

STUDENT VOICE, ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC LIFE



**Guidebook to the *Student Voice, Engagement & Civic Life*
Component of the CPS School Excellence Framework**

January 2018

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This guidebook was created by the Chicago Public Schools Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement in partnership with the Civic Engagement Research Group at the University of California, Riverside. Its aim is to support schools in assessing themselves on the “Student Voice, Engagement and Civic Life” component of the CPS School Excellence Framework (SEF). The SEF, which includes 17 components, serves to articulate understanding of the high impact practices expected in every Chicago Public School. Our schools utilize this framework to self-assess and subsequently determine priorities that will form the basis of a 2 year continuous improvement plan.

This guidebook builds and expands on the [Ready to Engage: Preparing the Next Generation to Participate in Civic and Community Life](#) implementation plan, which, in addition to laying out the district’s plan to expand access to high quality K-12 civic learning, also highlights civic learning’s importance, core elements and impact. The *Ready to Engage* plan identifies nine ways that schools can prepare youth for democratic participation which created the foundation for the tools included here.

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**Social Science &
Civic Engagement**



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OVERVIEW

This document was designed to support schools that are interested in an in-depth assessment of their implementation of the Student Voice, Engagement, and Civic Life category of the School Excellence Framework (SEF). This category of the SEF focuses on preparing students to engage, voice their perspectives, and effectively participate in democratic life—a cornerstone of public schooling from its inception. It guides school staff in promoting high-quality civic learning opportunities for all students. This component is critical for achieving the vision laid out in [Success Starts Here](#) which identifies preparation for college, career and civic life as the core mission of the Chicago Public Schools. To that end, the [nine components](#) included in this category illustrate key ways that schools can approach civic education. These components are described in detail in [Ready to Engage: Preparing the Next Generation to Participate in Civic and Community Life](#). Each component includes two to three descriptors outlining opportunities for civic learning across grade levels, content areas, and in the larger school community.

If you are interested in focusing on Student Voice, Engagement & Civic Life as a priority area for your school's CIWP, you can follow the below steps:

- Schools reflect on the suggested evidence listed, utilize the [Student Voice, Engagement & Civic Life SEF Rubric](#), and explore the aspirational *Looks Like/Examples* in order to analyze their performance with regard to civic learning, ultimately identifying 1-2 areas for improvement.
- **Step 1 = Gather Evidence.** Gather the suggested evidence listed and set aside time to thoroughly review and discuss.
- **Step 2 = Reflect on Evidence.** Using the rubric, engage in a discussion of the descriptions of practices and related evidence to evaluate the current degree of implementation at your school.
- **Step 3 = Assign Scores.** Using the rubric, assign a score and note the justification/reasoning for your scores based on the evidence you collected
- **Step 4 = Use in Planning.** Use your self-assessment for improvement planning by drawing on the [Reflection Questions](#) in this document. Choose a cluster of 2-3 components that will allow your school to move toward a deeper level of implementation of civic learning. Then develop an action plan that will support your school community in reaching your goals.

The 5Essentials student survey data focused on student voice and civic life can support your school's self assessment in the following ways:

- The CPS Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement and the [Civic Engagement Research Group](#) developed new survey items that were added to the [UChicago Consortium on School Research 2016-2017 5Essentials \(civics items\)](#).
- These items included questions related to students' civic learning experiences and commitments, in and outside of their classrooms. By random distribution, half of the students received Items A (related to traditional civic learning) and half of the students received Items B (related to digital civic learning).
- The items added to this year's 5Essentials student survey will provide you with relevant information on your students' civic-related learning opportunities, commitments, and practices. In addition to receiving your school's overall survey data, you will also receive a brief report in the spring that details the landscape of civic learning opportunities at your school and districtwide.
- Your school's data and summary report will provide you with critical information with which to complete the SEF and reflect on the distribution and quality of civic learning in your school community.

