



Chicago
Public
Schools



Chicago
Communities
Co-Creating
Education

Office of Portfolio Management

Chicago Communities Co-Creating Education (CCCE) Project Report



Table of Contents

Our Project	3
Project Structure and Goals	3
What is an Education Plan?	6
CCCE Community Engagement Efforts	6
Our Journey	11
Who is the Stakeholder Advisory Design Team?	13
Austin	15
Education in Austin	17
Our Community: Community Asset Mapping Exercise	20
Previous Education Planning Efforts	21
Our Belief Statement	22
Our Education Plan Pillars	23
Roseland	26
Education in Roseland	27
Our Community: Community Asset Mapping Exercise	30
Previous Education Planning Efforts	31
Our Belief Statement	32
Our Education Plan Pillars	33
Washington Park	35
Education in Washington Park	36
Our Community: Community Asset Mapping Exercise	39
Previous Education Planning Efforts	40
Our Belief Statement	41
Our Education Plan Pillars	42
Next Steps	45
Acknowledgments	48
Appendix - Community Feedback Detail + Resources	49
Student Feedback Sessions	50
Community Meet Up Feedback	54
Community Handbook	59
Website	59

Our Project

Project Structure and Goals

Grant Background and Objectives

In Summer 2023, the CPS Office of Portfolio Management submitted a planning grant application for the United States Department of Education (USDE) Fostering Diverse Schools (FDS) grant. FDS was a new grant, created to provide competitive grants to local educational agencies to develop or implement school diversity plans that improve school conditions for student learning.

CPS' application highlighted a deep commitment to authentic community engagement by partnering with local stakeholders to co-create an educational vision and plan using the CPS Community Toolkit. In alignment with the District's equity goals, the Portfolio team focused on collaborating with three communities rich in culture, resilience, and leadership, each ready to shape their own educational future. Recognizing that past processes often excluded these voices, CPS intentionally designed a community-driven approach grounded in inclusion, trust, and shared purpose. This approach affirms the vital role of schools as neighborhood anchors that nurture students, empower families, and strengthen communities. CPS was officially awarded the planning grant, for \$1M for two years, in September 2023.

Once awarded, CPS launched the Chicago Community Co-creating Education (CCCE) project and embarked on a journey to co-create an Education Plan that addresses the specific educational needs of three vibrant communities. Additional outcomes include fostering a collaborative environment to support continued education planning among community members after the project concludes.

A New Approach

Over the years, the District has acknowledged the importance of co-creating with the communities most impacted by policies and proposed changes. Examples of CPS shifting our approach to more authentic engagement include the overhaul of the District's Accountability policy, known as the School Quality Rating Policy, to a whole student-centered policy known as [the Continuous Improvement and Data Transparency Policy](#), and the [North Lawndale STEAM implementation](#), which was driven by the North Lawndale community proposing an education plan with support from CPS. These are only a couple of examples of successful initiatives shaped collaboratively by the community and CPS. Stakeholders rooted in the community often hold rich, innovative solutions that ensure students receive a high-quality education and a learning environment that meets their unique needs.

Most importantly, this initiative offered a new district approach to convening and collaborating with community members and conducting feedback collection to co-design an educational plan with community.

Community Selection Process

Communities were identified based on grant requirements, which included: historical disinvestment and geographical diversity, amongst other considerations. A mixed-methods approach was utilized, using primarily quantitative data to narrow down disinvested communities, followed by a qualitative review of existing characteristics to identify Austin, Roseland, and Washington Park (*figure 1*).

Quantitative indices were examined across the 77 Chicago communities (*Burgess & Newcomb, 1931; Chicago Historical Society, 2005; The University of Chicago, 2024*). The Opportunity Index was the primary source for determining which communities to consider; however, additional information was compiled into a **Community Scorecard Index** to further identify the most disinvested communities. Each school's [Opportunity Index score](#) was averaged by community location to create a community score. The Community Scorecard Index underwent the same process as the Opportunity Index variables. Each variable was normalized by percentile rank, where a higher rank indicated greater disinvestment and a lower rank indicated less disinvestment. All variable percentile ranks were averaged into an Overall Community Scorecard Index score for each community.

The first two communities with the highest overall scores (i.e., Austin and Roseland) were established as two out of the three participating communities as they fulfilled the requirement of disinvestment along with regional diversity (i.e., West and Southeast), with no pre-existing plan during identification, nor additional CPS support. Avalon Park and Washington Park underwent further analysis using qualitative methods.

The Centralized Project Team used key search terms (e.g., Avalon Park Chicago, Washington Park plan, etc.) via Google to compile the percentage of community schools, along with community engagement efforts and planning. Codes were created to tally if the website mentioned the community in question, a plan, and any evidence of community engagement. The community with the greatest raw tally and highest percentage of community schools was selected.

Please note that while these particular communities were identified for this grant, community groups have the autonomy to develop an Education Plan for their schools and communities, separate from this grant. Due to capacity limitations of the team, the scope of the project had to be clearly defined and narrow. We acknowledge that many communities have the desire, knowledge, and need to create a plan for education.



Figure 1



The Community Profile is qualitative information related to community engagement.

The Opportunity Index considered the socioeconomic environment in which students live, resources schools experienced in prior years, and the percentage of the attending student population that fits a particular category.

The Community Index considered the school building conditions within a given community, student enrollment trends within a specific community, and investments made within a community.

Percentiles from the **Opportunity Index** and **Community Index** were averaged into an overall score.

The communities with the highest scores underwent qualitative considerations (**Community Profile**).

Austin, Roseland and **Washington Park** were identified.



Project Timeline

What is an Education Plan?

An education plan is a unique collaborative process that outlines potential strategies for providing quality education for students in the community and culminates in the creation of a tangible plan. The plans incorporate views and plans developed by the Stakeholder Advisory Design Team (SADT), with feedback from various stakeholders included in the appendix of this report. There are three education plans, one per community, comprising of the Belief Statement and Pillars.

To support members in the creation of their education plans, a series of questions were cultivated by reviewing previous education and quality of life plans. This research led to the creation of strategic, thought-provoking questions. These questions were separated by categories that were also composed through various research efforts. The questions helped to guide the SADT through intentional conversations and compounding invaluable information.

CCCE Community Engagement Efforts

The heart of this project was to co-create education plans with the community by listening and learning from stakeholders who are the most impacted and have lived experience. Community members and stakeholders are a treasure trove of personal experience and meaningful contributions related to education in their communities. As such, the Chicago Communities Co-Creating Education (CCCE) team conducted a myriad of engagement activities over the course of the project to reach community members. In addition, CPS engaged two trusted vendors—Vera Creative and Fulcrum Education Solutions—who brought proven expertise in local community marketing, collaborating with schools and leaders to develop strong educational plans.

It should be noted that, despite our best efforts to engage community members, we did experience low participation and turn-out. While we are not sure of the specific root causes of this, we understand that to engage parents and students, additional efforts and strategic opportunities should be identified. We understand that all of our families contribute and provide feedback in different ways, and, as a district, we are committed to gathering their perspectives in whatever way is best for them. Feedback was collected from community members who participated in the project.



Fulcrum Education Solutions

Jasmine Juárez, Fulcrum Education Solutions Partner, supported the effective planning, facilitation of SADT meetings and community meet-ups, providing coaching to SADT members and CCCE team members. Moreover, Jasmine assisted in the development of the Education Plans with each community, drafting the CCCE Community Education Plan Report.

With over a decade of leadership experience, Jasmine has impacted students from primary to high school grades, building cultures of continuous improvement by fostering relationships between school and community. Her strategic leadership focuses on achieving results while shifting mindsets to inspire a collective vision of success. In all that she does, Jasmine Juárez is guided by a singular belief: leaders who lead with their values, create the most significant and lasting impact. She ensures that those she supports recognize their inherent power and potential, inspiring them to transform their communities.

Jasmine holds a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with endorsements in Bilingual Education, English as a Second Language, Mathematics, Science, and Middle School, a Master of Education in Instructional Leadership: Educational Studies, and a Doctor of Education in Urban Education Leadership.

Vera Creative Group

Vera has a track record of working with educational institutions to engage families around educational initiatives, specifically supporting Chicago Early Learning. For this project, Vera supported marketing, community events, community canvassing, focus groups and community meet-up facilitation, surveying and analyzing response reports, and website design.

Engagement Activities

The visual below provides a high-level timeline of our major engagement efforts and purpose:

Table 1

JULY 2024 - MARCH 2025	JAN. - NOV. 2025	JAN. - AUG. 2025	APRIL - JULY 2025	AUG. - SEPT. 2025	DECEMBER 2025
Stakeholder Advisory Design Team (SADT) Recruitment & Engagement	Stakeholder Advisory Design Team Engagement and Planning	Survey Administration	Canvassing and Hosting for Focus Group and Student Sessions	Community Meet-up Outreach and Community Meet-ups	Draft Education Plan Published

In addition, the CCCE team conducted boots-on-the-ground engagement in local communities. The information below outlines the various events, meetings, and places that were visited through the two -years of the grant to spread awareness of the project. This list does not reflect additional canvassing done at local businesses and community gathering places led by Vera Creative.

Table 2

- CPS Back-to-School Bash Harrison Park (July 2024)
- Fiesta Del Sol (July 2024)
- Austin Executive CAC Committee (September 2024)
- Far Southside Executive CAC Committee Meeting (September 2024)
- Bronzeville Executive Committee CAC Committee Meeting (September 2024)
- Elected School Board Candidate Forum District 5 (September 2024)
- GBCAC Elected School Board Candidate Forum District 6 and 10 (September 2024)
- Salem Baptist Church of Chicago Community Trunk-or-Treat (October 2024)
- CCCE Informational Session (November 2024)
- BUILD Visit (November 2024)
- By The Hand Club for Kids Visit (November 2024)
- Austin Parent Advisory Council and Community Action Council Meetings (December 2024)

- Burke Parent Meeting (February 2025)
- Washington Park Field House Visit (February 2025)
- Dyett Parent University Visit (February 2025)
- Metrosquash Visit (February 2025)
- Michelle Clark Visit (February 2025)
- Ella Flag Young Elementary Visit (February 2025)
- Leland Elementary School Visit (February 2025)
- BUILD Visit (February 2025)
- By the Hand Visit (February 2025)
- Austin Coming Together Visit (February 2025)
- Bethel New Life Visit (February 2025)
- Project Exploration Visit (February 2025)
- West Side Health Authority Youth Development Center (February 2025)
- Office of Faith-Based Initiatives (OFBI) Interfaith Gathering (February 2025)
- Chicago Collegiate High School (March 2025)
- The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center Chicago (March 2025)
- Phalanx Family Services (March 2025)
- Youth Peace Center (March 2025)
- Brooks High School (March 2025)
- Burke Elementary Visit (April 2025)
- Dyett High School Visit (April 2025)
- Harlan High School Visit (April 2025)
- Alex Haley Elementary Visit (April 2025)
- Christian Fenger Academy High School Visit (April 2025)



- Sunshine Ministry Visit (April 2025)
- Burke PAC Meeting (April 2025)
- Interfaith (April 2025)
- Michele Clark Magnet HS Visit (June 2025)
- Spill The Beans Coffee (June 2025)
- Maryville/Peace Corner Youth Center (June 2025)
- Austin CCA HS Visit (June 2025)
- Kroc Center Visit (June 2025)
- Christ Universal Temple Visit (June 2025)
- Chicago Excel Academy (June 2025)
- Kuttin Korner Barbershop (June 2025)
- Brooks High School Visit (June 2025)
- Culver's (Pullman) (June 2025)
- BUILD (June 2025)
- By The Hand Club For Kids (June 2025)
- Fraternite Notre Dame (June 2025)
- Austin Branch Library Visit (June 2025)
- Wendell Phillips Academy High School (June 2025)
- Dyett High School Visit (June 2025)
- Washington Park Field House (June 2025)
- Burke Visit (June 2025)
- KLEO Center (June 2025)
- St. Edmund's Redevelopment Corporation Visit (June 2025)
- Sunshine Gospel Ministries Visit (June 2025)
- MetroSquash Visit (June 2025)

