

**EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2020**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Application and Enrollment Process

1. How are we going to deal with registration? How are we going to make access equitable, especially for students of color, student in our poorest communities, and our learners with special needs?
 - CPS is currently conducting additional analyses using enrollment and waitlist numbers to ensure equity throughout the city. These analyses will help identify community areas where CPS may need to reallocate resources. In order to continue to serve our diverse learner population, CPS will largely keep the same amount of half-day programs and look to identify additional full day programs which are inclusive of diverse learners.
2. How can we improve the registration and enrollment process for Pre-K sites at magnet schools where students may not have the ability to remain there?
 - CPS will be looking at how we can create preschool enrollment policies within the District that allow for that choice for families but also align to current K-12 enrollment policies and structures.
3. Of the 24 percent expansion of preschool classrooms, what percentage of them are fully enrolled?
 - The average enrollment of the schools which received full day expansion for SY19-20 is 85%.
4. Where can we place families with three-year-olds in CBOs or CPS?
 - Universal Pre-K (UPK) is a city-wide initiative. For a successful implementation of UPK, CPS is focusing efforts to place four-year-olds in full day programs and three-year-olds in half-day programs. Families of three-year-olds wanting to attend a full-day program can call the Chicago Early Learning (CEL) Hotline at 312-229-1690 for placement assistance at community-based organizations. The CEL hotline also provides assistance for CPS placements as well.

Stronger Collaboration

1. How are you selecting [participants in the Think Tanks] to be part of this scrutinizing process?
 - Emails were sent out through Chicago Early Learning application portal inviting families who applied to preschool through Chicago Early Learning to join our Think Tank conversations. Additionally, we put it in our principal newsletter to gain principal support as well as in our early childhood blast, which is sent to all of our preschool staff.
2. How are we addressing gaps in services for students who are no longer receiving Head Start services? Those parents who got all their programs stripped, who contacted those parents?
 - All CPS preschool programs utilize the same research-based curriculum and assessments as Head Start programs funded through DFSS. In addition, CPS families continue to have access to high-quality comprehensive support and services regardless of funding source. Schools are provided with a support team which consists of education, comprehensive and family service program staff in order to meet the needs of children and families.

Teacher Workforce

1. What are the plans to develop bilingual teachers, special education bilingual teachers, and special education teachers generally?
 - CPS now offers the [CPS teacher residency](#) program throughout the district. Additionally, CPS has hired two recruiters to focus solely on early childhood education staff. One recruiter will focus on our diverse learners and the other will focus on general education. CPS has also collaborated with Truman Chicago City College that focuses on bilingual and special education teachers.
2. What assessment tools are being developed to validate the learning and the teaching that is going on in Spanish in our bilingual classrooms?
 - The diagnostic tools that we use to validate the learning and teaching that is going on in Spanish in our bilingual classrooms are self-assessments such as check-ins, and exit slips throughout a professional development session. We want to make sure we are able to check where our teachers are, what they know, and what they need and want to learn. We also use formative assessments such as think, pair, share, and reflect and share out loud to better capture the understanding of learning during the session. Lastly, we use summative assessments such as surveys to evaluate the overall learning of the teacher which gives us an opportunity to improve the modules we have for training and also to reach out to teachers as needed based on their surveys.

Student Supports

1. How will CPS ensure that restorative justice practices are implemented in preschools district-wide?
 - An essential element of the preschool day, as defined by CPS, is an opening and closing meeting to build community throughout classrooms and allow for instruction of critical social and emotional skills. All preschool classrooms are additionally equipped with a universal curriculum and assessment platform that specifically assess and support acquisition of these same skills for students. Additionally, preschool classrooms are annually provided, for professional development purposes, an observation of the teacher-student interactions in the classroom. This CLASS observation tool provides information to school administration and district staff on teachers that may benefit from additional support around positive climate practices.
2. In this city, in the past few years of teaching, walking into my classroom have been children with much more severe disabilities, trauma, trauma-induced behavioral difficulties (not misbehaviors). Teachers and students are not getting the kind of supports they need.
 - CPS early childhood teachers have access to training which includes trauma and social emotional support.
 - Many community based organizations offer wrap around services that include family case management, mental health consultants and professionals trained in trauma informed practices.
3. What support is provided for bilingual students?
 - The Office of Early Childhood ensures all bilingual classrooms have the Creative Curriculum in Spanish and if needed in English plus all resources to make sure students are able to receive the native language. Teachers also have opportunities to attend professional development specifically for preschool teachers around the WIDA standards. Understanding how to plan in conjunction with the WIDA standards teachers can fully support language throughout the day. Students are also supported by making sure they're screened if there is a "yes" on the Home Language Survey so they are placed in the correct preschool setting. Once placed as an English Learner (EL) they receive support in their native language. In the classrooms, students are supported with visuals, resources in their native language, strategies to help them assimilate, and with a lot of Total Physical Response (TPR) for all students to follow movements and adjust to routines.

BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. What is the process of this Committee? What is the timeline? What are the goals? Will there be a report? How many meetings will be held?
 - The Committee is meant to engage in different actions, in collaboration with other institutions and stakeholders, that provide insights on issues pertaining to early education in Chicago Public Schools. This first meeting succeeded in highlighting some short as well as mid-term matters, such as registration and enrollment processes, services to diverse learners as well as to the youngest English Learners, to name just a few. The Committee is currently considering next steps, which may include meetings bringing together specific groups of constituents as well follow-up on certain policies/practices within CPS. However, the Committee is intended to act as a convener and thought partner, not as a decision-maker. Ultimately we anticipate that the committee will contribute to inform the work of the CBOE on matters having to do with the education on the youngest of CPS students.