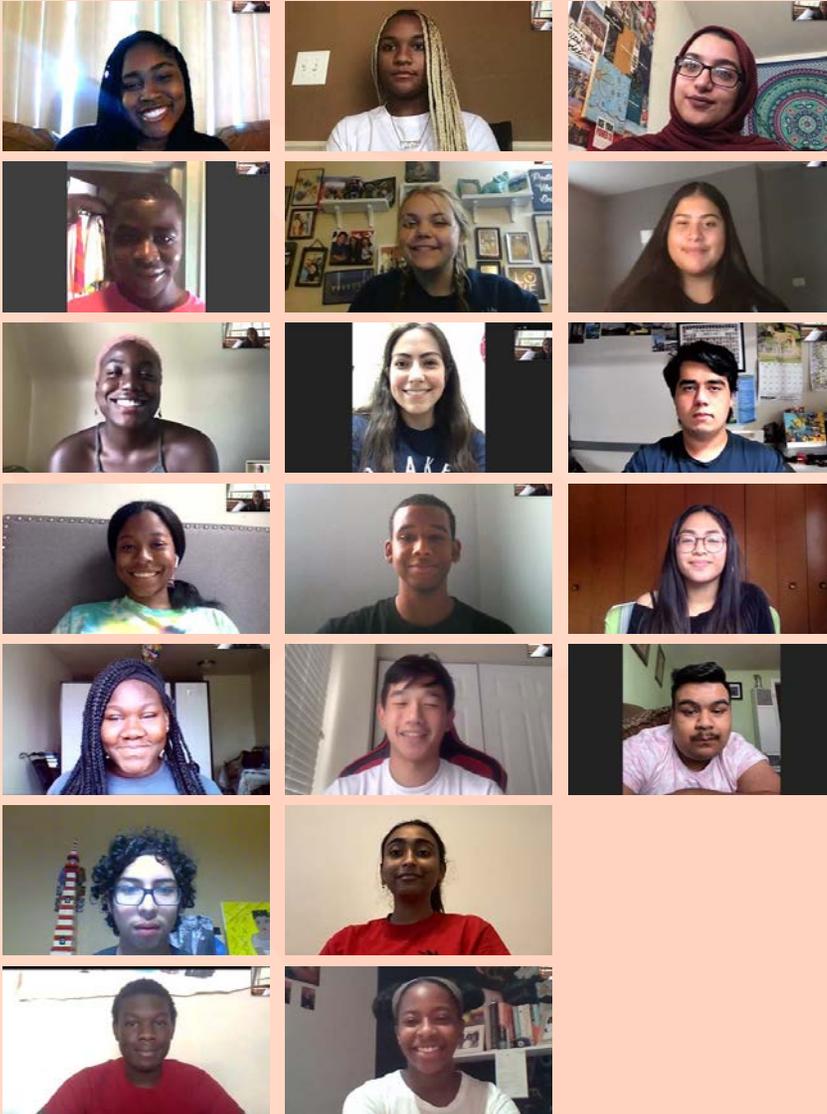
Many efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19 have been targeted toward the older generation because they are at higher risk. This has led many young adults and especially youth to ignore social distancing guidelines as well as mask wearing, overall leading to the recent increase of COVID-19 cases. It was reported that on July 14, there were 192 cases in Chicago (based on a rolling average) and 30% of those cases were among people from age 18-29. It is essential to promote mask wearing to youth especially since "researchers calculated that, among people aged 20 years and under, a probable 81.9% would present no symptoms following infection with the coronavirus." Face coverings especially have been recommended by the CDC in order to reduce the risk of infection by people who are asymptomatic, however, youth tend to ignore these guidelines. Hosting a youth mask design competition is a way to target mask wearing among youth. Young adults and youth are still impressionable and a competition geared towards them will allow them to take interest in social distancing and proper mask wearing.

# TEEN HEALTH COUNCIL

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# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL



**Delaiah Amerson**  
Devry HS

**Omolara Atoyebi**  
Wendell Phillips HS

**Owen Charles**  
Jones HS

**Jakee Elliott**  
Harlan HS

**Lisette Estrella**  
Prosser HS

**Sofia Fatima**  
Amundsen HS

**Xavier Garza**  
Ogden HS

**Tia Hawthorn**  
Lane Tech HS

**Meredith Joncha**  
Lindblom HS

**Luz Mayancela**  
Westinghouse HS

**Katelyn McBride**  
Kennedy HS

**Amoni Midderhoff**  
Goode HS

**Layan Nazzal**  
Taft HS

**Cassius Palacio**  
Brooks HS

**Guadalupe Quinones**  
Northside College Prep HS

**Yarelis Ramos**  
John Hancock College Prep

**Jorge Saldana**  
Curie HS

**Corrine Salter**  
Whitney Young HS

**Javier Silva**  
Von Steuben HS

**Judai Smith**  
Kenwood HS

**Matthew Sung**  
Northside College Prep HS

**Erica Taylor**  
Morgan Park HS

# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## **The CPS Student Advisory Council (SAC)**

is made up of Chicago Public School students from across the city who are passionate about education and are committed to improving CPS schools. Through a deep look into district policy, the council identifies and does research to advocate for policy solutions that will equitably impact students district-wide. The following document is the culmination of our research findings and considerations to further create a transparent CPS through inclusive partnerships.

## **FRAMING QUESTION**

**How might youth perspective inform and improve CPS District policy, priorities, and decisions in order to achieve the district vision goals?**

## **SUMMER SNAPSHOT**

Over the past 6 weeks, SAC explored equity as a vehicle to unpack the summer's framing question. By building a deeper understanding of the district through the examination of the CPS District Vision and Equity Framework, students were able to ground themselves in CPS' core values and goals and demonstrate an understanding of the crucial role that equity plays in creating authentic and representative pathways for youth involvement in decision making.

Working closely with CPS CEO, Dr. Janice K. Jackson, students explored how multilayered and dynamic issues around student voice and equity truly are and narrowed their focus to the following 3 issue areas to guide our work:

- The CPS Curriculum Equity Initiative to address classroom disparities happening across the district and ensure that their educators receive access to quality curriculum and resources that align with state standards.
- Student Code of Conduct to review the current SCC and offer feedback on how the policy and implementation of the SCC can prevent the reinforcement of racial inequities amongst CPS students of color.
- School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) to accurately and authentically represent CPS schools by incorporating student voices and experiences beyond academic achievement.

# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## (CONT.) SUMMER SNAPSHOT

Through our partnership with the CPS Office of Social Science and Civic Engagement, we have been able to connect with district experts to critically examine these impacts and policies further. Guests included:

- Ben McKay, Office of Social and Emotional Learning
- Maurice Swinney, Office of Equity
- Liam Bird, Office of Equity
- Jeff Broom, School Quality Measurement
- Helena Swanson-Nystrom, Dept. of Curriculum, Instruction and Digital Learning

***“I have always been a committed advocate for student voice throughout my career as an educator. As a high school principal, I encouraged student council members to go beyond planning dances and fundraisers and advocate for the issues that were important to them and their peers. And as CEO of Chicago Public Schools, I have prioritized the creation of Student Voice Committees and leaned heavily on the insight and perspective of the district’s student advisory council.***

***This diverse group of young critical thinkers and leaders has been invaluable to me as an educational leader. Their high-quality projects and policy recommendations have informed and, in many instances, improved the district's policies. Their kindness, altruism, and deep commitment to helping others inspire me to work even harder to prepare our next generation for success in college, career, and community.”***

**- Dr. Janice K. Jackson, Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools**

# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Recommendation 1: Curriculum Equity Initiative (CEI)

**Sub-framing question:** How can we ensure that the implementation of the new Curriculum Equity Initiative improves their learning experiences?

