



**CHICAGO PREP**  
CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Chicago Preparatory Charter Middle School

A proposed Chicago Public Schools Charter School  
Tier II Application

Respectfully submitted by the Chicago Preparatory Charter Middle School Design Team and Founding Board:

- **Mary Griffin**  
Lead Founder, BES Fellow, Proposed Head of School
- **Mercedes Bender**  
Partner, Kantar Group
- **Ken Dickerson**  
Franchise Owner, Seva Beauty Spa
- **Dr. Andrea Elzy**  
Director of Postsecondary Strategies, Thrive Chicago
- **Brandon Kimble**  
Superintendent, ReGeneration Schools
- **Mitchell Newsome**  
Application Sales Manager, Oracle Corporation
- **Jack Pritchett**  
Head of Legal, Finance, and HR at Buildout, Inc.
- **Rupa Ramadurai**  
Director of Policy and Advocacy, Leadership for Educational Equity
- **Julia Strauch**  
Senior Consultant, FMA

**For questions or additional information, please contact:**

Mary Griffin, Lead Founder  
Chicago Preparatory Charter Middle School  
773-394-1311  
mgriffin@bes.org

Section	Page #
<b>Domain 1: Community Engagement and Support</b>	
Section 1.2: Facilities (Updated)	1
Section 1.4: Updated Community Outreach	3
Section 1.5: Community and Family Support	10

## SECTION 1.2: FACILITIES

---

*The proposed facility option(s) reflect identified space requirements and are viable and available in the proposed opening timeline.*

- *Identified space requirements that adequately address the programmatic and operational needs of the school, including any proposed growth*
- *An explanation of how the proposed facilities reflect the identified space requirements (as evidenced by an adequate number of classrooms, specialized spaces, and administrative spaces) and are viable and available in the proposed opening timeline*
- *A facilities plan that includes a cost estimate for each location, evidence of interest from each facility's owner(s), and clearly articulates a plan for completing necessary renovations, including:*
  - *Construction estimates and timelines,*
  - *potential funding sources, and*
  - *plans to achieve ADA compliance*
- *A plan to appropriately address any risks associated with the proposed sites*
- *A clear timeline for securing one of two viable and available independent facilities, or one fully secured facility, that will feasibly permit school use in time for the school's opening*
- *If the proposed site(s) will not accommodate the projected space needs throughout the entire five-year period of the contract: A reasonable facility plan to meet space needs thereafter, including a discussion of risks and contingency plans*

### 1.2.2: OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED SITE

The Chicago Prep team has identified two proposed sites within the Bronzeville community: St. Ambrose School, located at 1030 E 47<sup>th</sup> Street, and St. Elizabeth School, located at 4052 S Wabash Avenue. Both schools are owned by the Archdiocese of Chicago and have previously been used as schools. The design team worked with an experienced Chicago real estate broker, Michael Pink of MAP Real Estate, to select the two proposed sites based on their size, layout, and location, all well-suited to meet the needs of Chicago Prep Middle School.

Each site has three floors, including a basement, and is already built out as a school, including existing classrooms, restrooms, and administrative and common spaces. Both sites meet our minimum space requirements for each year of operation, outlined in **Appendix 1.2**, or can be renovated within our opening timeline to meet the minimum space requirements. Chicago Prep worked with the architectural team at Techno Ltd. to complete all required facilities reports, including the ADA Compliance Report, Inspecting Architect's Report, and Rehabilitation/Construction Plan, all attached in **Appendix 1.2**. The Archdiocese has expressed interest in leasing either building to Chicago Prep, and a preliminary lease term sheet for St. Ambrose is attached in **Appendix 1.2**.

### 1.2.3: MANAGEMENT OF PROPOSED SITE

Upon the completion of the required architectural reports for each proposed site, the design team learned that both sites may be more expensive than anticipated to renovate in time for school opening. The current cost estimate for renovating St. Ambrose is \$1,499,000, and the current cost estimate for renovating St. Elizabeth is \$2,904,000. Based on these estimates, we have decided to focus on St. Ambrose as our proposed facility, as St. Elizabeth would be more difficult for a start-up charter school to finance.

St. Ambrose consists of three floors, including a basement. The basement space is unnecessary for us to meet our minimum space requirements and fulfill all programmatic needs, so our plans for renovation and construction focus on the two main floors and have been split into two phases. Phase one will be

completed by the beginning of Year 1 and will result in the inclusion of six general education classrooms, one special education classroom, a multipurpose room, administrative offices, conference room, teacher work room, staff and student restrooms, and a front office. Phase two will be completed by the beginning of Year 2 and will result in the addition of two general education classrooms (for a total eight between the two floors), one special education classroom (for a total of two between the two floors), and a new elevator. A detailed overview of each phase is attached in **Appendix 1.2**.

In order to finance the construction project at St. Ambrose, Chicago Prep has engaged in discussion with Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF), an esteemed Midwest nonprofit lender. IFF has over twenty years of experience financing facilities for charter school, including small start-up schools like Chicago Prep Middle School. We have included in **Appendix 1.2** a letter of interest from IFF outlining basic terms and conditions for a \$1,000,000 loan. In addition, Chicago Prep will receive a \$325,000 start-up grant from the Walton Family Foundation upon authorization, and we plan to use part of this funding to help cover the cost of construction at St. Ambrose. An outline of all sources and uses of funds for St. Ambrose is attached in **Appendix 1.2**. The Archdiocese has also presented a preliminary agreement to pay for half of the construction cost in the form of rent abatement. Once we have further negotiated these terms with them and with the support of IFF, we will accordingly adjust the draft budget we submitted with our Tier I Application, attached in **Appendix 3.1**. The construction costs we currently have are initial estimates, and we will work to drive costs down to the greatest extent possible, while also looking for additional sources of funding.

