

***Mikva
Challenge***

2020

**CPS STUDENT
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL



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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's 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 area 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.

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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.

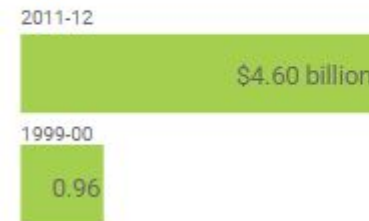
Why It's Important

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.

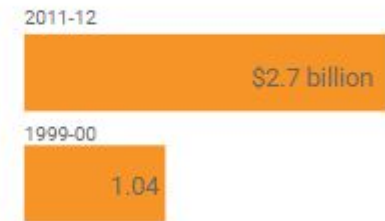
Notable Research (outside of what has already been stated)

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

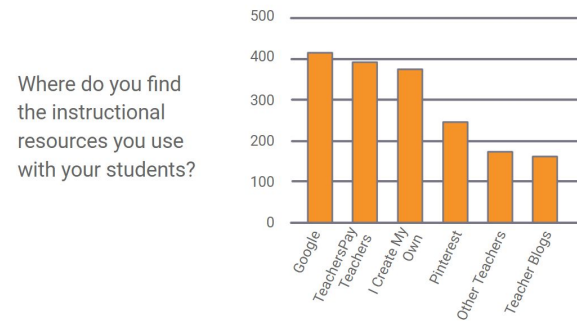
Pell grants awarded to undergraduate students taking at least one remedial course*



Undergraduate students taking at least one remedial education course



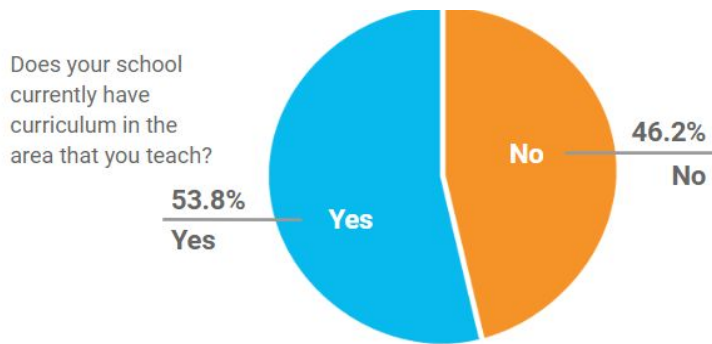
“53.8% of teachers say that they are provided with the Curriculum meanwhile 46.2% responded with not having a curriculum to work with and relying on websites such as Pinterest and Google in order to create a curriculum.”



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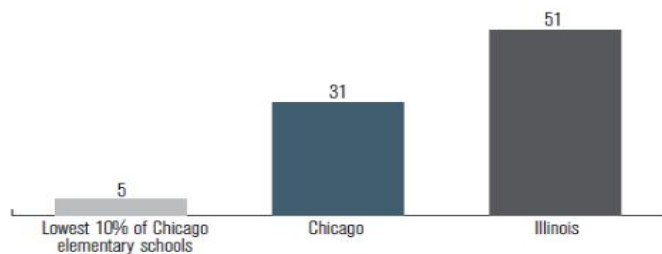
(Continued) Recommendation 1:

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.

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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?

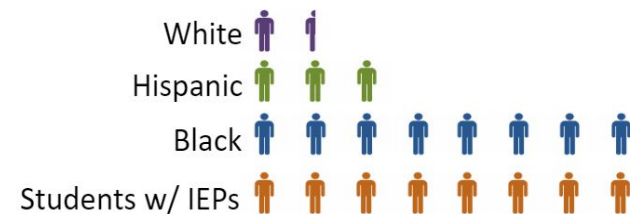
Students will work with the Office of Social and Emotional Learning to revise the current guidelines of effective discipline of the Student Code of Conduct, minimizing ambiguous and/or criminalizing language that allows space for personal biases to occur.

Why It's Important

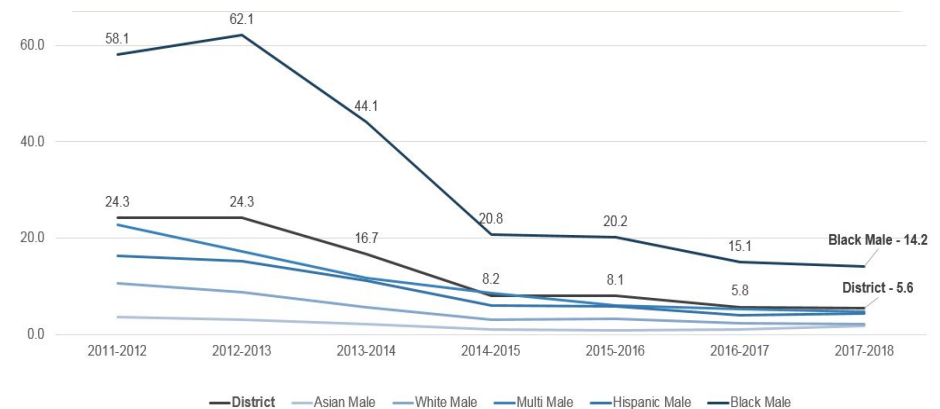
In recent years, CPS has taken steps towards a more equitable student code of conduct by limiting out-of-school suspensions and revising the consequences attached to certain behaviors, yet within this district, Black students remain 3 to 10 times more likely to be suspended than their non-Black counterparts. 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.



of out of school suspensions for every 100 students



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(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?

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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%

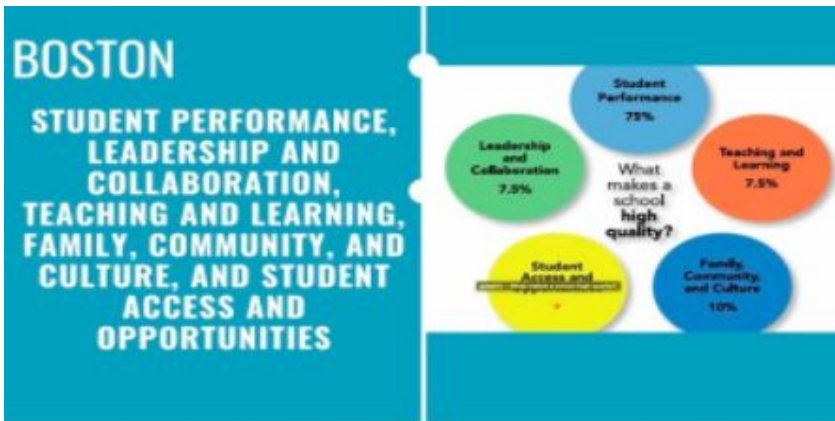
School discipline policies and the disparate impact on students of color, students with disabilities, and students that identify as LGBT - 48%

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(Continued) Recommendation 3:

School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP)

New York and Boston School Rating Policies



CPS SQRP only has one line of data from 5essentials



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(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.

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- ¹³ Shafer, Leah. "Making Student Feedback Work." *Harvard Graduate School of Education*, 2 November 2017, <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/11/making-student-feedback-work#:~:text=The%20benefits%20of%20student%20feedback,time%20adjustments%20to%20their%20teaching>.