



The Healing-Centered Framework for Chicago Public Schools

Our Commitment to a Trauma-engaged and
Culturally-responsive School District

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Toward our collective wellness

Both trauma and healing are **collective** experiences. Each of us has a role to play in promoting healing for others and addressing our own healing.

- ✔ **To our students:** We see your fundamental strength and wholeness and hear your call for more support. You are a source of strength for your peers and a source of joy for the adults that have the privilege to know you. We commit to providing you with the tools you need to be agents of your own wellness.
- ✔ **To our teachers:** We see the healing you pour into your students each day. Your relationships with our children are the bedrock of their school experience. We commit to supporting you with tools you need to create healing-centered classrooms and investing in the resources and environment you need to be well.
- ✔ **To our staff:** We see that whether your role is social worker, counselor, security guard, nutrition staff, or many others, you form critical trusting relationships with our students. We commit to giving you the tools to be agents of healing for our students throughout the school day and the resources to support your own wellness.
- ✔ **To our administrators and district leaders:** We see your unique role as the foundation of each school, bringing steadfast leadership to our complex learning environments in service of what is best for our students. You create school environments that can be shelters of healing. We commit to supporting you with the tools to do so and the resources to support your well-being.
- ✔ **To our families and caregivers:** We see how you work tirelessly to support your children in their education and in their development as people, even in the face of the most challenging circumstances. We know that healing takes place both in and beyond the classroom. We commit to increasing access to the resources you need to provide this healing, while also sharing tools and strategies to support your own wellness.
- ✔ **To our community partners:** We see the passion you have for supporting our students and staff, both in and beyond the classroom. We commit to building the infrastructure needed to maximize your contributions while providing you with the support and grace needed for your own wellness.

*This commitment to our collective wellness
is the foundation for our **vision of a
healing-centered district.***

Framework at a glance

STAKEHOLDERS

Four key pillars of the CPS community, in our roles as healers and as agents of our own healing

COMPONENTS

Five core dimensions of healing in our district that apply to each stakeholder group

EQUITY

A principle woven throughout the framework to ensure we all have access to the healing that meets our unique needs and goals



About this framework

In the fall of 2019, Chicago Public Schools (CPS), led by the Office of Social and Emotional Learning (OSEL), embarked on a long-term effort to transform CPS into a more healing-centered district. We realized that to fully achieve our five-year vision, we needed to work toward ensuring collective wellness for CPS students, staff, families, caregivers, and communities. Equity is at the heart of the CPS vision, as we seek to give all students the support and opportunities they need to be successful in college, career, and civic life.

The following pages outline the vision for our healing-centered district. This vision represents a significant investment in the wellness, safety, and support for each and every CPS student. However, this framework is only the beginning. We will need a commitment from our leaders, staff, families and community partners to build the healing-centered district that we know our students deserve.

WHERE THIS VISION COMES FROM

This vision was developed under the leadership of OSEL, in partnership with Chicago Beyond—an impact investor fighting for all young people to achieve their fullest human potential through investing in organizations, ideas, and individuals. It has been shaped by ideas from **hundreds of teachers, staff, students, administrators, families, and community partners** who graciously shared their time and wisdom. Children First Fund, the Chicago Public Schools Foundation, collaborated on developing this vision and engaging the community of partners and supporters dedicated to the success of Chicago's students. Additionally, this vision has been built on a foundation of **national best practices** from other leading school districts and education networks. It represents a true **district-wide effort** with contributions from many CPS departments, including but not limited to:

- ✔ Family and Community Engagement in Education (FACE2)
- ✔ Office of Diverse Learners and Support Services (ODLSS)
- ✔ Office of Equity
- ✔ Office of School Counseling and Postsecondary Advising (OSCPA)
- ✔ Office of School Safety and Security (OSSS)
- ✔ Office of Student Health and Wellness (OSHW)
- ✔ Office of Student Protections and Title IX (OSP)



The Impact of Trauma, the Opportunity for Healing.

TRAUMA IS...

Our response to an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening. Specifically, a traumatic experience overwhelms our ability to cope and has lasting negative **effects** on our functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

The “Three E’s” of trauma:

Event, series of events, or circumstances

Experience of the events

Effect of the experience, both short and long term

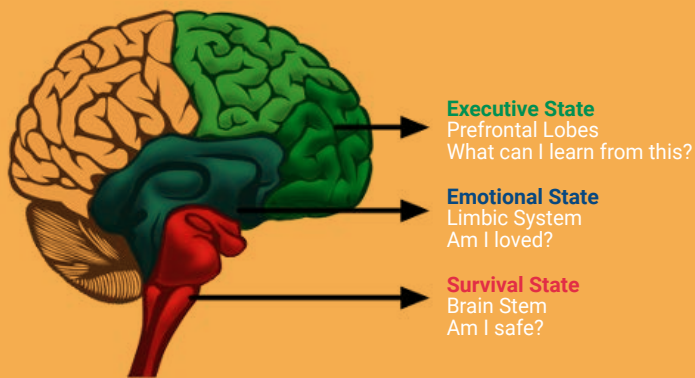


Image Source: Conscious Discipline

IMPACT OF TRAUMA

Trauma physically changes the way our brains work. Trauma “**short-circuits**” the **more complex thinking and feeling** parts of the brain and keeps us in a fearful survival state. We stay focused on safety and enter “fight, flight, or freeze” mode even when there are no threats.