Although we have outlined preliminary plans to secure and renovate St. Ambrose School in time for school opening, due to the cost of the project, the design team will continue to work with our broker Michael Pink in August and September to identify possible alternative facilities. Currently, contingency options include:

- Sharing space with Bronzeville Academy Charter School, operating in Hales Franciscan High School at 4930 S Cottage Grove Avenue. Chief Executive Officer Alvin Boutte has indicated that they have four classrooms available that we could potentially sublease in Year 1 of operation. Although we have not drafted any preliminary agreement, this has the potential to be a mutually beneficial option and the most fiscally practical solution for Chicago Prep.
- Leasing the commercial office space at 2036 S Michigan Avenue and executing a custom build-out to make the facility viable as a school. This location is several blocks farther north than the heart of Bronzeville; additionally, it would require going through the special use zoning process for approval to operate a school in the facility. However, if we have architectural reports completed and find that the construction cost is significantly lower than the construction cost at St. Ambrose, this could be a viable option.

Our design team and broker are committed to exploring these and other options and thoroughly evaluating each possible alternative in August and September, with a key consideration being how each facility option fits in with our revised budget.

Founding Board member Ken Dickerson has extensive experience with facilities acquisition and management. As the former owner of The UPS Store, Mr. Dickerson worked with a broker to review the proposed site for a new location within the Lake Meadows Shopping Center in 2015. This work included conducting site visits, creating buildout plans and estimating cost, and reviewing foot traffic, and concluded with letter of intent and lease negotiations. As the current owner of Seva Beauty in Ford City, Mr. Dickerson selected the Ford City location in 2016 after sourcing five different mall locations as well as five different Walmart locations. From 2018-19, Mr. Dickerson was preparing to open two additional

locations of Seva Beauty. He reviewed 45 potential locations ranging from new construction, partial buildouts and existing structures. Both Seva Beauty projects included working with a broker to review demographic information, foot traffic, competitive landscape, and buildout cost before reviewing and negotiating a letter of intent and lease. In 2020, Mr. Dickerson is the future owner of Christian Brothers Automotive Services, and for this role has reviewed plans for an Aurora, IL location consisting of demographics, buildout cost, and permitting process.

In addition to the knowledge of the design team and MAP Real Estate, Chicago Prep Middle School will benefit from working with IFF, which has decades of experience supporting charter schools with projects like ours, including extensive experience working with the Archdiocese. We also plan to add an additional Board member with expertise in facilities before fully negotiating a lease.

## **SECTION 1.4: UPDATED COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

*The proposal presents a compelling rationale why the proposed school(s) are a good fit for the targeted communit(ies) and will effectively serve the targeted student population(s).*

- *Members of the design team/board members with strong existing ties to the community*
- *Evidence that the applicant conducted significant, authentic outreach in the targeted communit(ies) to inform and seek community input about the application, including:*
  - *Evidence that the design team participated in various meetings, events, and/or volunteer opportunities to become more familiar with the targeted community and develop an outreach plan*
  - *Documentation of meetings that the design team held with key community organizations, businesses, and leaders*
  - *Documentation that community residents attended at least one community meeting hosted by the applicant, with a discussion of the feedback received for the proposed school*
  - *An evolved and updated discussion of what community members identify as the existing assets and needs of the targeted communit(ies) and how the proposed school would build on these assets and help meet identified needs.*
  - *Evidence that the design team involved the community in developing an educational vision for the proposed school or, alternatively, adapting the existing model to meet the unique needs of the community*
  - *An outline or table describing key pieces of feedback received from community members with an explanation of which were incorporated into plans for the proposed school or not, and why*
  - *A convincing rationale for why the proposed school is a good fit for the communit(ies)*

### **1.4.1: LEARNING ABOUT THE COMMUNITY**

Since the submission of the Tier I Application on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the design team has continued to engage deeply in the Bronzeville community and neighboring recruitment communities. In-person community engagement has been significantly limited by COVID-19, particularly in May under the stay-at-home order, but also in June and July with continued guidelines in place for social distancing. Nonetheless, we have continued outreach to learn about the community through as many strategies and stakeholders as possible, including:

- Email and phone call outreach to local nonprofits, businesses, religious leaders, families, neighborhood associations, apartment complexes, churches, schools, colleges, and elected officials.

- Participating in online events such as virtual town halls, presentations, and workshops.
- Participating in in-person events when possible and seeking feedback from attendees.

Our three design team members from the Bronzeville community – Mercedes Bender, Ken Dickerson, and Mitchell Newsome – have been particularly instrumental in forging connections with neighbors and families, business owners, pastors, politicians, and other community leaders. Lead Founder Mary Griffin has also joined the Mandrake Park Advisory Council as Secretary as a way to learn more about the community and contribute positively to this important neighborhood institution.

In addition, Ms. Griffin has taught two sessions of Online Financial Literacy classes (eight classes for each session). The first was attended by three students from June 9 – July 2, and the second attended by five new students from July 13 – July 23. Each session provided students with a well-rounded introduction to personal finance, covering such topics as budgeting, saving, spending (cash vs. credit vs. debit) and investing. Examples of outreach about the course are included in **Appendix 1.4**.

