



Collective Resilience

* * Annual Report * *
2020 - 2022



**Children
First Fund**

The Chicago Public Schools Foundation

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Letter from CFF Board President and Organizational Leadership

Dear CPS Friends and Supporters,

OUR PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO AND BEYOND demonstrates inspiring generosity in support of CPS students. Especially since the beginning of 2020, Chicagoans have come together to **collectively** advance equity for Chicago Public School students, directly supporting our schools and overarching district level priorities. This report illustrates our partners' **response** to challenging circumstances with extraordinary empathy and generosity, the **resilience** of our students and school communities, and how continued external engagement with our students and school communities supports the ongoing **recovery** from the impact of these challenges.

Reflecting the unique circumstances of the past two years, **this report covers the activities of the Children First Fund for both the 2020-21 and 2021-22 fiscal years**, as well as pandemic-related efforts beginning in March 2020.

RESPONSE

Our community responded to the challenges of recent years with extraordinary support. An immense network united in partnership, we helped ensure CPS families were safe and supported and equipped students to succeed amidst changes in their learning environments. Since March 2020, over 1,500 individual and organizational donors have supported our Compassion Fund alone. Donations reflect the diversity of our community of supporters, with contributions ranging from \$5 to over \$1M.

The response has gone beyond addressing the impact of an unprecedented pandemic. Our partners have also helped scale proven programs for students impacted by violence and trauma. They have helped launch the Chicago Roadmap, providing substantial funding to create a seamless transition to post-secondary options while focusing support and outreach on students who need them the most. In addition, they have launched scholarships, initiated programs, rolled-out social-emotional learning supports across the District, and equipped thousands of students with technology and other essential resources for remote learning.

RESILIENCE

School communities were on the front lines of response during COVID, as they are for so many societal issues and crises. While supporting our public schools is certainly not the only way to address inequities, it is an immediate and effective avenue to reach children and families during unique times of need.

Encouraged by community investment and bolstered by this support, our students and school communities demonstrated immense resilience, adaptiveness, and innovation in the face of unprecedented challenges.

Our City, school system, and partners built Chicago Connected, a nationally-recognized public-private partnership to erase the digital divide in Chicago, in rapid response to the need for remote learning. From the earliest days of the pandemic, partners pitched in with resources and significant financial contributions to facilitate CPS meal-distribution, getting millions of meals to those most in need in our communities. In mere months, the District rolled-out 1:1 personal learning technology



★ **THE GENEROSITY AND PHILANTHROPIC CAPACITY OF OUR CHICAGO COMMUNITY IS IMMENSE. WE'VE SEEN THAT TIME AND TIME AGAIN, ESPECIALLY DURING THE EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PAST TWO YEARS. THERE ARE AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTERNAL AND PRIVATE SUPPORT FOR CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BENEFITTING BOTH OUR PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY AND OUR CITY AS A WHOLE.**
Pedro Martinez, CEO, Chicago Public Schools

for hundreds of thousands of CPS students, supplemented by philanthropic partners giving more than 12,000 computers, headsets, cases, and more. Partners contributed millions of PPE materials to supplement CPS' investments in the safety of school communities throughout the many rapidly-shifting stages of the pandemic.

Despite often dire circumstances, **our students are resilient and CPS remains a district on the rise**. Many unsung successes in Chicago reflect this growth:

- Over the past decade, CPS high school graduation rates have increased by almost 50 percent, with a record high graduation rate of 83.8 percent in 2021
- 5 CPS schools were ranked in the top 100 nationally (2022 Best U.S. High Schools list, *U.S. News & World Report*)
- Chicago Public Schools' educators earned nearly half of the 30 high school teacher finalist spots in Illinois for the prestigious *Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching*
- The past seven CPS graduating classes have each earned more than \$1 billion in college scholarship offers, with the Class of 2022 projected to bring in the District's largest total ever.

RECOVERY

Through initial shutdowns and subsequent surges of COVID-19, "pandemic recovery" has proven a long process. While recovery and stabilization is ongoing, your partnership has been instrumental every step of the way. As the city of Chicago squares its shoulders against the lingering impacts of the pandemic, our resilient students and school communities continue to build on recovery efforts. And as they do, they will continue to need our partners to respond with support.

