

**Mikva
Challenge**



Summer 2023

**CPS STUDENT
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL



TaJalin Morris-Dyett High School

Amora Unger-Wendell Phillips Academy

Daniel Ranson-South Shore International High School

Rue Reddy-Lane Technical High School

Yaretzi Salcedo-Senn High School

Edgar Nava-Amundsen High School

Lucy Ogbedie-Simeon Career Academy

Emet Shifrin-Jones College Prep

Zahiedy Silva-Curie Metropolitan High School

Yanin Zarate-Schurz High School

Salvador Alfaro-Hubbard High School

Dawone Davis-Sullivan High School

Sanaa Fedrick-Morgan Park High School

Tariq Essat-Mather High School

Rose Flores-Kelly High School

Isabella Kelly-Ogden International High School

Mercedes Jimenez-Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences

Taisja Luckey-Little Village Multicultural High School

Maimuna Mahmood-Lane Technical High School

Johanna Ramirez-Back of the Yards College Preparatory High School



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CPS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The CPS Student Advisory Council (SAC)

The CPS Student Advisory Council (SAC) is a collective of 20 young leaders from across the city of Chicago who are passionate about education and addressing issues affecting students throughout Chicago Public Schools. Students work in subcommittees to focus on a specific issue in collaboration with CPS department stakeholders. The subcommittees gather and analyze student feedback from their peers, share their findings, and advocate for policy solutions that equitably impact students district-wide utilizing Mikva Challenge's Action Civics Curriculum.



Summer Snap Shot

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

At the beginning of the school year, students shared their lived experiences, learned about district priorities, and conducted their own research in order to identify three issue areas in which they wanted to focus which included: Safety and Student Rights, Student Voice, and Supporting Neighborhood Schools. Students determined specific sub-framing questions for their issue area research.

Over the past 6 weeks, students took a deeper dive researching the root causes of the issues they wanted to solve, engaged with a variety of education experts within Chicago Public Schools and outside organizations, received policy and research training and education, and created youth-driven solutions.

At the start of the school year, youth hope to further collaborate with CPS District officials to refine, support, and implement their recommendations.

Student Voice Subcommittee

Recommendation 1: Student Voice in Policy Equity Rubric

Subframing Research Question: *How can the District include more youth perspectives in policy through an Equity lens?*

Recommendation: Student voice should be introduced to multiple phases within the Equity Policy Rubric. SAC should be a part of the design and execution for the updated rubric; working in hand with the CPS Equity Department.

Why It's Important: The implementation of student voice into the Equity Policy Rubric is necessary for the aspect of complete equity to be met because this process is inclusive of the students who are directly impacted by the policy. As stated in the CPS Equity Policy Rubric, CPS believes that “those most impacted by inequity are engaged in every phase of policy development.” To make this statement true, the Equity Department should enforce the implementation of student voice into multiple phases of policy development because the students are the ones who are merely affected by policy inequity.

Evidence: The CPS Equity Policy Review Rubric provides a standardized process to examine current CPS policies. In Section B under Relevant Definitions Portion of the Policy and Equity Rubric, it states "All people affected by a policy need to be engaged in policy development. In CPS, we believe those most impacted by inequity are engaged in every phase of policy development." In order to fulfill this, students should be involved in this process as primary stakeholders impacted by the policy.

"Research shows that thoughtful inclusion of student's voice “can increase academic motivations, strengthen reports of positive school climates and boost students’ overall perceptions of school”, as well as that student representation, can encourage the development of equitable and culturally responsive policy” (Student Voice, “A Roadmap to Authentically Engage Youth Voice in the U.S. Department of Education.)

Source: https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5b7baf6ce413596290921486/5fd3c02f183ddd441da7682c_Student%20Voice_Youth%20Engagement%20Report_ED.pdf



This graph was adapted from: *Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice*. Toshalis, Eric; Nakkula, Michael J.; https://www.howyouthlearn.org/pdf/Motivation%20Engagement%20Student%20Voice_0.pdf

Student Voice Subcommittee

(Continued) Recommendation 1: Student Voice in Policy Equity Rubric

ACTION STEPS

Action Step 1: The equity team schedules meeting #1 with SAC

- Briefing on the Equity Policy Rubric
- Informs SAC on the different grading policies and how their team grades policy based on equity.
- SAC has a discussion about how policies can be graded based on the aspect of student voice.
- The equity team helps SAC narrow down ideas.

