

Mikva Challenge Grant Foundation  
332 S Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60604

# Chicago Public Schools Student Advisory Council Recommendations



**Summer 2016**

Youth created recommendations for CPS to get communities invested in neighborhood schools.

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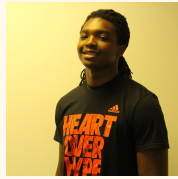
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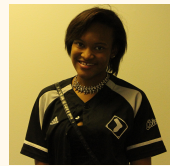
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## Who is The Student Advisory Council?

The Student Advisory Council is a collective of twenty young leaders from across the city of Chicago, who are passionate about education and addressing issues affecting students throughout Chicago Public Schools. With the support of Mikva Challenge, the council has learned about different factors that impact inner-city public education and met with several stakeholders, activists, and educational representatives including Chief Education Officer, Dr. Janice K. Jackson. With these opportunities, the council developed and curated recommendations for the Chief Education Officer of Chicago Public Schools.

## Issue

There is a lack of connection/ relationships between businesses schools and neighborhood community. This problem affects students, since students are often unheard by their own community and don't receive the acknowledgments that they deserve. When students do not know what is offered within their community they ultimately miss out on meaningful resources available to them. Communities can miss out on the benefits of getting students involved and supporting their organizations and businesses.

## Recommendation 1- Community Perspective Project

*Implement a community awareness plan as a Service Learning Project: The project's results will be different for each school. Students will obtain data, analyze it and decide what steps must be taken to change misconceptions related to the community school. In the survey that was created for businesses and organizations will be asked to attend a community fair located at the school. After the fair, quarterly meetings will be created by students and would invite those who participated in the fair. The meetings will allow students and representatives to discuss partnership opportunities and the issues that exist in the community.*

1. Students will present two surveys created by the SAC Council. One is for the businesses/organizations while the other is for the students that attend the school.
2. Inform the community organizations, students, and staff about the results first from both the surveys to view any connections of patterns of misconceptions from both surveys.
3. A fair will be created that will consist of the businesses and organizations that are in the community by the school. Businesses and organizations will present themselves to the community, students and staff. They would gain free publicity and potential customers.
4. After the fair, quarterly meetings will be created. Those meetings will consist of the school, and the community presenting their issues and creating solutions to solve them.

## Why is this Important?

Students learn about asset mapping and resources available to them in the community, create a relationship with the businesses and organizations near the school, educate the community on the struggles the school and students face and vice versa. This will be achieved by initiating a relationship and working on strengthening it through partnerships discussed in the quarterly meetings and working on alleviating any negative connotations affiliated with the school and ultimately targeting a root cause of detachment between community assets and the neighborhood schools.



## Data

The use of a community fair is not unusual. In fact, in the state of Utah, TH Bell Junior High School has an annual community awareness night during the beginning of the school year. Participation is very high and most of the community participates during this event. Another school called Roy High School, located in Utah, Have also created and used a Community Awareness Night. During this event, the school was able to bring up certain issues such as Internet safety, suicide prevention, and substance abuse prevention. Furthermore, a community awareness night can get parents engaged in the schools and care for the education of the students in the community. Also, it improves students academic performance by .5 of a standard deviation unit of .5, which is 34 percent of improvement for a student's academic ability. Lastly, The American Journal of Health studies shows that schools enhanced as a community bring resiliency together as one for progression.

"Home." Home. T.H. Bell Junior High Home of the Minutemen, n.d. Web. 03 Aug. 2016. Web. URL: [http://thbell.wsd.net/index.php?option=com\\_acymailing&ctrl=archive&task=view&mailid=87&key=8qYjbPyO&tmpl=component](http://thbell.wsd.net/index.php?option=com_acymailing&ctrl=archive&task=view&mailid=87&key=8qYjbPyO&tmpl=component)[http://thbell.wsd.net/index.php?option=com\\_acymailing&ctrl=archive&task=view&mailid=87&key=8qYjbPyO&tmpl=component](http://thbell.wsd.net/index.php?option=com_acymailing&ctrl=archive&task=view&mailid=87&key=8qYjbPyO&tmpl=component)

The first piece of evidence that is listed is a junior high school that had created a fair and invited everyone in the community and helped fundraise for the school. Also, most local businesses that are located near participated in this fair.

