



THE CHICAGO
PUBLIC
EDUCATION
FUND

Resilience and Reimagination

MID-YEAR REPORT 2021-2022

December 2021

The Chicago Public Education Fund (The Fund) is a nonprofit organization that improves Chicago's public schools by investing in the talented educators who lead them.

We are a catalyst for accelerating student learning and a long-standing leader in identifying and scaling what works. For more than 20 years, we have worked with our partners in the public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic communities to redefine what it means to lead a school in our city.

This school year, leaders are focused on pandemic recovery and reimagination. Students are back in buildings and the work of rebuilding school culture, accelerating classroom learning, and addressing individual wellbeing is just beginning. Our work continues to evolve, alongside leaders who are innovating in real-time, often in partnership with their communities, their peers, and education experts. This report provides additional insight into how we are supporting leaders to grow, stay, and collaborate during the 2021-22 school year and beyond.



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Program Participation



187

Principals



141

Aspiring Principals



134K

Students

INTRODUCTION

Pandemic Recovery and Evolving Needs

Since March 2020, Chicago's students, educators, and school communities have faced a series of challenges arising from the ongoing impact of COVID-19. The 2020-21 school year demanded much from leaders: navigating remote and hybrid learning, supporting families, and providing stability during a leadership transition.

The 2021-22 school year started with students back in classrooms five days a week and plenty of new challenges to navigate. During this time, The Fund has served as an anchor for school leaders. Our program and policy work have been responsive to their needs and have centered the recognition that the pandemic has taken an uneven toll on students and communities.

We have continued to serve hundreds of school leaders through

The Fund continues to serve as a stabilizing force for school leaders.

our programs, which convene stakeholders from across the city to cultivate the leadership of aspiring principals, grow principal satisfaction, and provide leaders with resources to innovate in their schools.

We also have used our annual Engagement Survey to amplify principal voice and inform district policy. The survey builds on principal interviews and focus groups to help us understand where more can—and should—be done to combat the adverse effects of the pandemic on student learning and school leadership.

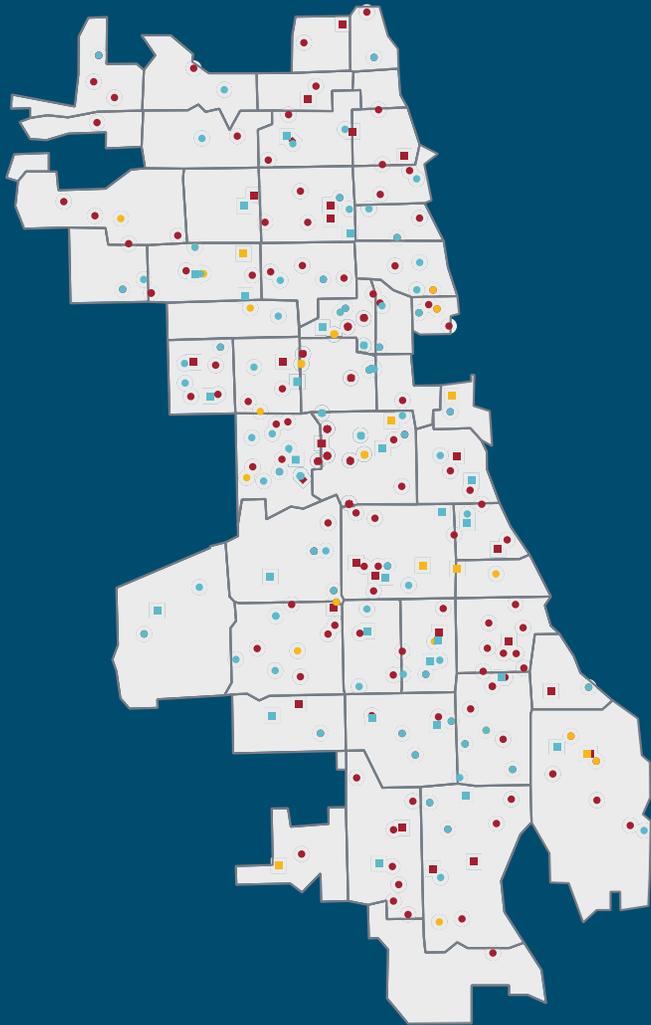
Schools and Educators Served

Schools

- Elementary
- ◆ Middle School
- High School

Educators

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Other



Our Philosophy is Rooted in Equity

To ensure that we meaningfully and equitably impact school leaders, The Fund works with principals at each stage of their careers: aspiring leaders developing their leadership skills to enter principalship, early-tenure principals needing professional development and mentorship, and expert principals who want to affect change with their peers and across the system.

