



# The Next Generation: Chicago's Children

21ST CENTURY PREPARATION FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE, CAREER AND LIFE

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2013-18 ACTION PLAN

CHICAGO  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

CPS



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## Dear Parents, Students, CPS Staff, Business Leaders and Community Members:



Education has and will always be a top priority for the City of Chicago. Upon taking office as Mayor, I pledged to take an aggressive approach to improving education in the Chicago Public Schools. From our youngest pre-kindergarten learner to our graduating seniors, our students deserve a system that will prepare them for a successful future. Our City deserves a high-quality system that will create the next generation of leaders.

In two short years, our city has accomplished significant gains that will not only position our students for success but also help make Chicago a better city. This work started with the implementation of the Full School Day and Full School Year. Through this effort alone, we have ensured our students will have almost a 30% increase in instruction time over their elementary and high school years. We have also made investments to expand access to high-quality education models such as International Baccalaureate (IB) and Early College Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Schools. Such models will ensure more of our students graduate from high school ready for college and careers and prepared to positively contribute to our city and society. We also recently unveiled the Arts Education Plan that commits to providing access to all art forms to our students at every grade level, enabling us to further develop the creativity, critical thinking and confidence of our students. Last year we launched *Chicago: Ready to Learn!* which is focused on providing quality early childhood education programs for children ages birth to five. This is critical to laying the foundation for kindergarten and beyond. Similarly, we have made the commitment to offer full-day kindergarten at every CPS school starting next school year. Across the system, from cradle to career, we are increasing access to high-quality education opportunities; we are investing in our children's futures.

These are accomplishments that we all should be proud of; yet, more work is necessary if we are to have the educational system that we all want for our students. There are still too many students that are not benefiting from the world-class education that I know Chicago is capable of providing. This will require active participation from everyone. Parents and guardians must continue to set high expectations for their children's education. They must participate in school functions, be engaged with their children's teachers and remain vocal when identifying educational needs in their communities. We need our business community to provide internship opportunities as well as access to tools and resources that students need for real-world learning. Our City agencies and community organizations need to partner together to provide safe environments for additional learning and enrichment activities outside of school time. We must continue to invest in selecting, retaining and supporting our top teachers and principals. And we must do so much more.

This plan reflects the path forward for the Chicago Public Schools system and the role we must each play in order to be successful. Together we are shaping the next generation of doctors, lawyers, business leaders, educators and of course, Mayors. I am dedicated to supporting and working with the Board of Education and Chief Executive Officer to ensure we continue to provide the education system that our students deserve.

Sincerely,

**Rahm Emanuel**  
Mayor, City of Chicago



## Fellow Chicagoans:

The Chicago Public Schools action plan is a critical step toward establishing and solidifying a culture of accountability and measurable results for our district. For too long we have allowed issues in school building utilization and financial management to dictate how we would improve student outcomes for all of our students. This strategic framework and execution plan will help to ensure that our focus remains on creating and sustaining a high-quality public education system for all students.

It is imperative that we continue to shift the culture of CPS to one that has high expectations for students, staff and families and that is grounded in continuous improvement. This is the only way that we can move forward together toward our shared vision of developing successful and well-rounded citizens. Simply having a plan will not yield the results we expect. We must act on the plan and transparently track our progress toward our goals.

The Chicago Board of Education has the responsibility of ensuring that our policies are properly aligned to this plan in order to enable the initiatives outlined. For example, we have already started putting our culture of accountability into practice by holding all of our schools – district managed, charter and turnaround – to the same standards of quality. Consistent expectations will help ensure that all of our schools are properly positioned to deliver the outcomes outlined in this plan. In order to ensure every taxpayer dollar is spent responsibly, we have also pushed for prudent cost management efforts through the re-negotiation of a number of major vendor contracts. Of course, supporting our students is our primary duty. We approved the new Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy to promote more nutritious food options in our schools as well as lifelong healthy behavior in our students. As we move forward, much more remains to be done to ensure the academic and personal growth of every one of our students.

As the parent of a Chicago Public School student, I personally value the importance of this plan to ensure our students graduate prepared for future success. As the product of public education, I can attest to what a difference a high-quality education can make in your life. As a Chicagoan, I understand the high expectations that we have of our school district. As President of the Chicago Board of Education, I will hold the district accountable to delivering on the actions and desired outcomes outlined in this plan.

Sincerely,

**David Vitale, President**  
Chicago Board of Education

## Dear Parents, Students, Friends, Colleagues and Partners:

All of Chicago's children deserve a world-class education that will prepare them for success in the 21st century. High school graduation is no longer the goal. It is only the starting point. Chicago Public Schools must graduate students with the skills to excel in the world beyond high school, in college or technical training, in career and in life.

Yet, thousands of our young people cross the graduation stage each year unprepared for productive next steps. While high school graduation rates have risen steadily in Chicago since the late 1990s, most of our high school graduates do not proceed to earn a college degree, and many are languishing in low-wage jobs or failing to find any employment.

A narrow focus on basic skills will not ensure success. Employers in today's global economy are seeking those who can problem-solve, communicate effectively and collaborate with others. We need not only rigorous instruction in the core subjects but also a well-rounded curriculum that builds students' initiative, creativity and social skills. We know that good health leads to better learning and so we are building more health education and physical activity into the school day. We are also expanding arts instruction to every school in the district. A rich education in the arts is valuable in itself, but research also shows that low-income children engaged in the arts are more likely to earn college degrees, find good jobs and become active in their communities later in life.

The enclosed 5-year action plan – The Next Generation: Chicago's Children – lays out a roadmap for achieving our vision of a challenging, high-quality education for every child in every neighborhood in this city. Achieving this vision demands that we set common standards for quality across all schools – whether neighborhood, charter, or contract schools – and it requires that we hold everyone accountable for meeting these standards. Achieving this vision will also require the energy and talents of all of us – principals, teachers and parents, faith-based organizations, non-profits and elected officials, universities, foundations and businesses and all of our community partners. We cannot reach our goals without your help.


Growing up in public housing in Harlem, I faced many of the same challenges that our young people in many parts of Chicago face today. I know that our children have the strength and fortitude to triumph over obstacles that some of us cannot even imagine. But, I have learned that our children triumph only if the adults in their lives do not give up on them. As a district and as a city, our mission is to support our children to ensure they achieve their dreams. I thank you for your partnership and commitment as we work together to develop the next generation of Chicago's leaders.

Sincerely,



**Barbara Byrd-Bennett**  
CEO, Chicago Public Schools





> HOW WE  
GOT HERE,  
AND HOW  
WE WILL  
USE THIS  
PLAN  
GOING  
FORWARD

>

# THE PLAN

This action plan – **THE NEXT GENERATION: CHICAGO'S CHILDREN** – was developed after listening carefully to the concerns of thousands of citizens and civic leaders across the City of Chicago. We have heard from parents and community members, from principals and teachers, religious leaders and business leaders, elected officials and philanthropists.