Our schools and educators deal with constantly changing circumstances, provide anchors in communities, and meet needs for students and families that range from health and meals to academics and after-school care and activities. Our caring educators and school leaders have immense expertise in stabilizing complex situations, and their reliable presence is a consistent source of hope for our school communities. **With your continued partnership, CPS can better recover from the challenges of yesterday and today while preparing to succeed tomorrow.**



Alan King, Esq.
CFF Board Chairman



Mica Matsoff
Managing Director,
Strategy and Investment



Yemisi Odedina
Managing Director,
Finance and Operations

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“THERE’S NO GREATER RETURN FOR CHICAGOANS THAN INVESTING IN OUR YOUNG PEOPLE. INCREASED SUPPORT FOR CPS AND MORE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES LEARNING AND THRIVING IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS GOOD FOR OUR DISTRICT, AND FOR OUR CITY AS A WHOLE.”

- PETER ELLIS, CFF BOARD MEMBER
PARTNER, REED SMITH, LLP

Strategic Partnerships Advancing Equity

Pathways for Giving

The Children First Fund serves as a knowledge hub and liaison between CPS and its community of partners, **securing and equitably organizing resources** that advance CPS’ mission and Five Year Vision.



School Communities	CFF 5 Year Vision Priorities	
COMPASSION FUND Direct school, student and family needs and resources, including meal distribution, direct family financial relief, technology, books, classrooms resources, student experiences, etc. Seasonal: Back-to-School supplies, Holiday meals and gifts, etc.	CHICAGO ROADMAP CPS and City Colleges partnership to provide seamless education pathways to and through postsecondary.	SAFETY & WELLNESS Supporting CPS growth as a trauma-engaged, culturally-responsive school district, includes whole school safety.
SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM Customizable opportunity for partners to build multi-year, 1:1 partnerships with individual CPS schools.	OTHER FUNDING INITIATIVES Other priorities aligned to CPS Five Year Vision. Including but not limited to those below.	
	COMPUTER SCIENCE	EARLY CHILDHOOD
	LITERACY	FINANCIAL EDUCATION
		DREAM FUND
		ARTS

A snapshot of your support

What follows in this report is only a small selection of the boundless support and generosity our community has demonstrated in recent years. Even a report many times longer than this one could not contain the immensity of your support – or the depth of our gratitude.

We hope you enjoy this snapshot showing some ways partners have supported Chicago Public Schools.



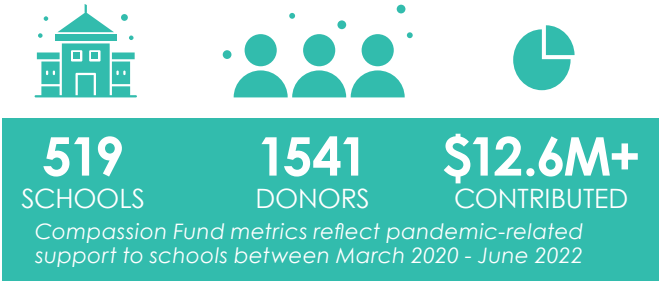
Compassion Fund

DIRECT-TO-SCHOOL

AN IMPORTANT LIFELINE FOR CPS SCHOOL COMMUNITIES, SECURING AND DISTRIBUTING FUNDING AND IN-KIND RESOURCES TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS

CFF's Compassion Fund is a lifeline for CPS school communities, providing resources to meet immediate needs. The Compassion Fund provides crisis support to meet critical needs of students and families facing challenging circumstances. Additionally, it directs resources to classrooms to promote a safe, supportive, and equitable learning environment through academic, facility, social emotional learning, and wellness resources to schools.

As the severity of the pandemic and scope of the recovery became more and more evident, we partnered with principals to identify ways for our community to provide equitable support. In partnership with district and school leaders, our Compassion Fund created a microgrant program, offering financial assistance to families, in small dollar amounts, to cover basic needs. CFF worked closely with principals and network chiefs to provide gifts from \$100-\$500 to families facing crises — including home fires, family deaths, or layoffs/unemployment — many of which were caused or exacerbated by the pandemic. School leaders have underscored how vital the Compassion Fund's flexible relief has been during challenging times, and how there are critical, ongoing needs in their school communities.