We listen to each group's specific needs, develop responsive programs, and continuously gather data and feedback to ensure that our work is impactful. We are also responsive during our programs. We administer mid-year and end-of-year surveys to learn about participant experiences. We use this input to continually modify the support we offer to educators.

For example, 2020-21 surveys highlighted several emergent needs. Principals indicated that they had

difficulty managing their own well-being, needed more collaborative spaces for sustained peer learning, and sought additional resources to creatively problem-solve and learn from more experienced principals. All programs highlighted in this report were designed to respond to these needs.

Whenever we design, implement, or evaluate programs, The Fund team commits to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism (DEIA). DEIA is more than just a lens through which we view our own actions; the tools, resources, and perspectives we have gained are integrated into all that we do. After extensive conversations with our internal and external stakeholders, we published a [statement](#) outlining our DEIA commitments to school leaders, our team, and our supporters. That commitment is also reflected in the programs described in this report.

We Serve a Diverse Set of School Leaders

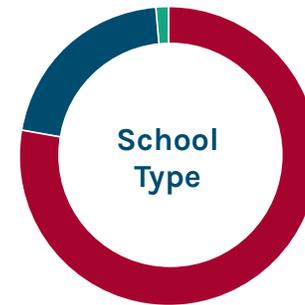
Our program participants lead in 232 district operated schools and 17 charter schools. A total of 78% lead elementary or middle schools, while 21% lead high schools. We bring diverse leaders together for opportunities that measurably improve leadership, culture, and learning in their schools. In addition, 39% and 15% of our participants identify as Black and Latinx respectively. This is comparable to the district, where 44% of principals identify as Black and 19% as Latinx.

Notably, some of our programs have recruited even more diverse cohorts—like our Leadership Bridge program, where 70% of this year's participants identify as Black or Latinx. Learning from this success, we will focus future recruitment efforts on supporting diverse leaders across our program suite.

Our programs serve 328 current and aspiring leaders in 73 Chicago communities.

To ensure that our programs reach communities most in need, we continue to track equity-focused metrics at the school level, including student demographic information, school budgets, and community factors. Overall, our programs are broadly representative across these metrics. Two exceptions worth noting: Our Executive Principal Program serves leaders in disproportionately higher-need communities. Our principal fellowship programs, however, tend to serve leaders in disproportionately lower-need communities on some dimensions.

Participant Characteristics



78% Elementary School
21% High School
1% Non CPS



92% District
7% Charter
1% Non CPS



0% American Indian Alaska Native
1% Asian
39% Black
15% Latinx
1% Multiple Ethnicities
18% Unknown
26% White

Program Investment and Characteristics of Schools Led by Program Participants

Program	Cost	Cost per Participant	Total Slots	Student Data				School Data			Community Data	
				Diverse Learners (%)	Low Income (%)	English Learners (%)	Temp Living Situations (%)	Teacher Retention (%)	90%+ Black or Latinx (%)	% Budget Change (FY18 to FY21)	INVEST Neighborhoods (%)	Life Expectancy
CPS/City Average				16.59	71.84	20.15	4.95	81.69	73.51	12.83	24.14	76.60
Summer Design Program												
+ Professional Learning Communities	\$911,930	\$5,880	155	16.79	66.74	16.11	8.65	86.12	62.99	11.99	27.10	76.68
+ Design Studios	\$1,085,000	\$1,206	90	16.11	71.46	18.10	8.03	86.67	72.22	13.80	35.56	76.28
Executive Principal Program	\$60,000	\$2,500	24	15.59	78.24	15.43	10.57	87.07	91.67	12.11	58.33	75.06
Cahn Fellows	\$115,375	\$14,420	8	11.53	64.33	20.47	8.50	86.41	75.00	14.60	25.00	77.24
The Chicago Principals Fellowship	\$304,500	\$20,300	15	16.85	68.19	30.71	6.42	91.81	53.33	17.34	6.67	77.35
Leadership Bridge	\$301,000	\$15,050	20	13.45	68.95	16.15	6.01	83.32	73.68	11.27	25.00	76.43
AP PLC	\$354,070	\$5,620	63	17.85	70.33	21.89	7.20	86.56	69.84	13.46	23.81	77.12
Chicago Principal Endorsement	\$10,000	\$710	14	19.90	75.27	17.38	9.06	82.85	75.00	16.30	14.29	76.35
Total Program Slots			389									
Total Leaders in One Program			271									
Total Leaders in More than One Program			57									

