

READY to ENGAGE

Preparing The Next Generation
To Participate In Civic And Community Life



**An Implementation Plan
for Chicago Public Schools**



**Social Science &
Civic Engagement**



READY to ENGAGE

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INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools issued an influential report that argued in favor of schools making civic learning a priority for the purpose of strengthening and sustaining American democracy. “Guardian of Democracy” made the case for educators to prepare students to engage and effectively participate in civic life, a goal that was in fact a cornerstone of schooling from its inception. The path to developing fully competent young citizens, according to research, are schools that provide students access to the following civic learning opportunities:

- 1 FORMAL INSTRUCTION** in civic knowledge, including U.S. government, history and democracy.
- 2 CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS** about current events and issues, especially those issues that are important to students.
- 3 SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS** that are linked to formal instruction and provide students with a chance to pursue meaningful civic change.
- 4 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES** that get students involved at school or in their communities.
- 5** Participation in **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE** and decision-making.
- 6 SIMULATIONS** of elections and other democratic processes and practices.

Magnifying the need to improve civic learning overall is a well-documented civic empowerment gap. Research has found that low-income students and students of color know less about government and vote less frequently than middle-class and wealthy white students. Surveys of high school students found African Americans reporting fewer civic-oriented government courses and current event discussions, while Latinos reported fewer opportunities to participate in community service and open classroom climates. Scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—also known as the Nation’s Report Card—reveal at least a 23-point gap on the civics assessment between white 8th graders and their Black and Latino peers.

Chicago Public Schools took note and, in partnership with the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago, Facing History and Ourselves, the Mikva Challenge and university scholars, launched the Global Citizenship Initiative (GCI) in 2012. The new civic education program sought to address disparities by piloting new course material, new instructional approaches and a new structure to support youth leadership through Student Voice Committees, while leveraging the district’s long-time commitment to service learning.

Meanwhile, the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition—a group of educators, administrators, policymakers, politicians, universities, funders, students and others representing public and private sectors—advocated for the passage of a law that would require every high school student in the state to take a civics course to graduate. The bill received bipartisan support and was signed into law by the governor in August 2015. Until then, Illinois had been one of only 10 states that did not require civics for graduation.

CPS has revised high school graduation policy to reflect the state mandate that every student complete at least one semester of civics, and to reinforce service learning by requiring completion of two projects. The incoming high school class of 2020 will be the first to be impacted by the new civics requirement, a measure that impacts Chicago more than districts across the state. An analysis of high schools across Illinois found that two thirds of schools not offering civics were in Chicago.

Over the past year, the CPS Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement engaged internal and external stakeholders in a participatory process to articulate student outcomes and develop a three-year implementation plan to expand opportunities for civic learning. By fall of 2016, 50 CPS high schools had adopted Participate!—the successful civics curriculum developed by the CPS Civic Engagement team in collaboration with teachers, Black Youth Project and Global Citizenship Initiative partner organizations.

Civic Learning

What should we all be doing daily, weekly, monthly to advance the work of our democratic society?

—POLICYMAKER

WHAT IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

At the outset of the planning process, stakeholders were asked to share their understanding of civic engagement. Their responses were both **PROFOUND** and **PRAGMATIC**, contextual and inspiring, and as varied as the number of people asked. Common themes touched on the **MULTI-DIMENSIONAL** nature of civic learning and the continuum of educational efforts necessary to make space for young minds to learn and express their voices.

Civic education is a collaboration, one that involves students, schools and communities. Students become engaged when issues are relevant and have a direct impact on their lives, and when they are inspired by an engaged relative or teacher. Chicago Public Schools’ civic education curriculum—Participate!—addresses **SIX CORE AREAS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**.

<p>Political Participation</p>		<p>REGISTERING to vote, getting involved in ELECTIONS and CONNECTING with elected officials</p>
<p>Community Participation</p>		<p>IDENTIFYING the challenges and opportunities in your community and GETTING INVOLVED</p>
<p>Government and Policy Knowledge</p>		<p>UNDERSTANDING history, government structure and current events</p>
<p>Informed and Aware</p>		<p>Savvy consumers of NEWS and INFORMATION</p>
<p>Civic Participation and Agency</p>		<p>Using your voice and TAKING ACTION</p>
<p>Political Skills</p>		<p>ARTICULATING your policy views and ADVANCING those positions</p>

9 WAYS SCHOOLS CAN TEACH CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Strategies to build students' civic engagement knowledge and skills are most effective when the articulated goals are centered on real-life outcomes. Students are taught that they have a voice and they have a right to be heard; they can advocate for themselves or their

positions with civility and they understand why other people may have different views. They also have a chance to practice and apply these skills. The following are a few of the ways CPS schools approach civic education.

Explore Identity & Beliefs



Students are encouraged to explore their multiple identities and beliefs while also being challenged to hear and understand the perspective of others.

Student Voice



Students have opportunities to influence school policy. They choose issues and topics of study that are relevant to their lives, do research, and then develop their own plans of action.

Discuss Current Events



Across the curriculum, students are asked to engage in discussions about current and controversial issues. Students learn how to evaluate and consider multiple viewpoints using evidence.

Interact with Civic Leaders



Students learn about the structures and roles of government and civil society, and how to engage with community leaders and policymakers. They learn they have power and practice using it.

Informed Action



Students learn how to work together to propose and advocate for solutions. Students are trained in the use of traditional and new media tools to create change.

Schoolwide Civics Culture



Teachers and staff collaborate across grade levels and disciplines to embed civic skills and content in curriculum and school programming.

Voter Preparation



Students learn about issues and candidates, prepare voter education materials and get involved. Eligible students are encouraged to register to vote.

Study Politics



All students have access to high quality instruction, where they can consider who has power in a democracy, how they got power and how they use it. Students assess their own power and explore ways to participate.

Engage with Communities



Projects based on curriculum, including service learning, are available across disciplines and allow students to address issues in their schools and communities. Students are exposed to civic careers.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Civic education scholars have clearly defined a connection between how young people engage in the world as citizens and what was taught and encouraged when they were in school.¹ A study of over 4,000 students in 52 Chicago high schools found that certain types of civic learning opportunities—among them discussions of current events; electoral simulations, and service learning—had significant impact on levels of civic engagement. Other studies have found similar effects.² Students in effective civic learning programs are:

- **MORE LIKELY TO VOTE** and discuss politics at home
- Four times **MORE LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER** and work on community issues
- More confident in their ability to **SPEAK PUBLICLY** and to talk to elected officials

However abundant the evidence, schools are still not offering students enough high-quality civic learning opportunities. A survey of 19 school districts in California found 34 percent of students never did service learning in high school and 36 percent never participated in democratic simulations.³ Schools that do offer effective civic learning programs tend to benefit students who are better off.

