



**Children
First Fund**

The Chicago Public Schools Foundation



Partnering for Progress

Supporting CPS Strategic Priorities

Dear Valued Partner,

AT CHILDREN FIRST FUND (CFF), we are driven by a shared commitment to create a brighter future for students, families, and educators at Chicago Public Schools (CPS). As the CPS foundation, our mission is to bridge the gap between talent and opportunity, leveraging external resources to ensure that every student has the support they need to thrive.

In alignment with the new CPS Five-Year Strategic Plan, **Success 2029: Together We Rise**, we have worked closely with the CPS community to prioritize philanthropic funding requests that represent the most critical needs and highest-impact opportunities to support CPS students and schools in achieving our strategic goals.

After evaluating the many existing funding opportunities, we've prioritized initiatives that not only align most directly with District goals, but also adhere to lessons learned from successful philanthropic partnerships of the past. CFF's *Partnering for Progress* outlines these key priorities, and highlights the unique opportunities for foundations, corporations, individuals, and organizations to partner with CFF and CPS. This is not an exhaustive list of opportunities, so we welcome the chance to explore additional ways to support our students and schools with you.

Together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of CPS students and help build a stronger, more equitable future for our city.

A special message to those who have supported CPS over the previous five years: Thanks to you, we have raised over \$78 million and an additional \$14 million in in-kind donations for the district, and provided support to more than 400 elementary schools, 120 high schools, and 35 Central Office teams, through more than 1,600 grants and contributions from generous foundations, corporations, and organizations, and gifts from more than 3,100 individual donors of all giving levels. You have bolstered funding for programs that touch all aspects of the student experience, from health and safety to core academics and college and career access and readiness.

The meaning of your support extends beyond the resources you have provided. You have shown our school leaders, teachers, and students that you are rooting for them, have confidence in their abilities, and are invested in their present and future success.

And the impact of your partnership—a critical piece of the puzzle along with the diligent support of CPS leaders, educators, and students—is clear. CPS schools have seen record-breaking gains, ranking first in reading growth and third in combined reading and math growth in 2023 among large urban districts. Our 2024 state assessment reports show continued gains, and our graduation rates are climbing. The CPS Class of 2024 graduated with more than 55,000 college credits.

Now, we look ahead to the next five years to continue to build partnerships that will ensure bold and transformational changes in our students' lives, with a focus on those who have historically been farthest from opportunity.

We invite you to explore these opportunities and consider how your support can help advance our shared mission. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Chicago's students and families. We look forward to working together to make a lasting impact.

Sincerely,

Mica Matsoff & Yemisi Odedina
Managing Directors
Children First Fund

CONTENTS

ABOUT CFF 3

CFF TEAM 4

PRIORITIES

Academic Success 5

Educator Development 8

College Access 10

Career Connectedness 12

Targeted Student Supports 14

Physical, Mental & Behavioral Health 16

School Partnership 18

OTHER WAYS TO ENGAGE 19



About CHILDREN FIRST FUND

CFF promotes the growth and success of Chicago Public Schools through philanthropy and partnerships. We work with you to create a rigorous, joyful, and equitable learning experience for every CPS student.

Structured as a team within CPS' Central Office and a standalone non-profit organization, CFF operates both with and within CPS. Consisting of development and partnership experts, CFF supports an array of schools and departments.

Together with you, we support CPS strategic initiatives and system-level efforts, as well as funding and in-kind resources for direct school, student, and family support.

CFF is committed to...

- ★ Being a trusted, independent philanthropy arm to ensure fidelity of investments and Implementation.
- ★ Identifying and elevating the needs of CPS departments, schools, educators, and families.
- ★ Finding new ways to strike meaningful, mutually beneficial partnerships.

Children First Fund is a registered 501(c)(3) with Guidestar Platinum Seal of Transparency and a four-star rating on Charity Navigator. As an independent fiscal sponsor, a program management fee is deducted from all donations we receive. This fee covers the indirect costs associated with gift administration, and allows CFF to provide comprehensive project and fiscal management.

Additional Benefits of Partnering with CFF:

- ★ Diligence in reporting
- ★ Flexibility with vendors
- ★ Flexibility and capacity to directly support individual school needs, including the ability to load funds directly into a school's budget

CFF Team



Mica Matsoff
*Managing Director of Strategy
and Investment*



Yemisi Odedina
*Managing Director of Finance
and Operations*



Rachel Orlowski
Director of Institutional Giving



Johanna Wheaton Dutt
Director of Major Gifts



Kenya Martin
*Director of Partnerships,
College & Career Success*



Andréa Banks
School Partnerships Manager



Julia Friedland
Development Specialist



Geniz Hernandez
Development Specialist



Patty Medairy
*Manager of Human Resources
& Operations*



Claire Sloss
*Marketing & Communications
Manager*

Academic SUCCESS

CPS envisions a rigorous, joyful, and equitable learning experience for every student, centered on the instructional core. This includes high-quality, culturally-responsive curriculum, meaningful assessments, student-focused instruction, accelerated best practices, and academic interventions.