An outpouring of generosity to support Chicagoans in crisis

Social-emotional learning 750+ Educators Trained in techniques to help students address trauma and grief.	4,500+ Students & Families Receiving financial assistance to help address extenuating personal circumstances	Emergency Relief	7M+ Masks 446k+ Bottles of Hand Sanitizer
Remote Learning 12,000 Devices Including laptops, tablets, and wireless hotspots	\$12M Contributed through the first 15 months of pandemic, with an additional \$5M In-Kind		8400 Hygiene Kits
CPS Meal Distribution support 21M+ Meals Served 463k+ Meals Delivered	Literacy 130,000+ Books 6,500 Early literacy learning kits	Postsecondary Support 350+ 2020 Graduates Receiving college success grants	CHICAGO CONNECTED 41,892 households 62,838 students connected with high-speed internet access (to-date)
	New Teacher Supports 700+ New CPS Teachers receiving yearlong mentorship and professional learning		



Compassion Fund impact examples from recent school year ('21-'22)

- ★ **Financial Relief** to families who lost students to violence
- ★ **Social-emotional learning (SEL) spaces**, calm classrooms, and school beautification
- ★ **Postsecondary success funds** for hundreds of recent graduates and CPS alumni, covering books, bus fare, technology and college fees
- ★ Financial assistance via microgrants to students and families, helping pay for rent, food, clothing, health expenses, and more
- ★ Self care rooms and **hygiene care closets** with essential personal care items
- ★ School-wide holiday celebrations, attendance incentives, and **wellness support** for teachers and school leadership

#ChooseCompassion

DIRECT-TO-SCHOOL

Choose Compassion: Holiday 2021

We were inspired to see Chicagoans rally together to provide a special holiday experience for our school communities. During the most recent holiday giving season, the Compassion Fund helped provide warm winter coats, holiday meals, and personalized gifts to students across Chicago.

Students wrote letters to our generous "secret santas," and partners went above and beyond to make this holiday season memorable with footballs, dollhouses, karaoke microphones, and other gifts selected specially for each student. Auditoriums were decked out in holiday decor, and our generous volunteers donned Santa hats to help spread holiday cheer, giving holiday gifts to nearly 3,000 students at 10 schools. Students played, danced, snacked, and celebrated, and auditoriums filled with gleeful shouts as they tore open their gifts.



School Partnership Program

DIRECT-TO-SCHOOL



CFF's School Partnership Program (SPP) is a customizable opportunity for philanthropic partners interested in partnering directly with individual CPS schools. The SPP builds capacity for partnerships and external fundraising in school communities with little pre-existing external investment. Initially, the SPP focused on connecting timely gifts and in-kind contributions with participating schools, including Recovery Grants for each school at the outset of the 2021-22 school year.

CFF matches partners and schools based on need and alignment of goals, with the goal of developing multi-year, 1:1 partnerships for each school in the SPP cohort. This program is a natural result of organizations' interest in establishing relationships with our school communities, and a unique opportunity to closely support and engage with an individual CPS school.

Partnerships bolster schools' recovery efforts and help usher them into a new season of post-pandemic growth. With a multi-year engagement, partners and schools alike can build lasting relationships and enjoy meaningful impact. Ongoing community and philanthropic support will play a vital role in supporting CPS schools and students as we work to address unfinished learning and promote safe, equitable learning environments for all.

Safety, Wellness, and Supportive Learning Communities

STRATEGIC DISTRICT PRIORITIES

Our partners support a range of safety and wellness efforts that align with the **Healing-Centered Framework** and advance the district's vision for a comprehensive approach to healing. This vision encompasses wellness for students, and also wellness of the school staff, educators, families, and caregivers who support our students. The vision also frames healing as a participatory and collective process, one where students and adults are active agents of their own healing and providers of healing to those around them.

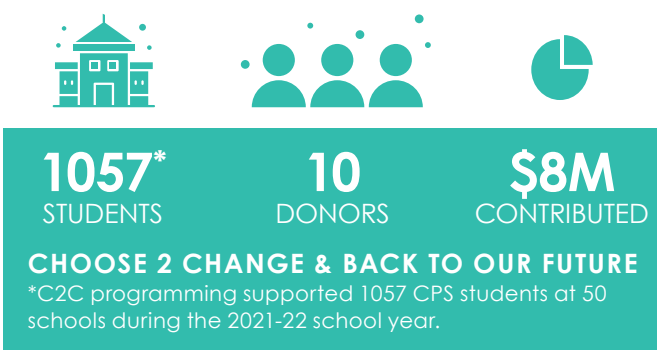
"Addressing multiple childhood traumas requires professional skills, time, dedication - and resources," said CPS CEO Pedro Martinez. "The effort is well worth the investment as every child deserves the support to overcome adversity and realign their life's trajectory."