All of these connections and conversations have deepened our understanding of community assets and needs. Figure 1.20 provides a list of all meetings and events held and attended since May 2020. See **Section 1.4.2** for additional outreach, including community events and presentations. See **Section 1.5.3** for communication and meetings with elected officials.

**Figure 1.20: Meetings, Events, and Volunteer Opportunities May – July 2020**

Date	Engagement
5/16	Met with Gwynda Jones, Bronzeville resident
5/16	Met with Keith Walker, Bronzeville resident
5/16	Met with Martez Rucker, Bronzeville resident
5/16	Met with Deana Patterson, entrepreneur
5/18	Attended 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Ward Virtual Town Hall: Mental Health in Bronzeville
5/18	Met with David Griggs, Bronzeville resident and pastor
5/18	Met with Kevin McFall, Bronzeville resident
5/19	Met with John Cook, Bronzeville resident and Owner, Bronzeville Community Clubhouse
5/23	Met with Stephanie Tarr, Bronzeville resident and faculty at Malcolm X College
5/26	Met with LaShelle Newland-Jordan, Deputy Director of Center for Changing Lives
5/26	Participated in Mandrake Park Advisory Council Meeting
5/28	Met with Rhonda Woodson, Bronzeville resident
5/28	Met with Cawanna Stonewall, educator and prospective Chicago Prep parent
5/28	Met with Arnold Robinson, grandparent to two 8-11-year-old children
5/28	Met with Shirley Newsome, Member of Board of Directors for Department of Planning and Development; Board Chair for SECC
5/30	Met with Joy Hearn, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at Richard J. Daley College; member of AKA Sorority Inc.
6/8	Attended 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Ward Virtual Town Hall: Youth Summer Opportunities
6/11	Met with Lisa Jones, Bronzeville resident
6/17	Met with Wendell Harris, Vice President of Lending Operations at Chicago Community Loan Fund
6/17	Volunteered at HelloBaby Giveaway Day
6/17	Met with Veryl Britton Boykin, CPS graduate and educator
6/22	Met with Clarence Phillips, former Bronzeville resident

6/23	Met with Dori Collins, Bronzeville resident
6/24	Met with Caryn Lichtenberg, Director of Alumni School Leadership at Teach for America Chicago-NWI
6/24	Met with Charles and Kim Edoigawrie, residents
6/24	Met with Yvette Love, CPS graduate and community networker
6/24	Met with Elizabeth Overstreet, former Bronzeville resident
6/24	Met with Della Taylor, Bronzeville resident
6/24	Met with Jennifer Hatch, Bronzeville resident and parent
6/24	Met with Ed Chapman, CPS graduate and community networker
6/25	Met with Pastor Eddie Williams, Pastor at Metropolitan Baptist Church (MBC), who was born and raised in Bronzeville
6/26	Met with Sabrina Wilkins, Bronzeville resident
6/29	Met with Chanel Sims, Bronzeville resident
6/30	Met with Robin Smith, Bronzeville resident
6/30	Met with Laurie Bryant, Bronzeville resident and Owner, Mathnasium Learning Center
6/30	Met with Patricia Akuamoah, Community Engagement at The Community Builders/The Cornerstone Apartments
6/30	Participated in Mandrake Park Advisory Council Meeting
7/1	Volunteered and tabled at HelloBaby Giveaway Day
7/3	Met with Parrish Hobbs, CPS graduate and tennis instructor
7/5	Met with Karen Riley, Bronzeville resident
7/5	Met with Robert Hazzard, Bronzeville resident
7/5	Met with Mell Monroe, Bronzeville resident and Owner, Bronzeville Bed & Breakfast
7/5	Met with Gachelle Coffey, Bronzeville resident and former radio personality
7/5	Met with Kim Turner, Bronzeville resident
7/9	Keronn Walker, Founder of B.I.G. Baseball and Scout for the Chicago Cubs; Bronzeville resident and De La Salle alumnus
7/28	Met with Harold Lucas, President and CEO of Black Metropolis Convention and Tourism Council
7/28	Met with Dr. Barrington Price, Vice President for Student Success and Engagement at Dominican University
7/29	Volunteered and tabled at HelloBaby Giveaway Day

### Input Received

As the design team has continued connecting with our community’s many diverse stakeholders, we have also listened for trends in concerns, needs, and desires. Much of what we have heard more recently aligns with the trends we heard in previous months cited in the Tier I Application:

- Concerns about parents feeling unwelcome or uninvolved, and the need for meaningful parent involvement at the school.
- The need for an open-enrollment, academically rigorous option for Bronzeville students.
- The need for curriculum to be affirming, accurate, and culturally relevant, prioritizing African and African American history, with renewed focus on making anti-racism a central tenet of the school.
- The need for teachers and leaders of color, especially Black teachers and leaders.
- The need for social and emotional learning and responsiveness to trauma.
- A strong desire for financial literacy education.



Designing a school that authentically reflects the strengths and needs of the community has always been a priority for the Chicago Prep design team. All of the above input has been incorporated into our school model. Many aspects of our school design, such as focusing on financial literacy and establishing an active Parent Advisory Council, came directly from community input as we heard the ideas so frequently from so many different stakeholders.