An examination of 9th graders across income groups showed those from wealthier backgrounds are:

- Twice as likely to discuss **HOW LAWS ARE MADE**
- Almost two times more likely to participate in **SERVICE LEARNING**
- More likely to participate in **DEBATES** or panel discussions

Inequitable access to civic learning is tied to race and ethnicity, as well as student achievement, with higher achieving students getting more access—a large and persistent civic empowerment gap that schools are best positioned to address. Another survey of high school seniors in California found:

- **BLACK STUDENTS** reported fewer civic-oriented government classes, current event discussions and experiences in an open classroom climate than white students.
- **LATINO STUDENTS** reported fewer opportunities to participate in community service, simulations and open classroom climate than white students.

Further complicating matters are changes in politics, especially the proliferation of digital tools that facilitate participatory politics, a form of engagement that is particularly compatible with youth culture.

Participatory politics are more equitably distributed than activities related to traditional, or institutional politics. Social media makes it easier to raise money; mobilize protests; express political views and find information relevant to individuals' interests.

Current narratives about the lack of civic engagement among young people are simply not true.⁴ In Chicago, youth actually voted at a higher rate than their parents' cohort in the 2016 primaries. Despite historically low levels of engagement nationally in earlier midterm elections, other positive trends in youth engagement show participatory politics are on the rise. Protest activity in urban areas is up. Engagement among youth subgroups around issues that are of particular concern to them are often overlooked.

In another survey of over 2,900 young people 15 to 25 years old, the Youth Participatory Politics Research Network found up to 44 percent of them saying they voted or intended to vote, and they engaged in participatory or political activities.⁵ Between the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, more 18 to 25 year olds posted political pictures, videos or news; started or joined a political group; and posted comments about political or social issues on a website or blog.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Best practices in civic education alone are no longer sufficient. Educators now have a responsibility to prepare young people for participatory politics, a way of addressing issues of public concern that is practiced informally through social networks rather than guided by mainstream media and civic institutions. These informal structures for civic engagement mean fewer gatekeepers are controlling and vetting information for accuracy.

As digital natives, younger generations often teach themselves how to use digital tools. For that reason, many believe that youth will learn how to use these tools for participatory politics on their own.

However, judging the credibility of information and learning effective search techniques do not come naturally. In fact, 84 percent of young people say they would like to learn more about how to determine whether online news is trustworthy.

In Oakland, educators are working in partnership with an initiative known as Educating for Democracy in the Digital Age to combine civic education and digital literacy to produce high school graduates who are “community ready.” Researchers are studying the impact of community readiness efforts, as well as what motivates districts to prioritize civic engagement goals for their students.

Inequitable access to civic learning is tied to race and ethnicity, as well as student achievement, with higher achieving students getting more access.

Lived experience also plays an important role in civic education. Differences in lived experiences shape young people's attitudes around politics and policy issues.

Compared to white youth, Black and Latino youth tend to experience more unemployment; lower high school graduation rates; and higher incidences of gun violence. Black youth report much higher rates of police harassment (54%) compared to white (33%) or Latino (25%) youth.⁶ Black youth are also more likely to say they distrust government and the legal system, as well as express beliefs that they are second-class citizens, receive an inferior education, and are discriminated against. Yet Black youth are the most likely to say their political engagement can make a difference (71%), compared to whites (52%) and Latinos (56%).

Measurements of civic engagement among young people of color, especially among African American youth, indicate fertile ground for civic learning.

Youth of color demonstrate higher levels of political engagement in a number of activities, including displaying signs and buttons; donating money; and volunteering or campaigning.⁷ The exception where Black youth showed lower rates of engagement compared to their white and Latino peers was in contacting public officials.

Demonstrations of participatory politics were also high among youth of color, including receiving campaign emails and writing blogs or emails about campaigns.

¹ Joseph Kahne, Sue Sporte, “Developing Citizens: The Impact of Civic Learning Opportunities on Students’ Commitment to Civic Participation,” *American Educational Research Journal*, 2008.

² “Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools,” Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. 2011.

³ Joseph Kahne, Ellen Middaugh, “Democracy for Some: The Civic Opportunity Gap in High School,” *The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement*, February 2008.

⁴ Peter Levine, “New chapter on generational trends in US politics,” *Peter Levine: A blog for civic renewal*, December 10, 2015.

⁵ Cathy Cohen, Joseph Kahne, Ellen Middaugh, Jon Rogowski, et al. *Youth Participatory Politics Survey*, February and June 2011.

⁶ *Black Youth Project Survey*, January 2014.

⁷ *Black Youth Project Survey*, November 2012.

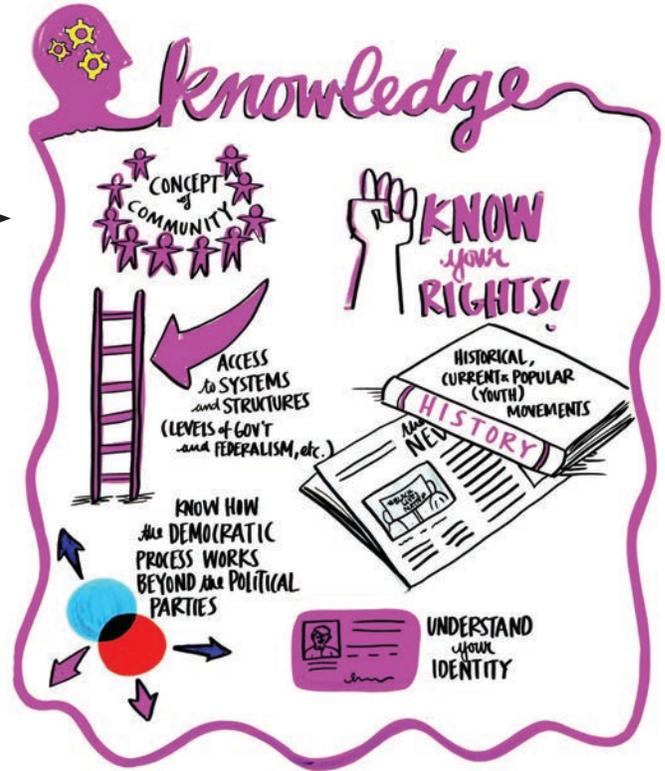
PROFILE OF READY-TO-ENGAGE CPS GRADUATES

What civic competencies will CPS high school graduates need to be fully engaged citizens?