Action Step 2: SAC meets and discusses their takeaways/conclusions for two weeks.

- SAC finalizes recommendations for the edits to the Equity Policy Rubric.

Action Step 3: The equity team schedules meeting #2 with SAC- three weeks after the first meeting.

- SAC and the Equity team discuss ways to implement SAC's recommendations into the Equity Policy Rubric.

Action Step 4: Equity team schedules meeting #3 with SAC- One week after meeting #2

- Briefing on the different phases of creating policy
- SAC holds discussions with the Equity team on where student voice can be implemented into the different phases of policy.
- The equity team helps SAC narrow down ideas.

Action Step 5: SAC meets and discusses their takeaways/conclusions for two weeks.

- SAC finalizes recommendations of student voice implementation for the edits on the different phases of policy.

Action Step 6: Equity team schedules meeting #4 with SAC- three weeks after meeting #3

- SAC and the Equity team discuss ways to implement SAC's recommendations into multiple phases of policy creation.



Student Voice Subcommittee

(Continued) Recommendation 1: Student Voice in Policy Equity Rubric

CPS Student Advisory Council Involvement

Phase 2: Understanding and Analysis

- SAC schedules annual meetings discussing the newly chosen policies up for revision with the Department of Equity.
 - What the meeting looks like:
 - The Equity team presents an overview of the policies up for revision translated into youth-friendly language and length. They have a printout of the policies in the youth translation to give to students.
 - The students then discuss with their peers how each policy will directly impact them. They then collectively group the policies into different departments.
 - Post-meeting:
 - SAC/Mikva/CPS organizes and plans events/town halls to discuss the policies up for revision. SAC sends out information about the events to SVCs/LSC student representatives. The student representatives and SVC members relay information to their school/students.

Phase 3: Drafting

- SAC reviews and analyzes data collected from the events/town halls.
 - SAC organizes meetings with the Equity department to relay information.
 - The equity team works with SAC to create final revisions on the policies to send to the individual departments.
 - The individual departments use the revisions and recommendations SAC and the equity team provides to draft the updated policies.

Student Voice Subcommittee

Recommendation 2: LSC Youth-Focused, Youth-led Trainings

Subframing Research Question: *How can existing student voice structures and systems be improved upon in order to maximize success?*

Recommendation: Student representatives should receive voting rights to principal evaluation and budget approval. In turn, CPS must have a mandated training made by students for student LSC members to know their rights and responsibilities.

Why It's Important: Being on the Local School Council as a student representative is not only daunting, but also confusing and unknown to those who are unaware of their schools student rep. This position has the potential to be a great avenue for the implementation of student voice not only to the specific school, but the district overall. However, this potential is not being harnessed due to the lack of information, equity, and uniformity. When students have the ability to get involved (and hear their own voices) in matters within their school, it increases community within the school, and creates a healthier learning environment, which leads to a more successful school. By creating this equitable and efficient set of guidelines for LSC student representatives, we are promoting a collaborative and sustained environment for students to grow and become future change makers.

Evidence: Two of the largest decisions the LSC makes are voting on the budget approval and conducting a principal evaluation. Research shows that participation in authentic student voice increases both student and whole school outcomes. To truly authentically involve youth in school-based decision-making, youth should be a part of this process.

"Currie high school is a great model of what happens when both the LSC and student voice are engaged in a meaningful way to solve issues and problems. This example highlights the outcomes when authentic student voice is incorporated such as in the Whole School Safety Process." - Curie Student

- Curie collaborated with other schools, this helped Curie better understand what could be done to better engage with students. When the administration from Curie went to other schools they saw how similar environments were doing better than them so they took advice from other schools into Curie.
- One thing Curie started doing was making an environment where the students were approached as young adults instead of children when disciplinary actions were made. This led the administration to be more approachable and students' discipline actions went down.