Capturing Community Perspectives

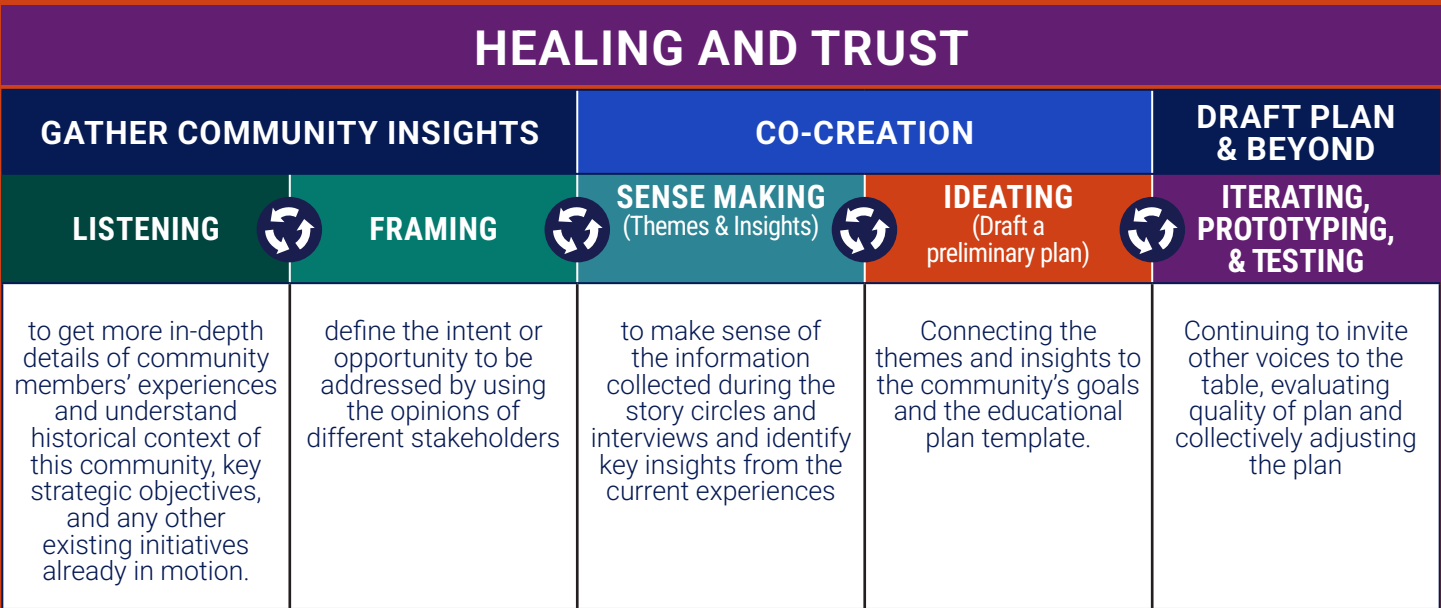
To capture community voice, varying levels of engagement were offered to ensure that members who desired to participate did not encounter barriers to their participation. The engagement levels included participation in Stakeholder Advisory Design Team (SADT), surveys, focus groups, one-on-one discussions, community meetups, and student feedback sessions. Conversations and activities centered around the current state of education, community assets, areas for improvement, personal experiences with education, and educational choices.

Stakeholder Advisory Design Team (SADT)

Our main vehicle for collecting feedback from the community was the Stakeholder Advisory Design Team (SADT). SADT members are educators, parents, students, community business owners, and leaders who live, work, or have a connection to the community. During the SADT meetings, the SADT was tasked with offering recommendations for engaging community members, reviewing feedback from engagement levels, and then participating in activities to create their plan. In addition to the meeting structure outlined below, SADT members led presentations about their community Belief Statements and Pillars at meet-ups in late September 2025.

The figure below demonstrates the journey of the SADT, which was one group consisting of representatives from three communities—Austin, Roseland, and Washington Park—who met between January and November virtually or in person.

Figure 2



The SADT officially met 10 times. They also met informally to plan for the three meet-ups. All presentations are available on the CCCE website at <https://www.cps.edu/strategic-initiatives/ccce>, under SADT Resources.

Our Journey

SADT members embarked on the CCCE journey by offering their voices collectively during meetings. Together, they sought to elaborate on community input, incorporating multiple perspectives along their voyage. Each SADT member provided contributions to a larger unifying entity, beginning with Community Asset Mapping to engender individualized community identification.

Community Asset Mapping was an exercise conducted with the SADT members. The members were encouraged to use their knowledge to identify different landmarks in the community, including businesses, restaurants, shops, parks, and even historical markers. These spaces are important for a thriving community by providing personality and ownership of the area. The SADT were shown a community map and then were given prompts to generate ideas and information related to their community assets - historical and current. The link below reflects feedback given directly from the participants.

[Feedback Captured in Meetings](#)



From here, inquiry into the educational ecosystem broadened academic landscapes outside of traditional school boundaries. This cross-sectional approach transcended into each of the CCCE communities.

Austin explored community identification as an opportunity for reimagining education. Viewing education as a communal effort, by advocating for improved conditions inside and outside school grounds, echoing the community's historical disinvestment.

“ If we’re trying to figure out how to make sure we have nurses, if we’re trying to make sure that some schools don’t have technology or don’t have computers or don’t have an art teacher or don’t have just some basic classroom academic experiences, then how are we meeting the demand of those other things that young people should have in their existence? And so I think that is one thing that I don’t see in here, which is addressing the elephant in the room about quality. What do we define as a quality educational experience? It’s not just about the academics, but it’s about everything.”



Roseland SADT members spoke about a community divided, often citing abutting communities in their reflection about education improvement. Roseland community members used their own experiences to help conceptualize their educational visions, emphasizing community collaboration.

SADT members from Washington Park valued collaboration between community, parents, and schools. Parent involvement for youth development was a key theme throughout their community discussions.

“ I’m a fourth- generation Rose- land dweller, so I’ve been here a very long time. And for exam- ple, I had an experience with my 14-year-old. I didn’t realize that the grammar school was not teaching science and he had a test that was due, I guess it was one of the city or state tests that they have to do. And he was lost. He was like, I don’t take this class, so how am I supposed to know this? I wasn’t even aware the child didn’t have science. So these type of things, it was off-putting, I don’t know what to tell the child. Oh wow. How do we not have a simple class in a school where I attended, I went to that school, we had science... We don’t know that we have... But it’s considered Pullman and it seems as though our communities are being separated, but they are not two different communities. Even though Roseland is considered one community and Pullman is considered one community, but it’s a viaduct that separates us.”

“Yeah, basically we need more parents, more involved parents to become involved in the school. More programs for the children like the one that we are doing now. Also, they need more after- school programs. They need a little more like we used to have cheerleading and different things like that. They still have cheer- leading, but I think more games, more basketball games, football games, stuff like that within the community. But it also involves the parents, because if you don’t have the parents’ help involved, we can have the kids, but you still have to have the approval of the parents. You still need trans- portation for the kids to and from whatever event they might have for them. There’s a bit of a lack. We need more things, but also we need a sort of collaboration between parents and school systems. And more parents to actually be passionate and kind of.”

Who is the Stakeholder Advisory Design Team?

Austin
Perriyana Clay <i>CAC Chair, Outreach and Partnerships Manager</i>
Ruth Kimble <i>Owner, Austin Childcare Providers' Network</i>
Sharif Walker <i>President/CEO, Bethel New Life</i>
LaTacia Morgan-Greene <i>Principal, Austin College and Career Academy High School</i>
Michelle Burgess <i>Parent Support Specialist, CPS</i>
Madelyn James <i>Director of Programs at the Austin Childcare Providers Network, Austin Childcare Providers' Network</i>
Yolanda Williams <i>Austin CAC Member, Parent</i>
Dr. Afina Lockhart <i>Founding Director of Equity and Student Services</i>
Roseland
Mykela Collins <i>Parent, Church Member at Covenant Faith Church of God</i>
Katrina Adams <i>STARR Community Services</i>
Marcus Flenaugh <i>CAC Member</i>
Lashun James <i>Community Member</i>
Melinda Jackson <i>Parent, Educator and Community Member</i>
Alisa Radcliffe <i>Parent</i>

Washington Park

Destiny Neekole Snow

Parent, Community Gardens Advocate, Previous CPS Employee

Lauren Norwood

Principal, Burke Elementary School

Harold Chapman

Parent, Educator

Crystal Hawkins

Parent

Bianca Hairston

Educator

Sharon Wingfield

Head Teacher, Burke Elementary School



Austin

Austin—SADT Perspective

**Authored By Perriyana Clay,
Austin Resident, Austin CAC Chair**

The Austin community, located on Chicago's West Side, is a neighborhood defined by resilience, creativity, and a deep commitment to justice and education. As one of the city's largest and most historically significant communities, Austin embodies both the triumphs and challenges that have shaped Chicago's social and educational landscape for generations.

From my perspective, Austin's greatest asset has always been its people—families who have called this neighborhood home for decades, faith institutions that anchor blocks with hope and stability, and community organizations that serve as bridges between generations. This sense of unity and advocacy is reflected in Austin's ongoing efforts to reclaim its narrative, restore its vitality, and reimagine its future through education, culture, and civic engagement.

Austin is home to a thriving arts and cultural ecosystem that celebrates Black heritage, creativity, and storytelling. The Austin Town Hall Park Cultural Center—a landmark modeled after Philadelphia's Independence Hall—serves as a cornerstone for community gatherings, arts programming, and civic dialogue. The Kehrein Center for the Arts has emerged as a beacon of renewal, hosting performances and cultural events that amplify local voices and foster unity. Public art initiatives, murals, and youth-led creative projects across Madison, Chicago, and Central Avenues reflect Austin's legacy of artistic expression and resilience.





Local cultural institutions and grassroots arts collectives continue to honor the neighborhood's history through film, visual art, music, and spoken, public spaces as places of pride and representation. From the annual Austin Arts Festival to creative youth programs offered by Austin Coming Together and BUILD Chicago, art remains a transformative force for healing, storytelling, and community restoration.

Austin's educational journey mirrors the community's broader fight for equity and investment. Once home to a thriving network of neighborhood schools, Austin has endured decades of school closures, enrollment declines, and systemic disinvestment that have fractured the educational pipeline. Many families continue to face barriers to accessing high-quality early childhood programs, afterschool opportunities, and safe learning environments.

Yet, the community's response has been powerful and organized. Parents, educators, and youth advocates have worked collectively to expand access to STEM, literacy, mental health, and out-of-school-time programs that nurture the whole child. Through initiatives like the Parent STEM Academy at Michele Clark High School, partnerships with local institutions such as the Shedd Aquarium and Lincoln Park Zoo, and collaborations with organizations like Project Exploration, Austin is redefining what community-driven education looks like.

Our community envisions schools as neighborhood anchors—spaces where students not only learn, but thrive. The ongoing work of the Austin Community Action Council and the Chicago Communities Co-Creating Education (CCCE) project embodies this vision, bringing residents, educators, and youth

together to co-design equitable educational pathways grounded in trust, access, and shared accountability.

Austin has a proud history of civic leadership and social justice activism. It has been the home of numerous movements advancing fair housing, civil rights, and police accountability. The neighborhood played a pivotal role in the West Side organizing efforts following the civil unrest of the 1960s, when faith leaders and residents mobilized to rebuild and advocate for equity.

Today, organizations like the Chicago Westside Branch NAACP and the Westside Justice Center continue this legacy—engaging youth and adults in civic participation, voter registration, expungement fairs, and advocacy for equitable healthcare, education, and housing. Austin's civic fabric remains strong because its residents understand that transformation requires both voice and action.

Austin's story is one of resilience and reimagining. Through collaboration, creativity, and unwavering commitment to its youth, the community is shaping a new chapter rooted in equity and shared prosperity. As we continue to co-create our education plan, we do so with an understanding that Austin's strength lies not just in its institutions, but in the people who continue to lead, teach, organize, and inspire—ensuring that every child, family, and resident has the opportunity to thrive.

Education in Austin

Austin is located on the West Side of the City of Chicago and includes the famous Austin Town Hall Park Field House.

As of SY2024-2025, schools in Austin were comprised of the following:

There are **18** elementary schools.

- **14** are zoned (attendance-area) schools.
- The **4** Citywide schools are Charter/Contract schools. (Plato closed at the end of SY2024-2025.).



There are **5** traditional high schools located in Austin.

- **1** is Zoned (Austin CCA)
- **2** are Citywide (Douglass and Clark)
- **2** are Options High School.



