

2025 - 2029

Black Student Success Plan



The Black Student Success Plan sets a clear path forward for the next five years, with a focus on immediate action and long-term sustainability for driving student success.



Foreword



Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is proud to present a vital step forward for Chicago: the Black Student Success Plan (BSSP). The Black Student Success Plan is much more than simply a document; it represents a firm commitment by the district, a roadmap, and a call to action for Chicago's educational ecosystem to ensure equitable educational experiences and outcomes for Black students across our district.

This work has been codified and mandated in state law (105 ILCS 5/34-18.85), demonstrating the district's commitment to aligning its efforts with legislative requirements. Reporting and progress monitoring at the Board level will adhere to Illinois Public Act 103-0584, which established the Chicago Board of Education Black Student Achievement Committee. These legal frameworks underscore the institutional support and accountability driving the BSSP's implementation. The roots of this plan stretch back through decades of reforms and initiatives aimed at addressing gaps in access, opportunities, and outcomes for Black students. While progress has been made in some areas, significant disparities remain. Our mission—"... to provide a high-quality public education for every child, in every neighborhood, that prepares each for success in college, career, and civic life"—compels us to act with greater intentionality and urgency.

In 2018, CPS took a significant step by launching the Office of Equity, the City of Chicago's first office solely devoted to equity in education. This move solidified our belief that equity must be at the heart of every district strategy, approach, policy, and initiative. The subsequent development of the CPS Equity Framework provided a roadmap for our journey towards a more equitable educational system. As we unveil this Black Student Success Plan as a key component of our 2025-29 Chicago Public Schools Strategic Plan, we are building upon these foundational efforts. This plan represents our most focused and deliberate effort to systematically address disparities and improve outcomes for Black students in Chicago.

Inspired by similar plans in districts like Los Angeles Unified, Denver Public Schools, Portland Public Schools, we created this plan through extensive collaboration with multiple stakeholders. It is designed not just as a strategy document but as a living blueprint for advancing educational equity for Black students in our schools. The CPS Black Student Success Plan is a pledge to tangible action, measurable progress, and unwavering accountability.

However, we cannot achieve this vision alone. The success of this plan depends on the collective effort of our entire community—educators, administrators, parents, students, and community partners. Thousands of stakeholders have contributed to the creation of this plan, and we now invite all stakeholders to join us in enacting this crucial work. Lend your voices, your expertise, and your passion to creating a stronger and more equitable future for every Black student in Chicago Public Schools. Together, we can and will create a school system where every Black student not only succeeds but thrives, setting the stage for a brighter future for all of Chicago.

Call to Action

We invite the Chicago ecosystem of community-based organizations, businesses, city agencies, higher education, philanthropy, and state and local government agencies to join us in a bold and transformative plan—the *Chicago Public Schools Black Student Success Plan*. This plan is a collaborative effort that addresses and works to close educational access and attainment gaps, uplift and elevate the voices of Black students and families, disrupt and dismantle inequities, and build a more equitable educational system. Together, we will:

1 Foster Culturally Responsive Learning

Support us in integrating culturally responsive teaching, professional development, anti-bias practices, and dismantling anti-Blackness that will honor Black students' and the community's histories, contributions, and lived experiences. We seek partners to help develop, deliver, and expand this work across Chicago Public Schools.

2 Increase Equitable Access and Opportunities for Black Students

Partner with us to ensure Black students have the academic, social-emotional, enrichment, and postsecondary resources they need to thrive. Provide help to design and/or advocate for critical supports (such as financial investment, program development, and implementation) and policies that address equity of access and the holistic overall well-being and success of our students.

3 Strengthen and Sustain Black Educators and Leaders

Collaborate with us to strengthen the recruitment and retention of Black educators, particularly Black male educators and leaders. We aim to partner with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), predominantly Black-serving institutions, and local and national organizations to build a pipeline of Black talent that reflects our students and empowers the communities we serve.

4 Engage and Empower Black Students, Families and Communities

Partner with us to holistically, authentically, and culturally engage Black students and families. We also call on businesses, community-based organizations, philanthropy, higher education, and local and state governmental entities to support the integration of the Black Student Success Plan, ensuring every Black student and family has access to high-quality education and opportunities they need to thrive.