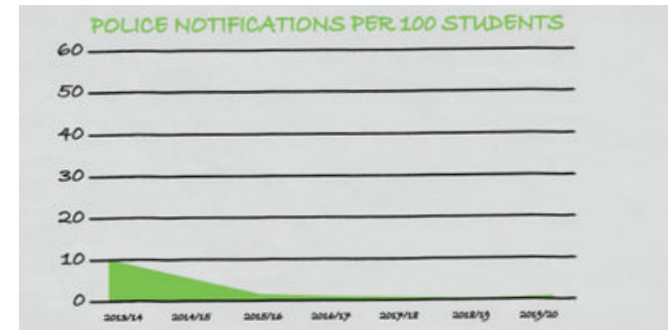
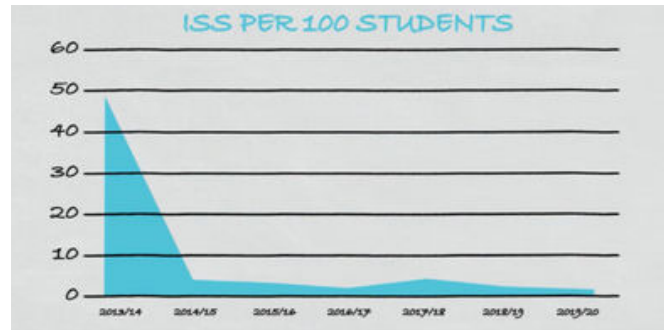
Source: Putting Care In The Center of our Schools: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTJyXoMquGM>

Student Voice Subcommittee

(Continued) Recommendation 2: LSC Youth-Focused, Youth-led Trainings

Evidence Continued

Graphs show a declining trend in police notifications and in school suspensions after authentic student voice was incorporated.



Source: Putting Care In The Center of our Schools: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTJyXoMquGM>

Action Steps

Action Step 1: Work with Office of the Local School Councils and the LCSAB to create and share the guidelines with LSCs across the district

- By working with this office and council, we will also be sure to advocate for the usage of language that is “student-friendly”

Action Step 2: Meet with [office that runs CIWP, SQRP, and principal evaluation] to add a student voice section to the principal evaluation form, the SQRP, and the CIWP.

- These sections must be filled out in the assistance of the LSC student reps (after consulting with the SVC/Student Affairs Committee)
- Sections of each respective form will also be written in the same language used in the guidelines mentioned above.

Action Step 3: Collaborate with the Office of Student Voice and Engagement to identify high schools in Chicago that already have existing SVCs and/or Student Affairs LSC Sub-Committees, and encourage those groups to work with the LSC Student representatives (if not done already)

- If neither of these groups is at the school, the OSV will work with these schools and their principals to establish a committee that best fits their needs, while also abiding by these guidelines.

Action Step 4: Once guidelines are spread, we will work with the IT department at CPS to create a district-wide “ballot” that students will use to vote for their representatives on the LSC

- This ballot will ask for the students’ CPS ID, and will then transfer the student to their correct form for their school.
- The results of this ballot will be shared with the respective Network Chiefs, Principals, and LSC Chairs.

Safety and Student Rights Subcommittee

Recommendation 1: Engaging Student Perspectives when Assessing School Safety & Security Personnel

Subframing Research Question: *How can we work to ensure students feel safe emotionally, mentally, and physically within a school?*

Recommendation: Every school should measure students' perspectives and lived experiences, especially when it comes to relationship-building, with the security staff at their school to help schools create safe learning environments.

This can be done through things such as a survey or focus group. Existing tools that the district uses for listening to students such as the *Cultivate Survey* can serve as a framework. The insight gathered should include student perspectives and their experience with interactions with their security officers. Moreover, that overseeing the supervision and training of security staff should incorporate this insight in the evaluation of their performance and to guide future training.

Why It's Important: Staff within the school play a major role in the safety and well-being of the students inside each school building. When students enter the school each day and experience security searches, there have been complaints of sexual harassment when students, especially in cases when students are being patted down. After sharing our lived experiences and hearing from peers, we have heard countless stories of misconduct with security specifically with the CPS Search and Seizure Policy, Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy, and overall the use of excessive force.

Evidence: Through speaking to students and doing our own research, we have evidence that not only is the search and seizure policy not properly being followed, but that instances of sexual misconduct continue.

- In a [2022 report](#) from the Office of Inspector General for the Chicago Board of Education about the complaints within Chicago school systems, it was found that over 25% of the complaints were about sexual misconduct. Most students mentioned that they received “creepy” behavior, assault, and more from the adults within their schools.
- [Previously in 2019](#), there were 450 cases opened up by CPS watchdog based on sexual misconduct.
- The majority of the teachers and staff resigned from their positions before a full investigation could take place.