CPS and CFF have increased investment towards Safety and Violence Prevention efforts this year, in partnership with the City of Chicago and philanthropic partners. Over the past two years, philanthropic support has been critical in both initiating new programming and scaling existing strategies with proven impact, all to improve outcomes for students impacted by violence

Choose 2 Change (C2C) is an innovative youth violence prevention program jointly developed and historically delivered by Children's Home & Aid and Youth Advocate Programs (YAP), and rigorously evaluated by the University of Chicago Crime Lab. The program works in neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence, supporting youth who are at higher risk of violence exposure. This year, with philanthropic support, the program expanded with four additional organizations

"WE HAVE SEEN THE [PANDEMIC'S] IMPACT ON OUR CITY'S CHILDREN AND WE WANT TO ENSURE THAT OUR STUDENTS FROM THE HIGHEST-RISK SITUATIONS ARE CONNECTED TO SUPPORT AND TRUSTING ADULTS [...] WE ARE PARTNERING WITH THOSE WHO ALREADY HAVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY, INCREASING OUR CHANCES TO SUCCEED AND HELP STUDENTS MAKE CHANGES THAT WILL SUPPORT A SAFER AND BRIGHTER FUTURE."

- JADINE CHOU, CPS CHIEF OF SAFETY AND SECURITY



providing services - including group and family counseling and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy - to 1000 students total.

Additionally, CPS launched a new initiative called **Back to Our Future** to identify and support young people who have been disengaged from school. In partnership with community based organizations, the City of Chicago, and philanthropic supporters, CPS aims to deliver a new model that places



significant focus on preparing participants to successfully return to school.

Thanks to increased philanthropic funding and public investment, CFF and CPS will support a total of 2,000 of the city's highest risk youth in the 2022-23 school year through the C2C and student re-engagement programs.

CHOOSE TO CHANGE - CARMEN'S STORY

Carmen, a CPS 2021 graduate, is among those who benefitted from Choose to Change. As a junior in high school, Carmen was skipping school and failing most of her classes. Her guidance counselor referred her to the C2C.

"I remember my first day at Choose to Change. There was a meeting during lunch with kids who were already in the program. It was a great vibe. Different," Carmen recalls. "It didn't take long for me to know this was something for me."

Carmen was paired with Nicole Alleyne, a Choose to Change YAP Advocate, who met with Carmen and her mom as they started their journey together.

"Nicole was there for me constantly, including for weekly Children's Home & Aid sessions where I was able to understand that a lot of my issues came from my own trauma - I lost friends to violence and, as a little girl, was a victim of it," Carmen said.

Trauma-informed group sessions led by a Children's Home & Aid clinical therapist, coupled with the support from her Advocate, gave Carmen the foundation she needed. Students like Carmen carry these skills with them when they leave Choose to Change so they can more successfully navigate challenges and build a stronger future.

Alleyne checked in with Carmen regularly to ensure she was on track: "Nicole told me not graduating was not an option," Carmen said.

As a result, Carmen started going to class. She realized how much she loved science, math, nature, and agriculture, and she began to see her own strengths. Carmen made it to graduation - a day she calls one of the "proudest days" of her life. Now Carmen is majoring in nursing at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

"I'm extremely proud of Carmen's accomplishments," Alleyne said. "Not only is she in college, she's working, volunteers with other youth, and has a very bright future."

Chicago Roadmap

STRATEGIC DISTRICT PRIORITIES



The Chicago Roadmap is an unprecedented partnership between Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) to support students along a seamless path to and through college on the way to their chosen careers. Our philanthropic partners have championed this effort every step of the way, from research and ideation to its burgeoning implementation, and beyond.

Through an equity-driven systems alignment, the Roadmap supports all students' postsecondary transitions while focusing resources and outreach on students who need this the most. The successful implementation of the Chicago Roadmap provides a smooth educational experience between CPS and CCC, along with providing access to high-quality programs, advising and support, career exploration and preparedness. CPS students will all gain greater access to transitional coursework, early college opportunities, and advanced work-based learning experiences. Those who matriculate at CCC will also receive comprehensive post-secondary support during their application process and transition to college as well as throughout their entire student experience.

