

Theory of Change: To be effective, urban schools must have a strategic and collaborative principal, teachers who work together and benefit from high-quality professional development, clear instructional guidance and materials, positive relationships with parents and community members, and a learning climate that enables students to feel safe and motivated to do their best.

Program Goal: To improve student learning through increasing knowledge, skills, relationships, and motivation to achieve.

All proposals submitted to the Foundation should adhere to one of the following strategies:

STRATEGY A

Principal Leadership

Target Population: Current and/or aspiring Chicago Public Schools principals

Components

- Training addresses the complex and varied elements of the principal's role and includes opportunities for peer networking and coaching

Evaluation Criteria

- Number of aspiring principals trained, passing CPS' eligibility process, placed in a principal, assistant principal or district leadership position, and retained for a minimum of two years
- Hours of training and follow-up support provided
- Improvement in school report card indicators, including test scores and school climate
- Evidence that principals focus their schools on challenging goals and high expectations for student achievement, provide high-quality opportunities for teachers' professional development and ongoing collaboration, and engage teacher teams, parents, and students in decision-making

STRATEGY B

Teacher Effectiveness

Target Population: Chicago Public Schools teachers

Components

- Teachers receive at least 15 hours of training that relates directly to what they do in their classrooms, equipping them to use new content and or strategies immediately
- Feedback is given as teachers implement what they learn (from classroom observation and or examination of student work) to encourage improvement
- Multiple teachers from a school are trained so they may support each other to sustain changes made and influence other teachers in the school
- When impractical to train multiple teachers in a school, an on-line learning community is used to provide ongoing support

Evaluation Criteria

- Number of teachers trained
- Number of teachers trained per school
- Hours of training provided and attended
- Amount and relevance of follow-up provided
- Evidence that teachers effectively implement what they learn
- Demonstrated transfer of knowledge to teachers and students

STRATEGY C

Parent Engagement and Community Schools

Target Population: Chicago Public Schools students, parents or caregivers, community members, and staff of nonprofit partners

Components

- Schools partner with nonprofit organizations to reduce students' barriers to learning and increase parent and community engagement in supporting students' learning at school and at home

Evaluation Criteria

- Amount and nature of support teachers and administrators receive to work effectively with parents and community members
- Number of hours of health, recreational, educational, or other supports offered for parents and number of parents attending
- Number of parents engaged in leadership positions, such as assisting in classrooms, serving on local school councils (LSCs), bilingual committees, or safety patrols
- Number of hours per week and nature of programs offered for students and number of students attending (outright, as a percentage of the total student population, and for more than 30 days)
- Evidence that out-of-school-time programs for students support what students learn during the academic day
- Type and monetary value of resources (programs, materials, counseling, etc.) offered by nonprofit staff and volunteers at no cost to the school(s)
- Indication that school-day attendance is increasing and chronic truancy is decreasing
- Indication that student academic performance is improving
- Demonstration that school climate indicators are positive and or improving

STRATEGY D

Learning Climate for Students

Target Population: Administrators, teachers, school counselors and/or social workers, security guards, and students

Components

- Training and support is provided to ensure schools create and sustain a safe, nurturing environment for students
- Interventions are asset-based, evidence-based, and aligned with Illinois Social/Emotional Learning Standards
- Goals and tools for students are developmentally appropriate
- Teachers receive feedback as they implement programs and/or strategies
- Whenever possible, multiple teachers in a school are trained to magnify impact and sustain improvements

Evaluation Criteria

- Ability to demonstrate that school climate indicators are positive and/or improving (based on CPS School Progress Reports when available)
- Evidence that students are developing self- and social-awareness skills, self-management and interpersonal skills, decision-making skills, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and behaving responsibly at school and in other contexts
- Evidence that rules prohibiting physical violence and verbal abuse are consistently enforced and students' individual differences are respected
- Teacher practices are supportive and include constructive feedback and encouragement for positive risk-taking, academic challenge, individual attention, and opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a variety of ways

STRATEGY E

Systems Improvement and Innovation

Target Population: Local, state and federal policymakers; Chicago Public Schools and other government decision-makers

Components

- Advances evidence-based system innovation that demonstrates best practices and leads to increased resources, improved policies and service delivery, and collaboration that facilitates better student outcomes system-wide
- Advocates to improve and implement effective policies and practices, leverage public dollars and promote the development and sharing of resources across systems
- Articulates a clear and comprehensive action plan, developed with participant input, that includes benchmarks for progress, defined organization and sector goals, anticipated outcomes and timing, and opportunities for cumulative learning to promote effective sector-wide systems integration and improvement

Evaluation Criteria

- Demonstrated progress (including adoption of policies) toward systemic changes that lead to improved resources, practices or services in Chicago public schools
- Collection and assessment of reliable and useful data and/or development of best practices that inform ongoing sector development
- Engagement of key stakeholders and decision-makers, leading to policy and practice changes system-wide
- Documentation of learning that will lead to greater reach, impact, or efficiency for participating organizations and the sector