In a conversation with Jadine Chou from the Office of Safety and Security this summer, the Safety subcommittee discussed the search and seizure policy that was already in place, but not once were pat downs mentioned within this policy. Jadine mentioned that wands are provided so that pat-downs don't occur. However, students have shared that pat-downs are still occurring, and sexual misconduct often occurs within these types of interactions.

"In my school, there is a fear of retaliation because it has been shown that when we speak up about injustices that are occurring we aren't listened to and there's a fear of being reprimanded. There's also a sense of embarrassment that stems from these situations. When we have spoken up, it was pushed to the side and we were labeled as liars." - CPS student

Safety and Student Rights Subcommittee

Recommendation 1: Engaging Student Perspectives when Assessing School Safety & Security Personnel

Evidence Continued

"Myself and my peers have strongly agreed that seeing pat downs and others' stories getting shut down by the school or staff makes us all feel as if sexual misconduct is seen as lesser of a priority and it makes me think about how much we have been told we're lying how much easier it is going to be for these actions to be dismissed and claimed to be false." - CPS Student

In an article by the Chicago Tribune, during the 2022-23 school year, a security guard began to make advances towards a student which started off on social media and then elevated to in-person sexual misconduct.

Relevant CPS Policies to Consider:

- A "Strip Search" occurs when any Board employee or School Official removes or arranges, or directs a student or visitor to remove or arrange, some or all of the student or visitor's clothing in order to permit a visual or manual inspection of his/her genitals, buttocks, anus, female breasts or undergarments. "Strip Search" does not include visually inspecting, conducting a pat down, or using a hand-held wand to inspect the portion of these undergarments which is visible to others. Note that Section II of this Policy prohibits Strip Searches.

- Gender Preference. When practical, School Officials of the same gender as the student/visitor should be assigned to scan students and visitors with hand-held metal-detecting devices, to conduct Weapons Pat Downs, and to ask a student/visitor to remove any belt and reveal the waistband or top of the pants or skirt for visual inspection. If no School Official of the same gender as the student or visitor is immediately available, a Board employee of the same gender should witness these searches.
- School Administrator Oversight. A School Administrator should witness any use of a hand-held metal detector or Weapons Pat Down of a student or visitor unless exigent circumstances require immediate action to protect any student, school staff or visitor from a physical threat.
- Prohibition Against Strip Searches and Washroom Searches. Board employees, contractors, volunteers and School Officials are prohibited from conducting Strip Searches and Washroom Searches.
- The method of searching must be (1) reasonably related to the objective of the search, and (2) not excessively intrusive in light of (i) the age and gender of the student or visitor and (ii) the nature of the suspected violation. An individualized search should be no more intrusive than is necessary to turn up evidence of the crime or rule violation the student or visitor is reasonably suspected of committing.

Sources:

<https://www.cps.edu/strategic-initiatives/cultivate-survey/>

https://cpsoig.org/uploads/3/5/5/6/35562484/cps_oig_fy_2022_annual_report.pdf

<https://graphics.chicagotribune.com/chicago-public-schools-sexual-abuse/index.html>

[Search and seizure | Chicago Public Schools. \(n.d.\). https://www.cps.edu/sites/cps-policy-rules/policies/400/409/409-](https://www.cps.edu/sites/cps-policy-rules/policies/400/409/409-3/#:~:text=Prohibition%20Against%20Strip%20Searches%20and,Strip%20Searches%20and%20Washroom%20Searches.)

[3/#:~:text=Prohibition%20Against%20Strip%20Searches%20and,Strip%20Searches%20and%20Washroom%20Searches.](https://www.cps.edu/sites/cps-policy-rules/policies/400/409/409-3/#:~:text=Prohibition%20Against%20Strip%20Searches%20and,Strip%20Searches%20and%20Washroom%20Searches.)