1. Table reflects program participants as of December 1, 2021.

2. Totals do not include other initiatives we support, such as network-based professional learning communities (serving an additional 9 leaders in 2021-22) and VAL-ED, an online 360 leadership diagnostic tool targeted at aspiring school leaders. They also do not reflect some of our upcoming programming, such as the Winter Design Studios.

Summer Design Program

Since 2013, Summer Design Program (SDP) has provided educators with the time, space, and resources to create innovative solutions to school-based, student-centered challenges. After 18 months of virtual learning during the pandemic, we wanted to provide principals and their teams the opportunity for reflection, connection, and action.

In this spirit, we designed SDP 2021 to help school teams look back with clarity on the year behind them and to look toward the year ahead with hope (and a plan!). In 2021, SDP consisted of two elements: Design Studios and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Schools had the option of participating in one or both to meet their needs. Read on for more details. ■

Design Studios

90 principal- or assistant principal-led teams

In spring 2021, The Fund partnered with [Leadership + Design](#) to help school teams conduct empathy-building interviews with students or teachers, learn how to use design-thinking to solve problems, and collaborate to develop learning acceleration strategies. The Fund prioritized schools with historically underserved students for this opportunity and provided \$1k stipends to every school team to implement their projects.

So far, 90 teams have participated in a design studio; 100% of these teams reported high satisfaction. Survey findings showed that principals benefited greatly from having dedicated time and resources to react to their school's unique situation. The Fund will offer design studios throughout the 2021-22 school year. ■

“We are implementing strategies learned during SDP in all of our instructional teams, using problem identification and data collection to come up with solutions together.”

—NICOLE LUKE

North-Grand HS, Summer Design Program

Yasmeen Muhammad-Leonard

Louis Nettelhorst Elementary School

English Learners 12.7%, Low Income 21.5%,
Black 11.4%, Latinx 13.5%



Yasmeen Muhammad-Leonard has led Louis Nettelhorst Elementary School, located in the East Lakeview neighborhood, for seven years. A central part of the philosophy at Nettelhorst is teaching to the whole child and maintaining a student-focused environment. During her tenure, Yasmeen has been most proud of the efforts teachers and staff have made to get to know each student's story.

After a year of remote learning, Yasmeen noticed that some students were slipping through the cracks. Accordingly, as part of SDP, Yasmeen and her team conducted 14 empathy interviews with

“SDP ignited my thinking and pushed us to replicate the design-thinking framework in other areas of our school.”

students who had disengaged during the pandemic or had struggled academically. These interviews allowed Yasmeen and her team to hear student stories and helped reveal the unacknowledged needs.

SDP provided Yasmeen and her team the time and space to better support students who required specially designed instruction, English-language

support, and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The team also built an engagement plan that included follow-up interviews with students and their families during the design studio.

Finally, with guidance from the school's case manager, the team mapped out touchpoints with this select group throughout the school year. This focus on learning from student experience and the embedding of student voice in instruction has helped lead the way to more initiatives that consider the lived experience of students.

Sustained Learning Areas for PLC Participants



**Student Re-Engagement
& School Culture**



**Social-Emotional Support
& Well-being**



**Equitable Grading
& Data-Driven Instruction**



**School Management
& Resources**

Summer Design Program

Professional Learning Communities

139 principals and 16 principal leaders

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are year-long peer study groups for Chicago's school leaders, led by the city's top principals. Each PLC is led by a principal "expert" who facilitates the learning experience for the participants in their cohort. Thus, PLCs serve to elevate the expert principal's practice and ultimately improve performance in participating schools. The program goals are to contribute to principal satisfaction and retention and highlight promising practices in schools that can be shared and scaled. As noted above, PLCs are one facet of The Fund's Summer Design Program, focused on the year-long implementation of practices.