Roy Cone Community Night." Roy Cone Community Night. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Aug. 2016. Web URL: <http://roy.wsd.net/index.php/community/205-roy-cone-community-night>

"Frisco Community Awareness Night | Frisco, TX - Official Website." Frisco Community Awareness Night | Frisco, TX - Official Website. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Aug. 2016. Web URL: <http://www.ci.frisco.tx.us/291/Frisco-CAN>

"The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and Urban Secondary School Student Academic Achievement." Urban Education. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Aug. 2016.

"The Relationship between Students' Sense of Their School as a Community and Their Involvement in Problem Behaviors." American Public Health Association -. American Journal of Public Health, Dec. 1997. Web. 03 Aug. 2016.

## Issue

Rising High School students often have to travel out of their community to attend a High School that offers more resources such as staff available, technology and more opportunities through career interest programs (Such as medical, STEM, & Engineering) to prepare for a higher education. For those students who can't travel/ aren't accepted into Ivy League HS's, they are forced into their local neighborhood high school. However, neighborhood High Schools have a bad reputation, from the community, for lacking these resources and under preparing their students for higher education. For the student, leaving their neighborhood removes a sense of community within the student, while currently staying at their neighborhood HS puts our students at unequal disadvantages to succeed in post CPS venues. Hence, why less than 14% of CPS graduates complete undergraduate school at 4 year institutions.

## Recommendation 2- Feeder School Initiative

*This recommendation is to re-envision the CPS district by instituting a Feeder School Initiative (FSI). This will not only create direct pathways from neighborhood Elementary Schools to neighborhood High Schools, to City Colleges of Chicago and Universities, it will also better utilize current programs offered by the Board of Education to change the perspective of the community on that neighborhood school to encourage enrollment. In addition, the implementation of a career-interest guided academic career could be offered for the student to study their field of interest as early as 6th grade.*

1. **Phase One** - At the 6th grade, elementary school transitional and career counselors will administer surveys through Naviance, a comprehensive K-12 College and career readiness solution that helps districts and schools align student strengths and interest to postsecondary goals. Beginning at a 6<sup>th</sup> grade level is important because it is directly prior to the grade levels that are most impactful to high school applications. Schools will utilize programs currently offered by the Federal TRIO programs such as *GearUp*, *Upward Bound* and others to their school, that will work with school counselors to assist in the early thought process of selecting high schools and possible career interests and readiness. Also, if beginning signs of failure are present, early mentoring will be given to students before the situation escalates.
2. **Phase Two** - In 7th and 8th grade, students begin the high school search. They will explore their options with the assistance of their transitional counselors and TRIO group programs through means of HS Open houses, Shadow days, and HS fairs. Once decisions are made, students could then be fed to neighborhood high schools within the community that offer electives (Multi Media, Liberal and, Visual Arts) core classes (STEM, History, English) and special programs (Nursing, Engineering) that assists with early preparation to gain knowledge for undergraduate school. Potential pilots for the FSI are Al Raby HS (Military/ Alternative), Carl Shurz HS(Automotive and engineering classes), Curie HS (RTC Medical Prep), Julian HS (Nursing Program), Dunbar HS, Chicago Vocational HS, and Bowen HS)
3. **Phase Three** - With all data collected in Naviance on the student for the last six/seven years in CPS, this information will be used to output recommendations for Colleges and Universities within the State of Illinois that offer undergraduate programs of their study. FSI will also work in collaboration with College counselors(Less than 40% of CPS schools have college and career counselors available that offer information on scholarships, financial aid information, etc) and the existing the 'College Readiness' programs within the Chicagoland area like TRIO group programs and Target Hope that assists students with College Applications, essay writing, studying courses and College visitations. Mentors are responsible to keep students on track to reach their career interests and continue to offer support for their skills study.