Black Student Success Plan

CPS remains committed to addressing long-standing racial inequities in Chicago. The development and integration of a *Black Student Success Plan* aims to eliminate opportunity gaps, improving both daily learning experiences and life outcomes for Black students. This holistic approach to supporting students addresses a wide range of factors impacting Black students' experience in school, including culturally-responsive curriculum, hiring and retaining educators of color, addressing disparities in mental health and discipline, equitable resource allocation, and meaningful family engagement.

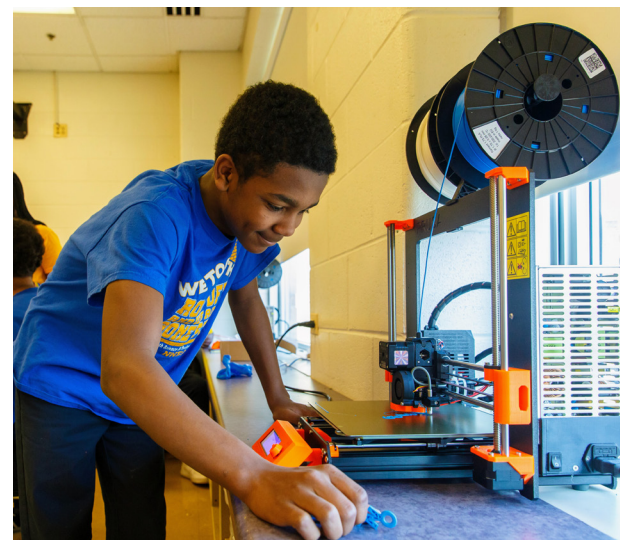
- ★ In SY25, the District plans to finalize and share the *Black Student Success Plan*, which will include specific short-term and long-term goals, as well as implementation strategies. To ensure accountability and transparency, the Plan will also establish standards for reporting progress and impact to stakeholders and the community. The District is seeking philanthropic support to help launch, communicate, evaluate, and continuously improve the *Black Student Success Plan*.★



Academic Instructional Core and Enrichment Opportunities

Challenging, culturally-responsive curricula and enrichment opportunities that promote daily growth are foundational to students' academic learning experiences. Over the past five years, CPS has made remarkable strides in providing its students with a high-quality public education that prepares them for success. Philanthropic partners play an important role in supporting student success in areas like arts education (music, dance, theater, visual arts), STEM, and computer science.

According to a national study conducted by Harvard and Stanford Universities, CPS students in grades 3 - 8 ranked first among large urban school districts in reading gains since the pandemic. CPS students made





**POST-PANDEMIC
READING AND MATH**

#1 Reading Growth
2022 to 2023

#1 Reading Gains
2019 to 2023

#3 Combined Reading
and Math Growth
2022 to 2023

of the **40 urban districts** included in the
Education Recovery Scorecard

up more than two-thirds of a year of instruction from 2022 to 2023 alone. CPS students ranked in the top third when compared to similar districts in math gains throughout the same time period. And combined, CPS ranked third out of large urban districts across the country.

In order to build on this growth and succeed in creating a joyful learning environment for all students, it is critical to develop culturally-relevant resources and extended-day programming that makes learning accessible, while also engaging families and communities in the learning process.

The District aims not only to provide every student with high-quality, grade-level aligned, culturally-responsive instructional materials, but also focus on student-centered instruction that enhances connectedness, belonging, and well-being. Additionally, CPS is committed to ensuring that 100% of schools have the resource capacity to hire full-time

arts education teachers.

- ★ To support these goals, CPS will look to identify partners to support the implementation of the *Arts Education Plan 2.0: Cultivating Creativity*, resource early childhood classrooms with age-appropriate STEM materials, as well as underwrite costs of enrichment programs like summer computer science and math camps and robotics clubs.

Looking ahead, the District and CFF will rely on partners to help support the continued adoption of academic interventions such as the Tutor Corps, which trained hundreds of Chicagoans to serve as literacy and math tutors at high-need schools on the South and West Sides of Chicago. This program demonstrated success over the pandemic and post-pandemic years, and is credited as a reason for the District's recent high rankings in academic achievement.★



Modernization of Technology

For students to thrive, they must have modern technology and systems, from devices for students to use in classrooms to the software and programs that support their learning.