At a “big picture” planning retreat, a group of educators, administrators and partner organizations mapped out what students need to learn; what they need to do and practice; and what values and beliefs need cultivating. Their ideas—captured by a graphic illustrator—reveal a variety of outcomes and indicators for civic competence.

Knowledge = Content

- Community systems and structures
- Youth rights and responsibilities
- How to advocate and maneuver through the system
- Identity and historical context
- Cultural competence



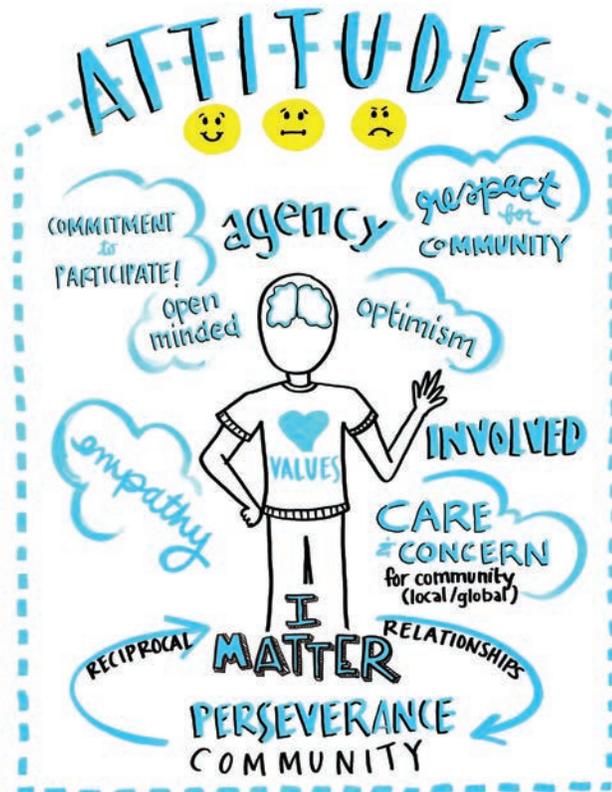
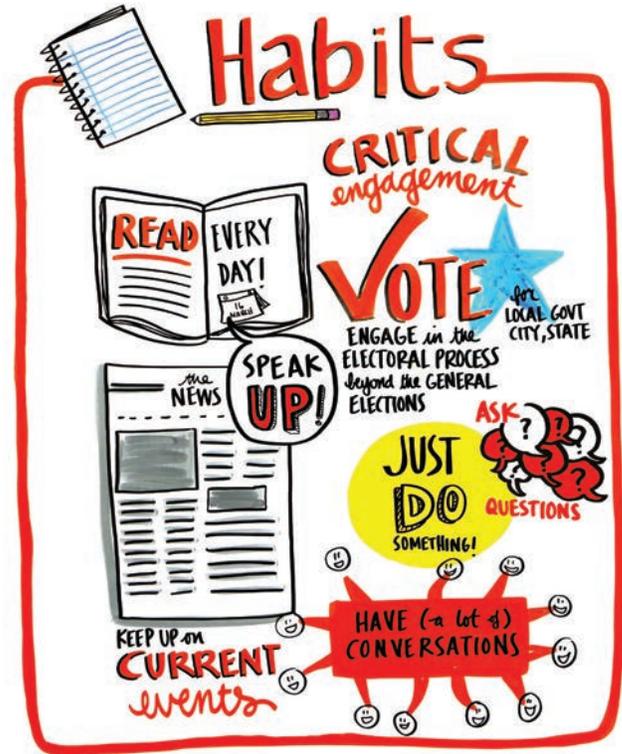
Skills = Capabilities, Personal Tools

- Critical thinking
- Research and identify reliable sources of information
- Active listening
- Civil discussion
- Making effective arguments
- Action and collaboration
- Effective communications tools

PROFILE OF READY-TO-ENGAGE CPS GRADUATES

Habits = Regular Practices

- Keeping up with current events
- Critical engagement: Voting and having a voice
- Having conversations and considering multiple perspectives
- Asking questions
- Just do something!
- Speak up



Attitudes = Values and Beliefs

- Agents of change
- Student voice matters and has value
- Open-mindedness
- Commitment to participate and engage in community
- Reciprocal relationships
- Empathy and respect for others
- Self-awareness, agency

Looking Forward

We ask students to think seriously about their role in a democratic society. They should understand that they have a voice and that they can choose to play a role in making change happen. History is the result of what people were doing; what they were not doing; and what roles they were playing.

—PARTNER ORGANIZATION

SCANNING CIVIC LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

By state law, Chicago has until 2019 to expand civics courses to every high school in the district. That's the bare minimum that must be accomplished. Chicago Public Schools and its stakeholders see a better, brighter path to ensure that all high school students have access to a wide range of civic learning opportunities. From representing their peers on high school local school councils or Student Voice Committees to engaging in service learning projects that connect what they learn in classrooms to solving problems in their own communities, there are many ways for students to engage.

The CPS Civic Engagement team worked with researchers to analyze civic learning in the 2015-16 school year at 95 district-run high schools. Specifically, the team examined:

- The number of district-sponsored **CIVIC LEARNING ACTIVITIES** offered at each high school, including a civics course, Student Voice Committees and five other district-sponsored civic learning programs.
- High schools' **SELF-ASSESSMENTS** of civic learning performance.
- Whether high schools chose civic learning as a **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY**.

Given the district's efforts in recent years to improve the access and quality of civic learning, results were mixed. One network offers civics courses in each of its five high schools, while two others did not offer the course at all in any of their nine high schools. Student Voice Committees are more evenly disseminated across the city. Nearly every network offers this student leadership development program in at least a third of its schools; only one network had no such committees in place. (See table in Appendix B.)

Low-income high schools are more likely to have Student Voice Committees in place than schools where poverty rates are less than 75 percent. In addition, only one of these better off high schools offers the CPS civics course.