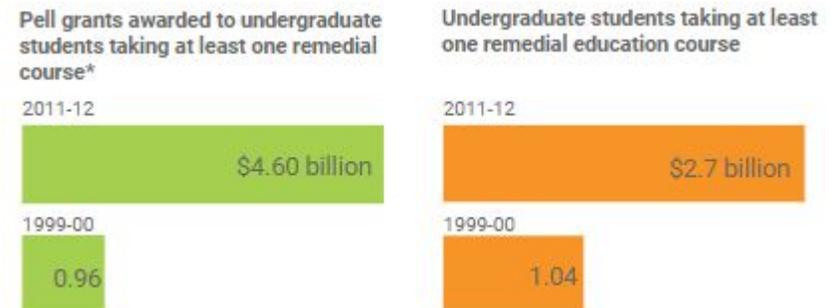
In order to promote student participation and advocacy, the CEI Team should allow students to take part in modifying and editing the new CEI rubric before it is finalized. Once released, the CEI Rubric should be widely promoted to students, who are most impacted and in need of a truly equitable curriculum. This allows for students to have agency over their education and curriculum in a time where diversity and inclusion within schools is desperately needed.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

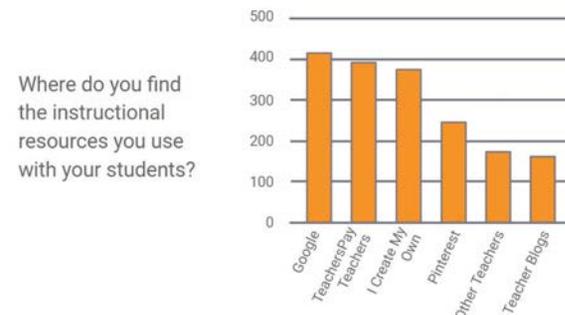
According to national surveys, quality resources are top funding priorities identified by teachers, at 55% of teachers saying that this is their top priority. (This trumps the amount of teachers who prioritized higher salaries - at 49%). Nationally, only 18% of educators strongly agree that their materials are aligned to the standards. Referring back to the data presented in our last meeting, teachers are heading online to supplement learning materials, but the assignments they are selecting tend to be lower quality than what the district or state provided.

### NOTABLE RESEARCH (outside of what has already been stated)

40% of students take at least 1 remedial class in college and \$1.5 billion spent annually on remedial courses.

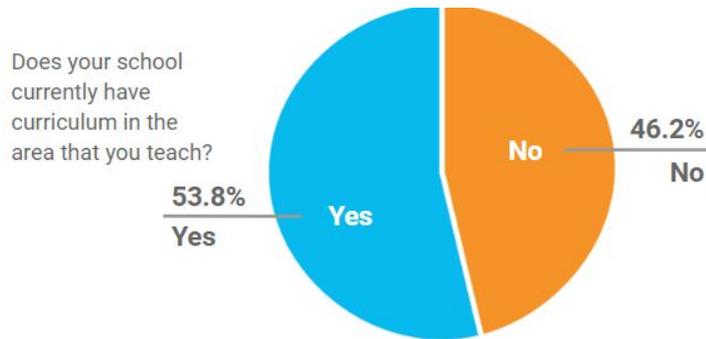


53.8% of teachers say that they are provided with the Curriculum meanwhile 46.2% responded with not having a curriculum to work with and relying on websites such as Pinterest and Google in order to create a curriculum.



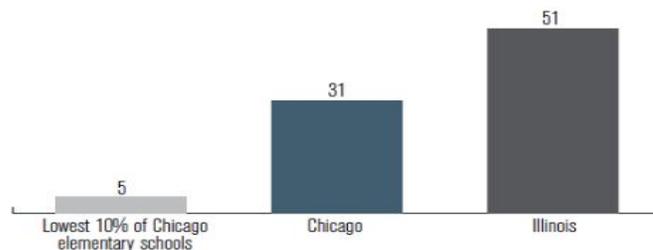
# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## (Continued) Recommendation 1: Curriculum Equity Initiative (CEI)



Students at Chicago's lowest-performing high schools drop out at nearly 12 times the rate of average Illinois students – 36 percent compared to 3 percent, respectively. According to the 2009 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, adults age 25 and older who dropped out of high school or had not earned a GED earned up to 41 percent less than those who had.

Only 5 percent of students in Chicago's lowest-performing high schools met state standards



### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Focus Group Creation with CPS Students and CEI

Conduct a focus group between CPS students and the Curriculum Equity Initiative Team. Students will be asked to give feedback on the rubric. The group, beforehand, will be exposed to the Curriculum Equity Initiative. The feedback received will be used to modify the rubric.

#### Action Step 2: Feedback on Rubric

Create a process in which students designated to receive the rubric will efficiently provide feedback to teachers on their curriculum, whilst also designating where said rubric will go.

#### Action Step 3: Feedback from Outside Partners

We will meet with other teams, organizations, and people including Sherly Chavarria. It is to ensure we get well rounded responses about how to improve the curriculum.

# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Recommendation 2: Student Code of Conduct (SCC)

**Sub-framing question:** How can the Student Code of Conduct be a tool for advancing equity in the District?

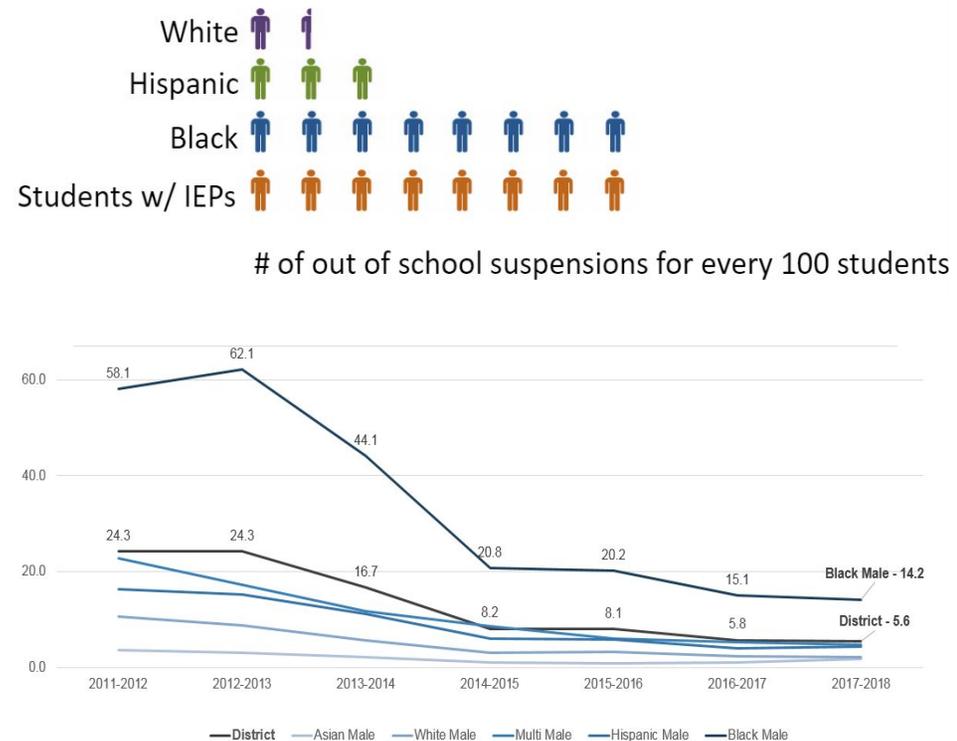
Students will work with the Office of Social and Emotional Learning to revise the current guidelines of effective discipline of the Student Code of Conduct, minimizing ambiguous and/or criminalizing language that allows space for personal biases to occur.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In recent years, CPS has taken steps towards a more equitable student code of conduct by limiting out-of-school suspensions and revising the consequences attached to certain behaviors, yet within this district, Black students remain 3 to 10 times more likely to be suspended than their non-Black counterparts. School should be a safe place for learning and support; however, a lot of students across the district instead experience school as a place for punishment and marginalization. When students exhibit behavioral issues, we shouldn't be pushing them away, but instead offering them more support, like restorative justice measures. The student code of conduct's discipline requirements are written in a way that permits admin to use their prerogative when disciplining students, allowing them to give unreasonable and ineffective punishments that do very little to solve root causes and instead criminalize youth and their actions, ultimately causing students to engage in and repeat destructive behavior.