For more information and support:

- For more information or support on promoting student voice, engagement and civic life contact the CPS Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement or visit the [Knowledge Center page](#).
- For research-based information on the importance of civic education, check out this research brief: [Research on the Impact of Civic Learning](#)

SUMMARY: STUDENT VOICE, ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC LIFE

What is Student Voice, Engagement & Civic Life?

Schools support all students to develop civic competencies, identities, and commitments by providing high quality opportunities for student voice, civic engagement, and participation in civic life at their school and in their community. Students learn about the political process, power in a democracy, current and controversial issues, civic leaders and candidates, issues they care about, and multiple viewpoints. Schools enable early and ongoing opportunities for all students to gain civic knowledge, practice and apply civic skills, develop digital civic literacies, cultivate civic commitments, and build relationships with their community.

What does it look like in practice?

All students have consistent opportunities across grade levels, content areas, and within school & community to...

- **Study politics**
- **Become informed voters and participants in the electoral process**
- **Engage in discussions about current and controversial issues**
- **Explore their identities and beliefs**
- **Exercise student voice**
- **Authentically interact with civics leaders**
- **Engage with their community**
- **Take informed action** where they work together to propose and advocate for solutions
- Experience a **schoolwide civics culture**

Evidence, Measures, and Standards

Suggested Evidence:

- 5Essentials Student Survey completion rates and results
- Artifacts from student-run organizations and events (including that of Student Voice Committees)
- Meeting minutes/agendas that include student participation
- School policies regarding student engagement in decision making
- Service learning reports and reflections on SL projects
- Unit and curriculum maps, rubrics, assessment artifacts
- Evidence of relevant student work
- Democracy School recognition

Measures: See [rubric](#)

CPS Framework for Teaching: Distinguished level practice indicates student ownership of learning in Domains 2 and 3.

Content Standards: Illinois Social Science Standards, Illinois Social Emotional Learning Standards

Principal Competencies: *A, B, C, and D*

Now What? Materials to Support Improvement Planning:

- [Research Brief on Impact of Civic Learning](#)
- [CPS Dept of Social Science and Civic Engagement Knowledge Center Page](#)
- [School Self Assessment Rubric w/ examples](#)

DETAILED VIEW: STUDENT VOICE, ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC LIFE

Schools support all students to develop civic competencies, identities, and commitments by providing high quality opportunities for student voice, civic engagement, and participation in civic life at their school and in their community. Students learn about the political process, power in a democracy, current and controversial issues, civic leaders and candidates, issues they care about, and multiple viewpoints. Schools enable early and ongoing opportunities for all students to gain civic knowledge, practice and apply civic skills, develop digital civic literacies, cultivate civic commitments, and build relationships with their community.

All students have early and ongoing opportunities across grade levels, content areas, and in the larger school community to...

- **Study politics**
 - Teachers teach about the structure and function of government as well as local, national, and international political structures and power dynamics.
 - Teachers invite students to reflect on their own role in the political landscape, engage in analysis of power, and identify strategies they can use to exercise civic power as an individual and member of a community.
- **Become informed voters and participants in the electoral process**
 - Students learn about the history and structures of the local and national voting process and ballot issues and candidates.
 - The school supports non-partisan engagement in all parts of the electoral process, including voter education, mobilization, and registration.
 - There are a variety of school/classroom activities or simulations that support student voter preparation and participation in the electoral process.
- **Engage in discussions about current and controversial issues**
 - Students prepare for discussions, learn about issues that matter to them through deliberation, evaluate evidence from a range of sources, consider competing views, develop arguments, and deepen their viewpoints.
 - Students learn how to engage in and lead respectful and productive democratic discussions.
 - Students research different points of view online and learn to engage in respectful, informed, and productive online dialogue.
- **Explore their identities and beliefs**
 - Teachers design learning experiences that enable students to explore how their identities influence their lived experiences and their perspectives.
 - Students are encouraged to learn about and understand the perspectives of those who have different identities and beliefs.
 - School staff reflect on their own identities and consider how that impacts their role, their instructional practices, and their support of students.
- **Exercise student voice**
 - Students can participate in multiple decision/policy making bodies and their perspectives are regularly included in decisions at their school.
 - The Student Voice Committee represents the diversity of the school, addresses school-based issues, and regularly gathers input from their peers to inform and impact school policy and decisions.
 - Teachers respond to and integrate students' lived experiences, perspectives, and interests in class.
- **Authentically interact with civics leaders**
 - Students learn about community, city, state, and national civic leaders and their roles in civil society.
 - School supports engagement with civic leaders by inviting them into classrooms/the

school and identifying face-to-face or online avenues for students to share their feedback and perspectives with civic leaders.