A majority of low-income predominantly Latino schools (66 percent) have Student Voice Committees. Among the 11 Latino high schools with the highest poverty rates (over 95 percent) only two, or 18 percent, offer a civics course. By contrast, 39 percent of the 18 poorest predominantly Black schools offer a civics course.

Some 22 high schools gave themselves the highest rating (4) for civic learning. However, nearly nine (41 percent) of these schools do not have Student Voice Committees and close to 70 percent do not offer a civics course.

Planning Process

The CPS Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement engaged dozens of stakeholders to develop this implementation plan. Focus groups of teachers, high school students and families were convened. A cross section of partner organizations, grassroots and civic leaders, funders, policymakers, principals, district administrators and network chiefs, and researchers generously carved out time for one-on-one interviews and, in some instances, provided feedback on the plan. Two half-day, facilitated planning sessions were held in the winter and

spring of 2016: A "Big Picture" planning session to envision outcomes for student competence in civic learning; and an action planning session to set priorities and timelines. Participants in both sessions represented high schools and elementary schools from across the district, as well as network and district office staff.

Alongside this rich engagement, CPS collected and compiled baseline data on civic learning activities and programs that are available at traditional high schools.



77
Number of people engaged



44
Hours in planning and listening sessions



92
Schools represented

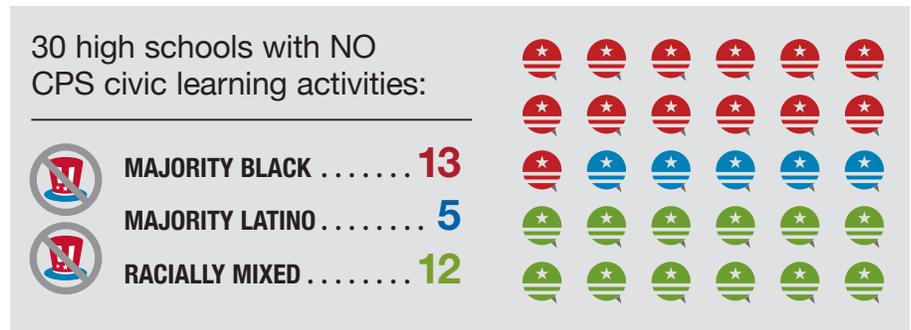
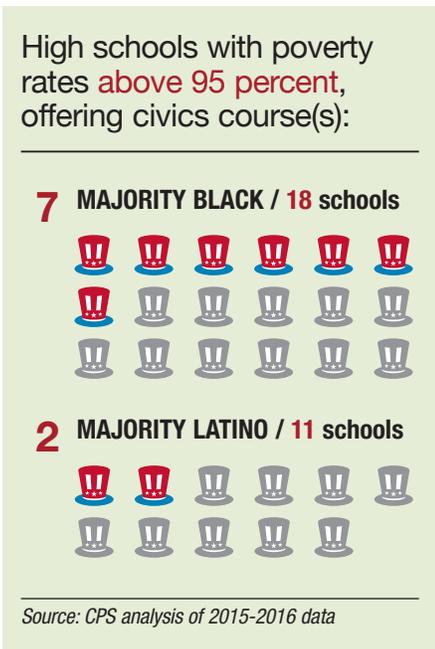
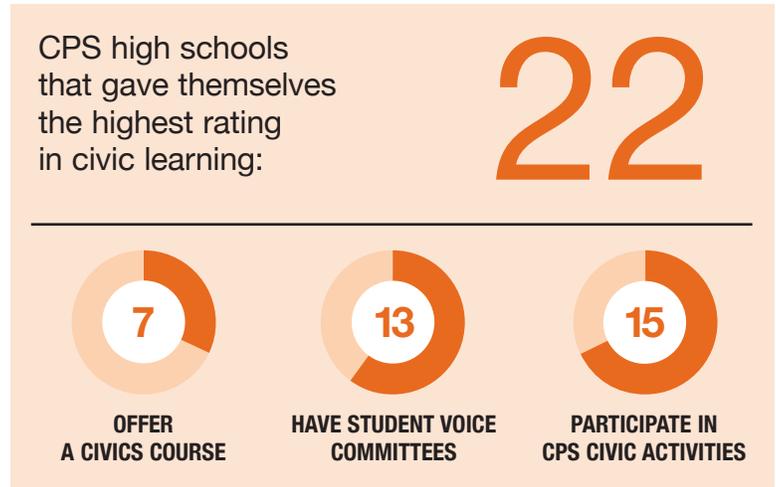
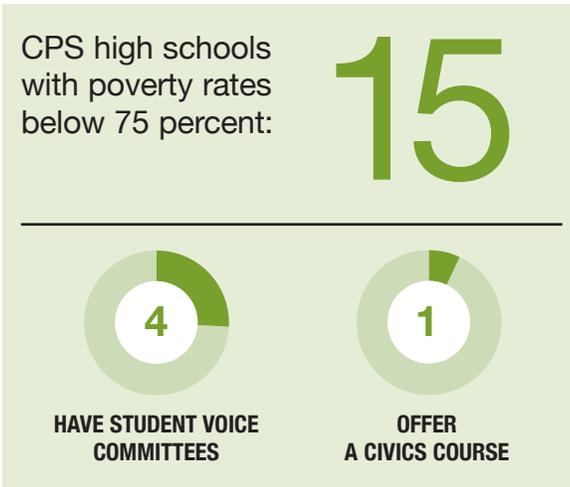
The result is a three-year outlook for civic learning priorities and benchmark metrics for civic learning opportunity—tools that the district will use to forge a path for graduates to be competent and fully participating members of their communities.

Civic learning by the numbers

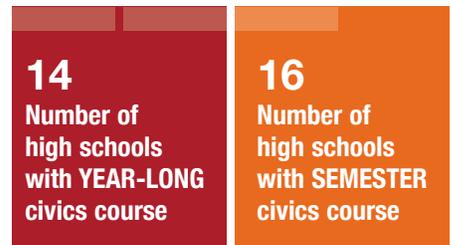
Seven of the 10 civic learning opportunities offered by the CPS Office of Social Science and Civic Engagement were tracked based on data from the 2015-16 school year for this analysis. (See list below.)