As of SY2024-2025, enrollment patterns in Austin were as follows:

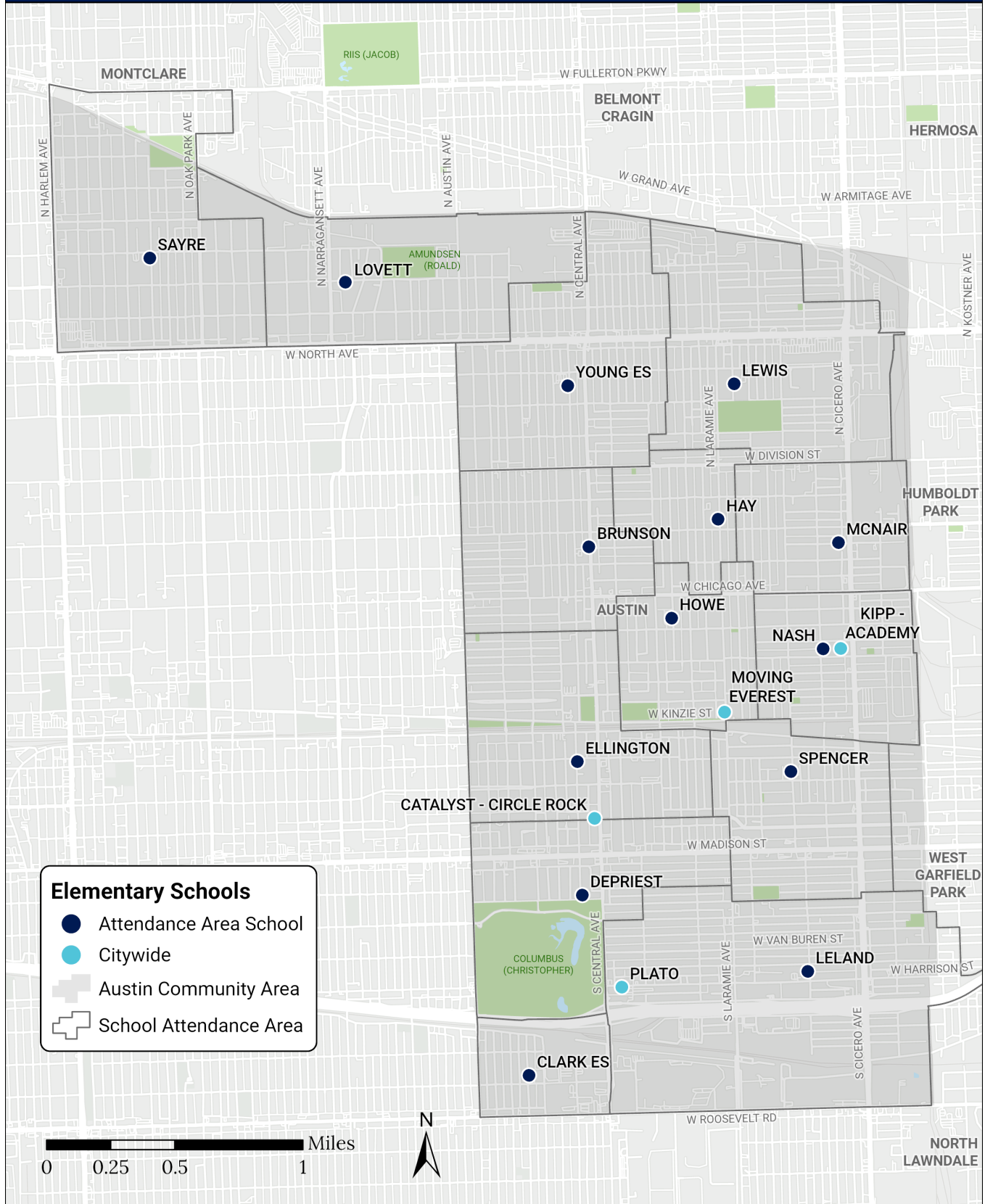
Table 3

Choice In
1,314
Students that live outside of the community but attend schools in the community
Choice Out
7,002
Students that live in the community but attend schools outside the community
Reside and Attend
6,429
Students that reside in the community and attend schools in the community (or attend their zoned school)

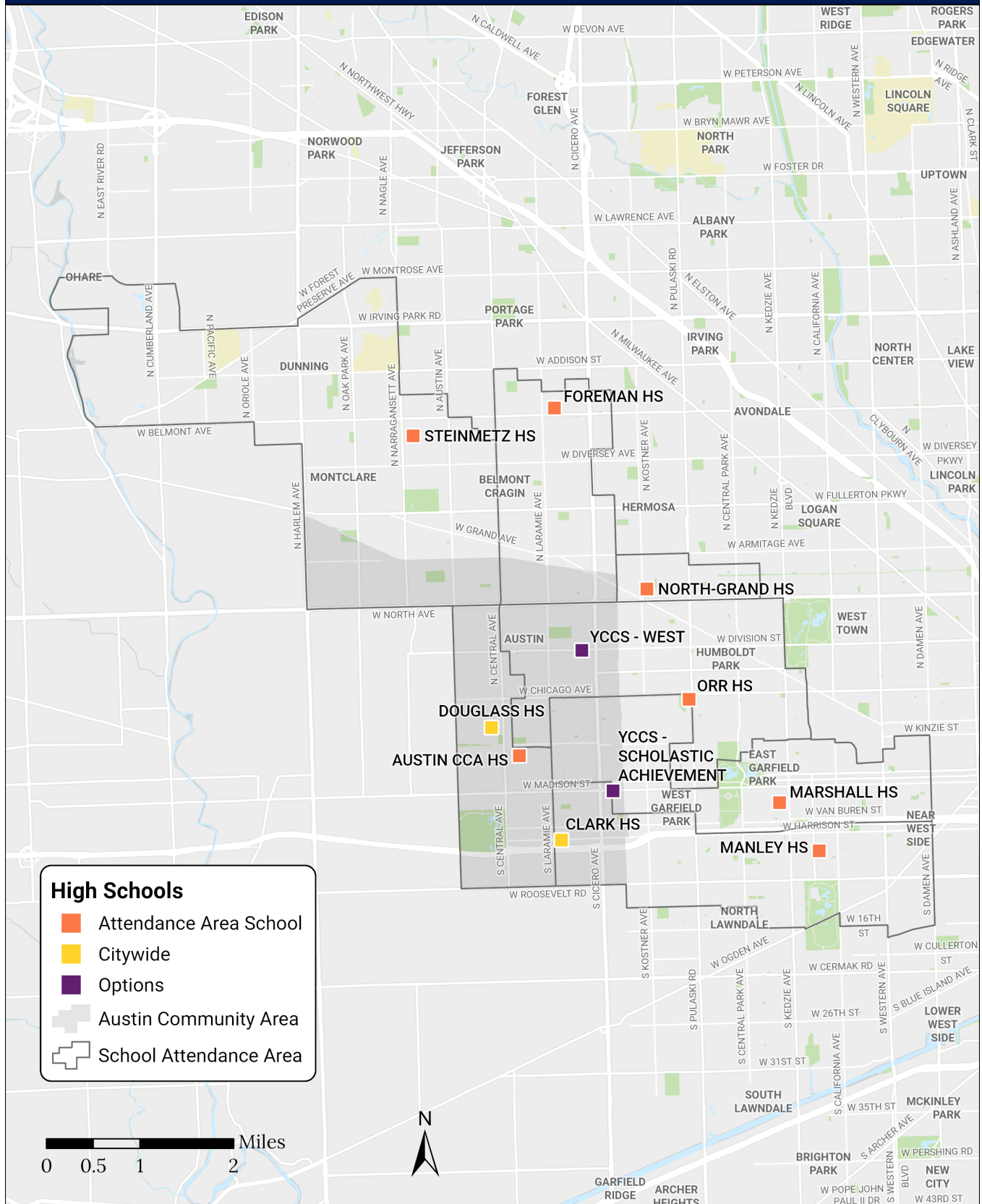
Overall, 63% of students living in Austin attend schools within the community, compared to 71% district-wide

[Annual Regional Analysis: Chicago Public Schools:](#)

Austin Community Area Elementary Schools, SY25



Austin Community Area High Schools, SY25



Our Community

Community Asset Mapping Exercise

SADT Participants from the Austin community viewed the significance of historical racial tension, architectural landmarks which included school buildings, focusing on school culture, services, and curriculum improvements.

Table 4

What traditions or stories from this community should be shared with future generations?	• The area that we live in, has Queen Anne Housing that cannot be torn down. This is a historical landmark. • This is a historically African American community. In, in the 70s, however, this was a White neighborhood. If you were in high school and a person of color, you would have to get special permission, and race relations were tense. • Back then, Black students were given education in trailers in a parking lot, but then, with Mayor Daley and integration, Black students were able to integrate into schools. • Crucial Conflict, Twista, and Do or Die, are all rappers who are from the area and would perform at Austin Town Hall.
What are your community assets?	• Austin Town Hall Library - since the early 1900s • The people / residents of Austin - we have talented and unknown people, unknown millionaires • Our parks - Columbus Park, LaFollette Park, Amundsen Park - host sports for students and community events • MacArthur's, Barney's Pizza, Uncle Remus, Whale Fish & Chicken • Bethel New Life • Churches

What is it about your neighborhood school that makes it a community asset?

- It's a physical structure
- It's a place where children go to improve their life - Tried to invest more currently
- Creating STEAM and STEM programming - they are partnering with CBOs
- We need a holistic partnerships - a new way to relate comprehensively to the students' learning
- Things are now focused on the value to the students, and this started shifting in 2019
- It could be better

What factors did you consider when enrolling your child in school?

- I want to know the curriculum and what students are learning
- Outside of the curriculum, extracurricular services does the school offer (tutoring, counseling, how often is the school nurse present, sports teams, debates club)
- Safety is a consideration
- Bell Schedule - sometimes it starts too early, how long are the classes
- NGSS standards, what are the students learning and supposed to be learning
- What parent and family resources are available? Parent university and family engagement opportunities
- Cultural aspects are important, having educators that look like the students as well as those values being incorporated into the school

Previous Education Planning Efforts

There have been several previous educational plans created for the Austin community. After conducting extensive research, we located a plan from Austin Coming Together, Bethel New Life, and the Austin Community Action Council, which was reviewed and considered as we co-developed the plan with the Austin SADT members. Moreover, community members shared that a refresh of this foundational plan was being completed during the time of our project.

As stated, while this report generally references past planning efforts related to quality of life and education, it is important to note that it is not intended to be exhaustive. Many other organizations and community groups may have developed thoughtful and impactful plans that are not reflected here.

Our Belief Statement

The Austin community believes that students of all abilities should graduate equipped to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally by advocating for themselves and choosing a pathway—whether college, career, or certification—aligned with their passion and purpose. They will become positive, productive citizens who understand what it takes to earn a thriving wage, support a family, and succeed as entrepreneurs, artists, or in any profession they pursue. Students will strive for success in alignment with their values and will show respect for themselves and others while contributing meaningfully to their community.

To achieve this, the community commits to creating an education plan that:

- Is centered on the whole child and young adult, providing exposure to diverse opportunities and enriching experiences
- Reflects the culture, strengths, and assets of the Austin community, and continuously includes community organizations and initiatives in shaping school pathways for learning
- Is realistic, sustainable, and relevant, and accessible to all students in the population we seek to serve, including non-traditional students
- Supports academic, emotional, and social development
- Includes and elevates the voices of all community stakeholders through inclusive and transparent practices

We believe our students thrive when they:

- Are seen, heard, and cared for consistently
- Have strong mental, emotional, and physical well-being
- Respect for themselves, their peers, and all who contribute to the well-being of their community
- Receive support from our community to stay rooted in our lived experiences and build resilience
- Love who they are and feel a strong connection to their community, especially when seeking advice and guidance
- Have access to the latest technology and modern learning environments to ensure an equitable learning experience for all



Our Education Plan Pillars

Austin Priority Pillars

Table 5

Whole Child	• Support students holistically: academically, developmentally, and socially- emotionally • Student transitions - Providing supports to all students and those who may have additional needs — age primary to intermediate to middle to HS to post-secondary, and diverse learners - Collaborating with daycares to bridge early learning to Kindergarten to ensure Kindergarten readiness • Families/Parents and the role they play in the development of students - Addressing challenges that families have and how they can impact students
Wrap-around support services - School	• Social workers • Psychologists • Nurses • Counselors • Mentorship programs - BAM/WOW Afterschool programming • Sports • Enrichment • Internships • City Partnership (for all ages, including primary) • Museum memberships Restorative Practices • Yoga • Mindfulness • Calm spaces in each school, like peace rooms • Sensory room • Methods to regulate

Health and Wellness - Education for students

Wrap-around support services - Community

Health and Wellness - Education for students

- Health Workers
- Clinics - Mental Health and Medical
 - Health and Wellness: Food Education, Food Justice, where food comes from, learning how to cook for students and families
 - Illinois recently adopted mental health screenings for students and how can we expand these services to also address needs for parents/whole family in the community
 - Nurses

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

- Identify innovative ways to partner with CBOs to ensure students and families are aware of and can easily access the services they need
- Bridge gaps between community and school liaisons to integrate them into opportunities where resource supports are presented to students (back- to- school events, parent/teacher conferences, vendor/CBO fairs, and connections between school staff and CBO liaisons)
- Student and family visits to meet CBO staff is one opportunity to build a bridge
- Youth programs
 - Expanded Financial Literacy that educates students regarding:
 - Livable/thriving wages in today's economy
 - Homeownership - how to own a home and cost of owning a home
- Afterschool programs

Post Secondary

- City Colleges
- Internships
 - Radio

Park Districts

- More programs after age 13

Hobbies/ interests/ experiences for students

- Medical Centers - healthcare centers and urgent care (for job training and general needs)
- Transportation
- Robotics
- Urban Agriculture Initiatives - horticulture and urban ag (continue to support this emerging field)

Career Exploration and CTE

- As Entrepreneurial opportunities arise (like culinary careers), it would be great to see in schools and supported by CPS as programs, as currently, due to restrictions, schools primarily offer these options after school

Celebration

- Where we come from and bringing attention and awareness to school and community assets
- Hosting collaborative events with neighborhood schools and community orgs that work in schools that are working to support families, along with anyone who has a stake (stakeholders in these communities), like a parade or a fair. An actual celebration acknowledges our collaboration and being in community with one another



Roseland

Roseland—SADT Perspective

Roseland, My community, looking ahead

By: Lisa Radcliff, SADT Member, Roseland Resident, and CPS Parent

Although I did not grow up in Roseland, over the past eight years I have built my life, my work, and my sense of community here. What stands out most to me is not only the challenges people often associate with Roseland, but the strength, creativity, and resilience that live in the people who call this neighborhood home. Roseland's story is rooted in legacy, the foundations that were created years ago still shape the neighborhood today, from block clubs that connect neighbors to community organizations that continue to advocate for justice and opportunity. Institutions like Chicago State University, the Pullman National Monument, and Pullman Porter Museum remind us that Roseland is tied to a national history of labor, education, and civil rights.