- **Engage with their community**
 - Students complete at least 2 service learning projects before graduation in which they gain exposure to civic organizations, leaders, and careers.
 - Students gain tools to work cooperatively in partnership with peers, community members, and organizations to advance a specific cause.
- **Take informed action** where they work together to propose and advocate for solutions
 - Students research and analyze issues that matter to them; identify root causes; develop a theory of action; determine relevant audiences; outline specific goals; implement a response; and reflect before, during, and after experiences.
 - Students use social and digital platforms to raise awareness about issues, produce and circulate multimedia content, and mobilize involvement.
- Experience a **schoolwide civics culture**
 - School leaders articulate a commitment to and vision for the importance of civic learning; students are civic leaders in the school.
 - Schools integrate civic learning across the curriculum, including projects that address relevant issues in the school and community.
 - School staff have professional development, collaboration time, and curriculum resources in order to infuse civic learning across disciplines.
 - Systems and structures exist where students are invited to participate in shaping the school's policies, goals, instruction, and climate.

Evidence, Measures, and Standards

Suggested Evidence:

- 5Essentials Student Survey completion rates and results
- Artifacts from student-run organizations and events (including SVCs)
- Meeting minutes/agendas that include student participation
- Policies regarding student engagement in decision making
- Service learning reports and reflections on SL projects
- Unit and curriculum maps, rubrics, assessment artifacts
- Evidence of student work
- Democracy School recognition

Measures: See rubric [insert hyperlink]

CPS Framework for Teaching: Distinguished level practice indicates student ownership of learning in Domains 2 and 3.

Content Standards: Illinois Social Science Standards, Illinois Social Emotional Learning Standards, CCSS ELA/HST Standards

Principal Competencies: A, B, C & D

Now What? Materials to Support Improvement Planning:

- [Research Brief on Impact of Civic Learning](#)
- [CPS Dept of Social Science & Civic Engagement Knowledge Center Page](#)
- [School Self Assessment Rubric w/ examples](#)

SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT REFLECTION ?s: STUDENT VOICE, ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC LIFE

The suggested reflection questions below are designed to support schools that are interested in an in-depth assessment of their school's implementation of the *Student Voice, Engagement, and Civic Life* category of the SEF. First, use the [rubric](#) to guide you through analyzing relevant evidence and assigning scores. Then list those scores below and reflect with your team on the goals and action steps that will enable your school to move toward a deeper level of implementation of civic learning.

1. **After completing the rubric, list your scores below =**

| Component | Score | Component | Score |
|--|-------|---|-------|
| Study politics | | Authentically interact with civics leaders | |
| Become informed voters and participants in the electoral process | | Engage with their community | |
| Engage in discussions about current and controversial issues | | Take informed action where they work together to propose and advocate for solutions | |
| Explore their identities and beliefs | | Experience a schoolwide civics culture | |
| Exercise student voice | | | |

2. **Areas of Strength** = Which of the 9 components are areas of strength for your school?
3. **Areas for Improvement** = Which of the 9 components are areas for improvement?
4. **Focus Areas** = Given your strengths and areas for improvement, what is one cluster of the 9 components that you think your school can improve upon or deepen in order to advance civic learning at your school?
 - Choose 1 of the clusters below (or develop your own) that your school would like to focus on to further promote civic learning.
 - Consider what your school is well positioned to do and what is most compelling for your school community. You may also want to reflect on the best entry point for your school if this is a new area of focus, or what your next edge of growth is if you have been implementing civic learning for some time.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Cluster 1: Civic Knowledge & Issue Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Study politics ● Become informed voters and participants in the electoral process ● Engage in discussions about current and controversial issues | <p>Cluster 2: Civic Identity & Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore their identities and beliefs ● Exercise student voice ● Experience a schoolwide civics culture | <p>Cluster 3: Community Engagement & Civic Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Authentically interact with civic leaders ● Engage with their community ● Take informed action |
|--|--|---|

5. **Goals** = What are your goals for improvement?