**We have heard the demand** for better educational opportunities for schools undergoing consolidations. We understand the need for richer libraries, updated technology and arts programming. We have listened to the call for safer schools, for a reduction in truancy and an increase in afterschool programs that enrich students' lives and provide a safe alternative to the streets.

**We have heard your voices** at public meetings on school consolidations, during visits to schools in every one of the city's neighborhoods, through formal and informal conversations with community leaders, through the Local School Council Advisory Board and from the eight Community Action Councils which support some of Chicago's most underserved neighborhoods.

**Our vision** builds on the goal that Mayor Rahm Emanuel established for the City: a high-quality education for every child in every neighborhood. We will deliver on his educational priorities of high-quality early learning opportunities, full-day kindergarten for all, expanded and enhanced arts education and a full school day. We will continue to add new high-quality schools to neighborhoods across the city – such as International Baccalaureate (IB), Early College Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and innovative charter and contract models – as we must ensure that all children have access to high-quality options that support their aspirations for college and career. Principals and teachers must be supported, empowered and held accountable in ensuring world-class learning experiences for every child. Parents must in turn be armed with the information to help them choose the best options for their children and support their children's ongoing development.

**This document is our commitment to you, and we intend to hold ourselves accountable for meeting that commitment.** Just as principals and teachers must now meet higher evaluation standards, so must the district leadership. Every senior leader will be evaluated on delivering results tied to this plan.

**This 5-year plan is not intended to sit on a shelf. It is an action roadmap to achieving our vision of a high-quality education for every child in the district.** Within this framework we have outlined strategies that will be refined and strengthened as we move forward in response to your feedback, to lessons learned along the way, and to new insights into how best to achieve our collective goals.

# Call to Action

**THIS IS A CRITICAL MOMENT** for the Chicago Public Schools. We are a district with enormous challenges, and also unlimited potential. We see the potential in examples of excellence in teaching, leadership and scholarship that exist in every neighborhood across this city. We see it also in the progress made by all types of schools in our city – from neighborhood to selective enrollment, from turnaround to charter schools – and in trends citywide:

- **The graduation rate has risen steadily while the dropout rate has steadily declined since 1999.** CPS had its highest 5-year cohort graduation rate in recent history in 2012, with 61.2% graduating. That is an increase of 14.2 percentage points since 1999.
- **Chicago schools dominate the list of top schools in the State of Illinois, and many of them are defying the odds and closing the achievement gap.** Four CPS schools achieved “90-90-90” status (90% minority students, 90% low-income students, and 90% of students meeting or exceeding standards) in 2012: Frazier IB, Haines, Leland and Chicago International Charter School West Belden.
- **College enrollment rates of Chicago graduates have been steadily improving since 2004.** While the percentage of CPS students who enroll in college is lower than the national average, we are closing the gap. Between 2004 and 2012, the percentage of CPS students enrolling in college increased from 43.5% to 59.5%, an increase of 16 percentage points. The national average meanwhile rose only 1.6 percentage points, to 68.3%.

## YET, WE ARE STILL NOT PREPARING ENOUGH OF OUR STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS:

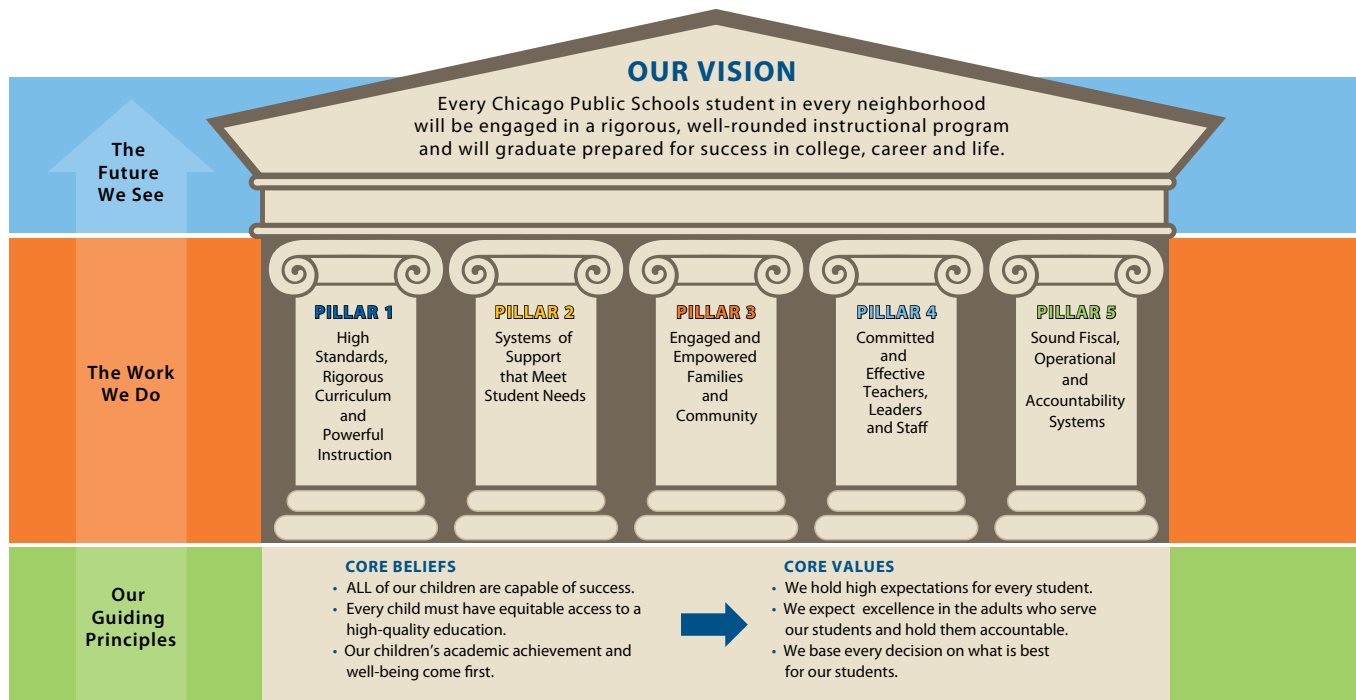
- Despite the improved graduation rate, **most CPS students have few postsecondary options** because they are not academically prepared for their next steps after high school. Last year, only 9.7% of 8th graders had EXPLORE scores that met or exceeded grade-level expectations, and only 8.9% of 11th graders met or exceeded ACT college-ready benchmarks.
- **Nearly one-third of CPS graduates who enroll in college do not persist into their 2nd year**, and of those who do persist, still many more do not proceed to earn a postsecondary degree.
- **The achievement gap remains significant in Chicago.** The performance gap in 2012 between White and African-American students on the Illinois Standardized Achievement Test (ISAT) was 25.5 percentage points in reading and 20.1 points in math, and between White and Latino students the gap was 13 points in reading and 8.9 points in math.