- ★ During the Covid-19 pandemic remote learning, CPS collaborated with government agencies and philanthropic partners to help narrow the digital divide for students and reach a 1:1 student to device ratio. In order to maintain this level of access, CPS is seeking funds to help update, replace, and maintain devices for student use. Technology can also enhance teaching and learning by expanding educator capacity and customizing student learning experiences. CPS' vision is to harness SkAI, a cutting edge AI for CPS' universally available digital curriculum, Skyline. With philanthropic support, CPS aims to collaborate with educators, school leaders, content experts, and ed tech partners to build an AI architecture that can support the District's in-house curriculum design team capacity as they create and modify high-quality, culturally-responsive curricular content and assessments.★





Accountability Redesign

For CPS, school accountability means holding schools and the District responsible for student learning through systems that provide information on school performance and quality. In April 2023, CPS adopted a new policy for evaluating school performance, built from the ground up, engaging over 20,000 stakeholders and forming a diverse advisory group to reimagine their approach to accountability. The Continuous Improvement and Data Transparency Policy (CIDT) sets out a systematic means for measuring school performance and identifying schools in need of support. This new approach focuses on the conditions, supports, and resources needed for a school to provide students with high-quality learning experiences. It expects the District to be responsive to the needs of school communities and involve communities in deciding what resources and support are needed from the District to improve a school's conditions.

A key piece of this work is seeking alignment within and across the early grades, which is critical for improved student outcomes and student and family experiences. CPS aims to ensure that every student begins third grade a confident, empowered, and supported learner with a strong foundation of academic and social-emotional skills to accelerate their path to life-long success.

- ★ Philanthropic support has been critical to the redesign process, and continued support for the next phases—including communication, stakeholder engagement, technical assistance and professional learning—will be beneficial as the District rolls out the new Continuous Improvement and Data Transparency policy.★



Educator DEVELOPMENT

Through initiatives such as Teach Chicago and Lead with CPS, the District strives to recruit, retain, support, and develop exceptional and diverse talent at all levels of the District.



Teach Chicago

TEACHER RESIDENCIES AND TEACH CHICAGO TOMORROW

Teach Chicago is CPS' comprehensive strategy to build the highest-quality teaching force in the nation with educators who reflect the diversity of CPS students and our city. Some of the most promising candidates for those roles are CPS graduates, as demonstrated by two innovative teacher preparation programs: CPS Teacher Residencies and Teach Chicago Tomorrow.

In 2018, the District launched Teacher Residency programs in partnership with local universities in areas with critical shortages of licensed teachers in the workforce. Since then, the program has grown from a cohort of 24 in SY19 to 225 in SY25. 76% of the current CPS Teacher Residency cohort are educators of color. Over the past two years, approximately two-thirds of the cohort have been CPS parents or graduates (and many are both). Because more than two-thirds of CPS students come from economically disadvantaged households, this group is likely to face

financial barriers to program participation. To address this, CPS plans to continue offering its Graduates and Parents (GAP) Scholarship to financially support these Teacher Residents.

Teach Chicago Tomorrow supports enrollment and persistence of graduating CPS seniors pursuing a Bachelor's degree and career in teaching. Through intentional career pathway design that puts students' needs first and extensive wraparound supports, Teach Chicago Tomorrow helps to ensure that more young Chicagoans who aspire to a teaching career can achieve that dream.

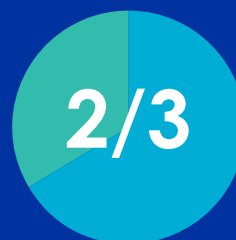
- ★Funding needs for these two programs include scholarship and emergency assistance funding for materials, supplies, and technology for teacher residents, as well as other convening and program costs for the Teach Chicago Tomorrow initiative.★



THE SY25 TEACH CHICAGO TOMORROW COHORT INCLUDES 101 SCHOLARS



identify as Black and/or Latinx



are first-generation college students



Advancing Leaders of Color

GEM FELLOWS AND UNITED BLACK MALE EDUCATORS

Several initiatives across the District are designed to support leaders of color, including the Great Expectations Mentoring (GEM) and United Black Male Educators (UBME) programs. GEM is designed to help Black male and Latinx CPS educational leaders advance to the next stage of their careers. Through a cohort model, GEM fellows work closely with District leaders to develop leadership skills, deepen their understanding of equity, and connect with GEM mentors and other innovators to transform their work in education.