Following the first year of implementation, the Roadmap has seen progress towards its goals, including the creation of a strategy to reduce Summer Melt which led to a **17 percentage point increase in college matriculation among students served.**



DANNA'S STORY

The main reason as to why I chose City Colleges of Chicago is because of the support I received when I needed help. It all started after I met with my high school counselor at North Grand. I asked about the Star Scholarship. She directed me to Victor Muñoz, a City Colleges navigator. He took the time to show me how I would be supported while in college, and the other colleges couldn't even compare. This year, I'm a freshman at Malcolm X College, and I have plans to be a medical sonographer and get my bachelors in sonography. I also plan to work at Rush Hospital.

When I'm asked why I chose to go to City Colleges, I tell my friends that they are connected and work with strong partners in the corporate and private sectors. Their transfer agreements with four-year schools will set me on my career path. City Colleges can really help you with things you can't even imagine.

DANNA VALENTINA CHAMBA, CCC CLASS OF '23

Academic Progress and Success

STRATEGIC DISTRICT PRIORITIES



Academic Initiatives with Philanthropic Support

- ★ Teach Chicago and talent pipeline initiatives
- ★ Scholarships and Postsecondary, including the CPS Dream Fund
- ★ Early Childhood Education
- ★ Financial Education
- ★ Civics
- ★ Arts Education
- ★ Literacy
- ★ Computer Science
- ★ STEM



CPS Dream Fund 2022 Scholarship Awardees



Teach Chicago: Chicago Teacher Residency 2022 Induction

There's no greater return for Chicagoans than investing in our young people. Increased support for CPS and more students and families learning and thriving in Chicago Public Schools is good for our district, and for our city as a whole.

Philanthropic support remains critical to supplement and innovate academic programming across the District in a variety of departments and content areas.

As the District's foundation, CFF identified and matched partners for meaningful connections with an array of schools, communities, and groups. Partnerships for an array of departments and initiatives across the District contributed to the educational and personal development experiences of the youth in CPS' care each year.



TEACH CHICAGO TOMORROW

The District hires approximately 140 CPS graduates as teachers per year and, through *Teach Chicago Tomorrow*, is setting a long-term goal to triple the number of CPS alumni hired annually to more than 500.

When they graduate from CPS, a select cohort of seniors each year commits to participate in Teach Chicago Tomorrow, a CPS initiative to increase diversity within the CPS teacher workforce by building stronger pathways for aspiring teachers from high school, to college, to career. The "homegrown" strategy features an innovative partnership with City Colleges of Chicago and Illinois State University in which students first attend City Colleges of Chicago, followed by Illinois State University—or a four-year college/university of their choice—before coming back to CPS with a job offer in hand. Based on current trends, most of those new homegrown teachers will be African American or Latinx.

Financials

FY21 FINANCIALS

REVENUE: \$27,774,118
REVENUE
PROGRAM SERVICES: \$22,328,016
EXPENSES
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE: \$599,180

FY22 FINANCIALS

REVENUE: \$23,388,583
REVENUE
PROGRAM SERVICES: \$16,719,844
EXPENSES
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE: \$1,198,465



Stay Up to Date

You can stay up to date on all of the work we're doing to support Chicago Public Schools by following Children First Fund on social media.

WE'RE @CHIFIRSTFUND ON

Visit our **Donate** page on childrenfirstfund.org to make a contribution and explore our initiatives to learn more about how you can make a positive impact on our students' lives

[SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER.](#)

#THEBESTAREWITHCPS



Our Partners

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED \$1M+ IN RECENT YEARS. FOR A MORE COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF RECENT SUPPORTERS, PLEASE VISIT THE '[OUR PARTNERS](#)' SECTION OF THE CHILDREN FIRST FUND WEBSITE.

★ Principal's Circle (\$1M+) ★



★ With Gratitude ★

THANK YOU! GRACIAS! DZIĘKUJĘ CI!

Children First Fund remains grateful for your partnership as we meet our mission of providing a quality education to every Chicago student.

You continue to inspire us and prove that, with you by our side, we can dream big. We hope as you read this report, you too were inspired by the good news you've helped make possible.

Thank you again for your support as we build on our academic progress and work together to create a more equitable and student-centered education system in Chicago.





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