5 Address Systemic and Structural Inequities

Together, we can make a collective impact and disrupt and dismantle policies and practices that could hinder Black student success and perpetuate inequities. Join us in this groundbreaking work to create a more equitable, just, and inclusive educational system for Black students and families.

6 Student Agency/Student Voice and Engagement and Empowerment

Partner with us to ensure we empower and elevate the voices of Black students. Together, we can create opportunities for students to actively shape their educational experiences, develop leadership skills, and participate in the design and decision-making process of their educational experiences. By prioritizing student agency and voice, we want to build a culture that amplifies Black students' perspectives, creativity, and ideas to co-create solutions that will have an impact on their academic, personal, and postsecondary success. This effort requires inclusive partnerships to design strategies and opportunities that allow Black students to lead, have voice, and thrive.

“All these ideas students have to actually be included in the plan – it's not enough to just have a voices. Elevating our voice can help people change their perspectives and views.”

- Warren Elementary School student

Executive Summary

The Black Student Success Plan is an essential strategic priority included in the District's 5-year Strategic Plan to improve Black students' daily learning experiences and life outcomes in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) by addressing opportunity gaps and advancing equity. This plan underscores our unwavering commitment to transforming the educational landscape to ensure every student, including Black students, thrives academically, socially, and emotionally.

Historical Context - Why it Matters

We are committed to addressing long-standing racial inequities in Chicago. While the District has made and continues to make progress, the data supports that persistent gaps continue for Black students in education access, opportunities and outcomes. Disparities between Black students and their counterparts in academic achievement, graduation rates, and postsecondary opportunities are the result of historical and present-day discrimination in the United States applied uniquely to Black people: unfair housing practices, segregation, lack of access to resources, and many other long-standing and federal policies, laws, and practices. Today, nationwide systemic educational issues, such as unequal funding, disproportionate disciplinary actions, and biased educational policies, continue to contribute to the challenges faced by our Black students. We will continue advocating for adequate and equitable school funding across all levels of government to ensure we have the necessary resources to support the success of our Black students.

BSSP District Anchor Strategies

The Black Student Success Plan incorporates the following strategic anchors:

- **Identity, Culture, and Voice:** Empower and elevate Black students' voices while celebrating their cultural diversity to create inclusive environments that honor their unique contributions and perspectives.
- **Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Instruction:** Implement culturally relevant teaching practices and expand access to high-quality, rigorous coursework and experiential opportunities that affirm Black students' identities and enhance academic success.
- **Whole School, Whole Child Supports:** Provide comprehensive, culturally responsive supports that address Black students' academic, social, emotional, and cultural needs, enabling them to thrive.
- **Culturally Responsive Family and Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Strengthen engagement with Black families and communities through culturally competent workshops and partnerships that empower families to be active participants in their children's education.
- **Learning, Development, and Liberatory Thinking:** Focus on professional development for educators and leaders to address biases, combat anti-Blackness, and create a culturally responsive community that uplifts Black students and families.
- **Systems, Policies, and Practices:** Transform policies and systems to eliminate inequities, ensure equitable resource distribution, and establish accountability measures for an inclusive educational environment.
- **Recruitment, Retention, and Support of Black Educators and Leaders:** Build a diverse and representative workforce by recruiting, retaining, and supporting Black educators and leaders with targeted efforts and professional development opportunities.

CPS Strategic Plan Five-Year Goals

- Double the number of Black male educators hired and improve Black teacher retention.
- Accelerate growth and attainment for Black students to close opportunity gaps from early learning through high school across all core academic areas.
- Reduce disciplinary actions against Black students, ensuring proportionality with their representation in the student population.
- Increase the percentage of classrooms utilizing culturally responsive practices and teaching about Black history and culture.
- Foster a strong sense of belonging among Black students so they feel valued and included in their school communities.

These strategies and goals represent our commitment to advancing equity, celebrating diversity, and ensuring that all students in CPS receive the support needed to thrive.



