

CPS' Three-Year Blueprint (2022-25) Recommitments & Reimagining



Table of Contents

A Note from CPS Leadership	3
INTRODUCTION	4
Our Mission	4
Our Core Values	5
CPS Graduate Profile	5
RECOMMITMENTS	6
Academic Progress	6
Instructional Core	6
Academic Progress (cont.)	7
1. High-Quality Rigorous Instruction	7
2. Talented and Empowered Educators	7
3. Safety, Wellness, and Supportive Learning Communities	7
Operational Excellence (Formerly "Financial Stability")	8
1. High-Quality Services	8
2. Equitable Resources	8
Building Trust (Formerly "Integrity"):	9
1. Inclusive Partnerships	9
2. Transparency	9
REIMAGINING	10



A Note from CPS Leadership

Over the past two decades, CPS has made remarkable progress in helping our students reach new heights – from rising Freshman On-Track rates, rising graduation rates, and record amounts of scholarships awarded. And in March of 2019, CPS released an ambitious Five-Year Vision to build on that success.

Less than a year later, however, our world and our District were turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amid trauma, uncertainty, and disruptions, our students and staff continued to achieve and persevere. But despite their resiliency, these past several years have deeply impacted our students academically, socially, and emotionally, and they have laid bare some of the deepest challenges in our society that existed long before the pandemic: economic inequality, mental health issues, racial injustice, and others.

Our charge is not only to recover the ground lost during the pandemic but to reimagine how our District can better meet the needs of our city and its children for years to come.

That is the purpose of this Blueprint – to outline how we are responding to challenges in the immediate term and how we are engaging our communities to co-create structural solutions to the long-standing opportunity gaps across our District.

We know that progress does not happen overnight, and it does not happen by accident. It happens because we continually work to improve the education and support we provide to Chicago's children; because we strategically invest resources in the places where they are most needed; and because of the effort put in day in and day out by our families and staff, going above and beyond to help our students grow and thrive.

We are inspired every day by the talent and tenacity of our students; the commitment and expertise of our educators; and the passion and dedication of our parents, families, and communities. Let's dream big and build the path forward, together.



Pedro Martinez
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools



Bogdana Chkoumbova
Chief Education Officer
Chicago Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

This Blueprint is our call to action – to meet the challenge of the moment and seize the opportunity to create a better, more equitable District. It builds on the important work outlined in the five-year strategic plan that was developed with our community in 2019 in two key ways: by acknowledging our obligation to do more to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, and by confronting longstanding challenges and opportunity gaps that impact our students and our communities.

There are two main sections of this Blueprint: **Recommitments** and **Reimagining**. The **Recommitments** section outlines the proven, data-driven strategies that CPS is using in the immediate term and beyond to address challenges brought on by the pandemic. The **Reimagining** section outlines a longer-term effort by CPS to address persistent challenges and opportunity gaps that exist in our District – an effort that will be a bridge to our next full-scale strategic plan. This Reimagining process has been guided by community input from the beginning. Through months of outreach meetings and discussions with over 1,000 CPS students, parents, teachers, principals, and other stakeholders, we have identified priority areas where we will focus our efforts to reimagine what is possible at CPS. We will continue to provide opportunities for engagement, and we encourage our school communities to participate. By conducting deeper inquiry and discovery into the state of our District and our students' needs, we can co-create the best solutions to move CPS forward.

While we may be adjusting some of our strategies to better meet our students' needs, many of the elements in the previous strategic plan – our mission, our core values, our commitment to equity and others – carry through to this Blueprint.

Our Mission

Despite the challenges of the past few years, our mission has never wavered:

To provide a high-quality public education for every child, in every neighborhood, that prepares each for success in college, career, and civic life.



Our Core Values

These core values will continue to guide the work we do every day for our students. They will also guide our planning and practices as we work together with our educators, families, and communities to implement the programs, services, and initiatives detailed in this Blueprint.



Student-Centered

We place students at the center of everything we do.



Whole Child

We support our students so they are healthy, safe, engaged, and academically challenged.



Equity

We eliminate barriers to success and ensure equitable opportunities for all students.



Academic Excellence

We provide diverse curriculum and programs with high academic standards to prepare students for future success.



Community Partnership

We rely on families, communities, and partners in every neighborhood to shape and support our shared mission.



Continuous Learning

We promote an environment of continuous learning throughout CPS for students, teachers, leaders, and district staff.

CPS Graduate Profile



Ethical and Collaborative Leaders



Inquisitive Learners



Empowered Decision Makers



Engaged Community Members



Adaptable and Independent Thinkers

The Graduate Profile is what we aspire for our graduates to be. Ideally, when students graduate from CPS, they possess the knowledge and skills to pursue their interests and achieve their postsecondary goals. Whether entering the workplace, training programs, or higher education, they are socially, emotionally, and academically prepared to think critically and creatively to solve problems. They are culturally sensitive and informed decision-makers capable of understanding multiple perspectives and eager to contribute to civic life. And they are dynamic and balanced individuals able to establish productive personal and professional relationships and live rich and rewarding lives.