Traumatic experiences in childhood can disrupt our ability to learn and can lead to serious long-term consequences. For example, the famous Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study found that as we experience more potentially traumatic events in childhood (like abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, or incarceration of a family member), we become more likely to experience life-threatening conditions, like cancer, stroke, and diabetes, or early death.

This groundbreaking research was confirmed by several additional studies* with diverse populations that represent our CPS community and include a wider set of adverse experiences (like community violence, bullying, and racism). Across all of this research, it's clear that these traumatic experiences are incredibly common. In fact, **the majority of us have experienced potentially traumatic events in childhood.**

THE POWER OF HEALING

Negative outcomes from traumatic experiences are far from guaranteed. Traumatic events are only traumatic if we experience them that way. In fact, we can build protective barriers that prevent our brains from short-circuiting and help our brains return to their best way of working. This is where CPS comes in.

Research shows that healthy adult-child relationships, like those between school staff and students, safe and supportive school environments, and targeted resources and interventions all help build those protective factors. This effect is strongest when we elevate student voice, co-construct experiences grounded in a healthy sense of identity and belonging, celebrate our students' cultures, and promote relationships anchored in dignity. **We know that to support our students, we must promote the healing needed to build protective barriers and buffer against trauma.**



* One set of studies comes from the Philadelphia ACE Project, including “Adverse Childhood Experiences: Expanding the Concept of Adversity” For more information, see www.philadelphiaaces.org

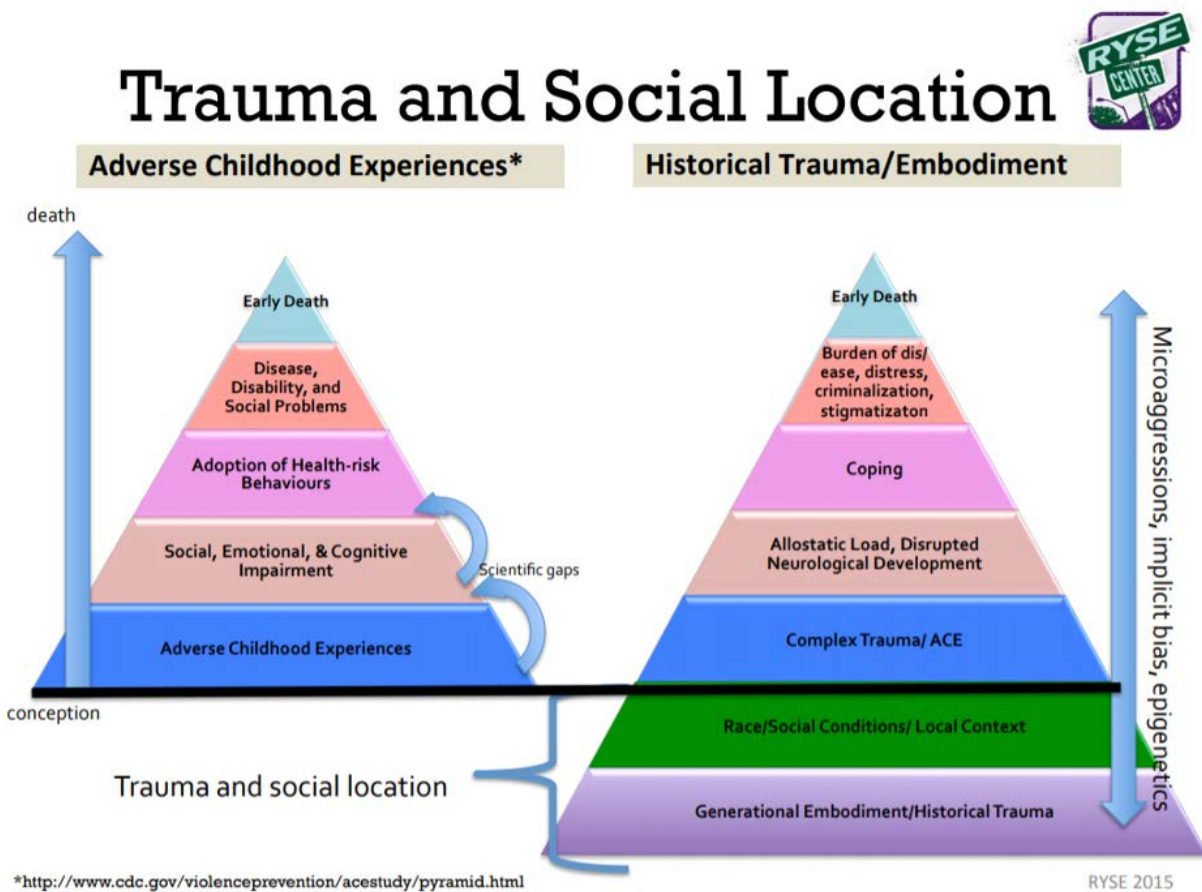
Trauma is a systemic issue

We know that a majority of us experience trauma during our lives. However, experiencing trauma is not simply a result of random chance or individual life choices. People who are a part of historically oppressed groups — whether due to race, immigration status, income level, gender identity, sexual orientation, zip code, or other factors — are more likely to experience trauma as a result of that oppression. Moreover, these factors “intersect,” compounding the impact of trauma as experiences of discrimination and oppression increase. **This is why trauma is fundamentally an issue of equity.**