GEM blends professional learning and personal development content including keynote speakers, text-based discussions, consultancy protocols, collaborative and individual projects, and a Capstone project. The

development of the *Black Student Success Plan*—a *Success 2029* priority—grew out of a GEM Fellow’s Capstone project.

UBME is a group of school and District Black male leaders who aim to further develop a leadership pipeline for Black men in the District. Their inaugural “Educate, Empower, Elevate” conference in Summer 2024 invited Black male students in grades 7-12 to participate, with a goal of bolstering outcomes for Black male students, including college enrollment rates.

- * Funding needs for both programs include meeting costs and stipends.*



Developing Exceptional Leaders

LEAD WITH CPS AND SUMMER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

*To support effective educators and leaders and promote employee retention, it is imperative that all District employees have opportunities to grow and develop. Philanthropy can support two featured examples for District and school leaders:

- * Through Lead with CPS, in partnership with the University of Chicago’s Center for Effective Government (CEG), CPS District leaders (directors and chiefs) can apply to attend a seminar series designed specifically for CPS, modeled after the Civic Leadership Academy, CEG’s flagship leadership development and training program for local government and non-profit leaders. This year, over 60% of participants were Black and/or Latinx.
- * The CPS annual Summer Leadership Institute is an opportunity for school administrators—all approximately 1,000 principals and APs—to ground themselves in the goals, practices, and initiatives of the upcoming school year. The program is designed for principals by principals, and is a three-day, in-person experience.*

These robust development opportunities not only build District and school leaders’ capacity to excel in their current roles, but also cultivate a stronger, more diverse pool of future executive leaders for the District.



Teacher Advisory Council

The CPS Teacher Advisory Council serves as a forum for direct communication and collaboration between teachers and the CPS Chief Executive Office and Chief Education Officer. The Teacher Advisory Council’s 40-50 selected members reflect the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of teachers across the District. They represent their school communities in monthly meetings with District leadership, discussing the issues most critical to teachers. Council members collaborate in developing creative, evidence-based solutions to challenges across the District. To ensure the council’s continued success, philanthropic support is needed to provide stipends to cover educators’ extended time, as well as other monthly meeting costs.



College ACCESS

CPS envisions a future where all alumni will successfully transition to and succeed in their postsecondary pathway of choice. While more students than ever are aspiring to a college education, first-generation college students, students of color, and students from low-income backgrounds all experience additional challenges to achieving this goal. CFF works with partners to support students to and through their college journeys.



College & Career Coaching

Successfully preparing students for sustained success in college and their chosen career path begins long before their senior year. CPS is committed to providing students with the resources to fully understand their postsecondary options, especially students who are first generation college-goers. From middle school through high school, informed college and career counseling and opportunities to visit college campuses are critical for helping students make postsecondary choices that are right for them. Through *Success 2029: Together We Rise*, CPS will ensure all students in grades 6–12 have access to high-quality advising and career exposure activities.

★ College and career visits for upper elementary and high school students are a research-backed strategy for promoting college enrollment, especially among students from communities underrepresented in higher education. Philanthropic support to cover the costs of college visits—through District-wide initiatives or school-based programs—enables students who may not otherwise have opportunities like this to make a more informed choice. Additional support for College and Career coaching activities at the school-level—for both students and families—allows schools to provide personalized advising for each student to help them make informed college decisions based on academic and social alignment, as well as affordability.★



Donor Scholarships

Scholarships are a crucial component of equitable access to higher education. A study by University of Chicago's Urban Labs found that while most CPS students aspire to earn a college degree, many graduates enroll in universities considered an “undermatch”—less selective colleges than they could potentially attend—often due to financial barriers, making them more likely to drop out.

★ Custom scholarships established through CFF allow donors to provide a unique name and can be tailored to support a priority group, academic or geographic area. The student outreach and selection process is managed in partnership with CPS, leveraging support from school counselors and the searchable scholarship portal. These scholarships give community members the opportunity to support CPS students to reach their goal of attaining a college degree or certification.★





Alumni Assistance

CPS aspires to be the national leader in district support for alumni success. CFF supports the District’s vision for all CPS alumni to not only successfully transition into their chosen postsecondary pathway but thrive there. In SY2023, 65% of CPS graduates enrolled in a college or university, and nearly three quarters of students enrolled in college were persisting toward attaining a degree. CPS has built a strong foundation for supporting alumni success, but there is more work to be done. That’s why CPS established the Alumni Support Initiative, partnering with school-based postsecondary advisors to create plans for alumni support and directing resources to assist CPS graduates who are facing barriers to college persistence.