RECOMMITMENTS

Our district has three overarching commitments that drive our work: Academic Progress, Operational Excellence, and Building Trust. Within each priority area, we are outlining our Recommitments — proven strategies that we are using in the immediate term and beyond to help our students and school communities fully recover from the pandemic.

We know that this pandemic has not impacted all students equally. It is our responsibility as a District to recognize this reality and ensure an equitable recovery.



At CPS, we apply an **Equity Lens** to all of the work we do.

It enables us to see and understand the existing structures and conditions that create inequities, as well as the changes that are necessary to create more equitable learning environments.

In order to achieve equity, we employ the practice of **Targeted Universalism** — setting universal goals and then using targeted support to help students and school communities eradicate opportunity gaps and reach those goals.

These two concepts are central to our work as we help our students recover.

Academic Progress

The central function of any school district is to help students develop the skills and knowledge necessary for future success. But coming back from the pandemic, our students have experienced major challenges — an overall decline in proficiency, persistent and widening opportunity gaps, and variance in student experience. We must do more to support the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students.

Instructional Core

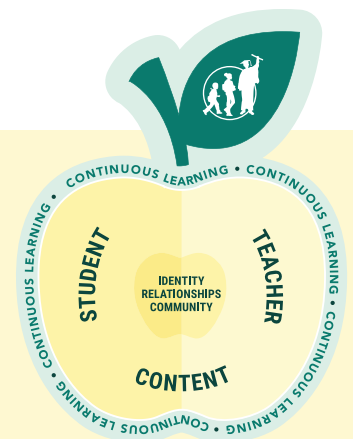
The foundation for our academic progress is our Instructional Core. By recommitting to this proven model, we can raise achievement across our District.

The CPS Instructional Core centers on identity, community, and relationships.

Students must experience core instruction that is responsive to and sustaining of who they are and what they bring, and empowers them to connect, imagine, and act as ethical, critical actors that shape the world.

Here are the components that make up the Instructional Core:

- **Content:** ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality curriculum that is rigorous and culturally responsive, and strong systems and interventions when they need targeted support.
- **Teacher:** ensuring that instruction is designed with the student at the center, and using learning acceleration practices that continue to give students access to grade-level standards.
- **Student:** ensuring that student identity is nurtured and students can grow socially and emotionally in our classrooms while providing robust experiences and opportunities outside of school to meet the needs of the whole child.



Academic Progress (cont.)

1. High-Quality Rigorous Instruction

Our Commitments:

- Ensure every school is organized and resourced to offer **small class sizes, arts instruction, robust academic and social-emotional learning intervention systems, and comprehensive Out-of-School Time and summer programming.**
- Have every student engage with a **high-quality curriculum** including expanding Skyline, Pre-K, and SEL curricula access to all schools and grade levels.
- Expand the use of **meaningful assessments** and access to assessment data to inform instruction including K-12 screeners and benchmarks, Skyline-embedded assessments and SEL skills assessments.
- Enhance **early learning experiences** through expanding Universal Full-Day Pre-K and investing in foundational early literacy programming and resources to help students become confident readers at an early age.



2. Talented and Empowered Educators

Our Commitments:

- Increase **teacher professional learning and collaboration opportunities** through school funds and provide teachers with **additional time and opportunities for professional development.**
- Invest in **development opportunities for school leaders** and expand our pipeline to teacher leaders.
- Prioritize **filling vacancies in hard-to-staff schools** and subject areas through targeted initiatives like Opportunity Schools and Teach Chicago Tomorrow.
- Ensure a diverse workforce.

3. Safety, Wellness, and Supportive Learning Communities

Our Commitments:

- Ensure policies and resources are in place to **support the whole child** so that all students are healthy, safe, engaged, and academically challenged.
- Expand **resources for students in temporary living situations, school counselor support** for communities in need, and coaching for staff on **restorative practices.**
- Use protocols that **protect school communities from COVID-19** and keep students in school.



Operational Excellence (Formerly “Financial Stability”)

In our previous strategic plan, this priority was called “Financial Stability,” but our commitment is larger than that — it’s about ensuring all of our students feel supported inside and outside the classroom with high-quality services, and that resources are distributed equitably to eliminate opportunity gaps across the District.

1. High-Quality Services

Our Commitments:

- **Invest in our buildings** so every student has access to high-quality school environments.
- Ensure our **buildings are cleaned and maintained daily** to create safe learning environments.
- Ensure that all eligible students have **access to transportation services**.
- Engage student voice to inform **nutritionally balanced breakfast and lunch** options.
- Procure goods and services in a user-friendly process and **without significant delays**.
- Develop a **robust data and IT infrastructure** to promote effective and equitable operations and learning.

2. Equitable Resources

Commitments:

- Work with school leaders to **fully invest in the District’s instructional priorities** and shift resources to support the core student experience.
- **Advance funding equity** by increasing targeted investments to support our highest-need students.
- **Secure additional education funding** from the state and improve our funding model to more equitably and adequately support students.
- Ensure **student access to technology** that allows them to access high-quality curriculum.
- Increase contracting with **minority-owned and women-owned** businesses to build wealth within the communities we serve.