THE DEEPER ROOTS OF TRAUMA

As a part of the ACEs study, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the “ACES pyramid”—a conceptual framework to illustrate how traumatic experiences as a child ultimately translate into long-term life-threatening conditions.

In 2015, the team at RYSE Youth Center in Oakland shared a modified version of this pyramid, adding layers to highlight the deeper roots of trauma and explore why these traumatic experiences occur in the first place (see both original pyramid and modified pyramid below). The CDC has since adopted the more complete picture offered by this pyramid.



RACE, SOCIAL CONDITIONS, AND LOCAL CONTEXT

This layer accounts for the **systemic role of social conditions and local context** in perpetuating trauma. For example, in Chicago, minoritized racial and ethnic groups are disproportionately affected by trauma through experiences like chronic microaggressions; structural racial discrimination in policing; and poor social conditions such as poverty, housing instability, and community violence. **At CPS, we know that inequitable access to quality educational opportunities can also perpetuate cycles of trauma. This underscores the importance of centering equity in our healing-centered vision and our five-year vision for the district.**

GENERATIONAL EMBODIMENT AND HISTORICAL TRAUMA

This deeper layer recognizes the growing body of research highlighting how **trauma can be transmitted across generations**. For example, in Chicago, this includes the impact of redlining in creating segregated neighborhoods, racialized hiring practices that widen racial wealth gaps, and multi-generational incarceration. We must admit that CPS alone will not be able to reverse the historical conditions that lead to traumatic experiences **However, we believe that we can begin to address historical and current harms rooted in racism by acknowledging our past and creating the space and tools to effectively promote collective healing.**

The need for healing, today

Traumatic experiences are not a new phenomenon, nor is the importance of addressing trauma with appropriate support. However, on top of existing sources of trauma, 2020 brought multiple traumatic crises to Chicago families, including threats to health and economic stability as a result of COVID-19 and lasting legacies of systemic racism.

THE NEED FOR HEALING IS MORE URGENT NOW THAN EVER.

While families nationally are facing these crises, these issues have local nuance.

Since the beginning of 2020, COVID-19 has affected both the health and economic stability of tens of thousands of Chicago families.¹ Due in part to a history of redlining, Chicago remains one of the most segregated cities in the country— with life expectancy varying by as much as 30 years from neighborhood to neighborhood.² Research suggests that more than 80 percent of high school youth in Chicago have been exposed to violence in their lifetime³ and that this violence is concentrated in communities with high rates of disinvestment. In the summer of 2020 in particular, our students and their families experienced disproportionately high rates of community violence. We must actively counter these longstanding sources of trauma with healing.

Chicago is working to become a more trauma-informed city, and a critical next step is transforming CPS into a healing-centered school district.

In May of 2019, newly-elected Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot laid out plans to transform Chicago into a trauma-informed city by training city employees to better understand the impact of trauma.⁴ More recently, the city committed more than \$8 million to strengthen Chicago's mental health system. These investments are a good start, but the long-term prevalence and impact of trauma in many of Chicago's communities requires a collective, city-wide healing effort. As the National Child Traumatic Stress Network highlights, "school personnel are uniquely situated to identify, respond to, and be impacted by students' traumatic stress symptoms, due to their central role in children's lives."⁵ **At CPS, we play a critical role in the lives of Chicago's young people, and we have an opportunity to promote healing throughout the school day. We believe it is imperative to build on our foundation of supports and transform our district into a place of healing for every student.**

¹ Chicago COVID Dashboard, retrieved October 2020

² NYU Langone Health, "Large Life Expectancy Gaps in U.S. Cities Linked to Racial & Ethnic Segregation by Neighborhood" (2019)

³ Deborah Gorman-Smith, Lauren Feig, Franklin Cosey-Gay & Molly Coeling, "Strengthening Families and Communities to Prevent Youth Violence: A Public Health Approach" (2014)

⁴ Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Inauguration Speech May 2019.

⁵ National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Schools Committee. "Creating, supporting, and sustaining trauma-informed schools: A system framework" (2017)

A message from our CEO and CEdO



To Our CPS Families, Staff, and Community Partners,

As the leaders of Chicago Public Schools (CPS), we believe passionately in the boundless potential of our students and school communities. We can't forget, however, that many in our city have been touched by trauma, especially at this moment in our history. The ripple effects of a global pandemic and the political and social unrest that has arisen in our country, have left their mark on our communities, and we must begin the process of healing.