Safety and Student Rights Subcommittee

Recommendation 1: Engaging Student Perspectives when Assessing School Safety & Security Personnel

Actino Steps

CPS SAC Students should collaborate with Jadine Chou of the Office of Safety and Security and the Office of Social and Emotional Learning to gain further insight from students on their experiences and interactions with the school security guard. Security Guards should be evaluated on:

- Whether or not security guards are following school policies and code
- Whether or not the security guard is recently trained in de-escalation, bias and unconscious bias, and restorative practices and techniques, and whether that shows up in their work
- First-hand experiences and testimonies from students in the form of a survey or student focus group
- Conduct and keep consistent records of focus groups and data

Students in partnership with the Office of Safety and Security should determine a “student well-being at risk” metric or in the case of any sexual misconduct is mentioned during evaluation:

- Visit at-risk schools in support with crisis counselors and mental health supports
- Involved Youth and Office of Security/School Safe Determine Safety Plan for Students
- Immediate Title IX staff enter school for investigation

Safety and Student Rights Subcommittee

Recommendation 2: Mental Health Spaces

Subframing Research Question: *How can we work to ensure students feel safe emotionally, mentally, and physically within a school?*

Recommendation: Mental health spaces need to be incorporated into places such as vacant classrooms so that the social-emotional well-being of students and staff can be addressed and taken care of as well. If a school contains additional vacant classrooms, youth in partnership with school staff design the area to support SEL well-being and community norms/guidelines for the space

Why It's Important: Having a space to decompress is crucial to mental well-being and support. These spaces are important because as students, we spend most of the time in school, and we're dealing with other things outside of school that come with us to school. Without proper resources and support, we can't get the help we need to navigate ourselves.

"We found that restorative circles really help us understand others' perspectives and values while being vulnerable with one another and how to create an unhostile environment when receiving training from Parrish Brown. The space we created for the CPC Student Advisory Council at Mikva's office this summer was a big example of that." - Student

Source: <https://ca-safe-supportive-schools.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Calming-Spaces-in-Schools-and-Classrooms.pdf>
<https://www.cps.edu/sites/cps-policy-rules/policies/700/704/704-13/>

Evidence

"To the extent practical, students should be involved in creating calming spaces. There are many reasons for involving students. First, co-creating spaces with students can provide important insights for adults about the challenges young people are facing and their needs for support. Second, engaging youths in the creation process will likely increase their use of the calming spaces, as the spaces are attuned to the needs and preferences of those they aim to serve. Finally, seeing young people as valued experts (and encouraging them to see themselves as such) can have a positive impact on students' experiences at school, which can increase their self-esteem and overall engagement" (Equity Accelerator, 2022). Additionally, "For systemwide calming spaces that align with MTSS Tier 1 interventions, it may be appropriate to use funds from Title 1 per (105 ILCS 5/) School Code.

Katrina L. Cunningham, MEd at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Student Care Department indicated that the use of building space and the idea of creating these spaces will likely not need much additional funding or additional funding.

The CPS Comprehensive Mental Health and Suicide Prevention policy also calls for a multi-tiered system of support model that includes universal, targeted, and individualized student support.

Safety and Student Rights Subcommittee

Recommendation 2: Mental Health Spaces

Next Steps

- Partner with the Office of Student Voice and Engagement and Office of Social and Emotional Learning in CPS to determine guidelines and expectations for equipping student voice committees to have conversations with their administration on calming spaces
- Inform Student Voice Committees on the benefits of calming spaces and how to set one up.
- Have a youth guidance counselor or SCS coordinator facilitating and maintaining the room since most schools are under-enrolled.
- Start implementation in 1-3 schools, tracking disciplinary and SEL data to determine if correlations exist.



Neighborhood Schools Subcommittee

Recommendation 1: Program Evaluation and Student Eligibility Requirements

Subframing Research Question: *How can we ensure all students have equal access and opportunity for quality academic programming?*

Recommendation: When evaluating the success of a program and entrance into an advanced program like IB, AP, Dual Credit, etc, students should have other options besides GPA, Test Scores should not be the only evaluation metric.

- Allow students who don't meet academic requirements to still participate and take AP, IB, and Honors classes if teachers see potential in students and recommend them. This will ensure equal opportunities are available for all students and allow students to potentially grow and exceed educational standards when they attend a neighborhood school.
- Admissions for AP and IB classes should be based on teacher recommendations to allow students' teachers to see if they're a worthy fit for these classes and allow students to take these classes despite academic standards.
- In line with Grading for Equity Practices, students should be able to "earn honors" credit in general education classes by
- Certain dual credit/enrollment classes shouldn't be based on SAT scores and should rely on interest and career pathways.
- CPS needs to make advanced classes easily accessible to ALL students

Why It's Important: To enroll in advanced classes such as IB, AP, or Dual Credit/Enrollment, students must meet specific academic requirements, such as good test scores, good grades, and teacher recommendations. When schools offer these programs, they should be available and made well-known for all students to pursue. For dual credit classes, why should students pursuing a career in fine arts need a high SAT score in reading or math to enroll in a course that could help them acquire skills and knowledge for their future careers? When more students have access to advanced and career-defining classes and programs, it will create higher demand and interest for local neighborhood schools, possibly allowing the ratings for these schools to increase.

