Feedback Summary Report
CPS 5-Year Vision Donor and Partner Engagement Event
We Listened

On December 17, 2018, the Children First Fund (CFF) hosted an event that brought together partners and donors of Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Throughout the event, donors and partners had the opportunity to hear about some of CPS’s recent accomplishments and upcoming priorities from CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson and CPS Academic Chiefs and leaders. The purpose of the event was to capture input from CPS’s partners on the development of the next 5-Year Vision. A critical component of the event was facilitated conversations whereby partners could share their feedback directly with the CPS leadership responsible for a diverse set of district priorities.

The Children First Fund thanks the Crown Family for making this engagement event and the development of the 5-Year Vision possible.

What We Heard

Donors and partners had the opportunity to share their thoughts on both the overarching framework and goals of CPS for the 5-Year Vision and on specific content areas within CPS.

Related to the overarching framework and goals, we heard the following messages from donors and partners:

- Donors and partners would like to see an overall high-level agenda of CPS’s work, so they can determine what broad areas they would like to support and understand how their partnership connects to CPS’s overall vision. Specific funding or partnership requests should be rooted within this high-level agenda.
- CPS should enter into “district-level” partnerships rather than department-specific partnerships to achieve greater sustainability of their investments. Donors and partners emphasized wanting to know how they could leverage other funding and partnerships in the district to work together to help CPS achieve its goals. Also, partners would like comprehensive information as to which schools are receiving which supports so they can better coordinate efforts with one another and fill needs-based gaps.
- CPS needs to be clear on what is needed to support “ALL” students and how donors and partners can support CPS on that goal.
- Donors and partners would like a better understanding of the data and metrics CPS uses to measure its progress and identify gaps. They expressed this would help them to better understand CPS’s needs. For

Analysis of the focus group feedback was completed by Maple Grove Objective.
example, many donors and partners expressed interest in wanting to support CPS in closing the equity gap, but they do not yet have a good understanding of what the equity gap is and how it is being measured.

Extensive feedback was also collected on the content-specific areas and provided to the CPS leadership. Some of the feedback we heard repeatedly through the conversations is provided below:

**Equity**
- Equity should be defined in each pillar of the vision, both how it is measured and the actions CPS is planning to take.
- Should be talking about equity of outcomes, not only equity of resources.
- More nimble disaggregated measures are needed to identify students with particular backgrounds who are not performing well at otherwise high-performing schools.

**Early Education (Universal PreK and Literacy)**
- Ensure that science is included in early learning programs.
- Focus on supports to parents for enrolling in PreK.
- Communicate what is needed to reach target of “all” students in a PreK program.

**STEM**
- Partners should be leveraged to bring STEM to every school in the district.
- Mentoring programs should be used to try to encourage more female students to consider STEM careers.
- Offering partners more information about what STEM programs and activities exist at various locations would help them better align efforts, reduce redundancies, and attract new efforts.

**Arts Education**
- Focus on providing support to the most vulnerable students and schools to ensure they have opportunity for quality arts education.
- The activities of arts-based partners should be better publicized, especially with regard to their work in struggling schools.
- Partners should work to invest in a neighborhood and a PreK-12 pathway, and not just one school at a time.

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Health and Wellness
- Emphasize the “whole child.”
- A Network Navigator program for health issues and coordinating care would help.
- Schools that need partnerships should be more proactive. There should be information available for which schools have the greatest needs in terms of programs and staffing.

Social Emotional Learning
- Change mindsets of adults about student disengagement and misconduct. Train educators to understand the impact of trauma and mental health.
- Research is needed to establish a base of evidence to understand what to measure.
- All school staff needs to be prepared to identify kids in need and connect them with services.

Parent and Community Engagement
- Develop a Learn. Plan. Succeed. initiative for parents and have parent/student career awareness events.
- Expand parent mentorship programs.
- Bring parents into contact with counselors and other supports to help prepare them for all the steps involved in getting their children into and through college.

Principal Quality and Development
- Coaching and mentorship are important for developing principals.
- Need concentrated effort to address the perception gap for CPS and the work it is doing and to publicize partners who support district goals.
- Need to find ways to increase the types and numbers of opportunities for leadership that are available for teachers and all levels of CPS leadership.

Teacher Talent and Development
- Partners can help CPS develop teacher pipelines through PreK-12 programs and supporting practicums.
- Need to invest in technology in the classrooms and in STEM school teaching.
- Provide supports to the hardest-to-staff schools regarding teacher leadership, recruitment, and retention.

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Data and Research
● Explore ways CPS can increase productive work with research partners to support CPS schools while maintaining student privacy.
● Data needs to be connected in a strategic way to levers for action. The focus of data and research should be on students and supports that help them.
● Data and research should include outcomes for option schools and charter schools. Policy choices appear to be based only on data that comes from certain types of schools.

Culture and World Language
● Focus on all students becoming bilingual.
● The connection between biliteracy and higher education partners should be strengthened. We need to build the value of biliterate competencies.
● Need to incentivize those who come from more diverse cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds to become teachers.

College Access and Persistence
● Emphasize career trajectories and college as one pathway in that trajectory.
● The perception should be that a student’s pathway is constantly evolving, as opposed to having a plan A, plan B, etc.
● CPS’s mindset should be on helping students find the right fit.

Curriculum and Professional Learning
● Classroom culture should be considered during curriculum development.
● Teachers should feel involved in the design of the curriculum so there is a sense of ownership.
● Parental involvement is important for the move toward a digital curriculum, and there are concerns with increasing screen time and the implementation of social-emotional learning.

Career and Technical Education
● Increase the number of students who have career-based experiences in high school.
● CTE should be rebranded to reduce the perception that it’s a supplemental back-up plan.
● Seeking partnerships should be a high priority for CPS. Some donors and businesses want to partner but don’t know how.

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- Counselors should inform students about both college and non-college pathways without a bias toward a specific pathway.
- Schools need more counselors and better-trained counselors.
- CPS needs to be clear as to what the goals are and what data is used to measure success.

Personalized Learning

- Need a better understanding of where personalized learning has been successful.
- Teachers need to be trained on how to personalize a classroom and how to instruct curriculum to engage students.
- Personalized learning should not just be used to innovate content delivery, but rather to deliver powerful learning experiences to kids.

Civic Engagement

- Increase opportunities for students to interact with elected officials.
- Students should be trained in how to be media-literate and news-literate.
- Public service should be promoted so that students can get a good idea about what is involved at an early age.

Next Steps

This feedback from donors and partners has been incorporated into the development of the CPS 5-Year Vision. The feedback will be combined with feedback from students, parents, community members, and higher education as well as with the feedback from CPS staff (teachers, principals, and leaders). The content-specific feedback was shared with CPS departments to inform the strategies they are developing to achieve CPS’s goals over the next five years. The CPS Five-Year Vision will be launched at the end of March 2019.

Thank you for your continued partnership with Chicago Public Schools.

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