### NOTABLE RESEARCH

Black girls are 16 percent of girls in schools, but 42 percent of girls receiving physical punishment, 42 percent of girls expelled with or without educational services, 45 percent of girls with at least one out-of-school suspension, 31 percent of girls referred to law enforcement, and 34 percent of girls arrested on campus.



# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## (Continued) Recommendation 2: Student Code of Conduct (SCC)

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Analyze Current Protocol

Understand and analyze the current protocol for disciplining students and/or reporting incidents (General Requirements of Student Code of Conduct).

- What cities/districts have successfully created unbiased environments and replaced unnecessary discipline with restorative justice (RJ) programs?
- Is the student code of conduct implemented and followed the same way throughout the district?
- What policies or wording is used that allows biased discipline to occur?

#### Action Step 2: Collaboration with OSEL

Work with the Office of Social and Emotional Learning (OSEL) and other students to identify and edit.

- Are students being adequately informed of the code of conduct and their rights?

#### Action Step 3: Create Accountability/Evaluation System

Determine accountability/evaluation system for protocol.

- How are schools being held accountable for following the code of conduct in those specific school environments?

# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Recommendation 3: School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP)

**Sub-framing question:** How can youth ensure SQRP 3.0 represents their schools in an authentic way?

The SQRP policy should shift from a numerical system into a more qualitative rating system that comprehensively evaluates the multiple components that make up school quality. This can be accomplished by reconstructing the SQRP into subsections such as Effective School Leadership, Academic Achievement, Teacher-Student Relationships, etc. that make up important indicators of school performance. By splitting up the rating into individual components, we hope to avoid overvaluing academic achievement and providing a more holistic representation of the student experience.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Currently, the School Quality Rating Policy mainly focuses on evaluating a student's academic growth in terms of standardized testing and its singular numerical rating can be harmful to a school's perception. Given that the measures heavily rely on standardized test scores, what is hidden is the factors that make up the true quality of a school like: school culture, rigorous instruction, teacher-student relationships, etc. We are aware that these factors may be proven in the 5 Essentials Survey that students are encouraged to complete, but the survey itself has flaws. The survey is easily lost in the other categories, is clearly not emphasized, and is combined into one word metrics like "Organized." Also, this category, which is the only student voice component, only accounts for 5% of the whole SQRP rating, and it also doesn't seem to fully capture factors that actually make up school quality such as culture, climate, and student experiences. We understand that measuring academic growth is important, but we believe that measuring school performance should not be the sole main component of measuring the quality of our schools, and instead there should be a way to measure and display both essential components that accurately determine the holistic quality of a school.

Efficient student-teacher relationships and personal, as well as professional development, are quintessential skills that students should be prepared to regularly practice in their respective colleges and careers. Thus, while determining academic growth on a standardized scale demonstrates academic improvement and provides an insight into classroom instruction, the school culture and relationships mentally prepare students for their future.

### NOTABLE RESEARCH

National Education Association Survey from over 1,200 educators

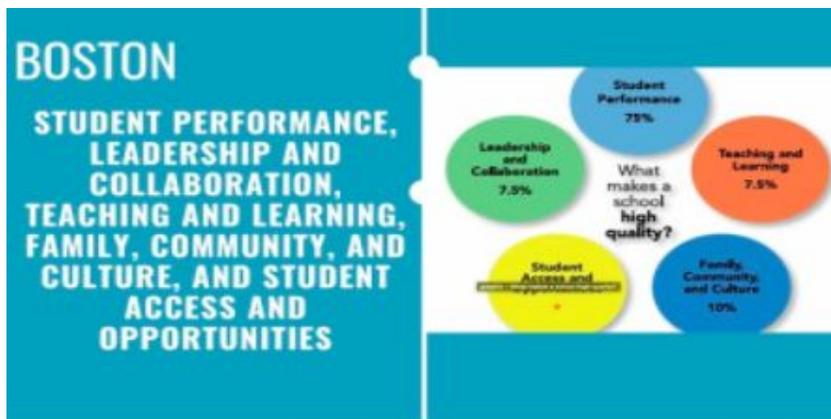
#### Best Indicators of School Quality and Student Success (Results of NEA Educator Survey)

- Students' access to fine arts, foreign language, daily physical education, library/media, and career technical education - 85%
- Students' access to health and wellness programs, including social and emotional wellbeing - 73%
- Students' access to fully qualified teachers, including Board-certified teachers - 65%
- Students' access to fully qualified school librarians/media specialists - 56%
- Student attendance (elementary and middle school) - 54%
- Students prepared for college or career technical education certification programs without need for remediation or learning support courses - 54%
- Students' access to qualified paraeducators - 49%
- School discipline policies and the disparate impact on students of color, students with disabilities, and students that identify as LGBT - 48%

# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## (Continued) Recommendation 3: School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP)

New York and Boston School Rating Policies



CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL SQRP

CPS SQRP only has one line of data from 5essentials



# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

## (Continued) Recommendation 3: School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP)

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### **Action Step 1: Reform 5Essentials Survey**

Reform the 5Essentials survey in order to ensure that the results are accurate enough to be used as a factor in the rating process by continuing work with the UChicago Research Consortium.

#### **Action Step 2: Consultation with the School Quality and Measurement Department**

Consult with the School Quality and Measurement Department about the ideal way to divide school ratings in a fair and balanced manner.

#### **Action Step 3: Consult with CPS Departments**

Ask CPS departments what they would want from a new SQRP policy.