As part of this strategy, the CPS Alumni Postsecondary Success Emergency Fund was established in partnership with CFF and the philanthropic community. For economically disadvantaged students, unexpected costs can derail their education and plans for the future. Low-cost expenses such as dorm supplies, overdue book charges, or an incidental

class fee can have major consequences for students and families with little or no financial cushion. The Emergency Postsecondary Success Fund—supported entirely by philanthropic funding—addresses unexpected challenges like these, providing emergency grants averaging \$942.

In addition to individualized supports directly to alumni, CPS is actively engaged in the College Compact, a collaborative partnership uniting stakeholders from over 35 top-enrolling colleges of CPS alumni, designed to address structural barriers and amplify best practices for college persistence and success. Through the Compact, CPS provides grants to these postsecondary institutions to support CPS alumni in their transition and navigation of the college environment.

- ★ Philanthropic partners can bolster CPS’ alumni assistance efforts by contributing to the Emergency Postsecondary Success Fund and supporting the implementation of best practices elevated within the College Compact. ★

“Your support for the CPS Dream Fund Scholarship at the college level is truly invaluable. Beyond the financial assistance, your contributions serve as a beacon of hope for college students like me. Your belief in our dreams and goals inspires us to overcome challenges related to our migration status. Thank you for being an essential part of our college journey and for helping us turn our aspirations into reality.”

Ambar, Carl Schurz High School, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



CPS Dream Fund

A significant number of CPS students are undocumented, and due to state and federal financial aid policies, these students are ineligible to receive any federal aid. This makes earning a college education more difficult for CPS alumni already shouldering the many burdens of non-citizenship.

- ★ Since 2014, the CPS Dream Fund Scholarship program has assisted talented undocumented students and DREAMers in their pursuit of postsecondary education at a two or four-year institution. Funded exclusively through generous philanthropic contributions, the CPS Dream Fund has provided more than 240 new and renewal scholarships to CPS alumni. ★



Career Connected LEARNING

CPS is dedicated to expanding opportunities and postsecondary readiness for all students, particularly those from historically underrepresented groups. CPS aims for every student to graduate with the equivalent of a semester's worth of advanced course credits and/or advanced certification, positioning them for success beyond high school. CPS graduates will not only be better prepared for their future, but will also benefit from significant tuition savings. For example, CPS Class of 2024 graduates are projected to save an estimated \$8 million in college tuition by earning credits through the District's early college partnerships.

CPS' vision is to establish a robust framework that not only supports college readiness but also extends comprehensive career preparation across various fields, from professional careers to skilled trades. This ensures all CPS graduates are well-prepared for sustained success, no matter what career pathway they choose.



Team-based challenges give students the opportunity to showcase their skills through a group problem-based learning project relating to their field of interest in competitive settings. This holistic approach prepares students for success in both academic and professional environments, fostering collaboration, leadership, and real-world problem-solving abilities.



Student Internships and Experiential Learning Opportunities

CPS aims to equip students with comprehensive soft-skills training, while offering opportunities to earn industry-recognized certifications, college or career endorsements, and participate in work-based and experiential learning experiences, such as team-based challenges. Career exposure activities starting in middle school prepare students to participate in advanced courses that connect to their postsecondary career plans. In SY2023, 49% of CPS students graduated with an advanced course credit or a career credential.

- ★ These initiatives help students connect classroom instruction with real-world career pathways. By applying their learning in practical settings, students can discover their interests and strengths while developing positive work habits and attitudes. Philanthropic and sponsorship support could provide stipends and transportation, making work-based learning opportunities accessible to more students.★

Advanced career credentials open doors to apprenticeships and job opportunities directly from high school. They can also act as stepping stones to postsecondary education, increasing students' persistence in their selected pathway.



Chicago Roadmap

The Chicago Roadmap is a partnership between 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. The Chicago Roadmap strives to dramatically and equitably increase student outcomes in college readiness, college enrollment, college persistence, college degree attainment and employment.

By enhancing access to transitional supports, model pathways, early college opportunities, and aligning work-based learning with student interests and coursework, CPS has seen significant improvements in college readiness and increased retention at CCC.

- ★ With the support of partners, CPS can further expand access to these critical resources, ensuring that even more students are equipped with the skills, credentials, and experiences necessary for long-term success. CPS can sustain this momentum, helping to bridge the gap between high school, college, and career pathways for all students.★



From 2019 to 2023, eligibility for college-level Math increased by 16%, while eligibility for college-level English rose by 13%, meaning more students are prepared for advanced coursework and postsecondary success.