Living here, I have come to appreciate the assets that speak to Roseland's future. The Roseland Medical District represents hope for better healthcare. The planned Red line extension promises better transit access and opportunity. Residents take pride in community gardens, neighborhood cleanups, mentoring programs, and small businesses that keep resources circulating right here at home. These examples show Roseland is not waiting for change—residents are creating it every day.

From my perspective, Roseland's greatest strength is its residents. I see elders who carry wisdom and history, parents who fight for opportunities for their children, and young people who dream boldly about their futures. Even in the face of disinvestment,

this community continues to find ways to reimagine itself. That resilience is what drew me in and what keeps me invested as both a resident and a co-designer of the Stakeholder Advisory Design Team (SADT). Education must reflect this same strength. Our children deserve schools that affirm who they are, honor their cultural identity, and prepare them for success in every aspect of life.



Education in Roseland

Roseland is one of the 77 Chicago Communities, and is located on the Far South Side of the city. As of SY2024–2025, the schools in Roseland are comprised of the following:

There are **9** elementary schools in Roseland.



- **8** are zoned (attendance-area) schools.
- **1** school is Citywide (Turner-Drew).
- Students living in Roseland are also zoned to schools in neighboring community areas (Westcott, Ryder, Kipling, Evers, Garvey, Mount Vernon, Schmid, Smith, and Pullman).

There are **4** high schools located in Roseland.



- **2** are zoned (attendance area schools, - Harlan and Fenger).
- **1** is Citywide (Brooks HS).
- **1** Options high school.

In SY2024–2025, enrollment patterns were as follows:

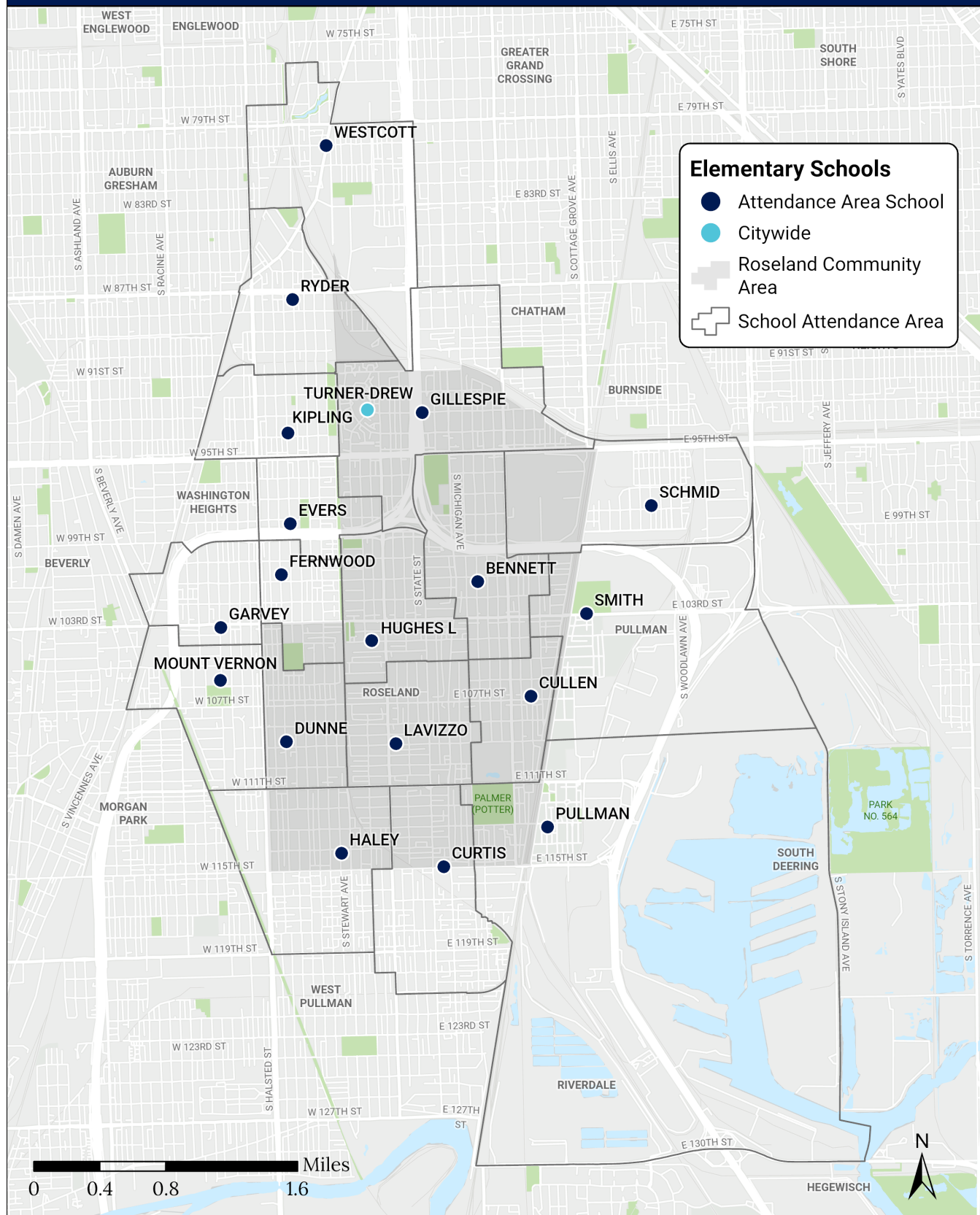
Table 6

Choice In
1,391
Students that live outside of the community but attend schools in the community
Choice Out
3,217
Students that live in the community but attend schools outside the community
Reside and Attend
2,304
Students that reside in the community and attend schools in the community (or attend their zoned school)

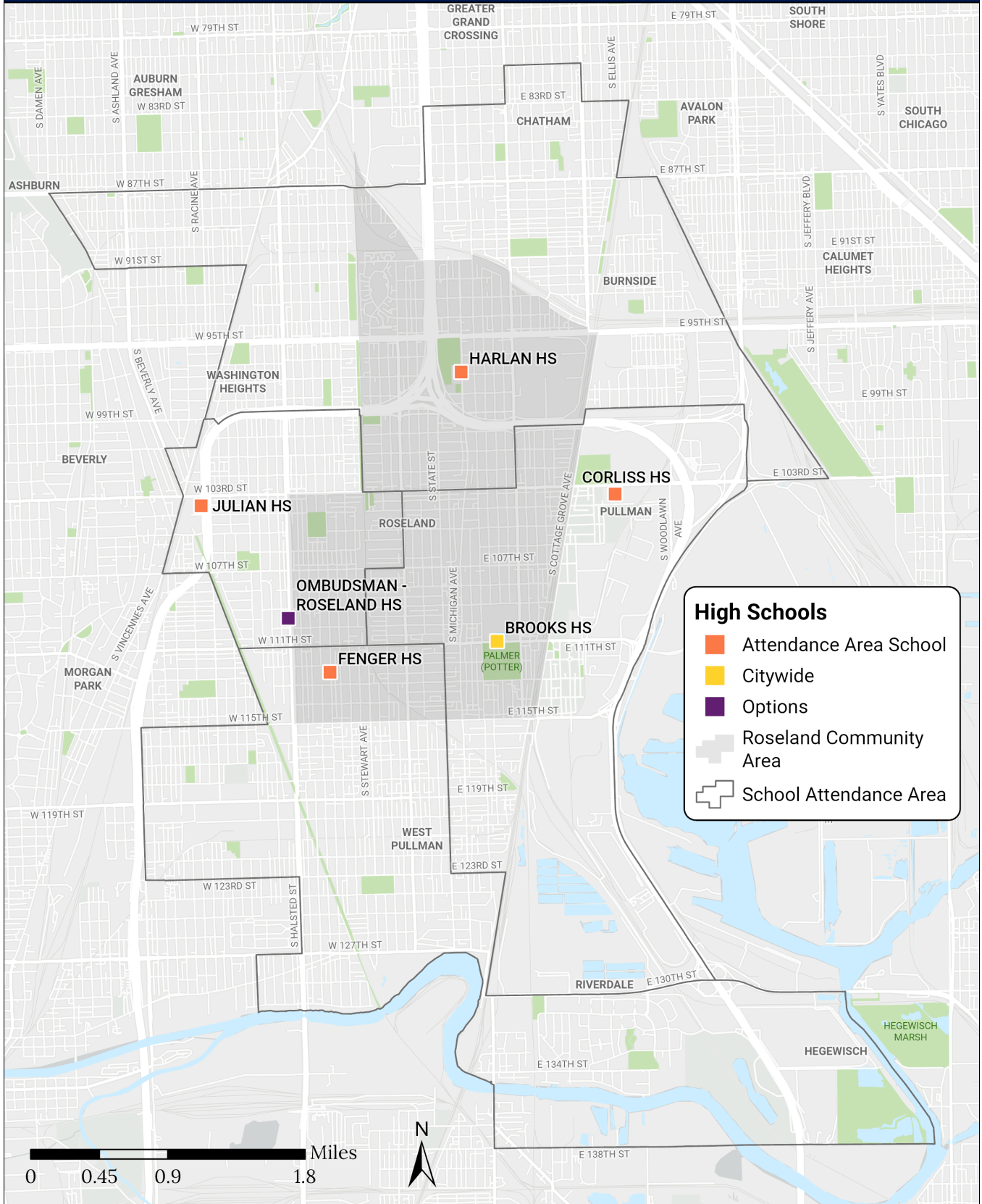
The percent of students attending their zoned school or a school within the community is about 21%. The district rate is 71%.

Additional data can be found on the [CPS Annual Regional Analysis website](#).

Roseland Community Area Elementary Schools, SY25



Roseland Community Area High Schools, SY25



Our Community

Community Asset Mapping Exercise

Many members of the Roseland community remember a thriving community shopping space spanning several blocks on Michigan.

Table 7

What traditions or stories from this Community should be shared with future generations?	• Community resources and events (Roseland hospital, churches) • A marketplace populated with small businesses • Walkable areas
What are your community assets?	• Railroad Museum • Community schools and local college • Little police officer camp • Churches (Giveaways, back to school events) • Chicago Park District facilities • Old Fashioned Donuts • Roseland Hospital • Salem Baptist Church • Small restaurants
What is it about your neighborhood school that makes it a community asset?	• Selective enrollment schools within walking distance • The fathers are very active in their children’s schools, and some schools host dads’ basketball events

What factors did you consider when enrolling your child in school?

- Good academics and test scores
- School environment and location
- Cultural factors and the diversity of the staff
- School leadership and strategic planning for future success
- Parent involvement in the school community

Previous Education Planning Efforts

During our research, plans created by the Far Southside Community Action Council (CAC), Pullman, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Far South Quality of Life Plan by the Far South Community Coalition were reviewed. Roseland's previous education plan has expired; it has also been included in aspects of education plans for the Pullman area. Roseland is eager to build its education and other resources to preserve and move forward with the further development of the community. Many community members have expressed interest in investing in the education system to give the youth a brighter future.