In 2021-22, The Fund is supporting 16 PLC leaders. PLCs intentionally span different content areas, but each touch on pandemic recovery and learning acceleration.

Some focus on equity and social-emotional support for staff and students, others are grounded in teaching practices like equitable grading and differentiated instruction, and others center around helping principals' re-ground themselves in the adaptive competencies necessary for leading in this unique moment.

Leaders are engaged in a reflective journey to better understand their leadership.

With the ultimate goal of impacting student outcomes, leaders are engaged in a reflective journey to understand their leadership practices and to make changes that accelerate learning and advance positive school culture. ■

Femi Skanes

Morgan Park High School

English Learners 0.6%, Low Income 77.6%,
Black 97.1%, Latinx 2.1%



Dr. Femi Skanes has successfully led high schools in CPS for ten years. Currently, she is the principal of Morgan Park, an IB high school known for its rich history of community partnerships on the South Side of Chicago.

Femi’s depth of experience as an educator has helped Morgan Park balance the need for innovation and sustain established practices during the pandemic. As part of The Fund’s Design Studio, Femi and her school team developed a design-thinking framework to help grade-level teams manage change and adopt the district’s Skyline curriculum.

“I am fulfilled knowing I am not only supporting school leaders but that I am helping kids.”

Serving as a leader in Fund programming has pushed Femi to continually learn and be challenged. Femi encourages her peers to maintain high expectations, prioritize relationships, and place equity at the center of their decision-making. Although she is expanding her leadership as an Executive Principal, she is excited to grow professionally and adapt her coaching to aspiring principals as a PLC Leader as well.

Her PLC, "Real Deal Leadership: What You Didn't Learn in Leadership Class," is designed to help aspiring principals develop a solutions-oriented mindset as they prepare to take on the evolving principal role. PLC participants will learn best practices for fiscal management and stakeholder engagement, and develop skills that can often go untapped in the assistant principal role. At its conclusion, participants will develop a leadership portfolio to use during the interview process for principal positions.



Executive Principal Program

24 principals

The Executive Principal program is a multi-year mentorship opportunity for Chicago's top leaders (Executive Principals) and rising stars (Partner Principals) in the second or third year of their principalship. The first three years of the program were a pilot funded by the Schwartz-Ward Family Foundation, featuring a 1:1 match between an Executive Principal and a Partner Principal.

PRINCIPAL COHORT GROWTH

13 to 24

from 2020-21 to 2021-22

Based on demand, we scaled the Executive Principal program to serve and impact more Partner Principals, growing the cohort from 13 principals in 2020-21 to 24 in 2021-22.

Like last year, the Executive Principal will provide approximately 300 hours of coaching and mentoring throughout the school year through monthly school visits, 1:1 meetings, and group sessions.

Leaders this year are focusing on a range of topics from advancing student achievement to aligning curriculum. Executive Principals will share their practices with colleagues and measurably grow their skills as leaders and experts in their content areas. We are continuing to explore new ways for principals to expand their leadership, such as a systems-level track that would allow principals to better understand the day-to-day responsibilities of district-level leadership. We will likely pilot lunch-and-learns with district leaders and shadow days in the spring of 2022. ■

John Fitzpatrick

Josephine C. Locke Elementary School

English Learners 41.6%, Low Income 76.3%,
Black 3.9%, Latinx 83.2%

John Fitzpatrick has served as principal of Josephine C. Locke Elementary School for eight years. John's open-door policy has helped him develop trusting relationships with his school community.

After two decades at Locke, John felt a need to share what he had learned about leadership and instruction with others, particularly with principals who had started their journey in school leadership during the pandemic. Specifically, John hoped to share his ability to explain grading to parents. During remote instruction, John noticed that many families were confused about grades and assignments due to differences

in grading styles between teachers. He knew that confusion around academic performance would continue to be an issue this year.

John serves as a point of reference for school leaders who want to bridge instructional gaps caused by the pandemic.

Through mentorship, John supports principals as instructional leaders on their respective campuses. Utilizing grade books, assessments, lesson plans,

and observations, both formal and informal, John shares the tools needed to support high-quality instruction with his Partner Principals.