In addition to these recurring themes, one obvious new theme has become clear: the need for a thorough, responsive, and flexible plan to respond to COVID-19. For months, COVID-19 has caused uncertainty and suffering for our community, country, and world. Black Chicagoans have died from COVID-19 at two-to-three times the rate of White Chicagoans, while Latinx Chicagoans have the highest rates of infection.<sup>1</sup> The pandemic has illuminated and exacerbated unacceptable inequities from health care to academic opportunities to economic investment. With no end currently in sight, many individuals we have engaged with have been curious to know how Chicago Prep will respond to COVID-19. We are in the process of preparing a response plan that prioritizes student and family health and safety above all else while ensuring that students' academic, social, and emotional needs are also met. The time between now and our proposed opening in August 2021 will allow us to share draft plans with key community stakeholders, incorporate feedback, and continuously revise and refine our plans. We are also eager to learn from CPS schools and charter networks this fall as they are executing their COVID-19 response plans. If in the spring of 2021, we find our city and country still dealing with the impacts of COVID-19, we will be fully prepared with a plan that includes the following:

- A consistent but flexible daily schedule for distance learning. We recognize the unique challenges of learning at home and will ensure our schedule allows for the following:
  - Every student has personal contact with at least one teacher daily.
  - Students receive continued daily support with social and emotional learning through virtual advisory, community meetings, and guided mindfulness and meditation.
  - Teachers hold office hours daily to allow students to get academic support one-on-one or in small groups.
  - Lessons are taught live as well as recorded to increase access and flexibility for families and students.
  - Teachers' schedules are reprioritized to include less time leading formal instruction, but more time to check in with students individually and in small groups, and more time to ensure that students receive targeted feedback on their work each day.
- A revised budget that reflects the shifting needs and demands of distance learning. The revision will include Chromebooks for every student, instead of one Chromebook for every two students, so that all students have access to a computer for distance learning if needed. The budget will also include key technology resources for teachers to lead effective virtual instruction. Examples include Zoom and Nearpod accounts to connect with and actively engage all learners.

### **Bronzeville Assets**

From the early stages of design, the Chicago Prep design team knew that Bronzeville's unique assets would make it an excellent community for a new middle school. Bronzeville's greatest strengths include its rich historical and cultural legacy, its wealth of social capital, and its current revitalization. Through our community engagement efforts, we have learned more about Bronzeville's existing assets, and the institutions below are some that may support students, families, and the school if approved to open.

### **Nonprofits and Community Organizations:**

---

<sup>1</sup> Report Date: May 16, 2020. Chicago.gov. <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/latest-data/2020-05-16.html>.



- **The Greater Bronzeville Community Action Council (GBCAC):** The GBCAC is an organization of volunteer leaders from diverse backgrounds who are dedicated to improving education in the Bronzeville community. Chicago Prep is eager to collaborate with GBCAC leadership to share resources, plan and problem solve, and improve opportunities and outcomes for all Bronzeville students.
- **Bright Star Community Outreach:** Bright Star is a leader in every area in the Bronzeville community, helping to build connections and resources among groups and offering its own programs in youth advocacy, trauma responsiveness, parent engagement, and workforce development.
- **The South Side Community Federal Credit Union (SSFCU):** This Black-owned not-for-profit financial institution could be a great partner in helping our students learn to manage their money. We are interested in the possibility of helping our students set up savings accounts through SSFCU to make what they learn in financial literacy class more tangible.
- **Neighborhood Associations:** Bronzeville is home to neighborhood organizations with active parents and community members who could support the school in various ways. These groups include the GAP Community Organization, the Greater Bronzeville Neighborhood Network, the Bronzeville Neighborhood Collaborative, and the Oakwood Neighborhood Association.
- **The Community Builders:** This nonprofit focused on building and sustaining communities operates two apartment complexes within Bronzeville: The Cornerstone Apartments and Oakwood Shores. The Cornerstone Apartments, in particular, have spaces for performing arts and physical activity center that they would allow Chicago Prep students and staff to use; they are also able to provide certified instructors for after-school programs such as karate, dance, art, and yoga.
- **Youth Programs:** Bronzeville is home to a variety of youth activity and advocacy programs, including Genius Lab, 4ne1Girl, Bronzeville Fencing Academy, Chicago Youth Center on Wabash, Little Black Pearl, and more. Chicago Prep will work with local organizations and our families to get scholars involved in extracurricular activities that appeal to their strengths and interests.
- **Chicago Park District Parks:** The parks include beautiful outdoor spaces, family and community resources, summer camps, and year-round after-school programming for students. Bronzeville's many parks include Mandrake, Ellis, Pendleton, Taylor, Dunbar, Douglas, and Armstrong.
- **Chicago Public Library Branches:** Libraries offer a great place for students to study after school, with librarians and volunteers offering homework help. Bronzeville branches include King, Hall, and Chicago Bee.
- **Build Bronzeville:** Dedicated to the revitalization of Bronzeville, Build Bronzeville has several unique initiatives to beautify and economically invest in the community. These include an incubator space, plans to renovate the historic Forum, and various supports for small businesses. Our students may benefit from learning about and visiting Build Bronzeville's incubator, Boxville, and the Bronzeville Community Garden.
- **The Harold Washington Cultural Center** is a nonprofit with a mission to preserve and protect African American culture. The center has a theater, video editing lab, museum, computer lab, and other resources that allows it to engage over 25,000 youth annually in programming.
- **DuSable Museum of African American History** is the nation's oldest independent Black history museum and would be an excellent partner for educational resources and experiences for our students.
- **The Chicago Urban League** is committed to the economic, educational, and social progress of African Americans and offers a variety of programs – including student programs, workforce development, parent supports – to build and sustain strong communities.