4. **Phase Four** - After the Student leaves the Chicago Public School System, the student's progress/success will be monitored through college. The Career and College system will be available to students up until their Freshman year of their undergraduate program. Things that will be monitored are: feedback on the initiative, suggestions for changes, student success rates (completion of undergraduate degree)

## Why is this Important?

With keeping our children within their own community, they build a sense of connection. What this looks like are parents and community members mentoring students, thus creating and strengthening long lasting relationships. Plus student ambassadors are mentors, trying to get youth to speak about the issues in their community, and how they are currently addressing them.

## Data

Lake View High School is an example of what we'd like to establish district wide, since it is a feeder High School for neighboring Elementary schools including; Mt. Carmel, Saint Andrews and Saint Benedict. Within the school, Lake View has established a partnership with Microsoft's commitment to transforming education, fostering local innovation, and enabling jobs/opportunity. As a gate-way to higher education, Lake View has also established a feeder-school partnership with DePaul University, the nation's tenth largest private university, to intake students from Lakeview interested in their undergraduate programs.

"Top US Private Schools with the Most Graduates Getting Into Ivy League Universities." TheStreet. Maxine Nunes, 15 Oct. 2015. Web. 01 Aug. 2016.

<https://www.thestreet.com/story/13325695/15/top-us-private-schools-with-the-most-graduates-getting-into-ivy-league-universities.html>

"Top Ph.D. Feeder Schools Are Now Chinese." Science. Jeffrey Mervis, 11 July 2008. Web. 01 Aug. 2016.

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/321/5886/185>

Definition of Feeder Schools- Official and Community Responses

"Feeder-school Dictionary Definition | Feeder-school Defined." Feeder-school Dictionary Definition | Feeder-school Defined. N.p., n.d. Web. 01 Aug. 2016.

<http://www.yourdictionary.com/feeder-school>

Garringer, Michael, and Patti MacRae. "Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs in Schools." Building Effective Peer Mentoring Services (n.d.): n. pag. Wwww.educationnorthwest.org. The Mentoring Resource Center in Cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Sept. 2008. Web. 1 Aug. 2016.

<<http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/building-effective-peer-mentoring-programs-intro-guide.pdf>>.

"Managing Mutually Beneficial Relationships." Today's Public Relations: An Introduction (n.d.): 75-105. Wwww.abcdinstitute.org. The Searle Funds at the Chicago Community Trust. Web. 1 Aug. 2016.

<<http://www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/Building%20Mutually%20Beneficial%20School-Community%20Relationships.pdf>>.

## Issue

Many students don't have the emotional support they need. 33% of students have experienced a disorder over their lifetimes. There were 5,574 school-based arrests of juveniles on Chicago Public School properties, accounting for about 1 of every 5 juvenile arrests in the city for all of 2010.

## Recommendation 3- Social Emotional Learning Classes

*Have one staff member in every neighborhood high school lead Social Emotional Learning workshops after school for their students and the community members.*

SEL is already implemented in 522 schools; 420 elementary schools, 96 high schools and 6 continuation schools. What we want to do is have every neighborhood high school take advantage of this opportunity.

1. These workshops would be held at the school, on the last Friday of each month in a full year for teachers, students, parents, and the community.
2. The times of the programs will be arranged at the discretion of SEL facilitators, community members and the students.
3. One Staff member from every neighborhood high school has to have a training to be able to facilitate this workshop
4. Get students to come to the workshops by first focusing on students who have disciplinary infractions.

- a. Studies in the Social Justice Humanitas Academy (See more in data)

## Why is this Important?

This can be used as a restorative justice technique; doing so can reduce disciplinary consequences that lead to students missing valuable class time. SEL is important because it increases prosocial behaviors and reduces depression and stress among students.