Skilled Trades Exposure

CPS provides students with opportunities to explore careers in architecture, STEM, engineering, construction trades, and related fields through up-close, hands-on experiences guided by industry professionals. These initiatives allow thousands of students to engage directly with many in-demand skilled trades, connect with potential employment, training, and internship opportunities, and gain exposure to rewarding career paths.

- ★ These efforts help address labor shortages while fostering economic growth and inclusivity in the trades. Philanthropic support is needed to make these opportunities possible, from marketing and logistics support to student transportation.★



CPS currently offers programs in construction, carpentry, electricity, welding, and HVAC at more than 80 high schools across the city, providing students with valuable work experience for in-demand careers, and opportunities to earn college credit, certifications, and skills training.



Targeted Student SUPPORTS

Every student deserves a rigorous, joyful, and equitable learning experience. The following targeted priorities are designed to ensure that all students receive the opportunities and resources that meet their unique needs and aspirations, prioritizing those most harmed by past instability and/or trauma.



Newcomer Supports

Every year, CPS welcomes newcomer students—refugees and international students new to the United States. These youth embody hope, resilience, and potential. However, many face significant barriers as they strive to acclimate to their new educational landscapes. The stakes are high for these young people; failure to complete high school might mean limited access to higher education and jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and benefits. Recognizing that education is a cornerstone of their aspirations, philanthropic support is needed to help students in their new learning environments by strengthening wraparound services including welcome center services, interpretation, tutoring, and mentoring.



Supporting STLS Population

For students who do not live in stable, permanent housing, attending school and staying on track for their grade level can present a variety of challenges. CFF works closely with the District to provide in-kind and financial resources to support students both inside and outside of school. Priority examples include access to necessary hygiene products and laundry facilities, weather appropriate clothing, and funding for essential student life activities, such as prom, transportation, and fees associated with sports teams and clubs.





Extended School Time Supports/Community Schools

Community Schools form partnerships between educators, families, and community members to address inequalities that exist in historically disinvested communities through both academic and non-academic supports. By collaborating with local institutions and organizations, these schools offer services such as afterschool programs, healthcare, family engagement, and workforce training. Philanthropic investment in this holistic approach not only supports students' growth but also strengthens local neighborhoods by fostering educated citizens and vibrant communities.



Addressing Absenteeism

The District seeks to reduce chronic absenteeism by at least 15% through increased connection of at-risk students using various interventions. With the aim of engaging families and community partners and garnering necessary resources to develop safe, welcoming, and affirming spaces, CPS wishes to designate Engagement Leads at high priority schools to build the home-to-school connection. Philanthropic support to identify and provide evidence-based training for Engagement Leads allows CPS to intentionally and proactively engage families and students who are most likely to become disconnected from their learning community.



Option School Design

RE-ENGAGING OFF-TRACK STUDENTS

Over the next two years, the CPS Options network is developing district-run innovative school models aimed at serving students who are more than a year off-track to graduate high school or have previously dropped out of school. Grounded in local and national evidence-based practices, the schools will emphasize accelerated, rigorous, personalized, project-based learning; a continuum of college and career readiness opportunities; and a primary person model whereby every student is assigned to an adult who provides the student with intensive wraparound support. Philanthropic support will be required to assist in stakeholder engagement, designing the curriculum/instruction model, developing a framework and implementation plan, and ensuring there is a leadership and teacher pipeline and professional development plan for staffing the schools.



Physical, Mental & Behavioral HEALTH

Students learn best when they feel supported in school, both physically and emotionally. CPS is committed to supporting the whole child so all students come to school healthy, engaged, and ready to learn.



Supporting Students with Disabilities

CFF supports the District's priority to ensure every student with disabilities has the opportunity to fully engage in rigorous instruction at their grade level within the general education classroom and to access the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers, to the greatest extent possible.

- ★ In order to best support students with disabilities and ensure students are receiving the services they need, the CPS Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) is committed to improving practices, strengthening communication with schools and families, and working transparently with stakeholders. In order to design a thoughtful strategy for the recently renamed office that utilizes best practices from around the country and incorporates feedback from those most impacted, additional capacity and philanthropic support is needed to convene experts and conduct robust stakeholder engagement. The ultimate goal is to develop a student-centered structure for the OSD that elevates the profiles of students with disabilities and ensures all students have equitable access to CPS' educational environments.★



Comprehensive Student Health and Wellness

CPS supports families with establishing a Primary Care Provider or a "medical home" to access the care they need. Two main components of this work are access to Comprehensive Care Coordination and ensuring that each school has a school nurse. Comprehensive Care Coordination, which includes following up to ensure students receive the necessary care and resources, is increasingly important for CPS families who require immediate and/or specialized care. Despite the nationwide nursing shortage, the District is committed to hiring at least one nurse for every school.