A review of school-level civic learning opportunities revealed high points and some challenges. Among the bright spots: Four CPS high schools offer four or more of these programs. Service learning requirements are now measured in number of projects rather than number of hours; and in the 2015-2016 school year, students completed close to 950 service learning projects.

Yet among 22 schools that gave themselves the highest rating in civic learning, nine do not have Student Voice Committees and seven do not participate in any district civic education activities.



- ### CPS Civic Learning Activities
- CIMBY (Calumet is My Back Yard)
 - Civics course
 - Community Peacemakers
 - Democracy schools
 - Election Simulation
 - Model UN
 - Parade to the Polls
 - Service Learning Projects
 - Student Leadership Conference
 - Student Voice Committee



- ### CPS Democracy Schools
- | | |
|------|----------------------|
| 2013 | Hancock |
| 2014 | Alcott |
| 2015 | Uplift, Westinghouse |
| 2016 | Curie, Lindblom |

Grounding the plan

Civic learning in every school, in every community. Navigating a course to realizing the district's civic learning vision means identifying and addressing challenges along the way.

In focus groups and one-on-one conversations, educators, administrators and partner organizations shared their thoughts on where time, attention and resources can be focused to facilitate expansion of civic learning.

CHALLENGES TO DEFINING, CAPTURING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

- Need for method to track and monitor civic learning data; perceptions of data collection
- Disseminating ideas, information in large, complex district
- Multiple ideas, definitions of civics and civic learning activities
- Civic learning currently not included in school accountability frameworks

CHALLENGES TO EXPANDING

- Need to fully utilize partner organizations
- Building infrastructure to match student interests with community needs
- Need infrastructure to support sustainable, meaningful partnerships with community partners
- Implementing strategies to empower to students, share decision-making with student stakeholders
- Gaining authentic buy-in
- Identifying and highlighting model classrooms, schools and programs for civic learning

CHALLENGES TO CAPACITY

- Addressing cultural competence districtwide
- Process needed to facilitate school partner relationships
- Perceptions of district initiatives and programs
- More teachers need training in civic learning content
- Fear of financial uncertainty and instability
- Competing district mandates and initiatives
- Limited time set aside for professional development and limited opportunities for peer learning
- Alignment needed between school values (CIWP) and where resources are allocated to address school accountability ratings (SQRP)
- Need for wraparound program supports

Three-Year Plan

Traditional civics courses focus on structure and the function of government but less on how to get involved. How do the things that get talked about in class relate to people's identities and how they relate to the world? It's important to help young people connect to these things, help them think about learning in relation to who they are and what they care about.

—EXPERT

A THREE-YEAR PLAN FOR DISTRICTWIDE CIVIC LEARNING

Informed by research and feedback from internal and external stakeholders, working groups of educators, administrators and partners identified three action areas to guide implementation:

Define excellence in civic learning and civic engagement by determining tools to measure performance, strategies to disseminate information and venues to recognize achievement.

Measure Progress | Communicate | Celebrate Success

Build capacity in instruction and operations so teachers and schools have the resources they need to prepare students to participate in civic life.

Prepare Teachers | Provide Resources | Students Participate

Expand opportunity for civic learning and engagement in schools and surrounding communities across Chicago so every student graduates ready to engage.

Every School | Across Communities | Globally Competent Students

Define Excellence

Before I got involved, I didn't know much about what was going on outside my school. I just went to school and did my work. Then I started to learn about our system and how it was structured. I wanted to make changes and see how I can help. Being informed is a big factor to being involved and making change.

—CPS HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR



IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

DEFINE EXCELLENCE IN CIVIC LEARNING, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Clear Vision and Expectations

Detailed articulation of what civic education will look like, who will be served and who is responsible once the expansion goals are fully implemented.

1 Year Goals

3 Year Goals

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- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate civic learning policy goals • Meet with Network Chiefs and District leadership to build awareness and engagement campaign about civic learning programs and goals • Engage educators who support English language and diverse learners in planning and delivery of civic learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand district-wide vision for college, career and community to include civic participation • In consultation with the Office of Language and Culture Education and the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services, develop guidance or resources on how to engage and support DLs and ELLs in civic learning • School improvement plans (CIWP) and budgets reflect commitment to civic engagement culture and high-quality civic learning programs as measured by the percentage of schools that designate civic learning as a priority • In consultation with CPS Family and Community Engagement and other community partners, engage parents and community stakeholders in regular practice of reflection on school civic learning culture, mission and vision |
|--|---|

Recognize Excellence

Awards and recognition of outstanding performance and effective models of civic education and service learning projects that integrate civic action with classroom learning.

1 Year Goals

3 Year Goals

-
- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop observation tool • Conduct tour of high schools with model civic learning opportunities • Construct structure and model for civic learning awards • Identify elementary and high school candidates to pursue state Democracy School certification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual district-wide event to recognize students and teachers for excellence in civic learning and project-based civic action • Model civic learning teachers, classrooms and schools host visitors, and are featured on a digital showcase • Establish at least one elementary Democracy School |
|--|--|