Neighborhood Schools Subcommittee

Recommendation 1: Program Evaluation and Student Eligibility Requirements

Evidence

Chicago Public Schools should provide rigorous course options at each and every school across the city. Programs such as AP, IB, and Early College Programs are important for every school.

The [CPS website](#) indicates that CPS high school campuses that adopt the Pre-AP program guarantee equitable Pre-AP and AP access to all students. Students are afforded the opportunity to learn, grow and succeed through four shared principles: close observation and analysis; higher-order questioning, evidence-based writing and academic conversations.”

CPS supports equitable access to AP and Pre-AP, however, all students don't have the same opportunities as other students. For example, Amundsen High School only offers AP Computer Science and AP Physics and this is not equitable access to all schools since a school like Lane Tech High School has access to all 34 AP Courses.

"At Amundsen High School restricts students in taking AP classes that may be underserved and underrepresented but have lower grades." - Student

The website continues by saying “we encourage CPS schools, administrators, AP Coordinators and AP educators to: Eliminate barriers that restrict access to AP for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underserved and underrepresented.” There are so many barriers that exist that restrict AP access to schools.

From [Our New Roadmap for Supporting High School Students | Chicago Public Schools](#): “Increasing equitable access to AP courses for Black and Latinx students will start by expanding the district’s AP Capstone Program—a two-year diploma program that guides students to complete an original, college-level research paper—from 12 schools to 30 schools by the 2023-24 school year.” This was a commitment the district made to students, but as the school year approaches, there is still a long way to go.

Neighborhood Schools Subcommittee

(Continued): Program Evaluation and Student Eligibility Requirements

Evidence Continued

From the Illinois State Board of Education: The most recent addition to the Dual Credit Act is the Mixed Enrollment Option that allows for those who don't meet the community college's district academic eligibility, students can enroll in a dual-credit class taught at their high school but only for high school credit. This provides exposure to dual credit for more students

Youth-Led Research (by SAC): When conducting a survey of 30+ CPS students from CPS schools, students were asked What requirements must be met by students to be eligible for these programs you selected? (Test Scores, Grades, Essays, Teacher Rec's). Responses included:

- "You need a 90% attendance and proficiency in English and math (from sat scores)"
- "Grades and teacher recommendation"
- "Good grades along with test scores."

When asked "What are some qualities/barriers of your school program you do not like, or would like to see changed? Write whatever comes to mind. (For example, being in this program causes me a lot of academic stress. I have to stay after school most days to be involved in this program. etc)"

- "I do not like that sometimes due to the workload, we are punished for having a life outside of school or doing extracurricular activities."

- "I don't like how I get stressed about most of the work that I am receiving. On top of that, I have a job so the time that I do have is barely enough to make up for school work so sometimes I have to rush and do it before I come to class or just turn it in late."

After answering the question above, please elaborate. What are the best parts of your program?

- "IB focuses a lot on social studies and writing which is the type of things I want to be good at for my future career."
- "...These programs show how hard-working I can be."
- "Dual enrollment offers you the chance to explore the career you are interested in."

Neighborhood Schools Subcommittee

(Continued): Program Evaluation and Student Eligibility Requirements

Action Steps

Action Step 1: Collect background research on accessibility and applications for programs and advanced classes in CPS schools.

Action Step 2: Compare this research and analyze why students aren't allowed to enroll in these advanced classes.

Action Step 3: Speak to CPS and LSCs about accommodations possibly being created to allow students who don't meet academic standards or are interested in career-defining classes to still benefit from programs the school offers

Action Step 4: CPS helps push our recommendation throughout schools so advanced classes and programs are offered to ALL students.

Action Step 5. Research students and their academic statistics in the advanced classes, determining whether their schools allow them to enroll into these advanced programs despite their academic statistics

Action Step 6: Additionally, we will meet with the Office of Teaching and Learning to share student perspectives and voice on how academic programs should be evaluated for success.