- ★ The District seeks philanthropic funding to support families in coordinating referrals and accessing care, providing direct care services such as vision exams, dental exams, physicals, and routine pediatric vaccines, and responding to emerging student health needs, particularly for newcomer families and those in transitional living situations.★

As healthcare providers, public health educators, and advocates, school nurses help ensure that each student has access to the holistic care needed for physical, social, emotional, and academic development. To address the nationwide nursing shortage, CPS aims to invest in the current workforce—with the support of philanthropic partners—to increase the number of Certified School Nurses as well as other high need certifications.



Social-Emotional and Behavioral Interventions

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES, CHOOSE TO CHANGE, AND STUDENT RE-ENTRY

CPS uses a multi-tiered system of support to address individual student emotional and behavioral health and safety needs. This begins with universal interventions for all students, like the Rainbows and Silver Linings programs, interventions for children coping with grief and loss—a greatly increased need among CPS students since 2020—as well as targeted group and individual interventions. In its bold new vision, *Success 2029: Together We Rise*, CPS sets a goal that all schools will have Whole School Safety plans that incorporate restorative justice practices and connect staff, students, families, and communities to social-emotional learning and mental health resources that address trauma and promote healing.

Over the past decade, CPS has dramatically reduced out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and police notifications. CPS aims to expand the use of restorative practices and targeted interventions to continue to decrease the use of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, especially for Black students and students with identified disabilities who are overrepresented in disciplinary incidents.

★ Philanthropic support is requested for the following initiatives:

- ★ An internal marketing campaign to elevate the importance of restorative practices in transforming responses to student behavior from punitive discipline to those centered on respect, empathy, and accountability. The campaign will highlight examples of successful restorative practices to inspire others within the District.
- ★ Choose to Change (C2C), an innovative youth violence prevention program that works in neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence, supports youth who are at high risk of being victims or perpetrators of violence. C2C offers a six-month intervention with intensive wraparound and professional mentoring services that focus on each youth's needs.
- ★ Wraparound services such as high-intensity mentoring and workforce training to support student re-entry after detention at Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center or enrollment at Nancy B. Jefferson, CPS' alternative school for court-detained youth.★

A new study from the University of Chicago Crime Lab, published in October 2024, found that students who participated in the Choose to Change program were significantly less likely to be arrested, and these effects persisted for up to three years.



School PARTNERSHIP



Compassion Fund

Support for our students and families extends beyond the classroom, particularly in times of crisis. Thanks to the generosity and support of our community, the Compassion Fund has provided aid to CPS schools, students, and families across Chicago to meet urgent needs since 2020. Key areas that benefit from the Compassion Fund include:

- ★ **Financial relief:** We will continue the critical work of providing financial relief or 'micro-grants' for families experiencing extreme hardship or extenuating circumstances, so school principals and counselors can directly assist families in need.
- ★ **Hygiene Care Closets:** Hygiene Care Closets empower Chicago schools to support student wellness, meeting both physical and social-emotional needs. Giving students access to personal self-care items with discrete Hygiene Care Closets in their schools removes barriers to learning and supports their confidence. Availability of these resources has been found to improve attendance and academic success.
- ★ **Holiday and Winter Season:** The holiday giving season provides an opportunity to support our students, educators, and families by easing the challenges they face both inside and outside the classroom. Support through the Compassion Fund provides

encouragement with gifts, warm weather clothes, and joyful celebrations. The Compassion Fund also supports the annual holiday Legacy of Love luncheon for families of CPS students who have passed away during the previous year, aiming to bring healing, strength, and glimmers of joy during the holiday season.

- ★ **Back-to-School:** CPS welcomes the start of each new school year with Back-to-School Bashes in neighborhoods across the city. These community celebrations are opportunities for CPS students and their families to foster connections within their school community. Essential resources and information are available at Back-to-School Bashes including school supplies, as well as enrollment and health-related assistance. The bashes feature music, food, games, and family-friendly activities. Philanthropic support is needed to make these events possible and impactful.



Sponsor-a-School

The Sponsor-a-School program fosters long-term one-to-one relationships between CPS schools and sponsors who support each school's unique needs and strengths. Ongoing community and philanthropic support plays a vital role in supporting CPS schools and students as we work to promote safe, equitable learning environments for all. By sponsoring a school, funders are able to partner closely with principals, teachers, and staff to help overcome obstacles in the pursuit of quality education and academic excellence for their students.