**THESE GLARING INEQUALITIES** in student achievement are unacceptable. The vast majority of Chicago’s children are entering adulthood undereducated and unprepared for college or career. We must prepare all of our students with the competencies needed for success in the 21st century. The success of the next generation of Chicago citizens depends on all of us. This plan is our call to action.





# The Next Generation: Chicago's Children – Our Framework for Success



At CPS, our vision is that **every student in every neighborhood** will be engaged in a rigorous, well-rounded instructional program and will graduate prepared for success in college, career and life.

**1** **First:** we need **high standards, rigorous curriculum and powerful instruction** for all students regardless of their neighborhood, diverse learning needs or level of English language proficiency. We must go beyond the basics to ensure that children become critical thinkers, effective communicators and responsible global citizens. The definition of core instruction must be expanded to include the arts, health, physical education and extracurricular activities.

**2** **Second:** we need robust **systems of supports that meet all of our students' needs** because every student is unique. High expectations for all students must be coupled with a holistic approach that supports the individual needs of each. We must also remove barriers to learning with practices that promote children's health and safety, social and emotional development, school attendance and college and career preparation.

**3** **Third:** for students to achieve at the highest level, the district needs **engaged and empowered families and communities**. Parents must be empowered as leaders who can advocate for their children and for all the community's children. Meanwhile, school and district leaders must be resourceful in identifying community partners who can support children's growth and learning.

**4** The **fourth** pillar is to ensure **committed and effective teachers, leaders and staff**. Our teachers, principals and administrators will be valued and developed, will hold themselves accountable and will be rewarded for success. We must ensure we are the place where the best talent comes to work.

**5** And the **fifth** and final pillar is that we need **sound fiscal, operational and accountability systems**. Priorities that lead to student success must drive planning, spending and accountability at the school and district level. Every employee needs to be held accountable for student outcomes and also provided with useful data and guidance in working toward those goals.

# > HOW WE WILL GET THERE

As a district, we will set **COMMON STANDARDS FOR WHAT HIGH-QUALITY LOOKS LIKE** in all five of these areas. We will cull the best local practices and national models and assist in scaling them district-wide. And we will ensure that **SCHOOLS ARE SUPPORTED TO MEET STANDARDS** with carefully selected or designed professional development, instructional materials and external partners.

At the same time, we must respect the professional expertise at our school sites and allow **INCREASING LEVELS OF AUTONOMY TO SCHOOLS** THAT PROVE TO BE HIGH PERFORMERS. We believe that schools are the unit of change, that **PRINCIPALS LEAD** that change, and that they must be both empowered and supported to be successful.


# > HOW WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL

Achieving excellence district-wide also requires that **WE HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE** for meeting standards, and that we organize a system for making quick course corrections when we fall short. Annual progress on each of the five pillars and our overall district vision will be monitored using our **CPS DISTRICT SCORECARD** which will include metrics such as student attendance and academic growth, evaluations of school climate, the percentage of high performing employees retained in the district, and student college enrollment and success. We are working to establish baselines on all of these measures so that we may set ambitious yet achievable goals for progress in the months and years to come.






**THE CPS VISION** is that every student in every neighborhood will be engaged in a rigorous, well-rounded instructional program and will graduate prepared for success in college, career and life. Five pillars outline the work we do to ensure our students' future success. The CPS District Scorecard tracks annual progress toward the key performance indicators that holistically capture the results of our district's efforts to achieve our vision.

## CPS DISTRICT SCORECARD

### ULTIMATE OUTCOMES

	Student Readiness	Student Success
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of students who graduate from high school within 5 years</li> <li>• % of graduates who are academically ready for college and career</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of students enrolled in college, enlisted in the military or employed 6 months after high school graduation</li> <li>• % of graduates persisting and succeeding in college or employment beyond the 1st year after high school               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ % of college enrollees persisting into their 2nd year</li> <li>▸ % of college enrollees earning a degree within 5 years after graduation</li> <li>▸ % of graduates in labor force earning a family-supporting wage</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF OUR WORK

	Pillar 1: High Standards, Rigorous Curriculum and Powerful Instruction	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of 3rd grade students reading at or above grade level</li> <li>• % of 8th grade students academically ready for high school</li> <li>• % of students graduating high school with college credit or professional certification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3rd-8th grade students' academic growth versus national norms</li> <li>• 9th-11th grade students' academic growth versus national norms</li> <li>• Achievement gap closure for all priority groups (English Language Learners, students with diverse learning needs, African-American students, Hispanic students) on all district scorecard academic measures</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average daily attendance</li> <li>• % of students on-track to graduate               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ % of 3rd-8th grade students on-track</li> <li>▸ % of Freshmen on-track</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of students completing Individualized Learning Plans annually (grades 6-12)</li> <li>• % of schools with strong or very strong rating from students on Supportive Environment (My Voice My School survey)</li> </ul>
	Pillar 3: Engaged and Empowered Families and Community	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of parents attending report card teacher conferences</li> <li>• % of schools with strong or very strong rating from parents on School Community (My Voice My School survey)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of schools with strong or very strong rating from students and teachers on Involved Families (My Voice My School survey)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of all employees rated high performing that are retained (principals, teachers and staff)</li> <li>• % of principal and teacher positions that are vacant on the first day of school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of all employees who rate themselves engaged and satisfied based on district-wide employee satisfaction survey</li> </ul>
	Pillar 5: Sound Fiscal, Operational and Accountability Systems	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of schools with high-quality facility ratings</li> <li>• # of schools rated high-quality based on performance policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$ per student allocated to schools</li> <li>• % of budget spent versus annual budget plan</li> </ul>





EDUCATE ME  
INSPIRE ME  
TRANSFORM ME

# High Standards, Rigorous Curriculum and Powerful Instruction

**OVERVIEW** A 21st century public education must develop students who are innovative thinkers, civic-minded collaborators and effective communicators. Achieving this goal requires teaching and learning that challenges students to think critically, sparks their creativity and supports their diverse needs. It also means expanding the definition of core instruction to subjects including the arts, health and physical education, and offering out-of-school enrichment to promote the comprehensive and balanced development we want for all children.