This document publicly outlines CPS' commitment to becoming a healing-centered school district. It includes interventions to support students in the classroom and strategies for creating safe, supportive learning environments where all children feel a sense of belonging. It also invests in the wellness of our educators and staff, who work tirelessly to provide our children with the education they need to be successful in college, career, and civic life.

Chicago is the largest school district in the nation to take this bold approach to healing. We thank the hundreds of families, educators, and community members who have worked together to craft this framework, especially our partners at Chicago Beyond, an organization that is rooted in equity and has stood with CPS from the beginning to support this effort.

The launch of our Healing-Centered Framework is only the first step in what we know will be an exciting journey. Moving forward, we will work hand-in-hand with all of our families, educators, and partners to translate this healing-centered vision into practice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janice K. Jackson".

Janice K. Jackson , EdD
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public School

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LaTanya D. McDade".

LaTanya D. McDade
Chief Education Officer
Chicago Public Schools

THE VISION



Our Healing-centered Vision:

To transform CPS into a **trauma-engaged, culturally-responsive** school district.

WHICH MEANS:

- **Trauma-engaged:** Not only understanding and being aware of trauma, but proactively promoting collective healing as a whole school system while responsively meeting the individual wellness needs of each student.
- **Culturally-responsive:** Centering equity in healing by promoting a liberatory consciousness*, recognizing a broad understanding of trauma (including historic and generational trauma), and affirming all cultures in the healing process.



* A 'liberatory consciousness' can be defined as recognizing systems of oppression and the harms they cause while intentionally challenging assumptions and beliefs to reimagine those systems toward collective freedom.

The Healing-Centered Framework

This framework is designed to articulate the requirements for being a school district focused on healing and wellness. This section aims to bring more clarity to what being “healing-centered” will look and feel like for the different members of our CPS community. It also outlines the five components of a healing-centered district and how they apply to each stakeholder.

STAKEHOLDERS

Four key pillars of the CPS community, in our roles as healers and as agents of our own healing

COMPONENTS

Five core dimensions of healing in our district that apply to each stakeholder group

EQUITY

A principle woven throughout the framework to ensure we all have access to the healing that meets our unique needs and goals



To achieve our healing-centered vision, we must engage all members of our community. We have defined goals for four **stakeholder groups**:

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL STAFF AS HEALERS:

CPS schools are safe, supportive environments where **all staff** actively promote mental wellness and rally around students who have been most impacted by trauma and could benefit from more targeted supports.

STAFF AS AGENTS OF THEIR OWN HEALING AND WELLNESS: All **staff** have the necessary resources to actively support their own wellness, feel empowered to do so, and have strong, consistent support from all levels of leadership.

STUDENTS AS AGENTS OF THEIR OWN HEALING AND WELLNESS: Every **student** plays an active role in their own wellness and has access to the necessary resources to heal and, build the skills to live healthy lives.

FAMILIES, CAREGIVERS, AND COMMUNITIES BOTH AS HEALERS AND OWNERS OF THEIR OWN HEALING AND WELLNESS: Families, caregivers, and community members are valued participants in the healing process for CPS students and **advocate** for the supports they might need to be well for themselves and for their students.

To achieve our healing-centered vision, CPS must employ a holistic strategy. Therefore, we are focused on driving change through **five components**:

- 1. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS:** How staff, students, families, caregivers, and communities **learn about trauma and mental wellness** in order to promote healing
- 2. SKILLS AND STRATEGIES:** The strategies staff, students, families, caregivers, and communities develop to **cope with stressors, manage/prevent trauma, and promote wellness**
- 3. CULTURE AND CLIMATE:** How the **physical environment and the culture of a school** promote wellness and belonging for staff, students, families, caregivers, and communities
- 4. RESOURCES:** The combination of **people, programs, and other resources** (both internal to CPS and external) that are needed to prevent and address trauma and promote healing
- 5. CRISIS SUPPORT:** How the CPS community (including district leaders, staff, students, families, caregivers, and community partners) **provides support and promotes recovery** when members of this community experience a potentially trauma-inducing crisis

Our journey to becoming a healing-centered district will require CPS to launch initiatives across each of these components, prioritizing the individuals most impacted by trauma. **The Appendix to this document includes examples of what these components might look like in our schools and district as a whole, for each of the four stakeholder groups.**

The core values that shape our work

The term “healing-centered” was introduced⁶ by Dr. Shawn Ginwright as an alternative to a “trauma-informed” orientation. As Dr. Ginwright describes it, a healing-centered approach to addressing trauma requires a different question that moves beyond “what happened to you” to “what’s right with you.” In a healing-centered orientation, individuals exposed to trauma are agents in their own well-being rather than victims of traumatic events.

Within CPS, being healing-centered embodies four core values, abbreviated in the acronym **CARE**.

Collective Healing

The work starts with recognizing that everyone is impacted by trauma, and every individual has a role in the healing experience for themselves, for others and for communities.

Asset-based Approaches

This work must be approached from a perspective of promise and not prognosis. The goal is to transition from trauma-informed to trauma-engaged, asking not what is wrong with you but what is right with you. To assist individuals with seeing beyond what is in front of them, they must be aware of the root causes of the behavior and the root causes of the trauma.