While this report includes several past planning efforts related to quality of life and education, it is important to note that it is not intended to be exhaustive. Many other organizations and community groups may have developed thoughtful and impactful plans that are not reflected here. The scope of this report is based on research conducted during the spring and summer of 2024, and as such, it captures a snapshot in time. We fully acknowledge the ongoing and evolving nature of community planning.



Our Belief Statement

The Roseland community believes that

students should graduate with the ability to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally by gaining meaningful employment, being accepted into college, competing confidently with peers from other communities, and effectively solving problems and communicating their ideas. We are committed to preparing students to launch careers rooted in purpose and to shape their own futures through higher education, entrepreneurship, and community leadership.

To achieve this, the community commits to creating an education plan that:

- Addresses the holistic needs of the whole child
- Provides equitable access to resources and opportunities to thrive
- Hears and responds to the specific needs of Roseland students
- Engages families as active partners in education

We believe our students thrive when they:

- Are treated equitably and have access to the same opportunities and resources as those in other thriving communities
- Receive the support and funding necessary for success
- Feel proud of their identity and community
- Learn and live in safe, student-centered environments designed with their needs in mind



Our Education Plan Pillars

Roseland Priority Pillars

Table 8

Specific Needs of Roseland Students	- Community resources need to be respected and seen as safe common spaces - Spaces that are specifically designed for student use - Events and resources are provided at times and in spaces that align with community needs - Provide resources that are walkable for community members - Support for students with IEPs - Create job opportunities in the community - Community housed after-school programs - Field trips - Education on Chicago history - Mentorship
Whole Child That Feeds Creativity and Curiosity and Joy	- Nurtures the whole child academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally so that they can shape their own future. - Provide students with the power to lead, create, and thrive—not just keep up. - Treat students as humans with complex emotional, social and physical needs. - Integrate mental health, nutrition, physical activity and identity building into the school day - Provide early childhood and after-school programming opportunities - Meet the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional needs of the child, the family, and the community - Take a holistic approach - Prioritize health, safety, economics, civics, family, emotional wellness, and trauma-informed practices - Respect everyone - Ensure every students is seen, known, and respected by adults and peers

Learn & Live in a Safe Student Centered Environment	• Ensures students are heard, seen, and treated with dignity in environments designed for them and by them. • Engage with the local police department through events like the CPD 5th District Night Out • Work with Blue Cross Blue Shield to provide produce to community members • Have well-maintained landscaping • Be near local retail stores • Partner with alderman/representatives • Community colleges
Access to Resources and Opportunities	• Maintain a virtual community calendar to promote resources, back-to-school events, and more • Maintain a community bulletin board with information and resources • Send outreach by mail to community members' homes • Promote job and educational opportunities, including home and community-based services, caregiving roles, trade school, higher education, and more • Promote housing resources • Collaborate with community organizations • Utilize and amplify resource channels that already exists
Engagement	• Recognize the difference between engagement and involvement • Create meaningful roles for parents and caregivers in schools and treat families as experts, not spectators • The local schools need to collaborate and coordinate with community members, community organizations, elected officials, faith-based leaders, and community-based organizations • Community-based organizations should engage with students and families

Washington Park

Washington Park—SADT Perspective

By Destiny Snow, Community Resident, Advocate, and Burke Elementary School Parent

Washington Park is a South Side Chicago community where resilience isn't just a word—it's our daily practice. Home to the 372-acre park designed by legendary landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, as well as the DuSable Museum of African American History, our neighborhood sits at the intersection of natural beauty and cultural significance. The DuSable Museum, founded in 1961, is the oldest and largest caretaker of African American culture in the United States, with a collection of 13,000 artifacts, books, photographs, and art objects— a living testament to the history our children should know intimately.

What strikes me most about Washington Park since moving here in 2021 is what we already have but don't always connect. Our park contains over 35 acres of native woodland, prairie, wetland, and aquatic habitats where children can see wood ducks, Great Blue Herons, and warblers—a living classroom right in their backyard. New developments like Sunshine Gospel Ministries' \$36.9 million, 77,050-square-foot community center at 6016 S. King Drive will include a gymnasium, café, youth programming rooms, and outdoor athletic facilities, adding to our growing infrastructure of support.

Yet Washington Park's greatest assets aren't buildings or acreage—they're our people. We have elders who built businesses when redlining tried to stop them, created community when systems tried to divide us, and survived every challenge Chicago threw at them with their dignity intact. We have families who've weathered the pandemic, school closures, and budget cuts while still

showing up for their children. We have young people with brilliance and potential that the world desperately needs but doesn't always see.

Our community's historical contributions run deep. We've produced educators, entrepreneurs, artists, and activists who've shaped not just Chicago but the nation. Washington Park has always been a place where Black excellence thrived despite systemic barriers. That legacy of innovation and community-building lives on in every block club meeting, every community garden, and every parent advocating for their child's education.

The challenge isn't that Washington Park lacks resources—it's that we've been conditioned to look outside our neighborhood for what we already possess. University of Chicago programming exists blocks away. The YMCA offers youth development. Local businesses want to support our young people but need structured pathways to do so. Community organizations are ready to collaborate if given the chance.

What Washington Park needs is an education system that connects to this existing strength, that teaches our children they come from people who built something beautiful against impossible odds, and that prepares them not just for college but for leadership in whatever path they choose. Our children should graduate knowing the names of Washington Park leaders who came before them, understanding the ecological systems in their own park, and possessing the life skills and emotional intelligence to navigate any future they envision.

This is who we are: a community that has survived everything and is ready to thrive.

Education in Washington Park

Washington Park is a community area located on the South Side of Chicago, and includes within it a well-known park of the same name. As of SY2025, the make up of Washington Park schools is as follows:

4 elementary schools



- 2 are zoned (attendance-area) schools and 2 are citywide schools.
- Students living in Washington Park are also zoned to schools in neighboring community areas (Dulles and Beethoven)

There is 1 zoned high school located in Washington Park.



- 1 zoned high school located in Washington Park (Dyett Arts).

When we look at enrollment patterns for Washington Park, as of SY2025, we see the following:

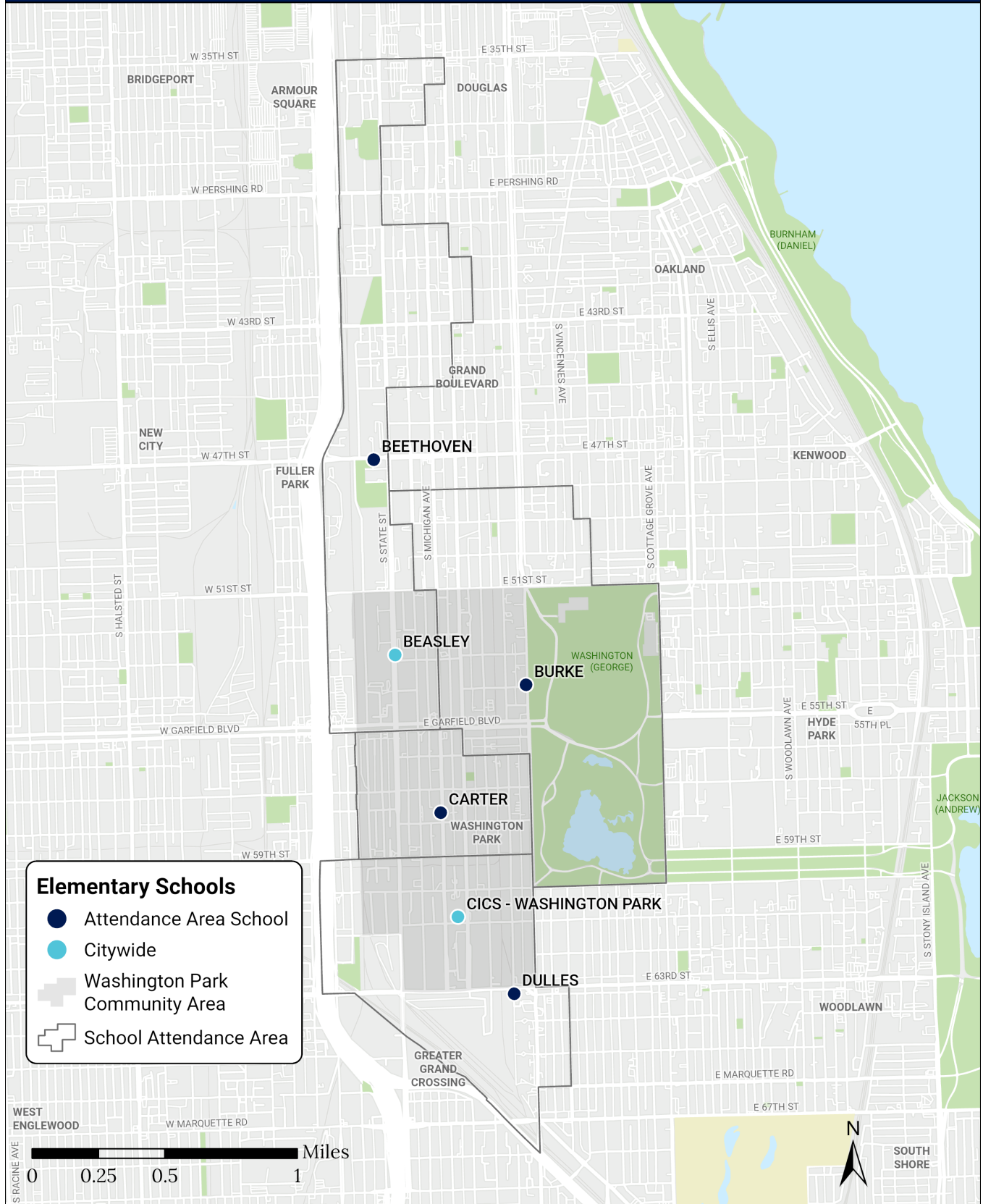
Table 9

Choice In
1,571
Students that live outside of the community but attend schools in the community
Choice Out
1,237
Students that live in the community but attend schools outside the community
Reside and Attend
960
Students that reside in the community and attend schools in the community (or attend their zoned school)

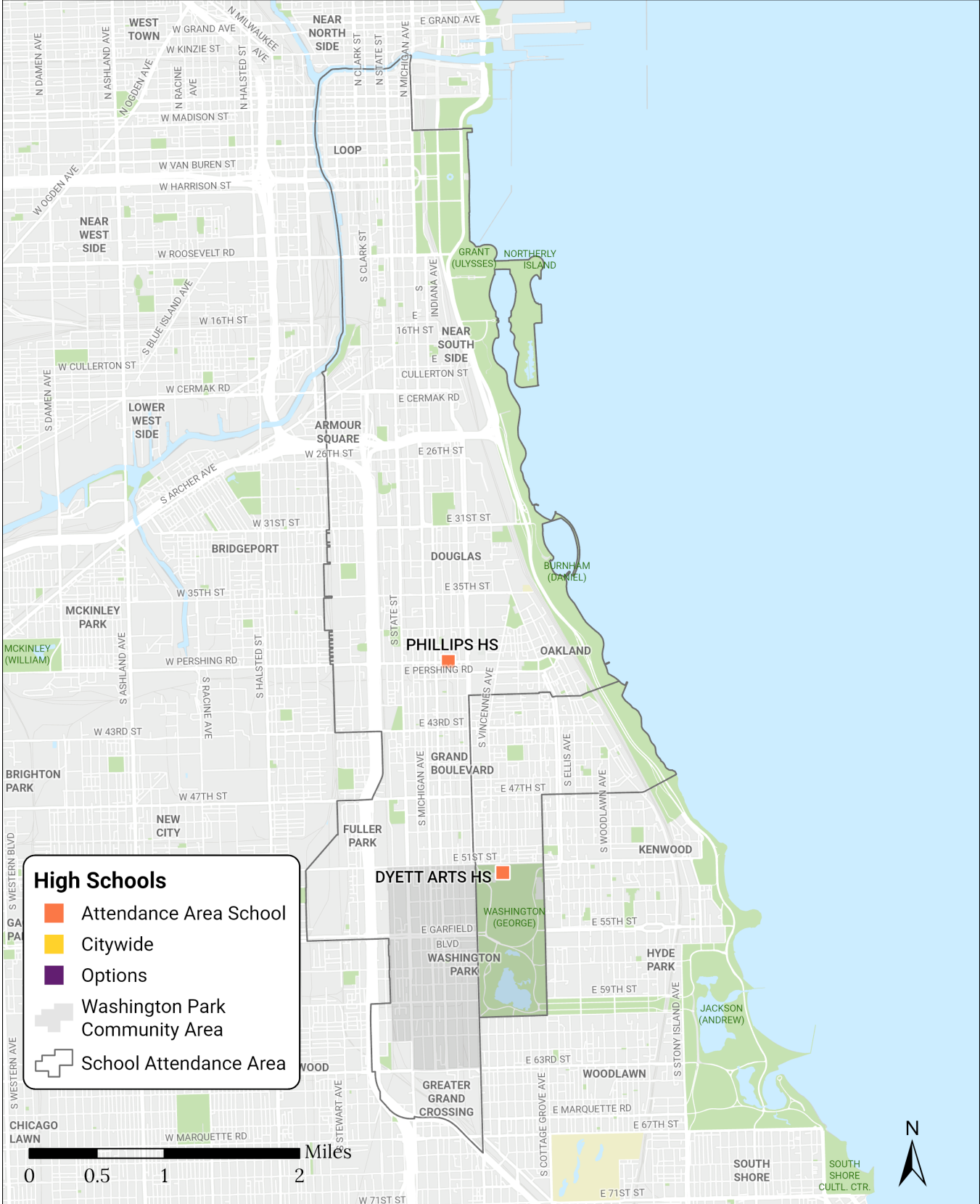
Overall, 58% of students living in Washington Park attend schools within the community, compared to 71% district-wide.