## OBJECTIVES

- **Implement the Common Core Standards in all grades K-12.** The Common Core State Standards are a national benchmark for math and literacy skills needed for success in today's global economy. They go beyond the basic skills of yesteryear with expectations that children be able to think deeply, such as by constructing logical arguments, critiquing each other's reasoning and understanding the perspective of others. Consistently providing students in all classes, across all schools with Common Core instruction will require these key efforts:

> **Clarity of Expectations:** Rigorous expectations for student learning will be matched by equally rigorous expectations for teacher planning and instruction. The new CPS Framework for Teaching provides teachers and principals with clear guidance on how to provide Common Core-aligned curriculum, instruction and assessment. The CPS Curriculum Frameworks will further define expectations for the kind of engaging and complex instruction all students should experience in literacy, mathematics, social science and science at every school. A streamlined assessment

system will measure student progress during the year in mastering the breadth and depth of Common Core learning. Teachers will receive training on using assessment data to determine where students need extra support to reach year-end goals.

> **Alignment of Supports:** Teachers will be supported in understanding how to design Common Core instruction through professional development and appropriate curriculum materials. Every school and region will be required to have a professional development plan that provides differentiated support for teachers and administrators to meet Common Core expectations. Professional development will be aligned to the expectations of CPS Curriculum Frameworks and will also focus on how to help teachers provide supports for students with diverse language, communication, physical and emotional needs. New texts and digital curriculum will provide teachers and students with a range of tools that promote interdisciplinary thinking, discovery and analysis for all students, and that in turn support consistently high expectations across subjects and grade levels.

## STRATEGIC PILLAR

# High Standards, Rigorous Curriculum and Powerful Instruction

“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.”<sup>1</sup>

Margaret Mead

Expanded use of digital curriculum, in particular, will better enable us to provide rich and engaging material, while also offering interactive assessments that provide real-time feedback and adaptable resources to meet the needs of diverse learners.

- **Ensure students arrive at 1st grade ready to learn.**

In 2012, the Mayor launched *Chicago: Ready to Learn!*, an initiative aimed at improving the quality of early childhood programs citywide and increasing access for families that need these programs the most. Opportunities will expand and will be distributed more equitably across neighborhoods, and programs will be held to high expectations for instruction and community engagement. All providers and schools will be trained on these expectations and will be supported with tools for continuous improvement. In addition, CPS recently established the requirement that full-day kindergarten be offered at all elementary schools to help all of our students enter 1st grade truly ready to learn.

- **Raise the bar for high school course-taking to align with college and career expectations.** High school courses as well as students' course-taking patterns currently vary tremendously in content and rigor across the district. The result is unequal access to college and career preparatory curriculum. To prepare all students for post-graduation success, we will establish common standards for coursework across the system, resulting in a more streamlined high school course catalogue offering only those courses that meet college and career readiness standards.



In addition, we will outline clear courses of study – 4-year course-taking roadmaps – that meet the needs of all students' interests and achievement levels and that guide students across the graduation stage and onto the post-secondary path of their choice. The senior year, in particular, must serve universally as a time to gear up for the rigor of college and employment – for example, through challenging college-level courses and internships – rather than as a time to coast to the end of high school.

- **Expand high-quality school models and programs that accelerate students on the path to college and career success.** We are committed to offering proven and innovative high-quality school models in every part of the city – serving a broad range of student interests – regardless of whether these are neighborhood, magnet, charter, or contract schools. Students in every neighborhood deserve convenient access to high-quality options.

We will continue to expand proven models while cultivating and scaling-up innovative new models. Programs such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), Early College, Career and Technical Education (CTE) and International Baccalaureate Programmes (IB) are just some of the current options that accelerate students' postsecondary preparation. An innovative blended approach to learning that launched in CPS in 2012, New Classrooms, allows students to progress through a math curriculum at their own pace using a combination of large group, small group and individual practice on computer software. Technology-enabled instruction will be a growth priority, and other school models may focus on world language, fine arts, service and citizenship, software coding and much more. As we expand these options, we will share best practices district-wide so that all students can be more successful in school.

- **Ensure quality education for students with diverse learning needs.** Special education has historically been focused too narrowly on compliance with the law and not enough on improving the quality of instruction. We must establish a shared goal of ensuring all students





succeed in their grade-level curriculum, Pre-K through graduation. We will train educators at all levels to provide students the supports they need early on, so they are not inappropriately labeled down the road. We will learn from best practices within our district and across the nation, and we will provide professional development to schools on how to serve diverse learners in the least restrictive environment. We will also deploy specialists such as speech pathologists, social workers and psychologists more equitably across the district to ensure that resources follow student needs.

- **Ensure the quality of bilingual and multilingual programs.** The district's population of English language learners (ELLs) is growing at the same time that academic standards are rising. Students must succeed in a rigorous, grade-level curriculum while learning the English language. To equip teachers to meet the challenge, we are providing significant professional development on teaching the Common Core Standards to English language learners. Bilingual, English as a Second Language (ESL) and general education teachers will be trained along with their administrators to ensure an integrated, school-wide focus on supporting English language learners.

Principals will also work to increase their numbers of teachers with ESL or Bilingual endorsements, both through recruitment and through encouragement of teachers already on staff to seek these endorsements. CPS is working with local university partners to provide this coursework for CPS teachers at a reduced cost. In addition, CPS is committed to ensuring that students' home language and culture are valued and reflected

across the school – from the use and development of the student's home language in class, to a learning environment that incorporates cultural artwork, literature and activities, to the availability of translators for families.

- **Expand health instruction and physical education.** A new health curriculum will support teachers to integrate health instruction, including nutrition and age-appropriate sexual health, into the language arts and science curriculum. Beginning in 2014-2015 we will expand the daily physical education requirement at high schools from two to four years. We are piloting new physical education curriculum in selected elementary schools with the goal of establishing daily PE in all elementary schools within five years.
- **Integrate arts education for students at every grade level.** The arts are a vital piece of a well-rounded education, stimulating creativity and critical thinking; but, in recent years some CPS elementary schools have eliminated art instruction altogether. The CPS Arts Education Plan, adopted in 2012, will now require a minimum of 120 minutes of arts instruction each week by certified art teachers for all students in grades K-8. The curriculum will cover visual art, music, dance and drama. High school students will also be required to earn two credits from these art forms. Each school will be matched with an external arts partner that can provide additional enrichment for students and professional development for teachers.
- **Grow out-of-school time opportunities and participation.** Activities that take place after school, before school and during school breaks play an essential role in providing students with a well-rounded education while also solidifying schools as the hubs of their communities. Clubs, competitions and sports help students explore athletic, artistic, service and academic interests while developing them as leaders and team players. CPS is committed to pursuing city and community partnerships – such as the Community Schools Initiative – to increase the number and type of out-of-school time program offerings available to students throughout the city.

[The CPS summer internship program] gives the intern the opportunity to get a glimpse of the real world and allows local businesses to serve in a mentor role to young adults.