Measure Progress

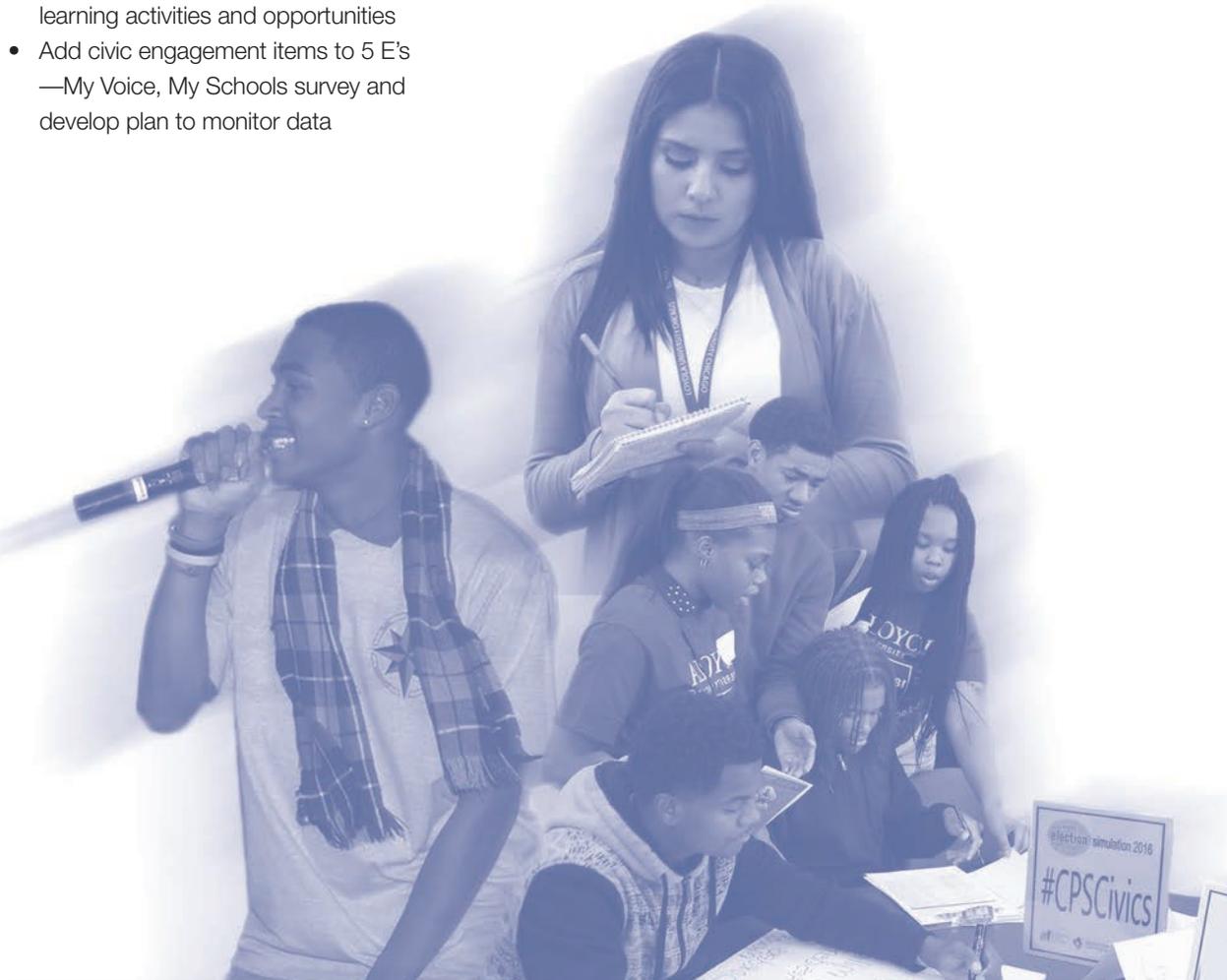
Rubrics and metrics that will guide implementation and gauge whether civic learning programs and activities are achieving intended outcomes for students, schools and the district.

1 Year Goals

- Develop a tool for schools to measure student access and participation in civic learning
- Refine School Excellence Framework definition and criteria for “Student Voice, Engagement, and Civic Life” component on CIWP
- Develop evaluation plan to gauge the effectiveness of civic learning programs on student performance and overall civic engagement outcomes
- Survey charter high schools on civic learning activities and opportunities
- Add civic engagement items to 5 E’s —My Voice, My Schools survey and develop plan to monitor data

3 Year Goals

- All schools measure civic learning opportunities by completing a self-assessment tool that is also embedded in the SEF
- CPS produces an annual civic learning report that will include an equity analysis of civic learning opportunities
- Add a metric that can speak to civic learning on the SQRP



Student Voice Committee

Early birds at Julian High School boost attendance rates



A campaign designed and launched by students at Julian High School set out to raise attendance and wound up motivating students to go to school and show up on time.

“Early Bird” promised to give away free raffle tickets to any student who arrived at school before 8:10 a.m. Tickets were distributed by grade, and drawings were held once a week on Mondays during advisory. One winner was chosen in each grade level.

Once it was up and running, Early Bird, the brainchild of Julian’s Student Voice Committee, moved the needle on attendance. After meeting with the dean of culture and climate, students worked with Principal Myron Hester, attendance clerk Celena Evans and Student Voice Committee coordinator Donna Gentry. They tracked attendance rates every week. Between the second quarter—when students launched the Early Bird campaign—and the third quarter of the 2015-2016 school year, attendance jumped from 85 percent to 90 percent. There was even a special raffle held to recognize parents for supporting the the teen attendance effort, and Amy Rule, the wife of Mayor Emanuel, paid a visit to congratulate students personally.



Build Capacity

Students get upset and want to do something and then go right to a sit-in. They need to do some other things first, such as research and going to talk to teachers and administrators about what their issues are.

—CPS ADMINISTRATOR

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

BUILD CAPACITY FOR INSTRUCTION, OPERATIONS

Professional Learning Community

Peer-to-peer information and instructional support networks to sustain quality and innovation as civic learning opportunities are scaled throughout district high schools.

1 Year Goals

- Lay groundwork for professional learning communities and collaborative PD on civic learning
- Offer civic learning PD for administrators at schools, networks and Central Office
- Identify mentor civic learning teachers to lead PD and develop resource bank
- Provide ongoing civic learning opportunity supports, such as PD, classroom visits and coaching feedback
- Provide research in civic learning and make it accessible

3 Year Goals

- Initiate teacher-leader model for civic learning focused on developing student agency and voice, with PD and curriculum to help educators incorporate issues relevant to students' lives into civic learning instruction and projects
- Develop model PD for LSC student representatives and facilitators of Student Voice Committees and other student governance structures
- Offer demonstration classes featuring civic engagement in all content areas
- Catalog and make available or promote civic learning resources, including curriculum and videos of classroom instruction and projects



High-quality Curricula and Classroom Resources

Materials are available to every teacher and every classroom and every school where civic learning opportunities are offered.

1 Year Goals

- Implement CPS Participate! civics curriculum in 50 high schools
- Publish an online resource archive on the CPS Knowledge Center for teachers seeking civic learning instructional materials and guidance

3 Year Goals

- Offer civics or AP Government course with a service learning component aligned to state requirements at every CPS high school
- Update CPS Participate! curricula with feedback from students, teachers, and district-level content and instructional leaders, and experts in the field
- Develop sample curricula to model how civic learning can be incorporated into broader curricula (math, literacy, art and science) and across grade levels, including demonstration of how educators use civic learning curricula in class
- Share widely examples of high-quality civic learning curricula and projects, including student work
- Populate CPS knowledge center with curricula, self-guided PD, tools for schools and videos, and make available to educators and school administrators

Civic Learning Infrastructure in Schools

Technology and operational systems are in place to facilitate civic educational efforts at the classroom, school and district levels.