#### **Action Step 4: Connect with the UChicago Research Consortium**

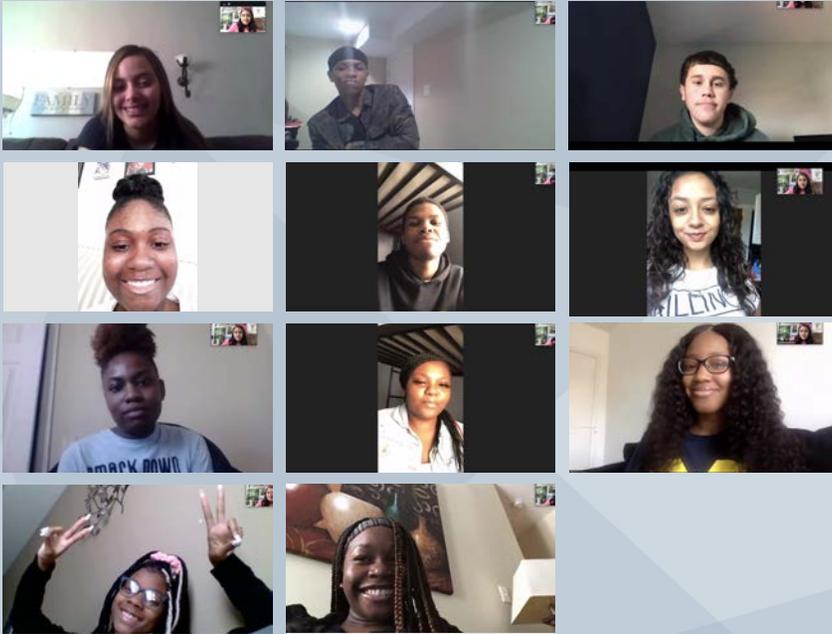
Discuss with the UChicago Research Consortium on ways in which we can measure the possible factors: Teacher-Student Relationships, Student Safety, etc.

# CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

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# CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY YOUTH COUNCIL



**Astarte Abbott**  
King HS

**Julian Barber**  
Disney II HS

**Asiah Cooke**  
Ogden HS

**Imani Davis**  
Noble - Muchin HS

**Jalayla Dotson**  
Prosser HS

**Tyler Drew**  
Mount Carmel HS

**Dayeliz Franco**  
Noble - Golder HS

**Prince Holman**  
YCCS - Innovations

**Shania Johnson**  
Crane Medical HS

**Angelo Lopez**  
Curie HS

**Tyshay Moore**  
YCCS - Innovations

**Tianna Osborne**  
Morgan Park HS

**Elijah Strange**  
Lane Tech HS

**Byonce Velez**  
Noble - ITW Speer HS

**Tanzania Walker**  
Marshall HS

**Keondra Williams**  
Alan B. Shepard HS

# CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY YOUTH COUNCIL

The Chicago Housing Authority Youth Council (CHA) is a group of young people from various areas of Chicago that strive to voice their opinions on addressing citywide issues. Most youth do not often get this opportunity to voice their opinions like this council does. This council values independence, justice, community, helping others, and liberation. Our vision is to improve the quality of life for all living in Chicago Housing Authority, especially young people. As CHA's impact on the community improves, more people will be proud to be CHA residents.

## FRAMING QUESTION

**How can CHA better reach youth residents by utilizing social media and the CHA website?**

## SUMMER SNAPSHOT

This summer we met with a variety of guests and came up with many great ideas over the course of 6 weeks. In our first week, we did activities to get to know one another within the council, and started to research and get data for the issues we wanted to recommend. Our first guest was Mrs. Cleopatra Draper from the National Public Housing Museum who gave us more facts and knowledge on housing. She also brought in guests like JR Fleming, who is with the Anti-Eviction Campaign, Ben Austen, who is the author of the book *High-Risers*, Marissa Novara, the Commissioner of Department of Housing for City of Chicago, and Mark Jaeschke and Shakira Johnson, who are also with the National Public Housing Museum. All of our guests gave us jewels on how to improve our recommendations and gave their experience with housing. They also gave us motivation, appreciation, and thorough answers to the many questions we had. We've gathered testimonies, data and research from CHA's website, and used personal or family experiences to make our recommendations stronger, in an effort to make change.

***“The Chicago Housing Authority can’t do it alone. We need the voices of our youngest residents to strengthen our policies and programs, and to shape and inform the decisions that impact their lives, their families and their future. Youth voice matters because youth matter. As adults, it’s vital that we support young people in realizing that and stepping into their power to educate and transform.”***

**- Ebony Campbell, Chicago Housing Authority Senior Director, Resident Services**

# CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY YOUTH COUNCIL

## Recommendation 1: *CHA Youth Speak!*

In order to heighten awareness of youth employment opportunities, as well as increase youth engagement, CHA should collaborate with the CHA Youth Council to develop a monthly newsletter that highlights resources available to youth. We wish to create this newsletter for all CHA youth residents. This virtual newsletter aims to bring awareness to opportunities that CHA youth may not know about. This newsletter, tentatively titled *CHA Youth Speak!*, also looks to give a voice to CHA youth and provide them with a platform to speak what's on their mind in a productive manner. We would like it to be a monthly newsletter aimed at youth residents aged 13-24. The CHA Youth Council will be responsible for the writing of the newsletter, with support in editing, content, and presentation from the CHA Youth Opportunities team.

### RESEARCH

According to CHA, in 2019, “2,432 CHA youth – from both public housing and Housing Choice Voucher families - participated in paid programming at 360 worksites across the city.” We believe this youth newsletter could help increase that number by publicizing more opportunities available to the CHA youth residents aged 13-24.

CHA's current quarterly newsletter is not written in youth-friendly language. Their April 2020 newsletter states *“In February, CHA announced that, for the 22nd consecutive year, it has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) in recognition of outstanding accounting and financial reporting and management. The Certificate of Achievement for the Fiscal Year 2018 is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting and represents a significant accomplishment by a government agency and its fiscal management.”* This language is not very easily understood by young people, who will easily lose interest in the adult newsletter that currently exists, especially as there are rarely portions that are about young people in CHA.

We also learned from our other council members about being unaware of the current opportunities that exist in CHA. “Until I was a part of the Mikva youth council, I was unaware of the opportunities that CHA gives youth residents... Like scholarships, the youth summit, Learn and Earn, Springboard to Success, etc. If I had never joined the Mikva youth council, I would've never heard of all these opportunities that CHA provides. This newsletter could help kids like me that don't know about these opportunities, and these resources can branch out to other youth outside of CHA as well.”

“Youth rarely really receive information directly. It may go through parents, if that, so it'll be best to get youth emails so they can get the information and see all of the resources and opportunities that's available for them.” - **Guest testimony**

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Collaboration with CHA Youth Opportunities Team

CHA Youth Opportunities Team will actively partner and collaborate with the CHA Youth Council to develop a monthly newsletter that highlights resources available to youth and specifically target youth ages 13-24 through the distribution.

#### Action Step 2: Section Examples

Different sections may include: “What do you want to see from CHA?,” youth-conducted surveys, important youth-relevant news, as well as opportunities from outside CHA programs.

#### Action Step 3: Youth Stories

The newsletter should also include stories from youth throughout CHA programs on how these resources have supported them to show examples and create buy-in for other youth.

## **(Continued) Recommendation 1:** *CHA Youth Speak!*

### **Action Step 4: CHA Collaborations**

CHA Youth Opportunities Team will actively collaborate with the council to connect with different providers throughout CHA (for example, Education Team, Workforce Development Team, etc.) to access different youth in programming.

### **Action Step 5: Social Media Campaign**

Social media campaign to target a wider range of youth, possibly through Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat; shared directly by FamilyWorks providers to assigned youth, emailed directly out by Youth Opportunities Team, etc.

[View the sample newsletter here.](#)

# CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY YOUTH COUNCIL

## Recommendation 2: Professional Development + Workforce Readiness for a Greater Range of Youth

CHA should expand the range of youth services for professional and workforce development. The services should target youth aged 16-18 to prepare them for and expose them to job readiness skills.