Laura Left, Office Manager  
State Farm

# Systems of Support that Meet Student Needs

**OVERVIEW** Every student is unique. High expectations for all students must be coupled with a holistic approach that supports the individual needs of each. All students need special attention to grow both personally and academically. Many also face serious challenges to learning, including poor nutrition or hunger, inadequate health care, emotional trauma and community violence. Schools – with support from the district and invaluable partners such as the Department of Family and Support Services, the Chicago Police Department, the Chicago Department of Public Health and community-based organizations – play a vital role in helping students build resiliency and overcome challenges. Every school will establish systems that keep students safe, healthy, focused and on-track for college and career success.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Ensure that every school is a safe, secure, orderly, drug-free environment for learning.** Keeping children safe requires that we become more proactive in preventing violence. Toward that end, we have begun transforming the role of school security officers by training them to identify potentially volatile situations and mediate conflicts before fights break out. We are guiding them to go beyond rule enforcement and to build trusting relationships so that students are comfortable seeking their help.

We will provide similar training to Safe Passage workers and Parent Patrol volunteers who support students' safety as they travel to and from school. In addition, we will continue to guide principals to partner with local police for support and timely information about neighborhood violence that can lead to conflicts within the school building. Each school will be required to optimize its safety plan in partnership with the CPS Office of Safety and Security. Continuing to expand the use of security cameras that can be monitored both



at schools and at central office is also a priority. Lastly, parents and community-based organizations will be further engaged to support student interventions and to resolve conflicts before they become serious incidents.



- **Establish a universal standard for a positive learning climate in every school that makes students feel valued, challenged and supported.** Schools with positive relationships, clear expectations, collective responsibility and learning-focused interactions have better student attendance, behavior and grades. We will expand proven school climate and social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies to help students develop the self-management, decision-making and relationship skills required to meet the academic expectations of the Common Core. As part of that effort, we will guide schools to resolve conflicts with restorative justice approaches, which require misbehaving students to listen to their victims, to acknowledge the harm they have caused and then to take action to remediate it. Restorative approaches have shown to be far more effective than punitive measures in improving behavior. We have also trained social workers, counselors and community partners to use proven anger management and trauma strategies to support students who have endured violence in their communities, and we have already seen fewer misconducts and suspensions system-wide.

Finally, when serious misconducts do occur, we must push to minimize instructional time lost due to out-of-school suspensions by providing alternatives such as in-school suspension, detention and Saturday school programming focused on improving conflict resolution skills. Such efforts will help students stay on-track academically while building the social and emotional skills needed for life-long success.

- **Promote good attendance.** Regular school attendance is critical for academic success. Each school will be required to organize an attendance team comprised of appropriate staff and community partners to identify chronically absent students and provide interventions, such as counseling or academic support. Schools with attendance rates below 95% will receive training to create attendance plans that include concrete roles for community partners, such as mental health organizations, who can provide additional services to students as needed. Schools and regions with the highest absentee rates will be targeted for further student services and family outreach.
- **Address health-related barriers to learning.** Research shows that healthy, active children are better prepared to succeed academically. Recently, we launched the Healthy CPS Action Plan as part of the Mayor's public health agenda, in partnership with the Chicago Department of Public Health. The plan contains 60 strategies for schools to improve student health. Among other initiatives, we will provide access to free oral health exams and treatment for all high school students, building off a successful program already in place in elementary schools. We will ensure all students receive a free vision screening and that those who fail their screenings can visit a local optometrist for free eyeglasses. We have also established the district's new Wellness and Healthy Snacks and Beverages policies, through which we are training schools to make productive use of recess time and create healthier cafeteria options.

“You can't educate a child who isn't healthy, and you can't keep a child healthy who isn't educated.”<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Joycelyn Elders, former  
US Surgeon General



## Systems of Support that Meet Student Needs

- **Provide students with the academic and behavior supports needed to achieve their full potential.**

Each school will be required to establish a Multi-Tiered System of Supports. MTSS is a system for schools to analyze student data, such as attendance and grades, and add layers of support for those who need extra help to progress academically or to improve their behavior. Nationwide, schools implementing MTSS are showing significant gains in student achievement. Extra support begins in the classroom as teachers analyze why certain students fall short of mastering a particular lesson. Interventions may include re-teaching small groups or individuals, assigning additional practice or redirecting problem behavior.

Students who continue to struggle will be supported by a school intervention team that considers a range of learning, health, behavioral and other reasons for poor performance. The team can then recommend additional interventions in the regular classroom or through individualized school services such as counseling or tutoring and through partnerships with outside agencies that offer additional services. Regional offices will provide professional development, monitoring and follow-up support for every school to establish an MTSS system. Training will also include strategies for teaching students with a range of diverse learning needs.



- **Ensure that every student graduates high school with a concrete postsecondary plan.** Many Chicago students leave high school without a plan for securing employment or enrolling in college or vocational training. Principals and school counseling staff will now be held accountable for ensuring that every student graduates with a clear plan for the future and the guidance needed to execute it. We will provide counselors with guidelines, strategies and professional development to keep students on track for graduation and the postsecondary option of their choice. Strategies include helping students select coursework or internships that match their aspirations, enrolling students in credit recovery programs and guiding them to select colleges that meet their needs and interests. Principals will also be supported to effectively implement afterschool and summer school credit recovery programs.

In addition, the district will increase student access to early college and career and technical coursework, enabling students to graduate with a leg up on their path to postsecondary success. CPS will pursue new partnerships with businesses in order to create more internship, job shadow and mentorship opportunities. Strengthening university and community partnerships will expand student access to college fairs, college tours,



scholarships and dual enrollment coursework. Collectively, these opportunities and partnerships will help students walk across the graduation stage with a postsecondary plan that is best-suited to their future aspirations and that meets the demands of the 21st century workforce.

- **Re-engage our off-track students.** To serve youth aged 14 to 21 who have dropped out or are significantly behind in credits needed for on-time graduation, we will create new high-quality Options schools and programs specifically designed to get these students back on-track and prepared for post-secondary life. We will also add seats at our existing sites and raise expectations for instruction and student outcomes. Historically, the district has referred to these sites as alternative schools, but we believe that these programs are quality “Options” for students who need a different setting to achieve their potential.

To recover dropouts aged 16 to 21, we recently opened three Re-engagement Centers in Garfield Park, Roseland and Little Village. Outreach workers actively search for dropouts and encourage them to enroll in credit recovery programs at the centers, offer counseling to help resolve issues that led to dropping out and assist

them to re-enroll in high school. Workers also visit their high schools to provide follow-up support. We will look for opportunities to open additional Re-engagement Centers going forward.

- **Target struggling schools for intensive district support.** Our lowest-achieving schools need additional support, and we will offer them targeted resources and guidance to improve all aspects of school governance and classroom instruction. The new Office of Strategic School Support Services will provide a Common Core-aligned curriculum and professional development for teachers, principals, school leadership teams and local school council members. Regular school diagnostic reviews will help school staff identify strengths and weaknesses and plan further improvements. Parents will be invited to workshops that help them support their children’s education and offer free GED and ESL classes to continue their own. Our goal is that after three years of receiving these additional resources and district-led supports, our lowest-performing schools will have demonstrated significant gains in achievement and will be capable of continuing this positive growth going forward.