## Data

Social Justice Humanitas Academies Individual Pupil Education Plan: Teaches students how to take responsibility for poor decisions; this had an impact on behavior trends in schools.

- Decrease in suspension rates (Only 0.2% of students were suspended in the 2013-2014 school year)
- Rising graduation rates (From 83% to 93.9%)
- First time exit exam pass rates increased (From 68% to 78%)

Burnham/Anthony of Math and Science partnership with Illinois State University

- They learned five core skills (Self awareness, social awareness, self management, relationship skills, responsible decision making)
- Practiced strategies for managing anger, fear, and stress. As well as, ways to refuse to not engage in risky behavior.

### Citations:

Coalition for Community Schools. "2015 Award for Excellence Winner:

Social Justice Humanitas Academy." (2015): 1-4. Print.

SEL Family Involvement Brochure. Chicago: Burnham/Anthony Math and

Science Academy, n.d. Burnham.cps.edu. Web. 1 Aug. 2016.

<<http://www.burnham.cps.edu/pdf/SELFamilyInvolvementBrochure.pdf>>.

## Issue

Many students and community members, mainly in the south, are struggling with real world issues and this is restricting them from prospering in life because they never learned it in school. These things include struggling with money management in correlation with taxes, communication skills, pre-employment skills, and interpersonal skills.

## Recommendation 4- Life Skills Classes

*Implement life skills classes in CPS Schools for students and parents/community members who are struggling with real life scenarios such as taxes, loans, and money management. Most of the classes will reflect on the issues that community members are experiencing.*

1. Contact schools located in the south such as, Hirsch Metropolitan High School, Tilden High School, Paul Robeson, Dunbar Academy, and Fenger Academy, who need life skill classes implemented. These schools need these life skills.
2. According the Cynthia Barron, leadership coach at the UIC College of Education Urban Education Leadership program, she said “every school has allocated money for certain classes implemented, especially for parents.” This money would be used to implement these programs and partake in some of the necessary materials needed for the program.
3. Next we would partner up with community centers around the school’s community to come to the schools to teach as well as facilitate the classes. We would first contact local community centers around the school and advertise the needs of life skill classes, attempting to persuade them by mentioning that schools and communities are struggling to survive in society. In return, they could get more publicity for their establishments, broadening their audience of parents and community members. With that, revenue for the community center increases. Since its a local business, they can get tax breaks for these charitable events.
4. Lastly, have the schools advertise the need for these programs by making flyers and sending them to houses as well as publishing them around the community. Include that these classes focus on the attendance of parents and community members. From this, we would also spread the word through social media as well Robocalls to parents and students

## Why is this Important?

It will prepare student and members of the community, that struggle to achieve their full potential and successfulness. Life skill classes will teach participants skills essential to the real world. Students will focus on staying in school and college readiness. Parents and community members will be granted access to lessons they’ve missed out on to perform certain life requirements.



## Data

A survey was conducted and given to multiple south high school students, one of them being Manchester high school. The survey consisted of a lot of things someone can do ranging from cleaning a toilet to setting insurance. In this survey students checked 21 of the 36 options saying that they knew how to do those things. This was roughly 58%. Of that, only 36% of them knew how to jumpstart a car and 20% knew how to take out loans and understand how they work.

"We Need to Leave High School with Real Life Skills." The Southerner. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Aug. 2016.

<http://www.shsoutherner.net/opinion/2014/06/04/we-need-to-leave-high-school-with-real-life-skills/>

An interest in personal finance among high school students doesn't appear to be the issue. A recent poll by Sallie Mae found that 84 percent of high school students desire more financial education. Among 16- to 18-year-olds, 86 percent said they would rather learn about money management in the classroom than make [financial mistakes](#) in the real world, according to a 2011 survey by investment bank Charles Schwab.