Neighborhood Schools Subcommittee

Recommendation 2: School Family Engagement

Subframing Research Question: How can we work to ensure neighborhood schools have opportunities and pathways for engagement?

Recommendation: Parent and Community Engagement should be prioritized at neighborhood schools.

Such efforts should look like:

- Town Halls- Have optional town halls with all cps students to hear their opinions, concerns, or questions they may have. The Town Hall Meeting invites all students to step into the role and explore multiple perspectives in a community that is preparing to make a decision about a problem or a proposed change.
- Community Peace Circles - Have peace circles for youth to create a space for them to speak about how they feel respectfully. The circle is to restore conflicts between students.
- Parents/Family Communication: Relationship Building- Events held for parents to connect with teachers(Local campaigns) where parents openly share and express ideas with teachers and build community.

Why It's Important: According to Youth.gov, "Family engagement in schools contributes to positive student outcomes, including improved child and student achievement, decreased disciplinary issues, improved parent-teacher and teacher-student relationships, and improved school environment." In addition to avoiding health risk behaviors, family engagement can increase participation in positive health behaviors such as school-related physical activity and improved educational achievement, including increased attendance and higher grades and test scores. Family Communication could help families feel more connected with the school and administration. Most parents are not filled in about how their children are performing in school.

Neighborhood Schools Subcommittee

Recommendation 2: School Family Engagement

Evidence

- The University of Chicago's Consortium on School Research wrote a book in 2010 ("Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago") that found that schools were four times more likely to improve in reading, and 10 times more likely to improve in mathematics, when parent engagement was strong. Conversely, when parental engagement was consistently weak, not a single school was able to improve student performance in mathematics.
- A study on Parent Involvement in Education by the Family Strengthening Policy Center in looked at 50 different studies and found strong connections between family involvement and academic achievement.
- According to the Article: "Why School Leaders should champion community schools to improve student, family, and neighborhood well-being"
 - As students become more developed in life-long relationships into their neighborhood schools, the parents will also develop a strong relationship and be more trusting.
 - When they do develop these strong relationships, it will lead to the creation of family ties in the neighborhood and communal trust.

SAC reviewed the UChicago 5 Essentials survey data from several schools for the correlation of academic engagement and parent involvement in schools and parents' influence of decision-making in schools and found that schools that are performing well academically have some type of parent involvement or influence. Examples include:

Lane Tech

- Parent influence on decision-making is strong 64.
- Parent involvement in schools is strong 65.
- Academic engagement is strong 77.

Amundsen

- Parent influence on decision-making is strong 78
- Parent involvement in schools is strong 78
- Academic engagement is strong 70

Neighborhood Schools Subcommittee

Recommendation 2: School Family Engagement

Evidence Continued

Relevant Policy- Parent Rights Policy

PARENT RIGHTS (parents have a right to be involved with their children) including:

- To visit the school.
- To receive a report which assesses the performance of the student's school in comparison with other schools in the district, city, or state.
- To be provided an opportunity to observe in their child's classroom at times mutually agreeable to the parent, teacher, and principal.
- To exercise all of the opportunities provided in the Board of Education's policy on community involvement.
- To participate in local school organizations such as the Local School Improvement Council (LSIC and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and volunteer activities.
- To participate in the District Education Advisory Council, if selected by the LSIC as a representative.
- To participate in the Field Education Advisory Council if selected as a representative of a district council.

Action Steps

We would like to collaborate with the appropriate CPS district offices, specifically the Department of Family and Community Engagement within CPS to further refine and implement our recommendation.

Additional Steps include:

Action Step 1: Address the lack of town halls at LSC and email administration about implementing these town halls within schools and meet with appropriate CPS departments to see if some of these strategies can be included within parent rights policy.

Action Step 2 : Gather student, parent, and community input on the benefit of implementation of town halls, will they attend these town halls? What problems/issues should be spoken about at these town halls to gather student interest?

Action Step 3. We can measure our success by collecting school ratings, seeing if town halls are beneficial to the school community, and if students are consistently attending the town halls and speaking for themselves. We use 5 essentials survey data, specifically noticing correlations with the parent engagement metrics and other factors

Special Thanks

Thank you to our adult partners and experts who created learning and experiences for students to further engage in their recommendations and research.

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