“My top priorities are to have a school with highly qualified teachers who are concerned about the students’ performance. This school should value parent involvement and community investment. It should also have an excellent and resourceful instructional leader. Additionally, we need programs in our schools to address the social-emotional learning challenges that our students possess.”

Austin Community Action Council Member

# Engaged and Empowered Families and Community

**OVERVIEW** Parents and families are the first educators of their children. Effective schools guide families to support children's learning at home and draw on the talents of parents as volunteers. A district that intends for every child to succeed in life must also support parents as leaders. Parents who can advocate not only for their own children but for all the community's children are a powerful force for change.

The community is also a vital source of nourishment for a child's growth. The work of schools can be strengthened by organizations that support students' academic, physical, social and emotional development. School and district leaders must draw on all the resources of our city and neighborhoods: nonprofits and businesses, universities and community groups, faith-based leaders and government officials, philanthropists and activists.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Engage neighborhoods in shaping a vision for education.** As we create a 10-year education facilities master plan for every neighborhood, we are discussing with families, Local School Councils, Community Action Councils and additional community partners the types of specialty schools and programs they want in their neighborhoods. These may include International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, STEM schools, world language programs, programs for the arts and many other options.
- **Empower families to support children's learning at home and school.** Parents need a clear understanding of how to support their children's school success from an early age. We will launch Parent Universities across the city to help parents understand expectations at each grade level, how to build children's academic and social-emotional skills and how to support their college and career plans. The Parent Portal enables parents to view their children's grades and attendance online and provides email access to teachers along with email and text alerts when children's performance slips. Trainings will teach parents how to advocate effectively for their



children with school staff and how to further their own educational goals through GED, ESL and college classes. Citywide parent information sessions will provide additional information on these topics while also engaging parents in dialogue regarding key district initiatives and exposing them to the range of schools and specialty programs available. Annual school progress reports provide a clear picture of school performance and further assist parents with selecting the schools and programs that best meet their children's needs.





- **Improve services that help parents to navigate CPS.**

We have already established call lines for parents in each region staffed by skilled and experienced professionals who help answer school-related questions and resolve issues. All issues and their resolutions are tracked to ensure that families receive timely and satisfactory responses to their concerns. Soon we will open Parent Engagement Centers at a number of locations across the city. There, parents will be able to find information about CPS schools, programs and services, file complaints, use computers and attend parent workshops. Meeting space will also be available for parent-related interest groups.

- **Prepare Local School Councils (LSCs) to become effective leaders, advocates and innovators.**

LSCs play a pivotal role in school improvement, with the power to select principals and approve the school's improvement plan and budget. We must raise the quality of training, both from in-house trainers and outside providers, so that all councils are prepared to assume those responsibilities. For the first time, the district's Talent Office will play a lead role in providing training to LSCs on principal selection. Beyond their primary duties, councils must also learn how to take the lead on crafting initiatives that address school challenges, such as safety or truancy.

- **Increase equity of access to high-quality school options by establishing a streamlined, single application system for CPS high schools.**

An unnecessarily burdensome process for applying for admission to CPS high schools currently involves multiple applications and varying deadlines. The current system is time-consuming to navigate and places many families at a disadvantage. We will create a unified application for all high schools in the CPS portfolio – magnet, charter, selective enrollment, etc. – to provide all students with more equitable access to the full range of school options.

- **Support principals to strengthen family and community engagement.**

Many of our principals do a phenomenal job of drawing community partners into the school who can enrich students' development such

as arts groups, faith-based organizations, universities, health providers and parent volunteers. We need all of our principals to create a welcoming environment for parents and community partners and to draw on community resources to support school improvement goals. Encouraging parent attendance at report card pick-up day will be a priority for every principal, and the district's Office of Family and Community Engagement will help to identify potential community partners in each neighborhood and guide principals on cultivating relationships with those that can help to meet school needs.

- **Strengthen community partnerships at the district level.**

Just as schools must extend themselves to draw on community partners, so must the district forge partnerships that can benefit many schools and students. Already a vast array of partners are ready to assist but want to invest their time, advocacy and resources in the most effective way. We hope this plan will prove useful to our current and prospective partners in matching their resources to priorities for district-wide improvement. It will take the contributions of all – nonprofits and community-based organizations, businesses, higher education institutions, faith-based leaders, elected officials, sister city agencies and the philanthropic community – to make this vision for Chicago's children a reality.

**I** would like the schools to become havens for education, positivity, healthy living and recreation for all community members (days, evenings and weekends). **”**

Lindblom High School  
Community Member

# 4 Committed and Effective Teachers, Leaders and Staff

**OVERVIEW** School leaders, teachers and staff need not only the skills to excel in their individual work but also the commitment to work effectively as a team in order to reach every child. The district must support a culture of collective responsibility, high performance and continuous improvement by helping all employees understand their role in meeting system-wide goals and by supporting them to succeed and grow in their daily practice. We must set the tone with a rigorous and well-coordinated hiring process, on-going professional development that meets school needs, individual performance evaluation and recognition aligned with district goals, and clear and timely communication with all staff.

People who feel connected, supported and respected and who understand their part in a greater mission are better motivated to solve problems creatively and deliver results. They are driven to remain and grow within the organization over time, and they help develop the district's reputation as a place where the best talent comes to work.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Recruit talented teachers, principals and school staff.** Attracting exemplary candidates will first require a modernized application process, a competitive benefits package and strategic recruitment and screening. In the past, applicants have found open positions by scrolling through a lengthy, online list that was updated only weekly and was frequently out-of-date. A new online system, updated real-time, will allow applicants to quickly search for open positions that match their interests.

We will continue to “grow our own” talent, building on the great expertise and potential within CPS to identify school and district leaders. In addition, we will step up our national recruiting efforts – especially of proven leaders from other districts – to expand our talent pool. At the same time, we are raising the bar for what it means to be a part of the CPS team. A more rigorous assessment of principal candidates is already in place, and in partnership with the Chicago Teachers Union, we will set higher standards for teacher applicants.



- **Implement an evaluation system for all district employees that requires them to deliver results – not simply comply with requirements – and that supports their professional growth.** In collaboration with the Chicago Teachers Union, the CPS teacher evaluation system was recently redesigned for the first time in 45 years. The new system, called Recognizing Educators Advancing Chicago (REACH) Students, evaluates teachers based on student growth and quality of instructional practice. Principal evaluations have also been revised to include a combination of student growth and standards for effective school leadership. Senior district leaders, too, will be evaluated on measurable outcomes related to their area of responsibility, and going forward, evaluations of all district and school-based staff will be tied to meeting the commitments outlined in this plan.