Other Ways to Engage

CFF welcomes the opportunity to co-create tailored, meaningful partnerships that positively impact students and align with District priorities. There are many ways for organizations to support CPS students and schools. For years, organizations have dedicated time, resources and talent to help lift up CPS students and school communities.

Service Projects

Employees can contribute supplies and volunteer their time to help beautify school spaces, clean out classrooms, and complete landscaping projects.

Career & College Access and Preparation

From industry-related workshops, to skills-based deep dives, corporate partners play an important role in preparing students for their futures. Some ways for your office to get involved in career and college preparedness include:

- ★ Lunch and Learns
- ★ Resume and Interview Skills Workshops
- ★ Career Panels
- ★ Internships
- ★ Office Visits

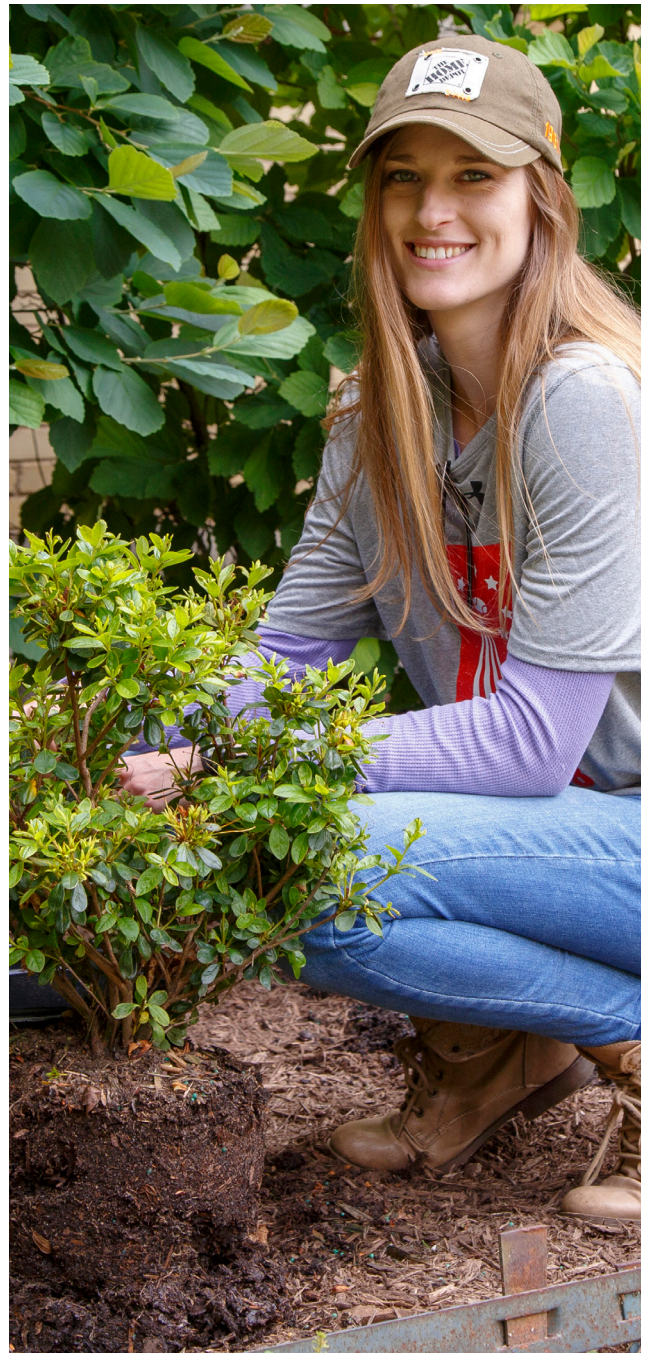
Student and Teacher Morale

You can play a crucial role in contributing to a joyful environment for CPS students, faculty, and staff by planning school-based celebrations like a back-to-school cheerline or holiday party.

In-Kind Donations

Gifts of non-financial material resources are essential to addressing the ongoing needs of our communities. You can help ease the burden of schools, students, and families, through the provision of bulk items such as:

- ★ Hygiene products
- ★ Weather appropriate clothing (winter gear, coats, winter boots, sneakers, uniforms)
- ★ School supplies (year-round)
- ★ Graphing calculators
- ★ Books from district and school-specific reading lists





The Chicago Public Schools Foundation

200 W. Madison St., 2nd Floor
c/o FBRK Impact House
Chicago, IL 60606

contactus@childrenfirstfund.org

WWW.CHILDRENFIRSTFUND.ORG