Alignment with Five-Year Strategic Plan

The Black Student Success Plan and the [CPS Five-Year Strategic Plan](#) share alignment across a number of significant areas:

Community-Centered Design Process

- The Five-Year Strategic Plan was informed by a series of meetings and engagements with various stakeholders, from public forums to focus groups.
- The Black Student Success Plan consisted of strategy engagements with hundreds of stakeholders, including a Black Student Success Working Group.

Shared Priorities

The Black Student Success Plan focuses on the three core values:



Daily Learning Experiences



Adult Capacity & Continuous Learning



Inclusive & Collaborative School and Community

The Black Student Success Plan is one of the five targeted priority areas in the CPS's Five-Year Strategic Plan that focuses on priority student groups to ensure that every student has a rigorous, joyful, and equitable learning experience. They are:

- Black Student Success
- Multilingual Pathways
- Students With Disabilities
- Early Learning
- Postsecondary Success

“The Black Student Success plan will impact students by securing a well-vetted, multi-component operating document that sustains a guided approach to ensuring Black student academic and social/emotional needs are addressed.

- Participant, Black Student Success Working Group



CPS Equity Framework

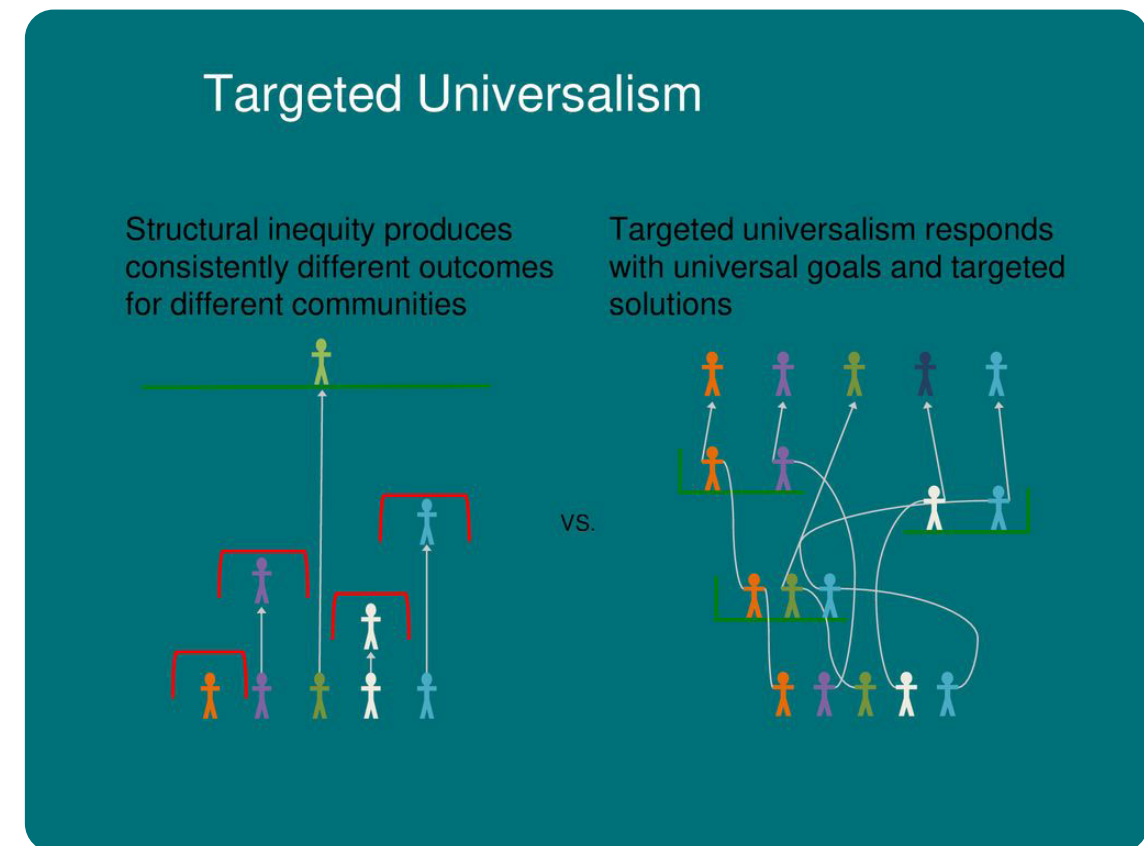
In response to these systemic challenges, CPS developed the [Equity Framework](#): a cornerstone of our commitment to change. The origins of this commitment to equity were first put in place almost a decade ago with the establishment of Chicago Public Schools' Race & Equity Working Group (REWG). The REWG was a group assembled to address the disparities, opportunities, and outcomes persisting for student groups based on race, neighborhood, socioeconomic status, learning pathway, and other identities and experiences. One of the goals of the REWG was to develop a framework that would guide the district towards its commitment to equity.