In addition, John outlines his communication strategy to help ensure that the Partner Principals provide accurate and timely feedback to their teachers about planning and skill implementation. He envisions that giving teachers actionable feedback about their grading practices will make it easier for schools to identify skills students need to master learning.



The Chicago Principals Fellowship

15 principals

The Chicago Principals Fellowship is a hands-on policy and leadership experience for Chicago's top principals, led by Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management and CPS' Department of Principal Quality. Fellows participate in academic sessions with Northwestern faculty. At the end of the Fellowship, groups of participants present policy recommendations on a topic of their choice to district leaders.

In 2020-21, the program evolved from a one-year to a two-year model, and academic and policy sessions focused on school sustainability and system-level leadership. The current cohort of fellows began meeting in January 2021 and will continue until May 2022. ■

The Cahn Fellows Program for Distinguished Principals

8 principals and 8 allies¹

The Cahn Fellows Program provides a 12-month national leadership development opportunity with a curated curriculum delivered by faculty at Teachers College, Columbia University. Fellows design and implement leadership projects in their schools with guidance from professors and practitioners. Each fellow chooses an "ally"—another educator in their school whom they are cultivating for leadership—to participate alongside them.

Fellows and allies participate in sessions around topics such as personal leadership and stakeholder engagement. At the end of the Fellowship, fellows attend the Cahn Fellows Annual Leadership Conference in which they present their projects. The current cohort of fellows will continue meeting until October 2022. ■

“The learning point from the Design Studio was the process of facilitating adequate reflection. It gave us time to look at our current practices and analyze where we have been falling short and develop a plan of action.”

—CHRISTOPHER SHELTON
Goode Stem Academy HS,
Summer Design Program



NUMBERS

MONTHS OF THE YEAR
JANUARY
FEBRUARY
MARCH
APRIL
MAY
JUNE
JULY
AUGUST
SEPTEMBER
OCTOBER
NOVEMBER
DECEMBER

DECEMBER 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4
5	6	7			

Days In School

Counting By 5's

5	10	15	20
25	30	35	40
45	50	55	60
65	70	75	80
85	90	95	100

Counting by 10's

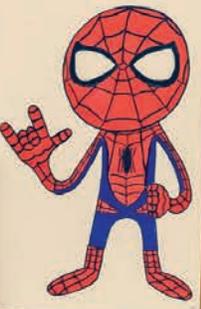
0	20	30
40	50	60
70	80	90

Fiction
Story (not real)

Non-Fiction
True facts (real)

- Pictures are drawn.
- Purpose is entertain.
- Characters, Setting, plot and Solution

- Photos are real
- Purpose is teach facts



Take Care of Your Environment



Great Hints for Solving Math Word Problems

Leadership Bridge Program

20 assistant principals

Leadership Bridge supports the leadership development and career growth of assistant principals (APs) so that they are as ready to assume the principalship as possible. It aims to ensure that Chicago has a robust, high-quality, and diverse pipeline of school leaders. Currently, in its third year, the program supports 20 assistant principals, 70% of whom are Black or Latinx, compared to the current district average of 63% of CPS principals and 59% of APs who are Black or Latinx.

Through on-the-job professional development and individualized coaching sessions from school leadership experts at [New Leaders](#), the [University of Illinois at Chicago](#), and [Accelerate Institute](#), APs work closely with their principals to prepare for their future roles and to develop succession plans for their schools. ■

Principal Endorsement Program

13 aspiring principals; 1 principal leader

Together with CPS and university partners, this special Professional Learning Community supports candidates enrolled in degree programs that award the General Administrative Endorsement, Illinois' statewide license for school leadership. The program is led by expert principal Tyrese Graham and includes teachers, network staff, and other school support staff who are interested in pursuing school leadership opportunities.

Cohort sessions focus on school leadership experiences and networking opportunities with key CPS Central Office staff, with the aim of elevating the profile of aspiring leaders within the district. We will recruit and welcome a new cohort of aspiring leaders in the spring. ■

Aspiring Principals Professional Learning Communities

56 aspiring principals; 5 principal leaders¹

The Aspiring Principals Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) aim to equip aspiring principals with a deeper understanding of the skills needed as an AP and provide them support to take on a principal position in the near future, through the mentorship of a current principal.