## Colleges and Universities

- The Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) is Chicago’s only technology university, ranks high in return on investment, and aligns with Chicago Prep’s focus on developing entrepreneurial mindsets. Not only is IIT an excellent institution for our students to visit; it also offers STEM camps that we could connect our students with.

## Businesses

- As a school focused on entrepreneurship, Chicago Prep views Bronzeville’s many small businesses as a key asset for our families and scholars. Examples include Shawn Michelle’s Ice Cream, Sip & Savor Coffee House, Pearl’s Place Restaurant, Absolutely Anything Essential, Faie Afrikan Art, Blanc Art Gallery, and Gallery Guichard. Small businesses provide a wonderful opportunity for scholars to learn about real-life entrepreneurship and economic investment.

### 1.4.2: INFORMING THE COMMUNITY

Since August 2019, the Chicago Prep design team has been informing the community of our plans for Chicago Prep. We are committed to openness and transparency, sharing details and seeking feedback from as many stakeholders as possible. In addition to the meetings held and attended, listed in **Section 1.4.1**, we have also undertaken the formal methods of outreach described in Figure 1.21 and Figure 1.22.

**Figure 1.21: Methods of Informing the Community**

Method of Notification	Details	Evidence
Facebook	97 posts since November 2019; 293 followers as of July 27, 2020	Chicago Prep’s Facebook page, facebook.com/chi.prep.middle; sample posts attached in <b>Appendix 1.4</b>
Instagram	84 posts since November 2019; 130 followers as of July 27, 2020	Chicago Prep’s Instagram account, Instagram.com/chi.prep.middle; sample posts attached in <b>Appendix 1.4</b>
Chicago Prep Newsletter	Sent newsletter in January 2020 to 178 email addresses	Dated email attached in <b>Appendix 1.4</b>
Flyers	Left 500 flyers at local businesses, libraries, parks, and community organizations	Example flyer is attached in <b>Appendix 1.4</b>
Information session/community meeting	Held 5 in-person information sessions/community meetings and 1 online information sessions/community meeting	Copies of sign-in sheets (in-person); flyers and social media records (online) attached in <b>Appendix 1.4</b>
Tabling at community events (see <b>Figure 1.22</b> for detailed list)	Tabled at a total of 12 events since December 2019, reaching an estimated 1,000 community members	Photographs and fliers attached in <b>Appendix 1.4</b>
Advertisement in <i>South Side Weekly</i> on 6/10/2020 and 6/24/2020	10,000 copies distributed to 250 locations across the South Side	Copy of ad attached in <b>Appendix 1.4</b>
LinkedIn	4 posts since May 2020; 85 followers as of July 27, 2020	Chicago Prep’s LinkedIn page, Chicago Prep Middle School

Presenting at the GBCAC and the GAP community meetings (see <a href="#">Figure 1.22</a> for details)	Formally presented Chicago Prep at 3 virtual meetings in June and July, reaching an estimated 80 community members	N/A
Direct mail campaign	Sent flyers to 2,453 addresses in ZIP code 60653	Copy of direct mailer attached in <a href="#">Appendix 1.4</a>

**Figure 1.22: Presentations and Tabling Events Designed to Inform the Community**

Date	Event and Details
6/20	Tabled at The Link Up, a pop-up resource center providing digital sign-up services and product giveaways, at Boxville. Gathered approximately 60 petition signatures.
6/24	Formally presented Chicago Prep to 15 members of the GBCAC Executive Committee; answered questions and received feedback. (This was the second presentation after our initial meeting in February.)
6/27	Tabled at The Free Black Children’s Library, organized by Brown Books and Paintbrushes, at Harper Court in Hyde Park. Gathered approximately 20 petition signatures and 5 intent-to-enroll forms.
7/5	Tabled at The Free Black Children’s Library, organized by Brown Books and Paintbrushes, at DuSable Museum of African American History in Washington Park. Gathered approximately 15 petition signatures and 5 intent-to-enroll forms.
7/7	Provided overview of Chicago Prep for 35 community members at The GAP Community Organization monthly meeting; answered questions and received feedback.
7/11	Tabled at 8 <sup>th</sup> Annual Remarkable Sip, Shop, and Support Black Businesses. Gathered approximately 25 petition signatures and 5 intent-to-enroll forms.
7/13	Formally presented to 45 members of the GBCAC at the Quarterly meeting (first presentation to full group; third presentation in front of the Executive Committee); answered questions and received feedback.
7/25	Tabled at For the Culture event at Harold Washington Cultural Center. Gathered 4 intent-to-enroll forms.
7/26	Tabled at Bronzeville City Market.

Prior to COVID-19, the design team held a series of information sessions/community meetings at the Bronzeville branches of the Chicago Public Library (Hall, Chicago Bee, and King). The session held on Tuesday, February 25, 2020, from 5:00 to 6:00pm, was typical of these community meetings. We advertised the session in advance on social media and distributed flyers with the date, time, and location to various community businesses and organizations several weeks in advance. Lead Founder Mary Griffin and Board Member Ken Dickerson then set up a table in the King Branch Meeting room with a Chicago Prep tablecloth, flyers and pens, sign-in sheets, petitions, and pizza and candy. We welcomed seven guests, including two young students, over the course of the hour. We shared the highlights of our school model through a 10-minute presentation, then engaged in questions and answers with attendees. Attached in [Appendix 1.5](#) are a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and the meeting sign-in sheet.