### RESEARCH

- There are a lot of resources around the 18-24 age range under CHA and through the city. This under-recognized age group of 16-18 youth doesn't have as much resources under CHA.
- The Great Cities Institute stated that "nearly 90% of black youth age 16-19 are jobless, figures that are, again, much higher than other major cities." This is a figure that is reflected throughout our city and youth ages 16-18 within CHA.
- Additionally, youth on the council experienced difficulties with completing their appropriate forms or acclimating to the standards of the workforce with this being their first exposure to the workforce.

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Collaboration with CHA Workforce Development Program

The CHA Youth Opportunities team, partnering with the Mikva Challenge Chicago Housing Authority Youth Council, should collaborate with the CHA Workforce Development program under the Resident Services' team in CHA to expand, reach, and target youth aged 16-18.

#### Action Step 2: Partnership with Retail Establishments

CHA Resident Services Team will partner with the existing retail establishments in high-need communities that also have a high youth population to reach 16-18 year-olds.

#### Action Step 3: Advertise Opportunities via CHA Youth Newsletter

Through the CHA Youth newsletter, CHA will advertise the opportunities available to youth aged 16-18 and promote the CHA Youth Council as one such opportunity.

#### Action Step 4: Job Readiness Tips for Youth

CHA Youth Opportunities Team, in partnership with the CHA Youth Council, will develop job readiness and workforce development tips for other youth, such as helping fill out tax forms like a W4 and how to prepare for a new job.

#### Action Step 5: Avenues to Target Youth

Some possible avenues for CHA to target youth aged 16-18: CHA Youth Newsletter, in collaboration with Family Works Providers.

## **(Continued) Recommendation 2:** Professional Development + Workforce Readiness for a Greater Range of Youth

### **YOUTH TESTIMONIES**

#### **Testimony 1**

“Having a job before the age of 18 is very efficient. Not only does it give you more experience before you become an adult, but it also gives teenagers experience on how to fill out certain forms and have the skills they need to have when it’s time to go into the real world. It has helped me be able to fill out all the forms that I need to and do it correctly.” – **Jalayla Dotson**

#### **Testimony 2**

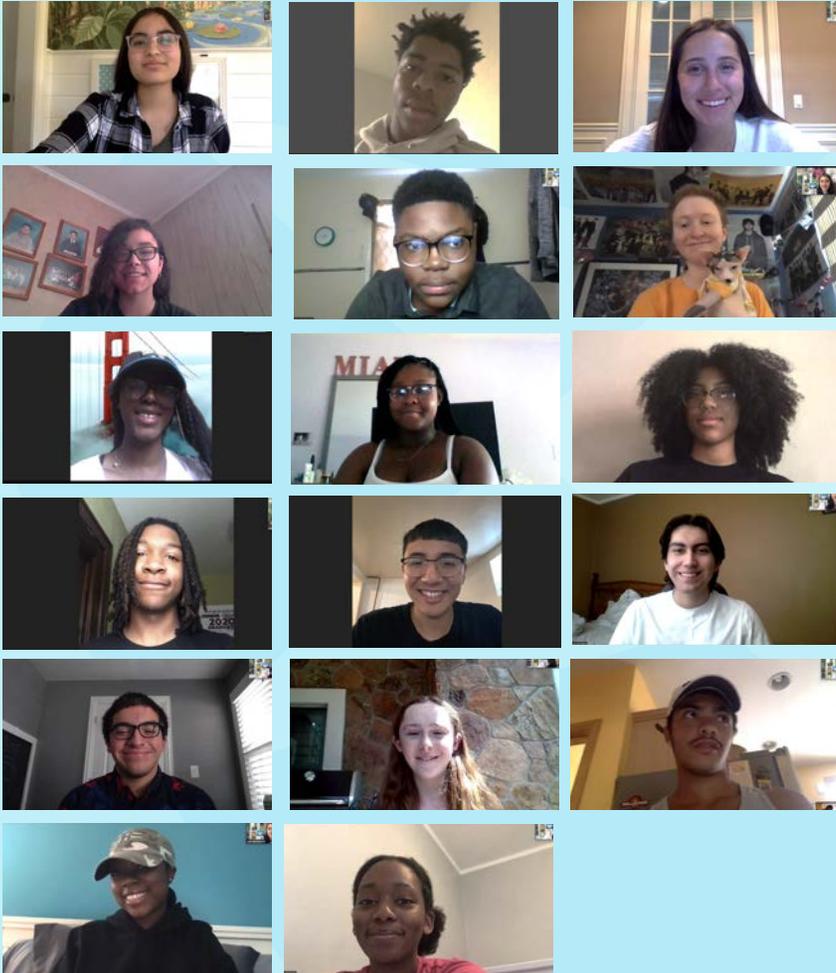
“Being in this group at 16 has led me to a greater understanding and development of the formal workspace I intend to have for my future! With being a youth council member for Mikva for this short amount of time, I have learned sooo many skills for the job force, from going to meetings with Mayor Lightfoot and simply filling out all my required forms for my first job as a cashier.” – **Julian Barber**

# CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY YOUTH COUNCIL

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# JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL



**Kyrie Adams**  
Kenwood HS

**Oluwatobiloba Akingbesote**  
Gage Park HS

**Xavieon Anderson**  
Morton West HS

**Marco Avila**  
John Hancock College Prep

**Miah Bertrand**  
Thornridge HS

**Edgar Casco**  
George Washington HS

**Dariah Clark**  
YCCS - Chatham

**Angela Cuevas**  
Lane Tech HS

**Treashur Duff**  
North Lawndale College Prep

**CJ Gordon**  
Whitney Young HS

**Daymien Gutierrez**  
Clemente Community Academy

**Jalen Hunt**  
North Lawndale College Prep

**Micah Johnson**  
YCCS - Innovations

**Nia Johnson**  
Providence St. Mel Development

**Andrianna Laye**  
Christ the King Jesuit College Prep

**Sarah Lerner**  
Whitney Young HS

**Grace Miller**  
Walter Payton HS

**Tonimesha Neal**  
North Lawndale College Prep

**Julian Nieto**  
Lane Tech HS

**Octavio Perez**  
Von Steuben HS

**Anita Rao**  
North Shore Country Day School

**Heaven Riley**  
Brooks HS

**RaMaje Scales**  
Homewood Flossmoor HS

**Sean Skoog**  
Whitney Young HS

**Ahide Soriano**  
Roosevelt HS

**Asata Young**  
Kenwood HS

# JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL

**The Juvenile Justice Council (JJC)** is a diverse group of 26 young people ranging from ages 15-18. This summer, we worked to generate ideas on how the COVID-19 pandemic caused inequalities in the justice system and ways to address them. Our recommendations reflect the thoughts of youth who have direct experience with the juvenile justice system in Cook County. The Juvenile Justice Council strives to promote youth voice, advocate on behalf of those who have not been given a chance to speak for themselves, and to promote a just and equitable society by advocating for restorative justice and fair reentry practices.

## FRAMING QUESTION

**How can the justice system respond to the racial inequalities and structural disparities that were presented by the COVID-19 pandemic?**

## SUMMER SNAPSHOT

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed and will continue to change the world. More specifically, the pandemic has brought to light major disparities that have persisted within the justice system. In light of the disparities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have identified issue areas in the juvenile justice system that have adversely impacted young people during this crisis. Our recommendations will address the county's longstanding commitment to reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders, the technological disparities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic, and barriers to re-entry for young people as they transition from system involvement to the community.