[Annual Regional Analysis: Chicago Public Schools](#)

Washington Park Community Area Elementary Schools, SY25



Washington Park Community Area High Schools, SY25



Our Community

Community Asset Mapping Exercise

When Washington Park SADT members were asked what they viewed as assets in their communities, they discussed the following.

Table 10

What traditions or stories from this community should be shared with future generations?	• DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center • Events like Jazz Fest, Summer Festival, African Fest, UniverSoul Circus, and Bud Billiken Parade • What was it was like when most of your neighbors looked like you, the transformation of the neighborhood moving from a primarily African American neighborhoods to a more diverse neighborhood, and how this process connects with disinvestment • The tradition of visiting the Chicago Public Library with family and friends • Washington Park, which was named after America’s first president • The importance and tradition of home gardens for many African Americans migrating from the South • Events hosted by churches and other organizations that help community members meet one another and be more involved • There seems to be an exaggerated sense of the community being “unsafe”
What are your community assets?	• DuSable High School • New Life Center • Beasley Academic Center • South Side Sanctuary on 47th and King (community space) • 55th and Indiana - church • 53rd and Michigan - two churches • Harold Washington Cultural Center (also on 47th and King) • L1 Retail Store on Green Line and 55th • The digital media program at Dyett High School

What would make your neighborhood school more of a community asset?	• A garden • Fitness center • Grocery store • Parent University
What factors would you consider when enrolling a child in school?	• Safety • Matriculation • Quality of teaching staff and years of experience for example • Opportunities to access college and career resources • Rigor of coursework • Feeder schools • Access to diverse programs including CTE • Access to pre-apprenticeship programs • Transportation

Previous Education Planning Efforts

In the past, Washington Park has not received the individualized education planning efforts it deserves. Because it is in the center of various large and distinct communities, Washington Park has been cited in quality-of-life plans for South Shore, Woodlawn, Bronzeville, Kenwood, and Hyde Park. These plans were reviewed during the research and planning process and helped bolster our engagement efforts in the community and provided a foundation for discussions with the SADT.

As you will see again in this report, while this report includes several past planning efforts related to quality of life and education, it is important to note that it is not intended to be exhaustive. Many other organizations and community groups may have developed thoughtful and impactful plans that are not reflected here.

Our Belief Statement

The Washington Park community believes that students should graduate with the ability to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally by being independent, critical thinkers who value their education, care for themselves and others, understand their history, and advocate for the wellness of their community.

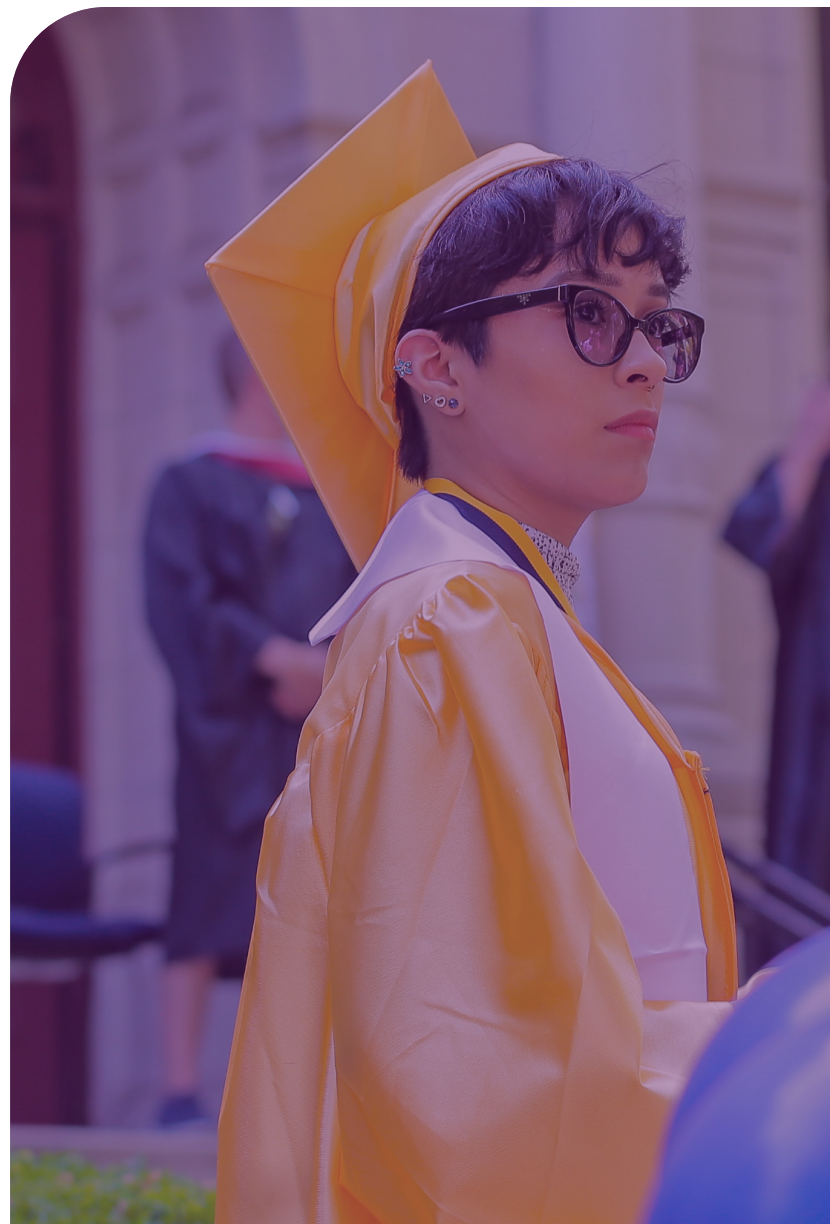
To achieve this, the community commits to creating an education plan that:

- Serves as a connector for all stakeholders
- Is child-centered and innovative
- Addresses and nurtures children's academic, social, and emotional growth—supporting engagement, problem solving, and the development of coping skills
- Connects and engages community stakeholders
- Strategically partners with community organizations, businesses, and institutions

We believe our students thrive when they:

- Feel safe, valued, and connected
- Develop a strong sense of personal identity while understanding diverse perspectives and global connections
- Experience diverse perspectives, cultures, and ways of thinking through varied learning opportunities

- Develop strong collaboration and communication skills through group work and multiple forms of expression.
- Understand their cultural heritage and community history while recognizing their potential to make meaningful contributions



Our Education Plan Pillars

Washington Park Priority Pillars

Table 11

Connector for Stakeholders A place where people in the community come together	When we say stakeholder, we mean anyone who cares about kids' success: parents, teachers, neighbors, businessowners • Community schools • Community members • Educators When we say connector or a place for people to come together we mean: • Teachers call parents regularly, not just when there's trouble • Parents can visit classrooms and volunteer without barriers • Monthly meetings where families, teachers, and neighbors plan together • Text messages and apps that keep everyone updated in both English and Spanish • Clear expectation from schools to caregivers about what's expected or events that might be coming up so they can plan to be there • Community meetings held at times when working parents can attend
Child-centered / Holistic	Child-centered and holistic. Holistic in this context is taking care of the entire or whole child, not just grades, but their physical and mental health, happiness and joy, entertainment, interest, extracurriculars, keeping our students engaged and wanting to be in the classroom. • Schools help kids with everything they need to succeed - Teaching kids how to calm down and ask for help when they are upset and ask for help - How to share, work in groups, and resolve fights with words and not fists or violence - Basic life skills: managing money, cooking fulfilling and nutritious and healthy meals, cleaning, and time management

Child-centered / Holistic

- Teaching kids how to calm down and ask for help when they are upset
- How to break big problems into small steps they can handle
- Visiting workplaces, learning about different careers, practicing job interviews
- Where their families came from and what makes them proud
- Counselors, security, and safe spaces where kids never worry about being hurt
- Job readiness
 - What are the careers that our students are talking about.
 - Connections with services in the neighborhood (CTA drivers, sanitation workers)
 - Let our students shadow workers they see every day in their community
- All needs addressed in schools
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Social/Emotional Learning
 - Life Skills
 - Problem Solving
 - Understand History
 - Safety

Community Organizations / Institutes

- University
- CBOs
- Childcare Organizations
- Mentorship Programs
- CPS Community Schools

Schools should partner with community organizations that help families and kids outside of school:

- Local colleges like the University of Chicago offer tutoring and college prep

Community Organizations / Institutes

- Groups like the YMCA provide sports, arts, and after-school care
- Quality daycare centers that prepare little kids for kindergarten
 - We do not have enough day cares or workers to support these services
- Adult or elders in the community who volunteer to meet with kids weekly and provide mentorship, help them with homework, and share life lessons and advice
- What are some of the crafts and careers that these people had and how did that benefit and impact their life—how can we pass that knowledge along to students

History

- Kids learn about their own family's story and culture
- Field trips to places like DuSable Museum to learn about African American history in Chicago
- Celebrating holidays like Kwanzaa, Dia de los Muertos, and others that families value
- Learning how Washington Park neighborhood used to look and how it's changing
- Understanding why streets and parks have the names they do
- There is always something new to learn about the community:
 - Co-working space
 - Other community resources that you might not know about
- Learning from the elders in the community

Next Steps

Community Meet-Ups

Shaping Our Education Plans with Local Insight and Input

The Community Meet-Ups, designed and facilitated by members of the Stakeholder Advisory Design Team (SADT), engaged a diverse group of 55 participants representing a broad range of community roles and perspectives. Attendees included parents, teachers, Local School Council members, faith-based leaders, nonprofit directors, health professionals, community historians, and representatives from local and state offices.

- **Washington Park:** 13 attendees
- **Roseland:** 30 attendees
- **Austin:** 12 attendees

Across all discussions, attendees expressed a desire to listen, share ideas, and ensure that community perspectives meaningfully shape the future of education in their neighborhoods. Key motivations included:

- **Listening and learning:** Deepening understanding of the education plan drafted by SADT members, gathering additional feedback on student needs, and exploring new opportunities for collaboration.
- **Community voice and partnership:** Ensuring that families, educators, and local organizations have meaningful opportunities to shape educational planning and contribute to shared decision-making.
- **Whole-child wellness and supports:** Emphasizing the importance of comprehensive resources—such as health, mental wellness, and community partnerships—that nurture students' academic, social, and emotional growth.

- **Learning beyond the school day:** Encouraging more after-school and enrichment opportunities that celebrate students' creativity, culture, and connection to their community.
- **Equity and belonging:** Fostering inclusive environments where all students and families feel valued, supported, and connected to their neighborhood schools.

Overall, the Community Meet-Ups reflected a shared commitment to shaping an education plan that reflects their community's values, elevates local voices, and supports students and families through collaborative and inclusive approaches.

Sustaining Engagement and Collaboration

Members of the Stakeholder Advisory Design Team (SADT) gathered to discuss strategies for maintaining momentum and collaboration as they continue to socialize and bring their community education plans to life. The discussion focused on communication methods, meeting structures, and strategies to sustain engagement across stakeholders.

1. Commitment to Collaboration and Communication

Participants emphasized the importance of consistent and transparent communication to keep community members informed and connected.

- Ideas included using social media, email updates, phone calls, and virtual check-ins to ensure ongoing dialogue.
- There was interest in holding quarterly meetings, potentially aligned with CAC sessions, though some preferred creating a new structure independent of CAC.
- The group agreed that having clear leadership and follow-up roles is essential to keep the work progressing.