Amidst the restrictions of COVID-19, the design team has committed to holding online community meetings to inform the community about Chicago Prep and seek feedback. One such meeting took place on Wednesday, July 29, 2020, at 6:00pm, via Zoom and Facebook Live. The community meeting was advertised in advance on social media. Lead Founder Mary Griffin and Founding Board Member Ken

Dickerson started the meeting by introducing themselves and having a conversation about the school (e.g., what inspired Ken to join the Board, why the school is a good fit for Bronzeville). From 6:10-6:20pm, we used a PowerPoint presentation to provide an overview of Chicago Prep, including our proposed opening grades and timeline, our mission and vision, and our key design elements. For the rest of the meeting, we continued our conversation, touching on community engagement efforts and ways for community members to get involved, and answering questions from viewers. The meeting lasted from 6:00-6:32pm, with 162 engagements and 115 views as of Wednesday, July 29. Attached in **Appendix 1.5** are a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and the social media flyer.

## **SECTION 1.5: COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT**

*The applicant has demonstrated that there is sufficient student demand to meet enrollment targets and community support for the proposed school.*

- *Evidence that collectively presents a compelling case that students will choose to attend the school and the school will meet enrollment targets, including:*
  - *A sufficient number of letters of intent to enroll for age-eligible children to comprise at least half of the first-year enrollment capacity*
  - *Personalized letters outlining why parents/guardians believe the school would be a good fit for their child*
- *Evidence that the community understands and supports the school opening in its community, which may include:*
  - *A description of some of the key supporters and champions of the proposed school in the neighborhood*
  - *Letters of support from community-based organizations, businesses, leaders, elected officials, and community members*
  - *(If any partnerships are integral to implementing the school model) A draft contract with a specific scope of services*
- *An open acknowledgement of opposition to the proposed school*
- *Evidence of having conducted all three methods of outreach to all of the aldermen, state representatives, and state senators in the intended recruitment boundary, including:*
  - *Sending formal notification of the proposed new school*
  - *Requesting a meeting (or listing meetings already held)*
  - *Attending the aldermen's ward nights*
- *A clear vision for how the proposed school will positively contribute to the community, outlining any services, resources, programs, or volunteers that the school will offer to families and/or community members*

### **1.5.1: STUDENT DEMAND**

Chicago Prep proposes to open with 120 students in Fall 2021, and to date we have collected 37 letters of intent-to-enroll, including 16 from current rising 4<sup>th</sup> graders and 21 from current rising 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Parent/guardian and student information were gathered primarily in person and on paper, with a few submissions electronically; all are uploaded in **Appendix 1.5**.

COVID-19 has presented unique challenges to collecting letters of intent-to-enroll. Most of our current intent-to-enroll forms have been collected at community events, where we have the opportunity to meet families face-to-face, build connections, share the Chicago Prep vision, and answer questions. However, from mid-March until the end of May, Chicago was under stay-at-home orders from Governor Pritzker and Mayor Lightfoot, meaning we were unable to engage in any in-person events on behalf of Chicago

prep. Since then, Chicago has slowly moved to new reopening phases with varying restrictions in place, including limits on indoor events and large outdoor gatherings. Many events we had planned to participate in, such as the all-day Bronzeville Art Market outside Mariano’s on June 6 and 7, were cancelled due to COVID-19. These and other necessary limitations have made it much more difficult to engage out in the Bronzeville community and collect intent-to-enroll forms.

However, when we have had the opportunity to participate in events in recent weeks, the response we have received from families has been overwhelmingly positive. Many parents quickly complete an intent-to-enroll form after hearing an overview of our proposal, excited about elements such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, social and emotional learning, and culturally relevant curriculum. We will continue to join and host events in the weeks ahead as long as local guidelines allow, and we are confident that we can collect at least 60 forms by September 30. In addition to participating in events, or even if Chicago takes steps back in its reopening plans, we also plan to engage in the following strategies to reach our enrollment target:

- Sending more direct mailers to new routes within our targeted ZIP codes
- Hosting more virtual community meetings
- Hosting at least two more sessions of Online Financial Literacy, one in August and one in September
- Posting about Chicago Prep opportunities (enrollment interest, Online Financial Literacy, community meetings) in the Facebook Group Bronzeville Alliance, which has over 4,000 members
- Posting in the Nextdoor app in our targeted neighborhoods
- Asking families who have already completed intent-to-enrolls to spread the word and refer other families
- Asking neighborhood associations and other groups to present Chicago Prep at their monthly meetings

### 1.5.2: COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Chicago Prep has garnered support from many diverse stakeholders in Bronzeville, the neighboring recruitment areas, and throughout Chicago. These individuals are listed in Figure 1.23.