- What will success look like by the end of the two year CIWP cycle?
- Reference the descriptors under the 9 components to get more of an idea of what this might look like.

6. **Action Steps** = What steps will you take to achieve your goals?

- Read the *Looks Like/Examples* to get ideas of how you might go about implementing this component. Please note the examples are meant to be both aspirational and inspirational so you may choose to implement just one small piece.
- How will you get started? Outline your action steps and next steps over the course of the next two years including who will help move these steps forward and the resources you will need.

7. **Supports** = What kind of support do you need in order to achieve these goals?

- When and how will you reach out for this support?
- When will you check-in to monitor progress?

SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: STUDENT VOICE, ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC LIFE

Study Politics

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|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Teachers teach about the structure and function of government as well as local, national, and international political structures and power dynamics.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Students in a chemistry class have been studying the water filtration system in Chicago and have been concerned about the conditions of the aging infrastructure. Students begin to examine what parts of local government have jurisdiction over the water system and invite someone from the Department of Water Management and/or the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to speak to the class about each agency's function, current issues they are facing, and new science and technology being used to modernize existing systems.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2: In a government class, students interview a family member or friend who has origins outside of the United States. Students research the political and governmental structure of that country and then develop questions about the impact of that on that person or their family's' experiences and involvement in civic and political life, quality of life, social mobility, and opportunities for growth and development.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Teachers invite students to reflect on their own role in the political landscape, engage in analysis of power, and identify strategies they can use to exercise civic power as an individual and as a member of a community.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = In a 6th grade literacy class, students have just read <i>Warriors Don't Cry</i>, a memoir by one of the Little Rock Nine. The teacher asks students to think about an issue about which they are passionate and committed. As part of the Mikva Challenge Project Soapbox program, students write speeches which require them to conduct research on the issue they care about, analyze the dynamics of power in relation to the issue, and develop a strategic call to action for the audience. The class hosts a soapbox assembly and shares their speeches and calls to action with the larger student body.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example 2: Students choose an issue that they care about and then design and develop a paper or online concept map that outlines the key organizations and institutions who have influence on that issue. Students research organizations, institutions, funders, or power-brokers who have a significant influence on the issue on a local, state, and/or national level and physically represent these relationships on their map. Then students place/locate themselves and their family/neighborhood on the map itself depicting the opportunities they have to influence the issue. Students pair up and compare their maps with a classmate and reflect together on the similarities and distinctions between their maps. Finally, as a whole class, students discuss the overarching patterns of power within the civic and political landscape and where there are opportunities to exercise their own civic power on a range of issues.</p> | | | | |
| | | <p>>-----Needs Improvement-----Area of Strength-----></p> | | | <p>Look for It Here (Evidence)</p> |
| <p>SEF Score Scale</p> | <p><i>Score 1 - None or few of the practices are evident.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 2 - Few of the practices are consistently evident and/or for few students and staff.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 3 - Most practices are consistently evident for some or all of the students and/or staff. The principal is generally the sole driver of practices for school improvement.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 4 - Nearly all practices are consistently evident for all students and/or staff. There is evidence students, teachers, and community are co-driving practices with the principal.</i></p> | <p>Unit maps/curriculum 5Essentials student survey Student focus groups Parent surveys Family engagement opportunities School-community partnerships</p> |
| <p>Reflective Notes:</p> | | | | | |