Next Steps

Community Meet-Ups

2. Centering Families and Community Voice

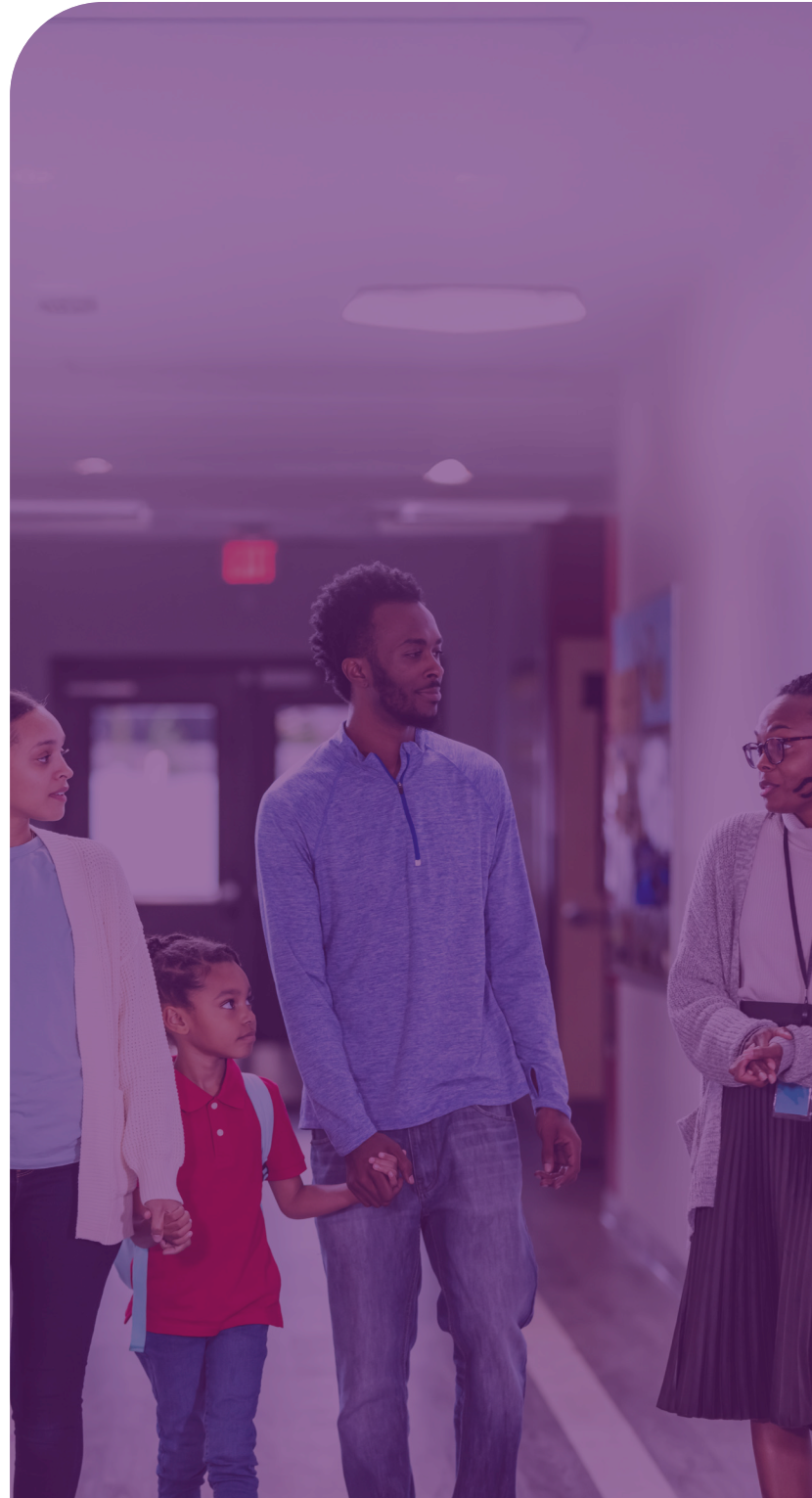
A strong theme emerged around the need to prioritize family engagement, including parents, foster parents, grandparents, and guardians.

- Participants emphasized that authentic engagement involves guidance, wraparound supports, and welcoming spaces for all caregivers.
- Many expressed a desire to focus efforts on families and to build engagement strategically through family nights, shared meals, and interactive activities.
- There was enthusiasm for creating a recurring “Family Engagement Night” that combines fun, learning, and relationship-building.

3. Inclusion and Access for All Students

The group discussed the importance of ensuring equitable access and inclusion for all students, particularly those in group homes, foster care, and nonprofit programs such as UCAN.

- Participants identified challenges related to school access and coordination of services for students with disabilities.
- They highlighted the importance of collaboration with the Office for Students with Disabilities to ensure equitable access to materials, supports, and resources.



Next Steps for Each Community

To move the work forward, SADT members identified several key next steps:

1. Establish a Regular Meeting Cadence

- Hold quarterly meetings (virtual or in-person).
- Identify a core team or point person to maintain communication and coordination.

2. Develop a Communication Plan

- Use multiple outreach methods (social media, flyers, door knocking, and email).
- Create a shared contact list for regular updates.

3. Select a Priority Focus Area

- Choose one key pillar/goal at a time (e.g., Family Engagement).
- Form a small working group to lead and monitor progress.

4. Partner with Community Organizations

- Define how partnerships and district supports can strengthen implementation.
- Invite nonprofits, parent groups, and local leaders to align goals and leverage collective strengths.



Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the Chicago Communities Co-Creating Education Project:

Individuals		
Alan Conley, CPS Alex Snow, Washington Park Community Member Alfonso Carmona, CPS Andrew Frangos, former CPS Grant Research Associate Angelica Sierra, Roseland Community Member Athena Williams, Austin Community Member Carl Hurdlik, CPS Christine Ruman, Magnet Schools Technical Assistance Center Christian Northington, CPS Conrad Timbers-Ausar, CPS	Dwayne Truss, Austin Community Member Emily Abarca, CPS Erin Cross, Washington Park Community Member Hugh Potter, U.S. Department of Education Iliana Vargas, CPS Isis Haley, CPS student Julia Buchholz, CPS Leslie Guzman, Roseland Community Member Mescha Lammy, Principal of Fenger High School Nadia Ochoa, CPS Nia Bailey, CPS	Nicole Fryison, CPS Nicole Hughes, Washington Park Community Member Pamela Price, CPS Preston Lewis, CPS Sandre Willson, Austin Community Member Shar Thomas, Washington Park Community Member Shermann “Dilla” Thomas, Chicago Mahogany Tours Natasha Smith-Walker, Project Exploration Tomer Eres, CPS Tommorrow Snyder, former CPS Program Manager
Community councils, organizations, and other institutions		
Austin Community Action Council Bethel New Life Bronzeville Community Action Council BUILD Far Southside Community Action Council Phalanx Salem Baptist Church		

Appendix - Community Feedback

Detail + Resources

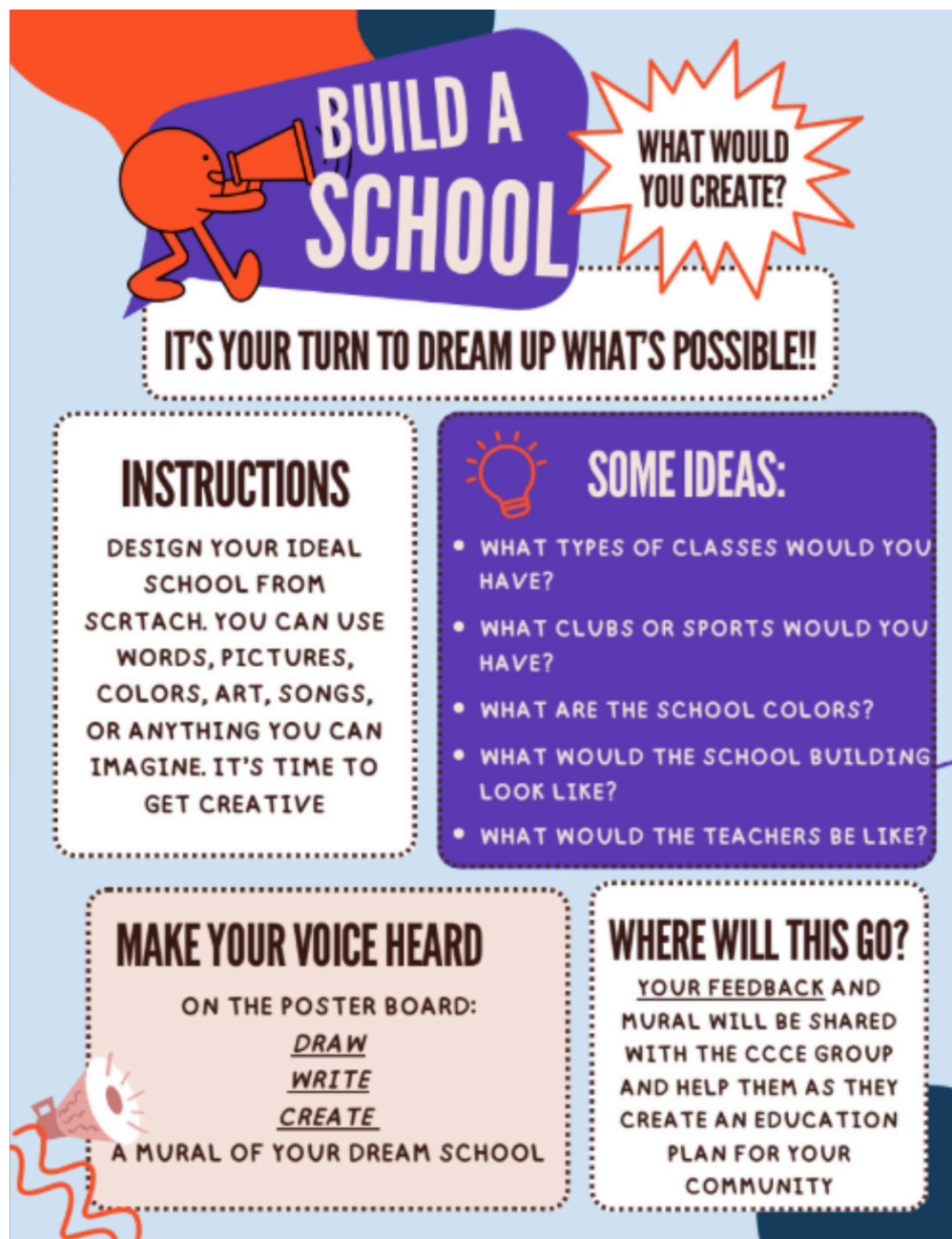
During the course of the Chicago Communities Co-creating Education (CCCE) project, the team sought community input in the form of **surveys, focus groups, a student feedback session, and community meetups**. CPS partnered with several organizations to support the collection of feedback in the following ways:

- CCCE engagement and marketing partner Vera Creative, assisted our efforts by conducting two focus groups (i.e., [Focus Group Report 1](#) & [Focus Group Report 2](#)), collecting [survey](#) responses and note taking during community meetups.
- Vera Creative, also, produced thematic reports to guide CCCE communities in further developing their education plans. Additionally, summarized responses from the community meetups along with the raw data, are included to further discussions.
- The CCCE team along with Phalanx, collected student input from the student feedback sessions. Student feedback sessions' artifacts along with synthesized findings, are present for community members to consider when conceptualizing the educational needs of students in their communities.

Student Feedback Sessions

Student feedback sessions were held at Phalanx, a community organization that helps students across Chicago achieve their educational goals. With the help of the Phalanx team, the CCCE team held student feedback sessions to inquire about what students envisioned education to be in their communities. Students constructed a visual representation of their ideal school and answered questions pertaining to the educational plan. Below is a description of the activity and the student products.