Relationships

The ability for students to have authentic connection with supportive adults is critical for healing. We must invest in relationships early and often. Adults must be present, empathetic and willing to be open and honest in an effort to create an environment where youth feel safe to share. To do this, adults must be active in their own healing and learning process.

Environment

Schools must be welcoming environments for every child, affording them the opportunity to see positive representations of themselves and the space to see beyond their current circumstances to their possibilities. By igniting dreams and aspirations, our schools will promote student growth and positive identity development in the journey to achieve them.

¹¹ Shawn Ginwright, “The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement” (2018)



*“We don’t heal in isolation
but in community.”*

S. KELLEY HARRELL

A message from Liz Dozier



As the former principal of Fenger High School in Roseland and the founder and CEO of Chicago Beyond, I am excited by the district's bold vision for a healing-centered future. Since 2019, Chicago Beyond has partnered with Chicago Public Schools to help articulate this vision. It boldly underscores the importance of changing the question from "what's wrong with you" to "what's happened to you" and, as importantly, centering assets not deficits. CPS students, and the staff and families who support them, have boundless potential.

However, many students operate in challenging, potentially traumatic environments. These circumstances are symptoms of longstanding inequities like systemic racism and chronic disinvestment. I have witnessed how these traumatic experiences can interrupt a young person's path to achieving their full potential, whether that's academic success, strong relationships, or opportunities in career and life. This is why healing is so important.

I particularly appreciate the holistic and comprehensive nature of healing described in this vision. Healing is not just about a single new program or a new intervention. While targeted support is incredibly important, this vision is about ensuring every adult in the school building has the same understanding of how trauma impacts others and has the same playbook of tools and strategies to address trauma. The vision also ensures school staff have opportunities to create an environment that heals rather than exacerbates trauma—a school that is welcoming, culturally-responsive, and recognizes the strengths of all people and communities in Chicago. When taken together, this holistic and collective healing can truly impact outcomes for our students. While this looks different for each school, at Fenger High School this manifested in dramatically decreased dropout rates (from 20% to under 2%) and a doubled graduation rate. And perhaps more importantly, it was the intangibles—how we allowed kids to be kids, helped them to feel stable and well, and empowered them to show up in ways that were more whole and more true to themselves.

While I'm excited, I understand the challenge of accomplishing such an audacious goal. This is a long-term journey to create sustainable change, one that demands time and resources. I challenge our city's philanthropic institutions and social investors to seize this opportunity and partner with Children First Fund to invest in this vision to cultivate the trauma-engaged and culturally-responsive district our city's young people deserve.

A stylized, handwritten signature of the name "Liz" in dark ink.

Liz Dozier
Founder and CEO of Chicago Beyond and
Former Principal of Fenger High School

THE ROAD AHEAD

A strong foundation

This work builds on a strong foundation set by the Office of Social & Emotional Learning (OSEL). For years, the OSEL team has worked towards four aims:

1. Developing supportive school and classroom communities grounded in caring relationships among all stakeholders
2. Promoting students' social and emotional development through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
3. Fostering staff mindsets and skills that respond to student behaviors compassionately, restoratively, and equitably
4. Promoting the development of self awareness, self management, social awareness, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making skills

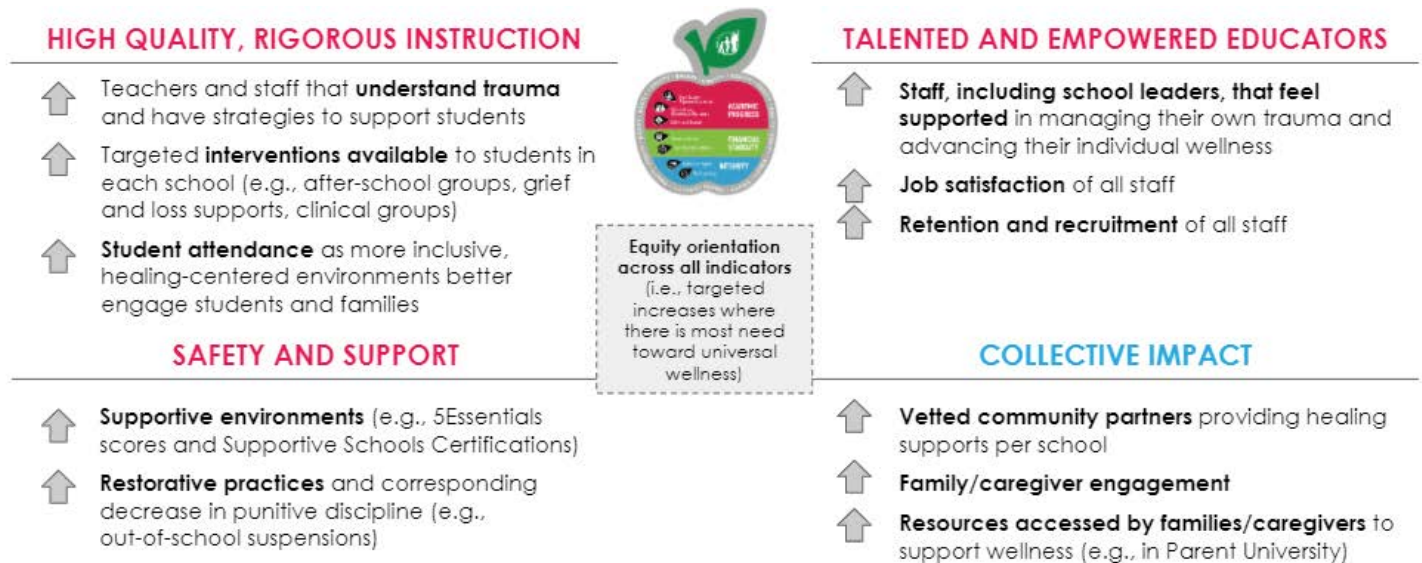
To achieve these aims, OSEL has partnered with CPS schools, networks, departments, and community organizations to develop various strategies, programs, and tools. With the Healing-centered Framework, we are recognizing that not one strategy, program, tool, or office at CPS is enough to achieve the goal of becoming a more trauma- aware, informed, and responsive school district.