**Figure 1.23: Supporters of Chicago Prep**

Name	Position	Affiliation
David Bender	Owner and President	The UPS Store, Lake Meadows Shopping Center of the Bronzeville community
Laurie Bryant	Owner and Center Director	Mathnasium of Chicago Hyde Park; Bronzeville resident
Diane Burnham	Executive Director	South East Chicago Commission (SECC)
Gachelle Coffey	Former Radio Personality	Bronzeville resident
John Cook	Owner	Bronzeville Community Clubhouse; Bronzeville resident
Diane Devroe	Owner	Lady Di’s Bakery
Debbie Frisch	Founder and Executive Director	HelloBaby
Andre Guichard	Owner	Gallery Guichard; Mayor of Bronzeville
Ken Harris	Director of Casino Marketing	Ameristar Casino Hotel
Robert Hazzard, Jr.	Managing Director	The Hazzard Group, LLC; Bronzeville resident

Darrel and Robin Hernandez	Community Members	Bronzeville residents and parents
Stacy Jackson	Executive Director	Chicago Lights
Danyelle Jones	Middle School Art Teacher	CICS Avalon
Gwynnda Jones	Retired Senior Global Project Manager at PepsiCo, Inc.	Bronzeville resident
Lisa Jones	Community Member	Bronzeville resident
Dr. Sokoni Karanja, Ph.D.	President	2016 MA'AT
Nicole Kwasigroch	Middle School Math Teacher	CICS Avalon
Gerald S. McCarthy	Owner	Law Office of Gerald S. McCarthy; Bronzeville resident
Mell Monroe	Owner	Welcome Inn Manor; also Bronzeville resident and Founder/former President, Bronzeville Area Residents & Commerce Council
Dr. Scott Nasatir, Ed.D.	Executive Director	NFTE
Deborah Persson	Director of Content and Coaching	Teachers Supporting Teachers
Clarence Phillips	Community Member	Former Bronzeville resident
Dr. Barrington Price, PsyD	Vice President, Student Success and Engagement	Dominican University
Greg Richmond	Community Leader in Education	Former Chief Officer for New School Development, Chicago Public Schools; Founder and former CEO, National Association of Charter School Authorizers
Karen Riley	Lawyer	Bronzeville resident
Danielle Rosenbach	Middle School Special Education Teacher	CICS Avalon
Chanel Sims	Community Member	Bronzeville resident and CPS parent
Scott Steward	Founder and CEO	Genius Lab, Inc.
Stephanie Tarr	Faculty, Radiography Department	Malcolm X College; Bronzeville resident
Joy Terrell-Hearns	Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education	Richard J. Daley College
Kevin Wadycki	Middle School Science and Social Studies Teacher	CICS Avalon
Erin Walsh-Hagan	Assistant Director of the BES Fellowship	BES
Robin Whaley-Smith	Community Member	Bronzeville resident
Sabrina Wilkins-Brown	Business Owner	The Law Office of Sabrina Wilkins-Brown, P.C.; Bronzeville resident
Rhonda Woodson	Community Member	Bronzeville resident

As evidence, 35 letters of support are attached in **Appendix 1.5**. All letters, including 20 from Bronzeville residents and leaders, express the belief that Chicago Prep will have a positive impact within the Bronzeville community by improving options and opportunities. Additionally, two letters are from parents



who explain that they opted to send their children to private schools or North side magnet schools due to dissatisfaction with the local public school options. This is a sentiment that we heard dozens of times when out in the community speaking with families; it aligns with the most recent Annual Regional Analysis (ARA) data that 27% of elementary school students who live in the Bronzeville/South Lakefront region are leaving the region to attend school.<sup>2</sup> Since August 2019 when we began listening and learning from the community, we have heard the need for improving educational outcomes from over 300 of the approximately 500 stakeholders we have engaged with, including families, educators, and community leaders. **Section 1.3** from the Tier I Application and **Section 1.4** of the Tier II Application include tables listing the events and meetings where we have heard these trends.

In addition to the above list of supporters, we are in ongoing communication with two influential community organizations in Bronzeville: the Greater Bronzeville Community Action Council (GBCAC), and The GAP Community Organization. We have presented three times to the GBCAC, twice to the executive committee and once to the full organization. We have presented once to The GAP in July, and we are invited back to present at their August meeting. We are eager to continue working alongside both organizations to support the students and families of Bronzeville.

While the design team has not encountered significant or persistent opposition, we have heard concern from community members regarding new charter schools and the impact they may have on existing district schools. Some community stakeholders do not want those existing schools to see enrollment decline more as students move to Chicago Prep, suffer financially as a result, and in the worst case, have to close. Specifically, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Sophia King shared that she is focused on improving neighborhood schools rather than supporting new schools. Senator Robert Peters has been one of the only stakeholders to express direct opposition to not only new charter schools but also to certain elements of our model, including the financial literacy and entrepreneurship focus. We do not believe this opposition reflects the general sentiments of community members and parents; these stakeholders remain squarely focused on ensuring the best academic opportunities for local students. However, we are committed to minimizing any negative impact on existing schools. We will actively recruit students from throughout Bronzeville and the surrounding communities, including students who are currently being homeschooled or attending private schools and students who live in Bronzeville but attend public schools outside the region. In addition, we are committed to collaborating with local district schools by sharing resources and partnerships. We want to support the growth and achievement of students at all schools in the region, not just those at Chicago Prep. Examples include sharing our financial literacy curriculum, collaborating on fundraising, and working together to provide after-school programming and family events.

### **1.5.3: ELECTED OFFICIALS**

The Chicago Prep team has conducted outreach to all aldermen, state representatives, and state senators representing Bronzeville as well as those representing the surrounding recruitment areas. An overview of this outreach is below; evidence of all communication is attached in **Appendix 1.5**.