- **Provide on-going professional development for educators in content areas, pedagogy and leadership.**

The core work of our district lives in our schools, in our classrooms, in our teachers' ambitious instruction. All teachers will be supported by a common vision for effectiveness, yet professional development should be tailored based on each school's unique needs. Each school should create a culture that encourages collaborative teacher planning to improve instruction, reflection on strengths and development areas, and ongoing discussions about how individual employees can improve their practice to grow student achievement. To support teachers' learning, the district can provide professional development directly to school teams or guide schools toward vetted, high-quality resources that best serve their local needs.

- **Provide professional development to principals at all stages of their career.**

Through the Chicago Leadership Collaborative (CLC), we have partnered with four of the nation's strongest principal preparation programs to develop a pool of aspiring principal candidates. CLC candidates will receive intensive coaching, mentoring and training and will be evaluated regularly on their progress toward becoming a high-quality CPS principal. The Chicago Executive Leadership Academy (CELA) contains a systemic curriculum for our current school leaders, including induction, on-boarding and coaching of our new principals; supporting "rising" principals in accelerating their student growth; and finally, working with experienced, successful principals to expand their impact through career advancement opportunities.

At all times, regional superintendent offices will continue to provide both formal training and individual coaching

to principals, their instructional leadership teams and teacher leaders based on school and employee needs.

- **Reward high performers, and empower great leaders.**

We must celebrate and reward success. The CPS Excellence in Teaching Awards will celebrate Chicago's many outstanding teachers and will build community awareness around the powerful work CPS teachers do in our schools. Principals who drive exceptional student growth will receive bonuses and recognition at an annual awards ceremony honoring their leadership and impact. Their schools will also be publicly recognized.

We furthermore must empower our highest-performing school leaders while also leveraging their expertise.

We will create an Empowerment Zone to provide our strongest principals with greater autonomy to innovate, and in turn, they will be expected to share their best practices with principals district-wide.

- **Establish systems to clearly communicate progress on this plan to CPS employees and to receive their feedback.**

We want every employee in the district to understand the vision in this plan and his/her own role in achieving it. Through means such as town hall meetings, webinars and a monthly newsletter, we will keep employees updated on the plan's progress. At the same time, we will seek feedback on the plan itself and obstacles to achieving it through focus groups, employee surveys, reports from regional staff, and advisory councils comprised of students and school staff. Our goal is to create a communication system that generates enthusiasm for the vision on the ground-level while continuously providing information that enables us to make quick course corrections in our efforts to support schools and ensure student success.

## SPOTLIGHT: CPS PRINCIPAL QUALITY INITIATIVE

CPS knows the critical role that principals play in the academic achievement of all students and has made it a top priority to place a high-performing principal in every school. To achieve this goal, the **Principal Quality Initiative (PQI)** has established the following five critical levers which are embedded throughout Pillar #4 Objectives:

- **Chicago Leadership Collaborative:** Partnership with four external program partners to provide year-long internships to aspiring principals
- **Leadership Development and Training:** Provide leadership training and support for new and incumbent principals through the Chicago Executive Leadership Academy
- **Principal Eligibility:** A more rigorous principal candidate assessment process to maximize the probability of success in the principalship
- **Principal Evaluations:** Provide clear performance standards for all CPS school leaders
- **Principal Achievement Awards:** Incent and recognize the district's highest performing school leaders



# Sound Fiscal, Operational and Accountability Systems

**OVERVIEW** We must establish a culture of thoughtful planning, continuous improvement and accountability for results. District financial, operational and accountability systems must be driven by priorities that lead to student success. Every employee should be held accountable for his/her contribution to student outcomes, and all team members must be provided with useful data and guidance that allow them to effectively work toward these goals. Communities and families must have a voice in shaping a vision for education in their neighborhoods.



## OBJECTIVES

- **Create a 10-year plan for investing in school facilities that supports each neighborhood's vision.** In partnership with community stakeholders, we are creating a 10-year educational facilities master plan for each neighborhood. The plan will allow us to invest in the types of specialty schools and programs that residents want and to maintain the optimal number of seats to serve students efficiently. It will also ensure an equitable distribution of high-quality, innovative school options across the district.
- **Safely transition children from schools undergoing consolidation to a higher-quality learning environment in their welcoming schools.** Working with the Chicago Police Department, the city's Department of Family and Support Services, community and faith-based organizations and elected officials, we have created a safety plan for every school that will welcome students affected by school closings. Each plan addresses safety concerns including busy streets and intersections and other neighborhood conditions. To ensure a smooth transition, we also will increase the number of Safe Passage workers monitoring students' routes to and from school and deploy additional safety personnel to each site.
- **At the same time, we are targeting significant investments into welcoming schools for all students impacted by consolidations.** Investments include additional libraries and art rooms, increased access to technology such as iPads and expanded internet bandwidth, installation of air conditioning and the launch of new IB, STEM and fine arts programs. Welcoming schools will also have access to additional academic and social and emotional supports to assist students and the entire school community in ensuring a smooth transition.
- **Establish a common definition of school quality and a comprehensive school accountability system.** We will enhance our school accountability system and hold all schools – including charter, neighborhood and magnet schools – to a consistent set of measurable outcomes including attendance and graduation rate. In addition, we will define standards for school quality that provide a



clear picture of what students and parents should minimally expect from all of our schools. Standards will be set in areas such as instruction, professional learning, school climate and family engagement. This common definition of school quality will serve as a guidepost for principals while still allowing them to innovate and tailor their plans to their unique school environment. To set specific criteria, the Office of Accountability will hold in-depth conversations with parents, students, principals and teachers from different types of schools as well as with regional superintendents and university researchers. We believe that an inclusive process will allow us to arrive at both a definition of school quality and an accountability system that are grounded in research and also viewed as fair and relevant by educators in a variety of school settings.

- **Provide timely, useful data to school, region and district staff so that problems can be addressed more quickly.** School, region and district staff need accurate data on students – such as attendance, disciplinary incidents and interim assessment scores – to intervene in classrooms or schools where progress is slipping. District leaders also need regular feedback on the effectiveness of their programs and policies. Historically, data has been inconvenient to access, infrequently updated and not always reliable. Now, we are aggressively upgrading our data systems and providing more real-time key data points on our online “Dashboard” so that employees have the information that they need when they need it. The Office of Accountability will also coach district, region and school staff on how to use the data to drive improvement in both long-term planning and daily practice.
- **Create financial plans that focus on priorities and eliminate waste.** In the past, staffing and budgets for each CPS department were automatically renewed with little scrutiny. To accomplish more with declining revenues, we must eliminate bureaucratic waste and make every taxpayer dollar count. Now the leaders of every district office must assume that there will be no money in their annual budgets until they justify every position,

program and expenditure as essential for meeting the priorities outlined in this plan.