The Healing-centered Framework highlights the opportunity to build on the work of OSEL to provide school communities with restorative and trauma-sensitive supports and is an opportunity to bring together the many offices that work to ensure the whole school, whole community, and whole child are our focus.



What we plan to accomplish

By building a healing-centered district, CPS will increase collective healing and wellness for staff, students, families, caregivers, and community. **Through this effort, CPS is making an unprecedented investment in the wellness of our people.** This commitment represents a deepening investment toward the goals we outlined in our five-year vision. Among many returns, we expect to see the following results:



Equity is central to how we define success. We approach healing with an orientation toward “targeted universalism.” This means we pursue collective wellness by acknowledging and addressing each individual’s experiences and goals. It also means supporting each person’s unique wellness needs and goals through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports and culturally-responsive approaches and resources. Healing is not a “one size fits all” approach and will look different for each member of the CPS community. For more on targeted universalism and the CPS approach to equity, please visit equity.cps.edu.

This Healing-Centered Framework is only the starting point of our multi-year transformational journey. At this stage, we are mobilizing cross-functional teams to launch initiatives that will begin to translate the vision into reality for our entire CPS community. This includes things like:

- ✓ Curating a coordinated set of professional development opportunities
- ✓ Launching guiding principles for trauma-engaged practice developed by teachers for teachers
- ✓ Developing and sharing resources for families and caregivers
- ✓ Building a comprehensive set of resources and supports for staff wellness
- ✓ Building the infrastructure for a robust network of community partners to support each school

We are incredibly excited to continue expanding this work as we learn more from our efforts and from our conversations with you. **The magnitude of this endeavor is large, both in scale and in importance to our CPS family. Together, we can create a healthier and more supportive district for all students.**

A message from Hellen Antonopoulos



In 2016, The Office of Social & Emotional Learning (OSEL) was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to address the comprehensive behavioral and mental health needs of students. This project, known as Healing Trauma Together, created 10 trauma-sensitive high school communities that promote student resiliency through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) lens. The program promoted awareness of trauma; developed teaming structures for trauma-focused social, emotional, and behavioral

health services; and established community partnerships to support the delivery of SEL and mental health services to students.

Healing Trauma Together proved to be successful and has informed our work as we strive to continue meeting the needs of our students. Through that project, we affirmed the power of a trusted, caring adult in the life of a child; the importance of a system of care; and the value of a school-wide effort. Most importantly, it reminded us that to truly care for the whole child, we must also mind the whole school and community.

We are all responsible for both the academic success and the social-emotional well-being and development of our students. We also have a responsibility to one another and the other adults who make a difference in students' lives—whether as teachers, caregivers, mentors, role models, or advocates.

This sets the Healing-centered Framework apart from other efforts in that we are focusing on our collective care and healing.

I am grateful to the OSEL family, our colleagues across the district, and our many community partners who have contributed and supported this effort, whether directly in the planning and development of the Healing-centered Framework, or through their mighty and tireless work as champions for students. **I look forward to our journey ahead as our district continues to lead the way in setting the standard for trauma-engaged, culturally-responsive, social and emotional learning.**

Sincerely,



Hellen Antonopoulos, LCSW
Executive Director,
Office of Social Emotional Learning

APPENDIX & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Vision for a Healing-centered district - detailed

The following four pages contain statements that characterize what healing-centered practice looks like across each of the stakeholders and components outlined in the framework. However, we know that healing is not a checklist. We should not think of success as compliance against these goals, but rather an orientation toward collective wellness that manifests in the knowledge, attitude, skills, actions, and behaviors below. These more concrete examples come from our conversations with a variety of stakeholders within our school and district community. However, these ideas are not meant to be exhaustive, as we know that healing takes many shapes and forms and there is no one size fits all approach. Instead, these examples paint a picture of our desired future state, one where our staff, students, families, caregivers, and communities experience collective healing, ultimately in service of the long-term success of our CPS students.