#### **Aldermen**

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Alderman Pat Dowell:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on May 29; met via Zoom on June 26. Attended Virtual Town Hall on May 18 and June 8. Alderman Dowell also listened to our presentation at The GAP Community Organization meeting on Tuesday, July 7, and the GBCAC General Meeting on Monday, July 13. She has asked many thoughtful questions

---

<sup>2</sup> "Region 13: Bronzeville/South Lakefront." Chicago Public Schools, 2019-20. <https://ara.cps.edu/bronzeville-southlakefront.html>.



and provided specific feedback on our proposal (e.g., that we reach out to the South Side Community Federal Credit Union as a potential banking partner for our scholars and families).

- **4<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Sophia King:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on May 29; met via Zoom on June 29. Attended 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Advisory Council Meeting for the Douglas community on February 19. Attended Virtual Town Hall on May 18 and June 8.
- **11<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Patrick Thompson:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on June 17.
- **5<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Leslie Hairston:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on July 6.
- **20<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Jeanette B. Taylor:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on July 6.
- **25<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Byron Sigcho-Lopez:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on July 6.

### State Representatives

- **Representative Kambium Buckner, 26<sup>th</sup> House District:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on May 29; spoke via phone on June 29.
- **Representative Lamont Robinson, 5<sup>th</sup> House District:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on May 29; spoke via phone with Chief of Staff Phillip Jones on June 24.
- **Representative Sonya Harper, 6<sup>th</sup> House District:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on June 18; emailed a second time on June 30.
- **Representative Teresa Mah, 2<sup>nd</sup> House District:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on June 17; emailed a second time on June 30.
- **Representative Curtis Tarver, 25<sup>th</sup> House District:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on July 6.

### State Senators

- **Senator Robert Peters, 13<sup>th</sup> Senate District:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on May 29; met via Zoom on June 12.
- **Senator Mattie Hunter, 3<sup>rd</sup> Senate District:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on July 6.
- **Senator Antonio Munoz, 1<sup>st</sup> Senate District:** Emailed formal notification and requested meeting on June 17.

## 1.5.4: COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Chicago Prep proposes to contribute positively to the Bronzeville community first and foremost by offering a high-quality, college-preparatory middle school option for local families. Middle school is such a critical developmental period in students' lives academically, socially and emotionally, and physically. In fact, other than infancy, it is the period of the brain's most rapid development.<sup>3</sup> Chicago Prep will provide a positive, structured learning environment uniquely tailored to needs of the pre-adolescent and early adolescent age group. We also provide an intensive focus on preparing scholars for high school as the stepping stone to college. As described in **Section 2.8.1**, we devote Advisory lessons to teaching scholars about high school options and the high school application process. Scholars will thus not only be academically prepared for high school, but also develop the motivation and work ethic to be accepted to top-performing, selective enrollment high schools, such as Bronzeville's own King College Prep. Chicago

---

<sup>3</sup> Immordino-Yang, Mary Helen, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Christina Krone. "The Brain Basis for Integrated Social, Emotional, and Academic Development: How Emotions and Social Relationships Drive Learning." The Aspen Institute: National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, 2018.

Prep plans to hire a Dean of Community Engagement and High School Placement (DCE) in Year 3 to work with our 8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars and families on the high school application and admissions process.

Our focus on preparation for high school and college is something many families in Bronzeville are concerned about. For example, one parent who completed both an intent-to-enroll form and our community survey wrote, “I am highly concerned about high school options and preparation for selective enrollment.” She also wrote that she is not satisfied with the 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade options in the neighborhood because “7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade seem to leave black children behind in competing for top tier high schools.”

Chicago Prep is committed to ongoing and meaningful collaboration with families and the community. During our Planning Year, we plan to establish a Parent Advisory Council that will play a key leadership role in determining the resources and services that would be most beneficial for Chicago Prep to offer families. Examples include financial literacy workshops, workforce development workshops, and family bonding and learning opportunities (such as cooking or exercise classes). We have included in our calendar two family events per month and are purposefully waiting to gather the input of our Parent Advisory Council before we determine the exact content of those events.

In addition to our robust parent engagement plans, Chicago Prep also plans to ensure that both staff and students are deeply engaged members of the Bronzeville community. For example, during our annual summer professional development, we plan to take a guided tour of Bronzeville led by a local expert. We also plan to patronize Bronzeville businesses for staff dinners and outings throughout the year. For our students, teaching the history of Bronzeville specifically will be a major focus of our internally created social studies curriculum, as described in **Section 2.2.2**. Similarly, as part of our Money and Business in Action class, Chicago Prep plans to invite local entrepreneurs to come and speak to our scholars about the small businesses they have started in Bronzeville and the surrounding areas. We believe that developing pride in the incredible Bronzeville community is an important response to need; as described in **Section 1.3.2**, the Communities That Care Youth Survey found that over 50% of students report that they are not emotionally connected to their neighborhood.

The design team has engaged a number of potential community partners but has not yet formalized any partnerships. For example, we have engaged in conversations with Scott Steward, the Bronzeville-based leader of Genius Lab, about the possibility of collaborating to offer Chicago Prep students instruction in their cutting-edge business and coding classes. We have discussed with The Community Builders the possibility of collaborating to provide after-school programming, including both space and instructors. We are also interested in working with a locally owned bank, such as the South Side Community Federal Credit Union, about the possibility of helping our students set up savings accounts through SSCFCU to make what they learn in financial literacy class more tangible. In the months ahead and during our Planning Year, we will continue to discuss mutually beneficial partnerships with neighborhood and Greater Chicago organizations. A list of the organizations, businesses, and leaders who currently support Chicago Prep Middle School can be found in **Section 1.5.2**, with letters of support attached in **Appendix 1.5**.