The Equity Framework serves as our compass, guiding the district towards a more equitable future. It has been instrumental in helping us:

- Co-create a plan with various stakeholders, ensuring diverse perspectives inform our approach.
- View our school system as a whole through an equity lens, challenging long-held assumptions and practices.
- Inform the planning, design, and execution of the Black Student Success Plan's research and co-creation process.

[Targeted Universalism](#) - Targeted Universalism (TU) is an approach to equity work that recognizes groups of people have differing needs and require specific support to reach the same goal. TU recognizes the critical role of systems and structures in students' everyday experiences and acknowledges that the way students interact with those systems and structures differs depending on identity and students' life circumstances, both of which can affect how they perform in school. Many of the systems and structures students encounter in the educational system, in school, and in life enable the predictive power of race and socio-economic status and other factors on student outcomes. To be successful in this work, we believe we must take a racial equity stance through targeted approaches to eliminate racialized outcomes caused by structural racism.



The Black Student Success Plan represents the District's Targeted Universalism approach to affirming the identities of Black students, enhancing their voices and successes, and celebrating their culture and achievements.

“ Having a judgment free school experience.

- Student, Dyett High School

SY25 Black Student Enrollment

This section highlights the state of enrollment of Black students across all schools.

Enrollment Band 1

75.01 - 100%

Black/African American Population

Schools by Governance Type

Type	#
ALOP	2
Charter	57
Contract	5
District	173
Safe	2



Enrollment Band 2

50.01 - 75.00%

Black/African American Population

Schools by Governance Type

Type	#
ALOP	1
Charter	9
Contract	1
District	44
Safe	1



Enrollment Band 3

25.01 - 50.00%

Black/African American Population

Schools by Governance Type

Type	#
ALOP	2
Charter	8
Contract	1
District	43



Enrollment Band 4

0 - 25.00%

Black/African American Population

Schools by Governance Type

Type	#
ALOP	3
Charter	38
District	257



“ To appreciate their culture and embrace it.

- Participant, Black Student Success Working Group



Historical Context and Black Student Success Working Group

This plan includes a framing of Chicago's historical context, specifically the educational landscape for Black students. It highlights decades of historical challenges faced by Black Chicago students. This framing not only provides critical context and acknowledgment of the roots that have grounded many opportunities for Black students to experience stronger and more equitable outcomes, but it also helps situate specific current and future initiatives aimed at improving Black student success.

To move forward, we must first acknowledge both the past and current realities that disproportionately impact Black students in Chicago, including an understanding of their causes. Historical segregation, structural racism, discriminatory housing policies, chronic underfunding, and disinvestment in many of Chicago's Black communities have had alarmingly damaging effects on the health, educational experiences, and quality of life of hundreds of thousands of Black citizens. The Black Student Success Working Group, a group of internal and external stakeholders, leveraged many sources of data that characterize the Black student experience in Chicago Public Schools.

The data disparity between Black students and other groups in our school district continues to be evident in various ways:

- Disproportionate discipline statistics, particularly in suspensions and expulsions
- Inequitable travel distances to schools
- Persistent gaps in academic achievement
- Access to highly rigorous academic courses, opportunities and extracurricular activities

The impact of these inequities on Black students is profound and multifaceted, affecting Black students and families socially, economically, and mentally. These effects create a cycle that extends from one generation to the next, resulting in long-lasting harm to generations of Black families and communities.



Plan Overview

→ The Why

Chicago Public Schools is driven by its mission, vision, and values. One of our core values is equity. We aim for a future where equity is not just clearly represented simply in what we do or how we work, but equity can be clearly seen in the progress towards our outcomes.