- **Create a school funding process that is equitable and provides maximum flexibility for principals to meet student needs.** In the past, schools have been given rigid guidelines about how district dollars needed to be allocated in their school budgets – much more of a school’s budget was defined by central office rather than by principals who know their students best. To allow principals to target money more effectively in their unique school settings, and to ensure a transparent and equitable approach to allocating funding to schools, each school will now receive a set amount of funding per pupil. Principals will be empowered to spend funds on the staff, materials, technology or other resources that best serve their students.
- **Develop detailed operating plans to fund and implement district priorities.** Every regional and district leader will have an execution plan that outlines the work he/she must accomplish to meet the goals outlined in this action plan and the expenditures necessary to do so. Student outcomes and implementation progress related to each plan will be continually monitored and district leaders will be held accountable for results, always with the ultimate goal of improving student success.



Standards are not rules issued by the boss; they are a collective identity. Remember, standards are the things that you do all the time and the things for which you hold one another accountable.<sup>3</sup>



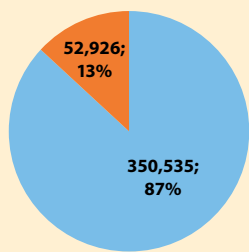
Mike Kryzewski, Gold Medalist  
Men’s Basketball Coach

# CPS Key Facts and Acknowledgements

**CPS VISION:** Every student in every neighborhood will be engaged in a rigorous, well-rounded instructional program and will graduate prepared for success in college, career and life.

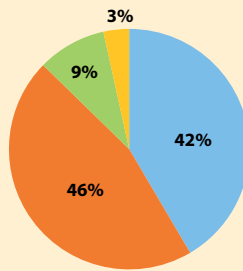
## At a Glance

**SY13 Enrollment by School Type**



Regular Contract / Charter

**SY13 Student Race/Ethnicity**



BLK HSP WHT ASN

**SY13 Student Enrollment:** 403,461

**By Grade Level:**

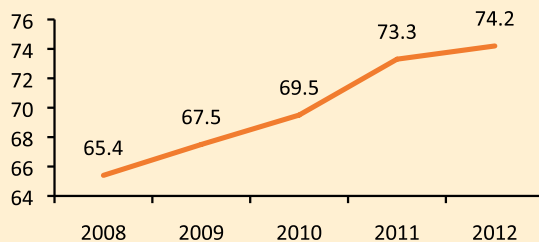
Pre-K:	24,507
Kindergarten:	30,936
Grades 1-8:	235,619
Grades 9-12:	112,399

% Diverse Learners	12.3%
% Limited English Proficiency	16.2%
% Free & Reduced Lunch	84.7%

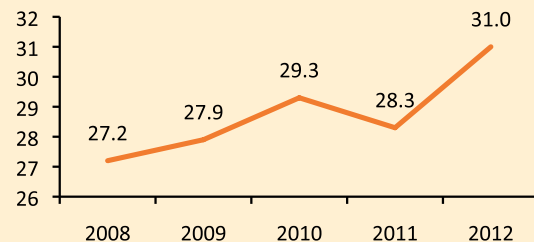
SY13 Teachers:	23,290
SY13 Total Staff:	41,498
FY12 Budget:	\$5.11 B

## Academic Trends

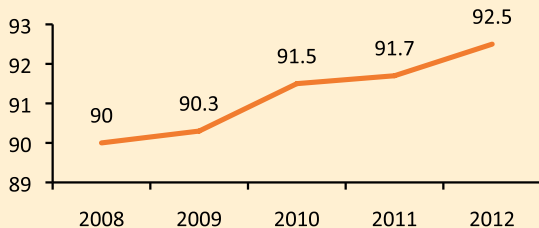
**ISAT Composite Score – % Meets/Exceeds**



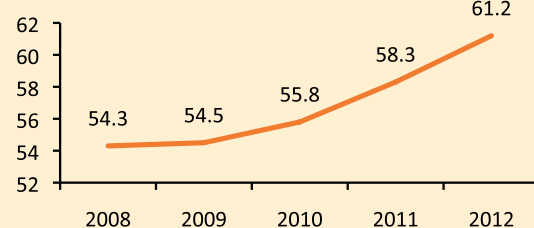
**PSAE Composite Score – % Meets/Exceeds**



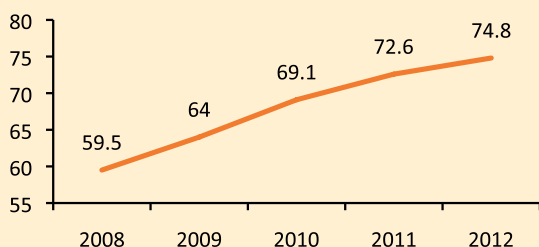
**Attendance Rate (%)**



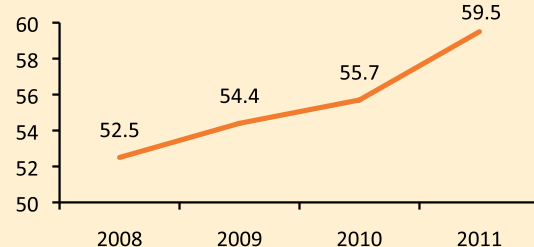
**Graduation Rate (%)**



**Freshman On-Track Rate (%)**



**College Enrollment Rate for CPS Graduates (%)**







## Recent Highlights

- Two CPS schools achieved **Blue Ribbon Status in 2012**: Jones College Prep and Lane Tech High School
- 75 CPS schools named to 2012 Illinois Honor Roll:**  
 18 Spotlight Schools  
 31 Academic Improvement Awards  
 29 Academic Excellence Awards  
**Note:** 3 schools received both the Spotlight Schools and Academic Excellence Awards
- 3 teachers received the Golden Apple Excellence in Teaching Award in 2012**
- 57 CPS students were candidate finalists for the Gates Millennium Scholarships in 2013**; in 2012, CPS had the highest candidate finalist number in the nation
- 70 CPS students named POSSE Foundation Scholars in 2013**
- 41 CPS high school students named Golden Apple Scholars in 2012**
- CPS students earned **record \$266M in scholarships** in 2011-12, an increase of nearly \$120M from previous year
- Whitney Young HS placed **2nd in the nation in 2012 Academic Decathlon** and is first CPS school in history to win **State Championship for Chess** twice (2011, 2013)
- Two CPS students** from Prologue Early College High School won **1st place in the 2013 national 100 Days Video to Freedom Challenge**, sponsored by the Frederick Douglass Family Foundation
- CPS crowned **32 City champions in 2012**, and three of those teams went on to win Illinois State Championships
- Simeon HS won **4th consecutive Illinois State Basketball Championship in 2013**

## Acknowledgements

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 Veenu Verma

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

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### ENDNOTES

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