This year is our largest cohort yet, with five experienced CPS principals leading 56 aspiring principals through nine learning sessions to develop their practical knowledge on the principal role. An additional 37 APs are participating in The Fund's PLCs for principals, which cover a broader range of school leadership topics. ■

Derrick Kimbrough

Skinner North Classical School

English Learners 1.6%, Low Income 8.1%,
Black 6.3%, Latinx 9.3%

Derrick Kimbrough has spent 17 years in the field of education working in Chicago's district schools. He is currently the assistant principal of Skinner North, a selective enrollment school on the North Side of Chicago.

After working as a community relations coordinator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Derrick's belief in student potential led him to enter the classroom as a resident teacher in 2004. His experience as a teacher on the South and West sides encouraged him to change subjects and grade levels frequently to grow as an educator.



“I value the opportunity to come together with leaders who want to collaborate and learn.”

Moving around the city as a teacher and school leader allowed him to see differences in access and opportunity across neighborhoods.

Skinner North's students come from all over the city. The opportunity to teach students from a mix of different Chicago neighborhoods has imbued Derrick with the values of empathy and equity that he'd like to share at a neighborhood school in the future.

Derrick participated in some Leadership Bridge programming pre-pandemic and was excited to become an official cohort member this year. He is eager to acquire the tools and feedback needed to become a better leader and values that the program has led him to think about the importance of and process for developing a strong succession plan for the school.

Our Path Forward

These programs are a vital part of how The Fund serves principals and aspiring principals. In our efforts to improve the quality and diversity of school leadership in Chicago, our work has expanded into other areas. As in previous years, The Fund helps amplify principal needs, identify opportunities for improvement, and facilitate policy change.

Additional work supporting principals in 2021-22:

- + **Identifying barriers to leadership for Black male and Latinx educators.** Black male and Latinx educators are under-represented among CPS school leaders, when compared to the student population. We are conducting focus groups to identify the barriers to representative leadership and want to support pilots that reduce their impact.
- + **Supporting school leadership succession.** For principals interested in developing a succession plan for their schools, we will continue to engage external experts, principals, and their teams to draft school playbooks. These playbooks support incoming principals to achieve organizational goals, recognize and celebrate strength areas, and identify areas for improvement.
- + **Engaging principals through a variety of channels, beyond our programs.** We will relaunch our Educator Advisory Committee (EAC). The participating school leaders will determine their projects based on a design-thinking protocol and share solutions with district and city leaders.
- + **Working with Local School Councils (LSCs).** LSCs play a pivotal role in school leadership; they evaluate and help hire principals. In 2022, we will launch bilingual workshops that will provide LSC members with tools to reflect on their role as principal evaluators.



IN CONCLUSION

As we reflect on our work—and look beyond to 2030—we must continue to support diverse leaders committed to the recovery and reimagination of school communities.

In the near term, we will focus on stabilizing and improving principal satisfaction, strengthening school performance and funding, and expanding diverse leadership and professional development. We are looking to launch new efforts to advance innovation at the leader- and school-levels, helping to outline what the future of high-quality school leadership could be. We believe Chicago's educators are well-positioned to build toward this vision. Our commitment remains to give school leaders the time and resources they need to best serve all of Chicago's students and to make Chicago the best place to lead a school.



DATA DEFINITIONS

Student Demographics	Diverse Learners	Students who receive special education and related services in accordance with their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
	Low Income	Students from families whose income is within 185% of the federal poverty line. This number reflects the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch meals.
	English Learners (ELs)	Students who come from non-English speaking homes and who are learning English.
	Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS)	Students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence.
School Data	Teacher Retention	The three (3) year average percentage of full-time teachers returning to the same school year to year as shown on the 2021 Illinois State Board of Education state report card.
	90%+ Black or Latinx Students	Schools where more than 90% of the student population identifies as Black or Latinx.
	% Budget Change (FY18 to FY21)	Percent change in CPS school budgets from FY18 to FY21.
Community Data	Located in INVEST South/West Neighborhoods	INVEST South/West is a community improvement initiative under Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot to marshal the resources of multiple City departments, community organizations, and corporate and philanthropic partners toward 10 communities on Chicago's South and West sides.
	Community Life Expectancy	2010 Life Expectancy in the Community Area.

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