→ The Vision

As we embark on our 2025 strategic plan and beyond, we are poised to leverage the Black Student Success Plan developed in alignment with the [CPS Equity Framework](#) to catalyze a transformative period of growth for Black students in Chicago.

We are committed to energizing and empowering multiple stakeholders to play their crucial roles in advancing outcomes for Black students. Our long-term vision of success is one where Black student experiences and outcomes will mirror those of the most successful groups across all CPS students.

We recognize the magnitude of this challenge, but we also understand the tremendous potential it holds for our students, our schools, and our city in both the short- and long-term.

“ The Black Student Success Plan will provide African American students with access, pathways and overall opportunities to close the opportunity and achievement gap for post-secondary success.

- Participant, Black Student Success Working Group



The Theory of Change

→ If We...

develop and integrate a comprehensive high-impact Black Student success Plan,

→ Then, we will see:

- **Identification, Disruption, and Modification of Policies and Practices** that hinder Black student success and perpetuate inequities. This includes reforming barriers such as disciplinary practices and actions, curriculum design and teaching practices, or resource allocation to create more equitable educational learning experiences for Black Students.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** District offices, networks, and schools will coordinate to align strategies and goals with the Black Student Success Plan using targeted universalism approaches. This collaboration will be embedded in continuous improvement plans, with regular cross-departmental reviews implemented to ensure cohesive implementation.
- **Ongoing and Adaptive Professional Learning:** CPS staff will participate in professional learning that centers adult practices on liberatory thinking, culturally responsive teaching, anti-bias practices, and dismantling anti-Blackness. This will include training sessions and continuous resources to support inclusive learning and work environments.
- **The Empowering of Black families and Community Partners** through expanded collaboration with a focus on targeted universalism district offices, networks, and schools will intentionally partner with community-based organizations, local businesses, philanthropy, city agencies, and higher education institutions to enhance implementation and ecosystem resources and support for Black students and their families.
- **Equitable Access and Opportunities** for Black students in advanced academic coursework, STEAM programs, out of school time activities, student voice, and leadership. Intentional efforts will be made to ensure equitable access to rigorous learning experiences, technology, and enrichment opportunities, creating pathways for future academic and postsecondary success.
- **A Strengthened Black Educator and Leader Pipeline**, with a particular focus on recruiting, retaining, and developing Black male leaders and educators. This will help to build a diverse and representative workforce that reflects the student population and enriches the educational environment by implementing targeted recruitment efforts, providing ongoing professional development, and creating supportive networks.

→ Which Leads to:



Double the number of Black male educators hired and improved Black teacher retention from 91% to 93%.



Accelerated growth and attainment for Black students to close opportunity gaps from early learning through high school across all core academic areas.



Reduced disciplinary actions against Black students, ensuring proportionality with their representation in the student population. Achieve a 40% decrease in the use of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for Black students and students with identified disabilities.



Increased the percentage of classrooms utilizing culturally responsive practices and teaching about Black history and culture.



A strong sense of belonging among Black students so they feel valued and included in their school communities.

5-Year Strategic Plan Goals

These strategies and goals represent our commitment to advancing equity, celebrating diversity, and ensuring that all students in CPS receive the support needed to thrive.

Future State of Black Students

Every Black student will have access to high-quality educational opportunities within their school and neighborhood, where they receive the necessary support to excel academically, socially, and emotionally; where they are prepared for college and family-sustaining careers; where they are empowered and affirmed in their identity; and where Black students, families, and communities feel valued, supported, and heard; while also ensuring that Black leaders and educators are increasingly supported and empowered with the resources and professional growth opportunities needed to drive positive change.

Black Student Success Plan (BSSP) District Anchor Strategies

The Black Student Success Plan incorporates the following strategic anchors:



Identity, Culture, and Voice:

Empower and elevate Black students' voices while celebrating their cultural diversity to create inclusive environments that honor their unique contributions and perspectives.



Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Instruction:

Implement culturally relevant teaching practices and expand access to high-quality, rigorous coursework and experiential opportunities that affirm Black students' identities and enhance academic success.



Whole School, Whole Child Supports:

Provide comprehensive, culturally responsive supports that address Black students' academic, social, emotional, and cultural needs, enabling them to thrive.