***“For the past several years of my administration I have been very fortunate to develop a relationship with Mikva Challenge’s Juvenile Justice Council and to be able to learn from and help implement changes put to me directly from these perceptive and passionate young people. Each year the JJC’s annual report has put forward recommendations for improving how juvenile justice is carried out in Cook County and over the years they have accomplished a great deal. This has included producing online platforms to help other young people have their juvenile records expunged and helping expand the community outreach of reforms we have put in place in Bond Court. Through their insight, their research, and their understanding of the lived experience of young individuals, the Juvenile Justice Council is an invaluable source for advocacy and policy. I am grateful for their work and look forward to continued partnerships with the JJC serving as a strong youth voice for Cook County.”***

**- Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President**

# JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL

## Recommendation 1: Addressing Barriers to Reentry: Roadmap to Reentry

**Cook County should host a digital forum on a roadmap to re-entry created in partnership with the Juvenile Justice Council and other potential partners. The result of which should be a collaboration on the creation and management of a technological guide to help young people navigate re-entry in the post-COVID-19 digital era.**

Cook County should launch a social media campaign to inform Cook County residents of their options, particularly families of those re-entering from the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. The Juvenile Justice Council can create and spread digital media with resources, links to sign up for County Care or other programs, and aid for families to determine eligibility of such programs.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system often do not have access to the information and resources needed for successful reentry. Unsuccessful reentry is often directly responsible for an increased likelihood of recidivism. As it stands, the Cook County Sheriff's Office's reentry assistance network is not user-friendly, and does not showcase resources for juveniles.

Social media is the most effective way to get in touch with juvenile offenders, as they are young people, too. Studies have shown that drug-involved probationers who volunteered to receive a text or email reminders about treatment goals participated in more days of treatment and had fewer days of substance use than those who didn't receive electronic reminders.

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Youth-friendly Digital Guide

The Juvenile Justice Council, in conjunction potential partners in Cook County, should create a youth-friendly and consumable digital guide [including, but not remaining limited to, comprehensive healthcare information upon re-entry, eligibility, and information on signing up for County Care, links to resources, and tutorials (i.e. a video on how one completes a W-4 tax form or applies for a job)] of relevant information and resources for juveniles involved with and/or leaving the Justice System, modeled after the re-entry assistance network put out by the Cook County Sheriff's Office, but with more youth-specific and COVID-19-related information.

#### Action Step 2: Virtual Forum

The guide should be presented in a virtual forum via Zoom involving members of under-served Chicago neighborhoods including Austin, West Garfield, Roseland, North Lawndale, and Cook County municipalities like Calumet, Thornton, and Bremen, and presented for any other county residents interested. The forum should also be recorded and uploaded as a manual for users of the guide.

#### Action Step 3: Social Media Display

Alongside the forum presentation, the guide should be advertised and displayed on social media for the maximum effect of mass information. This information can be displayed on the various social media accounts for county officials including the President's official Twitter account and the multiple Instagram and Facebook accounts of county officials.

# JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL

## Recommendation 2: Addressing Barriers to Reentry: Access to Education

**The Juvenile Justice Department, Chicago Public Schools, and partners in the Alternative School Network such as Nancy B. Jefferson, should build a coalition with the Juvenile Justice Council that assists in the navigation of challenges of e-learning and disparities in educational level upon re-entry. This network would participate in youth-led virtual workshops that promote high engagement, creative innovation, and collaboration.**

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

As programs that are utilized by re-entering youth become virtual, access to technology has become a top priority for Nancy B. Jefferson and Chicago Public Schools, evident in their efforts to get every student access to internet services. However, even when youth do have access to technology, they may not have the tools necessary to engage with a virtual education. Virtual learning presents new challenges to all students, but its effects can be especially damaging to those already struggling with school, facing the digital divide, learning in underfunded school districts, or facing other educational disparities. High drop out rates post-incarceration make it all the more imperative that schooling and education is highly encouraged and that these students and their educators get all of the support that they need.

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Coalition Creation

Creating a coalition involving the Juvenile Justice Council, the Alternative Schools Network, and Chicago Public Schools, to assist juveniles re-entering the community they need to actively support juveniles re-entering education digitally. These include, but are not limited to, re-enrollment procedures, information on school choice, and strategies to navigate remote learning. The Juvenile Justice Council has established a relationship with Daveed Moskowitz, and can use this connection to distribute high-quality resources and lead effective e-learning workshops to students exiting Nancy B. Jefferson and re-entering outside education as well as their adult educational mentors and staff.

## Recommendation 3: Aftercare and Post Release Services: Virtual Probation Services

Probation officers should connect with youth virtually during the pandemic by moving services to virtual platforms like Zoom. This adjustment addresses the communication difficulties that have arisen due to the social distancing guidelines necessary to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Due to COVID-19, probation officers have been unable to meet with youth on probation, preventing them from connecting with the youth to have a successful re-entry. In our interactions with members of the Juvenile Probation Staff, they have voiced concern about the difficulty of adapting to a changing environment, creating further concerns about their ability to adjust to virtual platforms.

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Mandatory Zoom Workshop

As part of the continuing education requirement outlined in the Illinois Probation and Probation Officers Act, probation officers should attend a mandatory virtual Zoom workshop, hosted by the Juvenile Justice Council, for probation officers to help transition to an effective form of communication to build community between officers and youth on probation.

The workshop would include how to...

- effectively engage with youth online
- form community norms for virtual spaces
- navigate virtual platforms such as Zoom
- help build youth soft skills through activities and energizers
- Provide a safe platform to build relationships with youth

This workshop would be part of the probation officers' continued education requirement, as outlined in the Illinois Probation and Probation Officers Act.

## Recommendation 4: Aftercare and Post Release Services: Trauma Screening

To align with the County's longstanding goal of reducing recidivism and supporting young people throughout the re-entry process, probation officers should combine the current trauma screening tools in use with the distribution of a comprehensive re-entry guide developed by the Juvenile Justice Council.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Currently, probation officers provide youth with programs based on the nature of their offense. This approach does not always take into account the trauma, psychological needs, and essentials for financial security of youth. Such needs must be acknowledged as they are indispensable in the reduction of recidivism.

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Develop a Tool Kit

The Juvenile Justice Council should partner with the Office of Juvenile Probation to develop a tool kit which will include, but is not limited to, the following information:

- **Employment** - Obtaining work permits, employment liaisons, Re-Entry Employment Service Program, Safer Foundation
- **Housing Opportunities** - Halfway homes and sustainable housing options
- **Substance Abuse Assistance** - Treatment Alternative for Safe Communities Inc., counseling, therapy
- **Legal Assistance** - Expungement (expunge.io), informing the youth regarding their rights and terms of their probation, Illinois Institute for Community Law and Affairs
- **Health Resources** - Mental health services, access to healthcare, eligibility for County Care
- **Government Benefits** - How to apply for Social Security Benefits
- **Education** - Re-enrollment process, including the "You Got This" Guide for Youth Transitioning from Juvenile Justice Facilities