Schools and school staff as healers

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- **All staff** understand the **prevalence and impact of trauma** and can recognize a trauma response
- **All staff** understand the **diverse cultures and experiences** of their students
- **All staff** have awareness of their **biases** and how these might impact relationships

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

- **All staff** have **strategies to support students experiencing trauma** and encourage student wellness
- **All staff** understand how their role can **contribute** to creating a trauma-shielding, trauma-reducing, or trauma-inducing environment in the classroom and school as a whole

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

- **All schools** create a **supportive school climate** (e.g., culture validates the importance of mental wellness and de-stigmatizes trauma; environment and physical spaces are trauma-reducing and welcoming spaces for healing)
- **All staff** seek to understand “**what’s right with students**” rather than “what’s wrong with students”
- **All staff** **prioritize the needs of students first, teaming to provide care** as needed, rather than raising role-limiting or title-specific barriers (i.e., shared responsibility culture)
- **All administrators** **design a healing-centered culture** and give staff the support needed to make it happen
- **All schools** **effectively implement restorative practices** with buy-in from all staff
- **All school staff** **take responsibility** for the way they promote or impede **restorative practices**

RESOURCES

- **All schools** effectively deliver a “**menu**” of **Tier 2 and 3 trauma interventions** appropriate for their student populations
- **All schools** **implement MTSS effectively, including effective trauma-engaged Behavioral Health Teams (BHTs)** (e.g., considering trauma history prior to diagnosis, training in understanding students’ mental health)
- **All schools** are **staffed with enough culturally-responsive mental health practitioners** to support the needs of the student population
- **All schools** have the **space, time, and ability to implement proactive (Tier 1) practices** in addition to responsive (Tier 2/3) practices

CRISIS SUPPORT

- **Any student** displaying signs of trauma is able to **receive individualized services and/or crisis support that is culturally-relevant**, relatable, and holds the young person at the center
- **All schools** have **strong crisis teams or BHTs** that effectively respond to suicide risk, respond to students in distress, refer students for Tier 3 support, and provide ongoing healing after a traumatic event (e.g., the loss of a student) beyond immediate “stabilization” response

Staff healing and mental wellness

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- **All staff** understand the **prevalence and impact of trauma, including secondary or vicarious trauma**, and can recognize a trauma response in other adults
- **All staff** build the capacity to **recognize their own current and past traumas in order to address them**

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

- **All staff** have **resources/strategies** to self-regulate and help colleagues to manage **vicarious or secondary trauma**

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

- **Staff trauma and loss is formally acknowledged** and validated by administrators and Central Office
- **All school leaders** model and encourage **real, personalized staff self-care**
- **Staff that take on additional roles** in supporting healing **are recognized**
- **All schools have a supportive school climate for staff** (e.g., culture validates the importance of mental wellness and de-stigmatizes trauma, trauma-reducing school environments, welcoming and inviting spaces for all staff, physical space for staff healing)

RESOURCES

- **All staff** have **equitable access to mental health resources** as needed and are **aware of these resources** before they are needed
- **All staff** have **appropriate structures to support each other and themselves** in healing and mental wellness (e.g., peer support groups)

CRISIS SUPPORT

- **All staff** feel supported through the **initial response to a crisis** with clear structures, processes, and paths to seek additional support
- **All staff** have access to **school, district, or community-based resources** for the **full healing process after the initial “stabilization” response to a crisis**

Students as agents of their own healing and wellness

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- **All students** have access to intersectional, sensitive, and **culturally appropriate mental health instruction** as part of their health curriculum
- **All students** have a developmentally appropriate and culturally-responsive understanding of the **prevalence and impact of trauma**

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

- **All students** have access to quality, **culturally-responsive social-emotional skill building** as a part of the school day
- **All students**, as “experts of their own experiences,” have opportunities to **lead trauma and healing efforts** and develop leadership skills in the process
- **All students** understand their right to **identify content that may be triggering** for them and seek an alternative and/or support in processing, as appropriate
- **All students** have a path to **self-refer for mental wellness resources** any time throughout the year, and **know how to do so**

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

- **All students** feel that they have the **voice to advocate for a school where they belong and feel represented**

RESOURCES

- **All students** that may receive support for mental wellness or trauma **understand the supports available and are equitable partners in selecting the best option(s)**
- **All students** have access to **structures to support each other’s mental wellness** and healing (e.g., peer mentors, student support groups)
- **All students** are able to provide **input on what Tier 2 and 3 trauma interventions** work well for them

CRISIS SUPPORT

- **All students** that have recently experienced a major traumatic event (e.g., loss of a student) **have the necessary tools/resources needed to support one another after a crisis**

Families, caregivers, and communities

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- **All family, caregivers, and community stakeholders** are aware of **what trauma is (and is not)** and have information that helps **destigmatize** trauma and mental wellness
- **All family, caregivers, and community stakeholders** understand the **prevalence and impact of trauma**

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

- **All family members** of students receiving support for mental wellness or trauma **are informed of the supports, know how to reinforce them at home, and are equitable partners in selecting the best options**, as appropriate
- **All families and community stakeholders** have access to strategies that **support healing and mental wellness outside of the school day**