Become Informed Voters and Participants in the Electoral Process

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|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Students learn about the history and structures of the local and national voting process, ballot issues and candidates.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Students in a contemporary American History class study the historic election of Harold Washington, the first Black Mayor of Chicago. After a trip to the Harold Washington library to visit the archives, students become very interested in campaign materials that were produced at that time. Students study the various voter guides and platforms that were created at that time and compare them to campaign materials from more recent elections. In groups, students prepare a “youth voter platform” in which they articulate the local issues that they think are most important for young people.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = Students in an 8th grade social studies class are engaged in a unit of study on voter participation and barriers to participation. Students look at voter registration data and participation rates across different demographic groups. Students then engage in a Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) on the issue of compulsory voting in which they consider multiple perspectives on the issue and deliberate as a class before writing an argumentative essay.</p> | | | | |
| <p>The school supports non-partisan engagement in all parts of the electoral process, including voter education, voter mobilization and registration.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Students in a Student Voice Committee are worried that their peers aren’t engaged in the upcoming elections. They spend time analyzing voter turnout data for their community and formulate an outreach plan explaining to their peers why voting matters. The students partner with Chicago Votes to organize a Parade to the Polls, a lively and engaging activity in which students eligible to vote gather and march to the nearest polling place to early vote. Students not eligible to vote participate with signs and cheer their peers on.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = Students in a Civics class have been learning about the candidates in the Aldermanic race for their school’s ward. They notice that not many candidates have their school as a priority in any of their campaign platforms. In order to draw attention to the school community and its needs, the students organize a candidate forum. The school and greater community are invited; the forum is held in the auditorium; and questions for the candidates come from students, teachers, and residents of the Ward. In order to ensure candidates attend, the students reach out to local news media to cover the event and recruit candidates to attend by using social media, visiting the campaign offices of candidates, and delivering invitations in person.</p> | | | | |
| <p>There are a variety of school/classroom activities or simulations that support student voter preparation and participation in the electoral process.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Students in a Civics or AP Government class participate in an extended election simulation in which students research issues and take on the role of various Super PACs, voters, media, campaign staff, and candidates. The student body is given the opportunity to learn about the election through a school “candidate” forum and campaign activities leading up to a school election.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = A school has redesigned their student body elections to include meaningful applications of the electoral process. Students get on the “ticket” by collecting signatures; primaries elections are held; clubs and classes sponsor several debates and forums for candidates and the community to discuss and deliberate issues and policies and an official election day is held that includes referendums on the ballot.</p> | | | | |
| | | <p>>-----Needs Improvement-----Area of Strength-----></p> | | | <p>Look for It Here (Evidence)</p> |
| <p>SEF Score Scale</p> | <p><i>Score 1 - None or few of the practices are evident.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 2 - Few of the practices are consistently evident and/or for few students and staff.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 3 - Most practices are consistently evident for some or all of the students and/or staff. The principal is generally the sole driver of practices for school improvement.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 4 - Nearly all practices are consistently evident for all students and/or staff. There is evidence students, teachers, and community are co-driving practices with the principal.</i></p> | <p>Unit maps/curriculum 5Essentials student survey Student focus groups Parent surveys Family engagement opportunities School-community partnerships</p> |
| <p><i>Reflective Notes:</i></p> | | | | | |