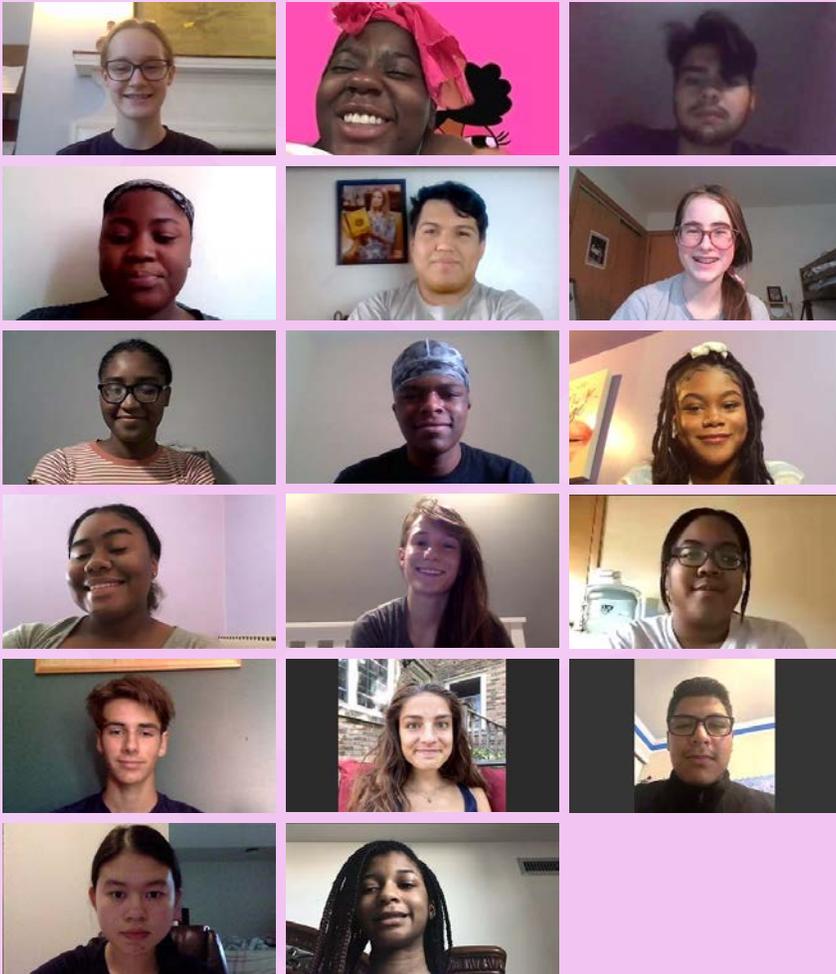
This packet can be developed both digitally and in hard copy, and will be distributed via email and reviewed in the first meeting between youth and their probation officer. In order to enforce the distribution of this packet, it will be mandatory for both the probation officer and the youth to sign an agreement stating they have received and reviewed the packet.

# JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNCIL

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# YOUTH SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL



**Amori Balogun**

Schurz HS

**Serenity Cross**

Walter H. Dyett HS for the Arts

**Donell Davis**

South Shore Intl HS

**Eric Garcia**

Lane Tech HS

**Mamayan Jabateh**

Chicago Math & Science HS

**Aysia James**

Westinghouse HS

**Hannah Lawrence**

Lane Tech HS

**Alexis Mata**

John Hancock College Prep

**Anthony Mocny**

John Hancock College Prep

**Shelia Murphy**

Holy Trinity HS

**Monique Petty-Ashmead**

Brooks HS

**Destiny Phillips**

Holy Trinity HS

**Julia Rademacher-Wedd**

Whitney Young HS

**Brianna Sirdich**

Walter Payton HS

**Sabrina Sirdich**

Chi Arts HS

**Keviyonna Staton**

Noble - UIC HS

**Gabriel Stonor Saunders**

Whitney Young HS

**Deen Syed**

Amundsen HS

**Jaelan Vanable**

Harlan HS

**Bella Watts**

Walter Payton HS

**Erica Yang**

Kelly HS

# YOUTH SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## **The Youth Safety Advisory Council (YSAC)**

has been focusing on researching and discussing current policing behaviors and systems within Chicago in order to draft policy recommendations to optimize youth engagement with police by way of furthering accountability, transparency, and community voice. The following document is a cumulation of our ideas to affect a better, more just, and progressive culture of policing and their relationship with the larger population. Our hope is that by publishing and proposing this white paper, we are able to incite legislative changes.

## **FRAMING QUESTION**

**How can community policing and public policy reforms inform police accountability?**

## **SUMMER SNAPSHOT**

Over the summer, YSAC had the opportunity to meet with Chicago leaders and stakeholders in Chicago Police Department (CPD) operations. During our first week, we met with Jadine Chou, who oversees the safety operations for more than 380,000 students in more than 640 Chicago Public Schools. We utilized her knowledge of the impact of punitive policies within the School Resource Officer (SRO) system to inform our recommendation in regard to police-community relations. In week 2, YSAC learned about the Civilian Police Accountability Council (CPAC) and Grassroots Alliance Police Accountability (GAPA) and the differences between the two plans. We also met with Mecole Jordan-McBride and Adam Gross to further our discussion on civilian oversight of the police. During the third week, YSAC learned about pensions, overtime, police bonds, and training within CPD with the help of Alyx Goodwin, who is a researcher at Action Center on Race & the Economy. During our fourth week, we met with Mariela Estrada and Deborah Witzburg from the City of Chicago Office of the Inspector General (OIG), who taught us how to navigate and find resources on the OIG website. We used their research tips to begin to craft actionable recommendations. During the final weeks, YSAC met with Ben Mckay as well as finalized the recommendations pertaining to the framing question.

***The Chicago Police Department understands the importance of engaging our youth, whose voices and perspectives are essential in building community trust and keeping our neighborhoods safe.***

***To that end, Superintendent Brown's reinvigorated community policing model places an emphasis on building police and community partnerships with residents of all ages, and includes a focus on youth engagement, leadership, mentoring and exposure to career opportunities.***

***Superintendent Brown continues to meet with Chicago's youth, listening to their stories and experiences as CPD works to create a safer future for them, and everyone who lives, works, and visits here.***

**- Superintendent David O. Brown, Chicago Police Department**

# YOUTH SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## THE PROBLEM

Instances of police brutality, the militarization of the police through political rhetoric, and sentencing policies that have disproportionately impacted people of color and youth have continuously marginalized minority communities. Despite historically acting as a means for oppression, through reform and the refabricating of community-police relations, policing can play a fundamental role in enfranchising the country's most disadvantaged communities. In fact, through the implementation of public policy reform and community policing, the Chicago Police Department can act towards achieving a safer, more equitable, and more accountable system of public safety.

# YOUTH SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Recommendation 1:

### *Community Policing Strategies - CPD Community Center for Youth*

**Inspired by a model to that of the New York City Police Department, we recommend that the Chicago Police Department (CPD) should create community centers for youth. A youth community center would provide a space of safety for all in need, especially for vulnerable populations such as victims of violence, immigrants, Black, Indigenous, people of color, and LGBTQ+ individuals through youth programming, mental health and educational resources, and community centered events. Ongoing community engagement can build thriving communities where people have the support they need to address harm without continuing cycles of violence. Through establishing a police-run community center, the city enables itself to refabricate community relations and perceptions of police, in addition to furthering community policing measures to provide greater service and protection to the city.**

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In its community relations strategy, Chicago Police Department outlines community policing as imperative to creating a safer Chicago. Young people from around the city have experienced firsthand the benefits of community centers, especially in under-resourced communities. Eric Garcia, of Irving Park, says that this community center would create another safe space for kids and teens to go to where they can feel safe and stay out of trouble. It would be a place for them to stay, especially if other places like libraries or schools are closed. Jaelen Venable, from the South Side, believes that a new community center could directly contribute to making Chicago a safer place for young people. He has observed that many people do not have a safe place to go and end up out in the open, where they are at a higher risk for experiencing violence.