<http://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/articles/2012/10/09/why-most-high-schoolers-dont-know-how-to-manage-their-money>

"Why Most High Schoolers Don't Know How to Manage Their Money." US News & World Report. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Aug. 2016.

According to the "The Atlantic newsletter" a study found that women, the poor, and the elderly are the groups with the lowest levels of financial literacy. It also said that men outperformed women on the finance quiz, greater numbers of women responded that they "don't know," a result that held true all over the world. The upshot is that women, more conscious of their limitations, are more likely to be interested in financial-education programs but don't have the opportunities.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/05/the-danger-of-financial-ignorance-do-you-understand-money/361851/>

The Atlantic. Atlantic Media Company, n.d. Web. 10 Aug. 2016.

## Issue

The language barrier between parents and school teachers/staff in primarily spanish speaking communities causes discomfort to the parents, refraining them from participation/affiliating with the school. This is an important problem to address because the parents have the power to better schools, but they will not do so if they don't feel comfortable due to the language barrier.

## Recommendation 5- Parent Language Engagement

*Our recommendation is implementing a system in neighborhood high schools, in which student volunteers of that school go to designated school events to help translate for the parents and staff.*

1. Pick 5 schools (Juarez Community Academy High School, Curie Metropolitan High School, Westinghouse College Prep, Farragut Career Academy, Schurz High School) with a large Latino population. We want to try it with one language at first (Spanish).
2. We would ask the students from each school to be translators at specific days for the school (report card, open house) to help translate for parents.
3. Specifically, these students would come from different clubs such as Spanish club, Arabic Club, French Club or any student volunteers in the school.
4. Students would gain service learning hours.

## Why is this Important?

Parents are benefitting because they are being more comfortable in attending the school and talking to the staff. Students are benefited because their parents are actually involved in their child's life. Additionally, it affects teachers because they don't have the necessary connection with parents.

## Data

**Parent University:** The goal of Parent University is to increase parent involvement in the schools and empower parents to raise children who are successful in school, and in life.

*"Chicago Public Schools Launches Parent Universities." CPS : Press Releases :. Chicago Public Schools, 26 Mar. 2015. Web. 03 Aug. 2016.*

### Research displays that parent involvement increases student achievement:

"When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more." That's the conclusion of A New Wave of Evidence, a report from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education

*"Research Spotlight on Parental Involvement in Education." Rss. NEA, 2002. Web. 03 Aug. 2016.*

### Examples of Implementation:

The bilingual parent involvement coordinator at Turnbull Learning Academy and bilingual staff at Hueco Elementary ensure that all school-home communications, including newsletters, announcements, and information about student progress are published in both Spanish and English. Due in part to these efforts to reach more parents, the number of Hueco parents involved in at least one activity increased from 30 percent in the 1994-95 school year to 80 percent in 1996-97.

*"Family Involvement in Children's Education; Bridging School-Family Differences." Archived: Family Involvement in Children's Education; Bridging School-Family Differences. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Aug. 2016.*

## Issue

Many parents and students do not know/understand the resources available in Chicago Public Libraries (CPL) such as; computers, books, printers, and study areas. And the connection between CPS and CPL is weak. Students are not aware of services, other than books, offered in CPL.

## Recommendation 6- Libraries

*Change the dynamic of the partnership between Chicago Public Schools and Chicago Public Libraries. Students and community members need to be more aware of these resources. This can happen through events that expose the youth to various resources libraries offer such as YOUmedia and After High School, programs that enforce healthy learning habits. (computers, books, study areas, and staff, etc.) are presented to them in libraries*

1. Every Local School Council Student Representative will get a step-by-step guide on how to create a strong partnership with their local libraries, which will be sent to them through email.
2. The school's administration, staff, and students will host a Get to Know Your Library Day, which is a day where; students, community organizations, library staff, and teachers get together to present what the library and community has to offer.
3. Students and Teachers would be responsible for Getting to Know Your Library Day, an event where would be introduced to the Library's resources. The resources would include not only books, but computer resources, social resources, and other resources. A good example of this would be You-Media, which provides students with computer usage, 3-D Printing, Graphic design classes, video editing classes, photography classes, and other educational courses.