Culturally Responsive Family and Community Engagement and Empowerment:

Strengthen engagement with Black families and communities through culturally competent workshops and partnerships that empower families to be active participants in their children's education.



Learning, Development, and Liberatory Thinking: Focus on professional development for educators and leaders to address biases, combat anti-Blackness, and create a culturally responsive community that uplifts Black students and families.



Systems, Policies, and Practices:

Transform policies and systems to eliminate inequities, ensure equitable resource distribution, and establish accountability measures for an inclusive educational environment.



Recruitment, Retention, and Support of Black Educators and Leaders:

Build a diverse and representative workforce by recruiting, retaining, and supporting Black educators and leaders with targeted efforts and professional development opportunities.

“ Students want to feel as though they are part of a family. I call my teachers ‘Auntie/Uncle’. You feel loved and appreciated here.

- Student, Dyett High School

Black Student Success Plan Implementation Approach

Overview

The Black Student Success Plan will align with the CPS Equity Framework and utilize a tiered approach based on Targeted Universalism (TU).

Black Student Success Plan Implementation Tiered Approach

Level 1 - Universal

- Establish common understanding and direction across all levels: Central Office, Networks, and Schools.
- Align continuous improvement plans with the Black Student Success Plan.
- Provide universal resources, tools, and professional development.
- Foster inclusive partnerships in support of the plan.

Level 2 - Convening & Collaboration

- Strengthen support through collaboration between Networks and Central Office teams.
- Analyze data to identify challenges and effective strategies for supporting Black students.
- Highlight successful innovations and implementation strategies.
- Collaborate with external partners for support and to ensure alignment with shared goals.
- Host specialized discussions focused on Black Student Success.

Level 3 - School Cohort

- Create professional learning communities for school teams with focused support.
- Engage in targeted convenings and discussions.
- Offer comprehensive professional development and student voice collaboration.
- Provide coaching to address systemic challenges.
- Access additional resources and partnerships.

The tiered implementation of the Black Student Success Plan ensures that the district effectively supports and uplifts Black students while creating equitable opportunities that benefit all students across the system.

Accountability, Transparency and Engagement Structure

SY 2024-2029

Overview

CPS is dedicated to ensuring accountability and transparency in the Black Student Success Plan (BSSP) across four key areas:

- **Progress Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**
CPS will actively track the implementation of strategies and the academic success of Black students. Regular assessments will help identify improvement areas, enabling implementation adjustments to promote and enhance Black student success. All district, network, and school teams will align their goals with the BSSP.
- **Alignment with Continuous Improvement and Data Transparency (CIDT) Policy**
The BSSP aligns with CPS's CIDT Policy, which establishes a systematic method for evaluating school performance. This approach focuses on the whole child, enhancing teaching and learning environments to support comprehensive student development. By adhering to the CIDT policy, the BSSP aims to address disparities faced by Black students through a transparent, community-centered strategy, ensuring equitable learning conditions and opportunities.
- **Annual Reporting**
CPS will publish an annual report on the BSSP, detailing progress, successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. This report will be available to the public, keeping stakeholders informed and engaged.
- **Engagement**
The Black Student Success Working Group (BSSWG) is committed to a diverse and inclusive membership rooted in the CPS Equity Framework. The BSSWG will amplify the voices of all stakeholders by organizing community roundtables where parents, students, and community organizations can discuss the plan's implementation, address challenges, and collaboratively set priorities.

The work of the Black Student Success Working Group and implementation of the Black Student Success Plan has been codified and mandated in state law (105 ILCS 5/34-18.85). Reporting and progress monitoring at the Board level will adhere to Illinois Public Act 103-0584, which established the Chicago Board of Education Black Student Achievement Committee.

References

Nettles, A. (2024). *We Are the Culture: Black Chicago's Influence on Everything*. Lawrence Hill Books.

Todd-Breland, E. (2018). *A political education: Black politics and education reform in Chicago since the 1960s*. University of North Carolina Press.

Resources

- [CPS Black Student Success Website](#)
- [CPS Equity Framework](#)
- [CPS Equity Framework: Targeted Universalism](#)
- [CPS Equity Framework: Inclusive Partnership](#)
- [Together We Rise: CPS Five-Year Strategic Plan](#)