Aysia James notes that, "In the North Lawndale community, we lack community centers and it's also a lot of violence over there. It would be safer for the youth to have a community center to rely on without the fear of getting hurt and having support during hard times. We need the center for people who are in low-income communities, also known as resource deserts, that lack the programs that are in wealthier communities. It would bring people together and make them feel they have the support that wealthier communities have."

### POTENTIAL LOCATIONS

The Police and Fire Training Facility being built in West Garfield Park can benefit both cadets and community members simultaneously. Those who oppose the approval of the budget for the Academy want the City of Chicago to invest in resources in communities such as West Garfield Park. The Police and Fire Training Academy is a perfect way to do just that, as money is already earmarked to construct the facility. By sharing its classrooms and gymnasium with youth and by providing a safe place for young people to go to receive support with academics, social services, and relationship-building, the Police Academy will incorporate community policing from the moment it is built. This usage of a Chicago Police Department space for a community center would exemplify the Police Department's commitment to serving the community, give youth a casual space within which to interact with police officers, and pave the way for more police-run community centers to exist in neighborhoods across the city. Additionally, if West Garfield Park residents voice that they would prefer the community center be in a different space, a shuttered Chicago Public School (CPS) could be another option that CPD could welcome the community into without taking on the cost of constructing a building.

# YOUTH SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## **(Continued) Recommendation 1:** *Community Policing Strategies - CPD* Community Center for Youth

### **STEPS OF ACTION**

#### **Action Step 1: Listening Sessions with Community Residents**

In November 2020, YSAC will have a virtual listening session with community residents of the West Garfield Park Area in order to get feedback on what they would like to see in the community center.

#### **Action Step 2: Meetings with Supt. Brown + Potential Partners**

YSAC will meet with Superintendent Brown in the fall of 2020 in order to get feedback on the community center and to create public support of the community center in the cop academy. YSAC will also meet with and evaluate potential partners on the site (After School Matters, Youth Guidance, I Grow Chicago, Joyce Foundation).

#### **Action Step 3: Training for Youth Liaison Officers**

In 2021, training for Youth Liaison Officers in community engagement strategies and youth center programs will commence. Some programs and services can include academic planning, counseling sessions, basketball games, and hangout spots and meeting rooms for youth councils such as the Youth District Advisory Council (YDAC).

# YOUTH SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Recommendation 2:

### *SRO Training Reform - Mandatory, Local Based, Ongoing, and Youth Integrated SRO Training*

**The Chicago Police Department (CPD) should mandate the implementation and attendance of community focused School Resource Officer (SRO) training sessions. In addition, CPD should ensure the creation of a training program that works to proactively maintain and develop localized youth involvement, as well as develop positive relationships among SROs and students. Through localized training sessions (on the North, West, and South Sides) that integrate and highlight youth voices, SROs will be able to continually develop the tools to have positive interactions with youth. The current training models lack emphasis on the uniqueness of diverse geographical communities wants and needs within Chicago Public Schools (CPS) as well as youth involvement.**

In terms of localized training, we are requesting that in addition to the newly enacted policy, that SROs within respective communities undergo regional training, delineated between Northside, Southside and Westside. This is important as each area of the city encounters varying difficulties and celebrates a vast amount of cultures and traditions, each impacting the way in which community members view and interact with policing. Thus, if the community policing rationale is expanded to allow for SRO officers to get to know the historical significance of the school and its people, better outcomes are likely to occur. This can be exemplified by student and community lead engagement within an area with a predominant cultural, ethnic, and linguistic heritage, such a community tour of Pilsen and Little Village, areas with high Latinx concentrations. If not already in effect, such training would occur on an annual or biannual basis in order to insure best practices. Moreover, collaboration incites a policing benefit, as “cognitive; emotional; social; and moral [skills]...may improve officers’ wellness as well as promote relationships between police officers and community members,” allowing both parties to receive benefits (Blumberg).

Regarding youth voice, we are requesting that youth obtain a voice and a standing within SRO training mechanisms, which can be actualized through an additional youth developed toolkit, community forums within schools in order to bridge understanding of student and SRO rights, a system of complaints against an SRO officer, and having youth on the ground through training, should the safety regulations permit. As students, and disproportionately students of color, are the most impacted by SRO presence, engagement and aggression, it is imperative that student voice is provided a platform to speak out and channeled into meaningful school, local, or district wide reform in years to come.

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

These policy elements should be implemented through the 2020-2021 school year to create a safe environment where both SROs and students feel welcomed, dismantling previous harmful SRO behavior and the culture it has bred. Creating a channel of influence for youth and community leaders in mandatory training procedures presents a sustainable solution for community change. This will also inform students and parents of their rights, which acts as another way to reduce infractions, besides the restorative and educational recommendations outlined in the current policy.

Within our city, youth seldom have the opportunity for their voices to be heard, and if able, often are subject to being stereotyped and manipulated. While the intentionality behind others wanting youth to speak is sometimes difficult to determine, it is not difficult to understand the value of student involvement in SRO training. Youth involvement not only creates a better perception of CPD and an equitable environment to share their voice, but young people will be empowered with a greater sense of purpose and capability. It is both an investment in development and safety.

# YOUTH SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## (Continued) Recommendation 2: *SRO Training Reform - Mandatory, Local Based, Ongoing, and Youth Integrated SRO Training*

### STEPS OF ACTION

#### Action Step 1: Mandatory Trainings

SRO annual trainings must be made mandatory for Chicago SROs and other Chicago Police Department employees working in or around Chicago Public Schools.

#### Action Step 2: Localized Trainings

SRO annual trainings must have a localized component which separates the city in North, South, and West side communities.

#### Action Step 3: Student Involvement

SRO annual trainings must have student involvement from the respective areas, functioning on a volunteer basis, in addition to YSAC, and if the popularity demands, operate on elected representation from each region.

#### Action Step 4: Handout with Student Opinions

SRO annual trainings must include a handout that will be created by YSAC, informed by a survey curated by and for CPS students to express student opinion. Sample questions include: What would you like SROs to know about your community and your student experience? and What can SROs do to have a better presence in your school? Additionally, the survey will analyze whether further efforts to establish youth voice, through community forums or introduction and information sessions are desirable or necessary, and if so, can be deliberated under the framework of our policy. This can be done through open forums hosted by YSAC and/or CPD through social media and even Zoom Meetings.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- After School Matters
- Youth District Advisory Councils (YDACs)
- Chicago Public Schools
- Southwest Organizing Project
- I Grow Chicago
- Mental Health First Aid
- National Alliance on Mental Health
- National Association of School Resource Officers

**The district is working with the Mikva Challenge Youth Safety Advisory Council to develop a training and measurement system that is designed to ensure student voice helps shape the effectiveness of the SRO program. Members of the Youth Safety Advisory have proposed that if SROs are to remain in schools, annual training must be made mandatory for them and other Chicago Police Department employees working in or around Chicago Public Schools. In partnership with youth stakeholders, this training program will work to maintain and develop localized youth involvement, as well as develop positive relationships among SROs and students. In addition, the district will work with the Youth Safety Advisory Council and other youth organizations to build a monitoring system that includes tactics such as focus groups, surveys and other ways to capture student feedback to measure the training program's effectiveness.**

# YOUTH SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

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