CULTURE AND CLIMATE

- **All families and caregivers** view their child's school as a **welcoming and supportive environment** (e.g., positive environment during the school day, safe places to go during non-school hours)
- **All families and caregivers** are valued as **key parts of the healing process** (i.e., in the parent bill of rights)
- **All CPS resources** for families, caregivers, and communities are **trauma-engaged and culturally-responsive** (i.e., beyond those focused on trauma, healing, and mental wellness)

RESOURCES

- **All schools** have knowledge of **agencies and community partners to connect students' families, caregivers, and key members of their community** to appropriate **mental wellness resources**, as needed
- **Community organizations** have clear guidance on **how to effectively partner** with schools and students, and how to do so in a **trauma-engaged and culturally-responsive way**
- **All families and caregivers** have awareness of **resources that address basic needs**
- **All families and caregivers** have a clear **understanding of the interventions** for their child and feel **empowered to communicate with the school** to ask questions about those interventions
- When appropriate, **families and caregivers have the opportunity to participate in healing with their student**, whether provided by the district or through community partners and/or sister agencies

CRISIS SUPPORT

- In the event of a crisis, **all students' families and caregivers** (including members of their community) **feel supported, informed, and connected to relevant resources**

Bibliography

To define our vision for a healing-centered district, we began by reviewing national best practices from other school districts and other organizations. Below is a reference of some of the reports and framework that served as a baseline for this work.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work has been shaped by many hands. This vision would not be the same without the support and investment from each of you.

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Thank you to the members of each of these groups that joined one or more community advisory sessions over the course of the first year of this work. Your input was critical to shaping our vision.

Alternatives, Inc.	Juvenile Protective Association (JPA)
Asian Human Services	Lurie Children's Hospital Center for Childhood Resilience
Between Friends	Lurie Children's Hospital - Adolescent Medicine
Black on Both Sides	Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI)
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council	Metropolitan Family Services
Broadway Youth Center	Mikva Challenge
BUILD	Mindful Practices
Calm Classroom	National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Collaborate for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)	Organic Oneness
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE)	Phalanx Family Services
Chicago Children's Advocacy Center	Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago
Chicago Department of Public Health	Rainbows for All Children
Chicago Freedom School	Resilience
Communities in Schools	Riveredge Hospital
DePaul Family and Community Services	Spine and Body Health
Educators for Excellence (E4E)	The Kedzie Center
Enlace Chicago	Thrive Chicago
Great Lakes Mental Health Technology Transfer Center	UCAN
Hartgrove Behavioral Health System & Garfield Park Behavioral Hospital	Umoja
Healing Empowering & Learning Professionals (H.E.L.P.)	Under the Rainbow: Mount Sinai Hospital
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Healthcare Alternative Systems	University of Chicago Medicine: Urban Health Initiative
Illinois Collaboration On Youth (ICOY)	University of Chicago Urban Labs
Illinois Safe Schools Alliance	Youth Advocate Programs
	Youth Guidance
	Youth Outreach Services

OUR PARTNERS AT CHICAGO BEYOND

Chicago Beyond is an impact investor **fighting for all young people to achieve their fullest human potential through investing in organizations, ideas, and individuals** (for more about Chicago Beyond please visit www.chicagobeyond.org). The Chicago Beyond team stood side-by-side with us from the initial conversations to launching this vision and everything in between. The team brought energy, support, connections, and thought partnership to ensure this critical work moved as urgently, audaciously, and equitably as possible. Thank you to each member of the Chicago Beyond team that supported this work, including:

Liz Dozier	Eva Liu
Jon Ervin	Jenna O'Brien
Katie Hickey	David Pellegrini
Dr. Nneka Jones Tapia	Alfonso Tapia

CHILDREN FIRST FUND: INVEST WITH IMPACT

Children First Fund serves as a knowledge hub and liaison between Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and its community of partners, securing and organizing resources that advance CPS's mission to provide a high-quality public education that prepares every child in every neighborhood for success in college, career, and civic life. CFF works with donors to advance equity in education, resourcing transformative district initiatives, providing resources directly to schools and families, and matching funding or in-kind gifts with the students, schools, and teachers that need them most.

Achieving this comprehensive and holistic vision will require dedicated effort in the coming years, as well as partnership from the full community of CPS supporters. Funders have already joined Children First Fund and CPS in addressing trauma, supporting training for more than 1,000 staff members in small group evidence-based interventions, including Rainbows' Silver Linings, a curriculum to support students experiencing grief and loss and help them process community trauma (such as a nationwide pandemic).

As the district's only fiscal sponsor, Children First Fund is positioned to help direct your resources for maximum impact. We look forward to partnering with you on this vision to cultivate the trauma-engaged and culturally-responsive district our city's young people deserve.

Get in touch with us at:

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To cite this framework, please reference: Chicago Public Schools (March 2021). Chicago Public Schools' Healing-Centered Framework: Creating a Trauma-Engaged and Culturally-Responsive School District, Chicago, IL.

Version 1.0, 2021

Design by Jessica Morrow Design | jessicamorrowdesign.com