1 Year Goals

- Establish district department with staffing for civic learning
- Offer implementation guidance for high schools establishing civic learning structures

3 Year Goals

- Include operational support to raise external resources for civic learning
- Identify civic learning instructional specialists in every network
- Include funding to support district-wide civic learning in CPS budget
- Grant funding to schools to support civic learning staffing and projects

Parade to the polls

1,200 students from 12 high schools get out the teen vote in 2015 primary



A basic lesson in civics education is learning about the importance of voting in a democracy and getting informed about candidates. Students from across the city put the lessons they learned from partner organization Chicago Votes into action when those who were eligible to vote marched to the polls to do just that. Other students who weren't able to vote also marched to support their peers.

Some 200 students from Washington High School headed out to their early polling place to cast their votes—most of them for the first time. Students in civics courses at Curie High School (above) recruited their marching band to join them to make some noise as they walked over to cast their votes. At Bogan High School, some students were trained by Mikva Challenge to serve as polling place judges. One student from Morgan Park High School felt inspired and was already looking forward to participating in future elections. “I can't wait.”



Expanded Opportunity

We make a mistake by limiting civic education to high school only. We're sending the message that citizenship begins at a certain age. And that's not true.

—PARTNER ORGANIZATION LEADER

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

EXPAND OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENT CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

Equity Analysis

Equity of civic learning opportunity is addressed through transparent and ongoing analyses of access and quality data.

1 Year Goals

- Produce civic learning equity map by scanning and plotting civic learning opportunities across the district

3 Year Goals

- Launch regular process for monitoring and analyzing equity of access and opportunity
- Implementation of civics learning at every high school includes a Student Voice Committee or student governance structure, a civics class, two quality classroom integrated service projects and at least one community partner organization connected to every school
- Update civic learning equity map annually to assess whether priorities and program opportunities are equitably distributed

Deepen, Expand CPS Partnerships

Partner organizations and institutions are engaged to inform, produce and facilitate civic education programs for schools and service learning projects for students.

1 Year Goals

- Create structure to match and maintain external civic learning partnerships for high schools
- Develop partnerships with external groups to work with students and staff on schoolwide civic learning projects
- Certify 100 community groups as CPS Service Learning Partners
- Offer a menu of service learning projects and activities that community partners will work with schools to implement

3 Year Goals

- Establish district level civic learning resource/partnership coordinator position to match schools with civic learning partner groups and facilitate the integration of community in civic learning activities
- Grow the number of certified community partners to 150 and develop program of regular professional learning for partners
- Increase the project implementation rate for certified Service Learning Partners to 50 percent
- Expand menu of programs and partnerships that extend to elementary school and ensure offerings are equitably distributed across the district

Early and Often: Elementary Expansion

Moving beyond state mandates, elementary schools are included in civic learning programming and offer students a range of options to engage in their school and home communities. Elementary teachers have opportunities to learn and practice civic engagement strategies in their classrooms.

1 Year Goals

- Explore models of effective PreK-8 civics instruction
- Build awareness and expand participation in civic learning pilot
- Identify elementary student leadership opportunities

3 Year Goals

- Encourage civic learning collaborations between high schools and elementary schools at the network level
- Develop evaluation plan for effectiveness of civic learning practices in middle grades
- Establish connections between local and state politicians and elementary schools in their districts
- Showcase examples of service learning and inquiry-based community engagement for 8th grade capstone projects
- Establish at least one middle school Student Voice Committee in every network
- Develop instructional resources and programs for integrating civic learning in the classroom and include these resources on CPS Knowledge Center
- Offer professional learning opportunities for middle school teachers to integrate civic learning in classrooms, across the curriculum
- Develop and provide middle school modules for embedding high-quality instruction on the Constitution, controversial issues and the structure and role of government

Expand Student Voice, Leadership Opportunities

Students are able to engage authentically in planning and decision-making at the classroom, school and district levels. Structures are in place at every high school to nurture and support student voice and leadership.

1 Year Goals

- Articulate a ladder for student leadership development
- Identify and communicate opportunities that are available now for students to participate in decision-making structures and processes and influence policy in classrooms, schools and the District

3 Year Goals

- Elect and train student representatives for every high school LSC
- Ensure every high school has a Student Voice Committee or student governance structure that allows them to actively participate in school decision making and to influence school policy
- Facilitate student input and participation in school and district level decision making with structural supports, such as student members of school climate teams.

Calumet Is My Back Yard

Environmental civics blends coursework with field action



Science teacher Monique Murray took her high school students out to brave the cold to remove invasive honeysuckle brush and learn about water quality at Eggers Woods. Field work is integral to Calumet Is My Back Yard, or CIMBY, an environmental civics class available to South and Southwest Side CPS high schools that combines science with civic engagement.

Student Kelly Jones (bottom left) completed the class and then went on to work as a CIMBY Summer Environmental Intern, where she learned about environmental stewardship in Chicago's Calumet Region and elsewhere. CIMBY interns decided to focus their six-week experience on measuring the impact of food deserts on community residents and gauging the impact of food insecurity on the environment.



Appendices

Things that are not considered real, kids won't be bothered with it. If it reflects reality in some way, they would be interested.

– PARTNER ORGANIZATION LEADER

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CIVIC LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, BY HIGH SCHOOL

Civic Learning Data for CPS High Schools, by Network 2015-2016 academic year

	CIVICS COURSE (YES OR NO)	STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE (YES OR NO)	MEAN NUMBER OF CIVIC ACTIVITIES	MEAN CIVIC LEARNING SCORE	MEAN CIVIC LEARNING PRIORITY
Network 1 (7 schools)	14.3%	28.6%	0.9	3.1	0.0
Network 2 (6 schools)	33.3%	50.0%	1.5	2.8	0.0
Network 3 (8 schools)	12.5%	37.5%	0.6	2.5	1.3
Network 4 (4 schools)	50.0%	50.0%	1.5	3.3	0.0
Network 5 (5 schools)	0.0%	40.0%	0.8	2.8	3.0
Network 6 (4 schools)	0.0%	0.0%	0.3	2.5	0.3
Network 7 (6 schools)	33.3%	50.0%	1.0	2.8	0.5
Network 8 (7 schools)	14.3%	71.4%	1.9	3.1	0.0
Network 9 (6 schools)	16.7%	50.0%	0.8	3.2	0.0
Network 10 (5 schools)	20.0%	60.0%	2.2	2.6	0.0
Network 11 (7 schools)	26.8%	57.1%	1.1	2.7	0.6
Network 12 (5 schools)	100.0%	60.0%	2.6	2.8	1.0
Network 13 (5 schools)	40.0%	80.0%	2.2	3.2	0.8
AUSL (5 schools)	80.0%	40.0%	1.4	2.4	0.6
ISP (9 schools)	33.3%	33.3%	1.0	3.4	0.1
Service Leadership Academy (6 schools)	33.3%	50.0%	1.0	2.8	0.2
Average Across the Networks	32.0%	47.0%	1.3	2.9	0.5