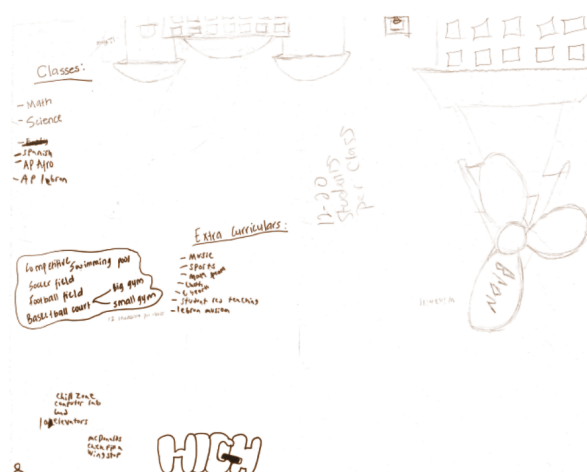
Figure 3. Activity Description



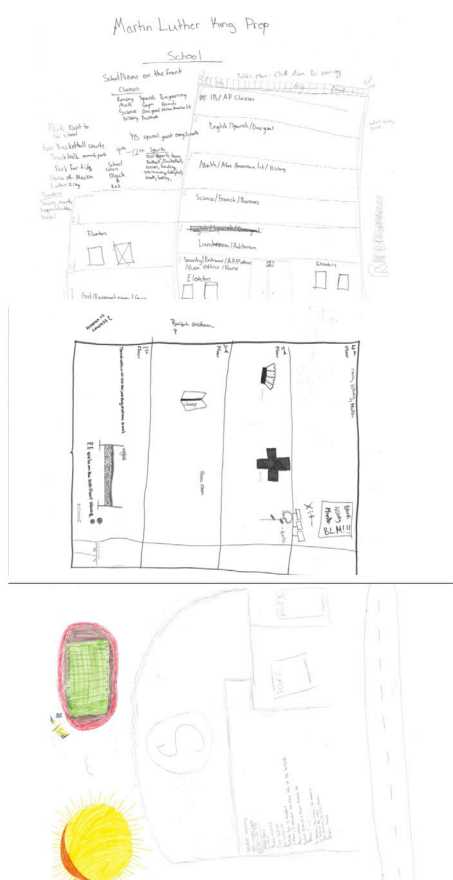
School 1



School 2



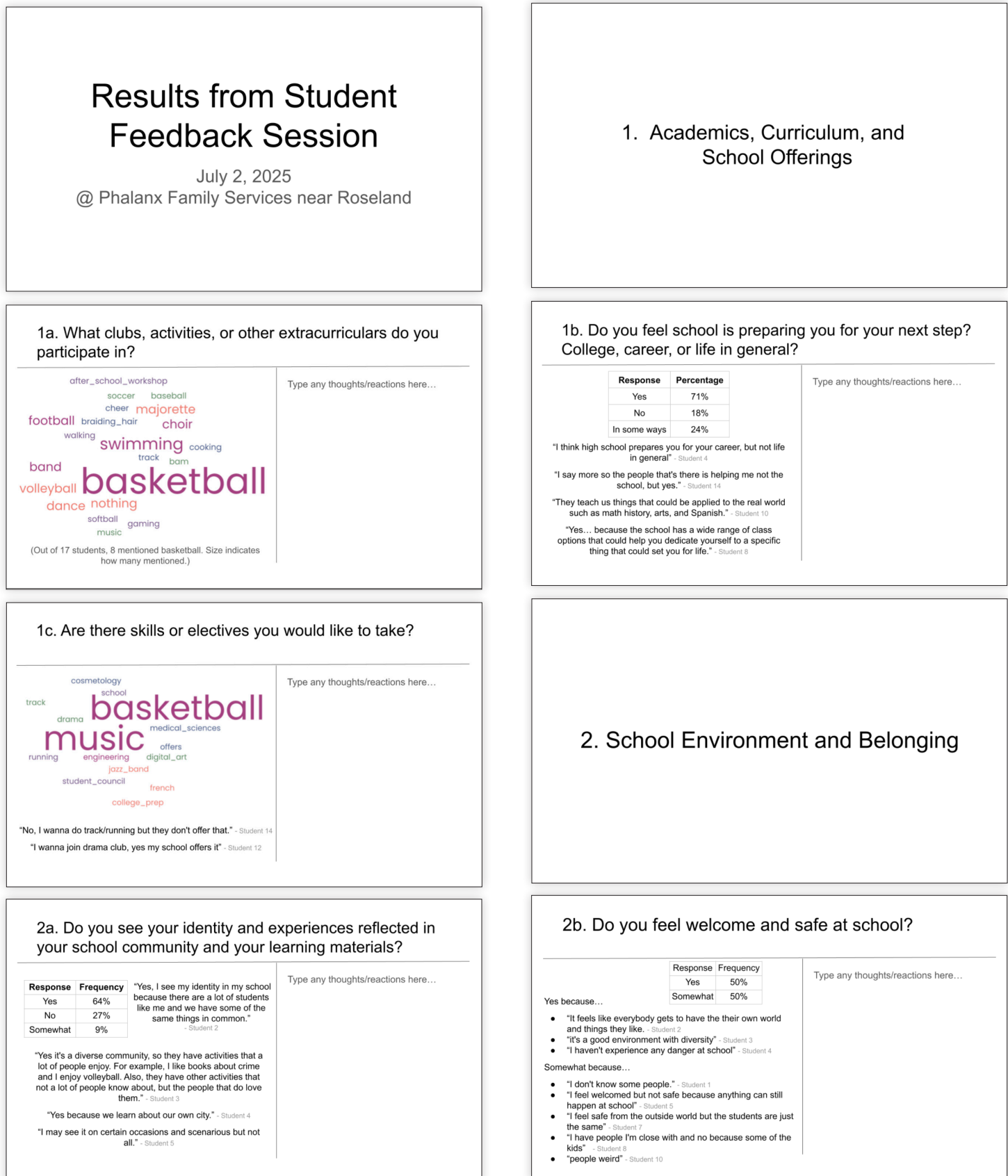
School 3



School 4



Figure 5. Powerpoint summary of student feedback



2c. How could your school better support your mental health/well-being?

hire more counselors
chances to improve grades
mental health programs slow down lessons
check_on_students
do their job
listen_to_students
start school later giving breaks class talks

Type any thoughts/reactions here...

"They could hire more counselors to accommodate more than their two favorite students day." - Student 3
"Try to understand where we are coming from and give us some sort of help." - Student 8

2d. How can adults better listen to students?

"Take more consideration and think about what these students go through outside of school." - Student 9
"One on one conversations if you see them feeling bad" - Student 2
"By letting students talk plus understanding us since we're growing up to become and adults just like them." - Student 1
"Just start understanding us" - Student 9
"This won't never happen. Adults think just because they're older that they know everything." - Student 5
"Put themselves in the students' shoes" - Student 7

Type any thoughts/reactions here...

3. Student Experiences and Engagement

3a. Tell me about your favorite teacher or school staff member. How do they make you feel supported?

Answers included

- Teachers
- Security Guard
- "Ladies at the front desk"
- Counselor

They were students' favorite because they...

- "would listen to me and also tells me right from wrong."
- "helped me during bad times and whenever I had an issue."
- "have supported me."
- "supported by helping me understand my work."
- "understood me when I needed them to."
- "pushed me to be better."
- "make me feel special and supported and were always there when I need them."
- "give me snacks, advice, pep talks, and support on school work."
- "were easy to talk to, talked to me about real life situations."
- "were always in a good mood."
- "were not too judgmental about attendance."

Type any thoughts/reactions here...

3b. What activities or classes do you enjoy the most?

reading biology
one goal
gym_or_sports
chemistry
foreign languages english
hooping math art lunch
self_directed_learning web_design
turn_and_talk
Because the class is...
• Easy
• Fun
• Fits their personality
• Something they are good at
• A space to connect with others
• Interesting
"Hooping because its like meditating."

Type any thoughts/reactions here...

3c. Name one thing that makes it difficult for you to come to school?

distractions
early_start_time
family_responsibilities
laziness
transportation
illness

Type any thoughts/reactions here...

3c. Do you feel like students can give input regarding school decisions?

Out of 14 students, we say the following responses:

Response	Count
Yes	9
No	2
Kinda	2
Don't care	1

Type any thoughts/reactions here...

With students saying things like

"Yes, I have before." - Student 3

"Sometimes yes sometimes no 'cause they make dumb rules." - Student 5

"No, they give surveys but they never listen to what the surveys say" - Student 12

Community Meetup Feedback

Three community meetups were conducted in September in place of the Town Halls described in the Community Handbook. The community meetups were held in person in each CCCE community, where SADT members led discussions on the progress of the education plan. A total of 55 attendees participated, with 13 from Washington Park, 30 from Roseland, and 12 from Austin. Questions were created to help guide discussions. Below are summaries of the responses to the questions per community.

Table 12

Austin	
What is your reason for joining this meeting today?	Sentiments included building community, partnering, offering resources, and general curiosity.
What is your feedback on the belief statement and pillars?	Feedback was positive. Student center approaches, career pathways, and community history were highlighted.
How would you prioritize the pillars or areas of education to work on?	Community members would take a student-centered approach that focuses on the whole child when working on areas, including engagement, mental health, wraparound services, career exploration, and exposure. Some felt that special needs students, as well as school counselors, needed greater attention.
What are some ways we can make the plan achievable and actionable?	Actionable and achievable methods to achieve the plan include: • Intersectioning pillars by building momentum • Familial engagement • Disseminating information across various platforms • Accessible school-and-organizational partnership • Planning, including financial considerations.

Austin	
How can we best contact you to keep up the involvement and feedback for this project?	A majority of attendees preferred email as the main means of communication.

Table 13

Roseland	
What is your reason for joining this meeting today	Reasons for joining included curiosity, community involvement, and incorporating feedback, including aspects of early childhood, healthcare services, faith-based curriculum, and education funding.
What is your feedback on the belief statement and pillars?	Attendees felt there should be more extracurricular activities, legislation, equitable funding, parental involvement, improved information dissemination, and church involvement, with life skills and value systems included.
In your opinion, what would be your top three educational priorities to focus on in Roseland?	Attendees would like to prioritize student involvement, financial literacy programs, mental health, career paths, eliminating the grade system, literacy growth, funding, church involvement, more community involvement, and legal autonomy.

Roseland

What community resources should our kids know about?

While some attendees had resources to offer, others felt resources were limited, didn't exist, or needed to be created.

".... We need to start opening up these school doors to the whole family. If that is your son, that is my son too. We need to learn to get together as a community first...."

"Being a teacher, we don't have the resources to begin with. A lot of teachers have to use their own money to provide resources and tools for their students."

"... we can't give these kids a luxury education or service... Hold these public figures up to their standards, I was told by them directly, we owe education 1billion, but we don't have it."

Community resources include:

- NAMI
- One summer in Chicago
- Youth centers
- Kid Millionaires

What does parent engagement/ involvement look like to you in education?

Parent engagement in education looks like:

- Rebuilding community
- Social and health services for family and youth
- Community and family support
- Free after-school programs
- Acknowledging generational circumstances
- Making schools a community center

What does it look like to respect the different ways families support students?

Respect for families looks like:

- Eliminate demeaning conversations
- Allowing constructive criticism/avoid bias
- Alternate teaching modes so parents can help students
- Incentivize parent involvement
- Respect differing opinions, cultures and parenting styles
- Compromise on important issues and plans

Roseland	
What kind of roles or opportunities would make you feel like a true partner in your child's education?	Roles and opportunities include: • Parent incentives for student perfect attendance • Parent awards (e.g., mother of the week) • Parent education • Joining efforts with educators • More opportunities to communicate with parents • Church and education collaboration • Accessible social services

Table 14

Washington Park	
What is your reason for joining this meeting today?	Reasons include: • Community investment and outreach • Being informed • Provide feedback
What would your ideal school experience include for our students?	Student school experiences include: • Updated technology • Medical staff • Parent Universities • Food pantry • Family services • Safety • Alternative learning methods • On-hands learning • Student-led curriculum • Collaborative environments • Materials to support education

Washington Park

What is your feedback on our belief statement about students graduating ready to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally?

Feedback on students thriving academically, socially, and emotionally was positive, with the only criticism being to include family services.

What is your feedback on the four priority pillars we've identified for Washington Park?

Feedback on the four priority pillars was in accordance with additional inclusions of social services accessible within schools, such as affordable housing and food pantries. They also emphasized school-to-school collaboration, school-community partnerships, and building life skills.

What community organizations & resources do you think our kids should know about but may not? How can we better connect what we already have?

Community resources that students should know are the University of Chicago, churches, alternative transportation, and mentorship programs. Community members can better connect these resources to schools by using alternative transportation to alleviate the school bus shortage, creating a parent-child mentoring program where parents can collaborate on homework help, and offering university students incentives to tutor high school and elementary school students.

Beyond reading and math, what life skills should every student graduate with to be ready for real life?

Life skills that students need include critical thinking, problem solving, financial literacy, and cultural awareness. They should have the ability to regulate their emotions and be competitive.

Washington Park

How can parents, teachers, and neighbors better communicate and work together for our children? What concerns do you have about this process? What neighborhood history should every student know about Washington Park?

Parents, teachers, and neighbors can better communicate and work together by engaging in community historical tours, such as Dilla; ensuring people continue to want to live there.

ORIGINAL SOURCE: [Community Meetup Feedback](#)

Community Maps

- [Link to Austin](#)
- [Link to Roseland](#)
- [Link to Washington Park](#)

Community Handbook

- **Link to digital community handbook** - https://www.cps.edu/contentassets/3e24a12d5af6449dbd912f48d14e3c98/ccce_2025_handbook_digital.pdf

Website

- A full repository of project materials is stored on the official Chicago Communities Co-Creating Education website - <https://www.cps.edu/strategic-initiatives/ccce>