Building Trust (Formerly “Integrity”)

In our previous strategic plan, this priority was called “Integrity,” but we changed it to “Building Trust,” recognizing that acting with integrity is something you do alone while building trust is something we do together. To do this, we must respect our students and families and the diverse communities in which they live, and honor them as partners in our shared mission. Our challenge is to ensure that we honor the lived experiences of the families we serve and ensure transparency within our decision-making. As part of our commitment to leading with integrity, we acknowledge the need to heal and build trust with our community by focusing on:

1. Inclusive Partnerships

Our Commitments:

- Value and prioritize youth participation and influence by establishing decision-making roles for students on all Local School Councils (LSCs) and the Board of Education.
- Center teacher voice through the Teacher Advisory Council as a forum for direct communication and collaboration between CPS teachers and executive leadership.
- Deeply engage principals on all key decisions that impact their schools through bi-monthly meetings with the CEO, CEdO and COO; the Principal Advisory Council; and Network Advisory Groups.
- Bridge stakeholder engagement with policy-making by creating strong systems to ensure parent and community voices are represented in District policies.

2. Transparency

Our Commitments:

- **Proactively share** all of the **inputs** the District is providing **for schools, programs, initiatives, and resources, as well as their impacts on student outcomes.**
- **Increase our family programmatic offerings** and ensure our partners have access to information and resources to support their decision-making for their students.
- **Provide timely, relevant, and accurate information to the public and make it accessible** by translating District-wide, parent-facing communications into the five major languages in Chicago: Spanish, Polish, Arabic, Mandarin, and Urdu.

REIMAGINING

The strategies contained in the **Recommitment** section of our Blueprint are essential to support our students' recovery from the pandemic in the immediate term and set them up for future success. But the bottom line is that these recommitments on their own will not be enough to eradicate persistent opportunity gaps and address longstanding challenges in our District. We need to **Reimagine** what is possible for our District and work together to co-create solutions for our students and families.

Our District is facing major challenges that have been made more difficult over the past few years. When it comes to academic progress, our students' proficiency has declined overall. They have dealt with persistent and widening opportunity gaps and a wide variance in student experiences from school to school. From a financial and operational standpoint, CPS is experiencing an enrollment decline, and we have aging facilities that require a comprehensive plan for improvement; all the while, CPS has been severely underfunded by the State of Illinois, and federal emergency pandemic relief funds are set to expire in FY2025. And when it comes to building trust, CPS has work to do in recognizing the lived experiences of our families and being more transparent in our decision-making.

Solving these challenges will require us to do the critical work of **Reimagining**. We know that solutions cannot be dictated from the top down; they must be grown from the bottom up. So throughout this process, we have engaged our students, families, teachers, leaders, partners, and community members, asking for their input on the areas we should prioritize.



These are the areas that our communities have deemed to be the most important for CPS to reimagine:

- Improve our approach to accountability to account for historical and systemic inequity while providing stakeholders with the information they need.
- Redesign our admissions and enrollment policies and processes to ensure that they are responsive, accessible, and equitable for all families.
- Intentionally involve stakeholders as inclusive partners in reinvesting in and planning for the future of schools in their community.
- Design responsive programming and school models specifically for students who are furthest from educational opportunities.
- Provide career readiness and preparation to all students in grades 6-12 through career awareness and exploration, real-world learning, and early college opportunities.
- Serve students with diverse learning needs to ensure that all students access positive, inclusive, and rewarding academic and extra-curricular experiences.
- Design a continuous, connected system of Pre-K - 2 early literacy supports, and partner with families to ensure that every child is a proficient reader by third grade.
- Ensure that all students develop spoken and written proficiency in a second language.
- Ensure grading policies, procedures, and practices are consistent, equitable, and transparent.
- Elevate Out-of-School Time and summer programming as a critical extension of the school day and year, offering all students responsive and engaging experiences.

Some of these areas will require major system-wide changes and bold new ideas; others will require us to make simple but impactful improvements to the student experience. But they are all interconnected and will all contribute to a better experience for families across our District.

This work will continue to be driven by community feedback. We will continue to engage with our communities on these topics to understand the issues and root causes, work to generate and test new ideas with key stakeholders, and ultimately deliver results.

Our theory of action is this:

If... we co-design solutions with communities to ensure

- **Equity of access;**
- **Excellence in programming; and**
- **Equitable resourcing and financial stability...**

Then... every student will experience high-quality academic, social-emotional, and culturally responsive learning; develop the competencies of the CPS Graduate Profile; and be prepared for postsecondary success.

Make no mistake — these challenges are significant in scope and scale. But they also present a unique opportunity to do the necessary and important work of reimagining a better school system for the families we serve. This work has the power to be transformational for our District. We are excited to take on this task, and most importantly — to do it with our communities.



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