Note: Civic Learning Score ranges from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest). These scores are based on a self-rating in the CPS school excellence framework component, Student Voice, Engagement and Civic Life.

Note: Civic Activities could range from 0 to 7 activities. These include: Model UN, Democracy School, School Voice Committee, Civics Course, CIMBY, Community Peacemakers, and Parade to the Polls.

Note: Civic Learning Priority ranges from 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

COUNCIL OF ADVISORS

We would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions and insights of our virtual Council of Advisors, a group of experts, educators, administrators, funders, grassroots leaders and civic engagement partners who graciously shared their time and wisdom to inform this implementation plan. Each advisor participated in an in-depth interview and agreed to provide additional feedback on the plan and implementation as requested. We truly appreciate their support.

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WORKING GROUPS

The following educators and administrators spent two half days in planning sessions, contributing their ideas and recommendations to one of four working groups that helped think through the CPS civic engagement implementation plan. The Districtwide Expansion Working Group set their sights on issues related to measuring progress, celebrating success and resource development. The High School Supports Working Group discussed ways to promote schoolwide civic engagement culture and what schools need to ramp up civic learning opportunities. In the Educator Resources Working Group, planning efforts centered on what teachers need, particularly as it relates to professional learning networks; curricular and experiential learning tools; and technology infrastructure to support community partnerships and service learning projects. Finally, a working group for Expanding to PreK-8 through 8th Grade brainstormed ideas that would introduce preK and elementary school students to civic engagement and service learning before they reach high school.

We are grateful for Working Group participants' generosity with their time and commitment, and we are looking forward to their continued engagement in this work.

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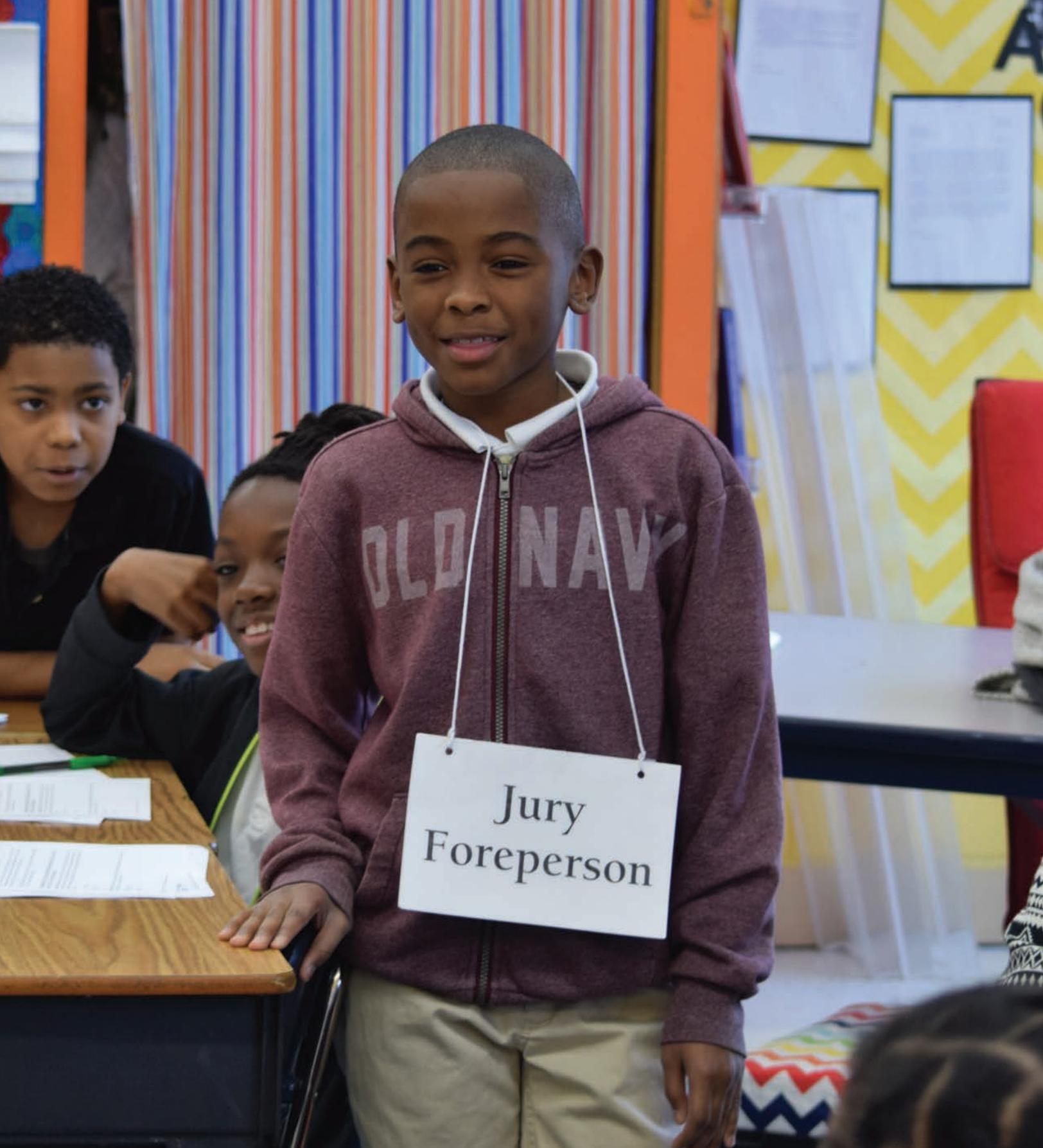
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