## Why is this Important?

This recommendation will enhance the interaction between the community and local libraries as well as take advantage of the resources already available at the libraries . We have many people in our community that could benefit from this greatly.

## Data

"School and Public Libraries: Enriching Student Learning and Empowering Student Voices Through Expanded Learning Opportunities." *Expanded Learning*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Aug. 2016.

"Library Locations." *City of Chicago* :: N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Aug. 2016.

"About YOUmedia." *Chicago Public Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Aug. 2016.

## Issue

Lack of community surveillance in neighborhoods leaves students unsafe during their travel to and from school. Because practice typically lasts about 2 hours, by time students are leaving to head home they are often left susceptible to danger because as of now, safe passage workers leave too soon after school. A similar issue occurs in the morning for students who travel to school for practices/etc earlier than when workers are posted.

## Recommendation 7- Safe Passages

*The Student Advisory Council recommends that Safety Passage hours be expanded both before and after school (for the target neighborhood schools). The passage will begin 2 hours prior to the schools' start times, in addition to a 3 hour expansion after the schools' end times.*

1. First Survey: Mikva Student Advisory Council members will create a survey for parents/students of target schools determining what hours they believe are necessary for them before school and after due to extracurricular activities.
2. Second Survey: Mikva Student Advisory Council members will survey community members/current safe passage workers on their willingness to work the extra hours that safe passage would be extended.
3. Spread The Word: After finalizing appropriate hours, communicate to participating organizations and have students work on propaganda after school that will spread awareness to other students and members of community about the expanded operation times

## Why is this Important?

This would give students who both participate in extracurriculars and walk home from school a reliable safety resource as they make that travel during early/late hours. It also encourages and gives parents, local businesses, and citizens a chance to become more involved in the community.

## Data

*"It happened around 6 a.m...Police sources tell Eyewitness News the victim was walking to get on a bus to a school outside the neighborhood, before any Safe Passage monitors would have been in place."*

Girl Sexually Assaulted near Safe Passage Route." ABC7 Chicago. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Aug. 2016.

*"Safe Passage has demonstrated other important effects in schools, including the decline of criminal incidents around schools and an increase in attendance. Safe Passage historically results in a seven percent boost in attendance at a school, contributing to a District attendance record of 93.2 percent last school year."*

Board Approves Contracts for 22 Safe Passage Vendors." CPS : Press Releases :. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Aug. 2016.

*"The analysis found that crime along [safe passage] routes between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on school days dropped 26 percent between the 2012-13 school year and 2014-2015...There have been 44 percent fewer drug offenses along routes during the 2014-15 school year compared with 2013-14. Robberies are down 34 percent. Batteries are down 22 percent."*

Ali, Tanveer. "Is Crime Down on Your Kid's Route to School? Safe Passage Works, Data Shows - Bronzeville - DNAinfo Chicago." DNAinfo Chicago. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Aug. 2016.



We would like to express our gratitude to all those people and groups who have made this report possible. This project is truly the sum of collective knowledge, insight and perspectives shared with us over the course of our summer and would not be possible without the support of the following:

Dr. Janice Jackson  
Chicago Public Schools

Community Schools Initiative

Dr. Cynthia K. Barron  
UIC, Center for Urban Education Leadership

Elias Coral  
Little Village Lawndale HS, Enlace Chicago

Timothy Tutton  
The Hideout, Chicago, IL

Rodrigo Paredes  
Parent University, Chicago

Micheal Ropper  
Hopleaf, Chicago, IL

Jackson Potter  
Chicago Teachers Union

Jessica Marshall  
CPS, Office of Civic Engagement and Social Science

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<http://cps.edu/Pages/StudentAdvisoryCouncil.aspx>