Engage in Discussions about Current and Controversial Issues

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| <p>Students prepare for discussions, learn about issues that matter to them through deliberation, evaluate evidence from a range of sources, consider competing views, develop arguments, and deepen their viewpoints.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = In <i>Unit 1: How Do Living and Non-Living Things Interact?</i> of a high school biology class, students extend their learning by looking at a local environment to debate the environmental costs and benefits of developing a newly vacant space. Students take on the role of multiple stakeholders, creating an argument for their group that they will use to make the case in a teacher or student moderated stakeholder meeting.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = Students in a health class discuss national issues connected to health topics discovered through current news articles and online media. One week, students utilize information they learn about nutrition to analyze and deliberate the value and effectiveness of the USDA’s ChooseMyPlate.gov healthy diet model. Students extend their learning by researching local access to healthy food in their community, food deserts, community gardening, and solutions for improving access to healthy food sources. Then students discuss and deliberate the impact of food access on the health of their local community as well as possible solutions via a Fishbowl discussion.</p> |
| <p>Students learn how to engage in and lead respectful and productive democratic discussions.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Seventh and eighth grade students investigate landmark Supreme Court cases by focusing on the tension between the rights of the individual and the good of society. Students work in groups, presenting various cases to the class in the form of a press conference. Key issues include the right to privacy, equal protection, and the First Amendment. As a culminating event, students hold a town hall meeting to discuss whether the burning of the American flag is protected under the right to freedom of speech.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = Students in a Biology class regularly participate in debates on current controversial trends in science. One week a discussion about the ethics of cloning became heated and the teacher had to stop the discussion early. In the next class, students look at their norms for discussion and identify what norms they should reinforce and what norms should be amended in order to improve discussions so that everyone feels they can be disagree and discuss productively. The students then revisit the discussion and use their new understanding of the norms to keep the discussion lively, engaging, and rigorous.</p> |
| <p>Students research different points of view online and learn to engage in respectful, informed, and productive online dialogue.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = After studying the rhetorical situation, students in a 9th grade literature class are asked to evaluate the differing coverage of a specific current event they’ve been discussing in four major newspapers, and look for evidence of the intended audience, purpose, and any bias evident. The students found that two papers had headlines and content that were misleading and used loaded language that showed a lack of balanced coverage. Students then worked in pairs to write a comment and submit it online to the newspaper sharing their feedback, constructing an argument on the importance of balanced reporting, and encouraging the editors to take action.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = Now that students have spent time discussing effective discussion on controversial topics in class, the teacher asked students if the same practices should apply in an online space. This inquiry led students to select one current controversy and coverage of the topic on two news sites. They then conducted an audit of the online discourse readers had on the story, identified effective and ineffective comments and exchanges and then created a rubric with examples. After refining their tool, students decided to create a “Better Online Conversations” campaign sharing their rubric publicly and offer classes for parents during a school open house.</p> |

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| | >-----Needs Improvement-----Area of Strength-----> | | | | Look for It Here (Evidence) |
| SEF Score Scale | <i>Score 1 - None or few of the practices are evident.</i> | <i>Score 2 - Few of the practices are consistently evident and/or for few students and staff.</i> | <i>Score 3 - Most practices are consistently evident for some or all of the students and/or staff. The principal is generally the sole driver of practices for school improvement.</i> | <i>Score 4 - Nearly all practices are consistently evident for all students and/or staff. There is evidence students, teachers, and community are co-driving practices with the principal.</i> | Unit maps/curriculum 5Essentials student survey Student focus groups Parent surveys Family engagement opportunities School-community partnerships |

Reflective Notes:

Explore Their Identities and Beliefs

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| <p>Teachers design learning experiences that enable students to explore how their identities influence their lived experiences and their perspectives.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Fourth and fifth grade students define the term "stereotype" from a variety of perspectives. At the beginning of the unit, students brainstorm individually and in groups to understand how stereotypes have affected their own lives and their learning. Using the example of Negro baseball leagues, whose contributions have been omitted from the history of baseball, students thoughtfully plan and execute a letter campaign to contact textbook publishers.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = In a "family tapestry" project, 1st graders investigate similarities and differences among themselves and within their larger community. Children learn about different family structures and cultural traditions to identify what makes their own family unique, then interview family members or other important adults in their lives to explore how families have different roles and responsibilities in their community. Children synthesize what they have learned through a classroom quilting project that tells the story of each unique family and how those families contribute to their overall classroom community.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Students are encouraged to learn about and understand the perspectives of those who have different identities and beliefs.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Sixth grade students explore the claims to land in the Middle East from three major religions — Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. After learning about the geography of the area, the students begin to explore the region's political unrest and debate the controversy over control of the land of Israel through a series of Philosophical Chairs—a discussion-based activity where students must choose to agree, disagree, or remain neutral about a topic and support their views with evidence.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = As part of a service learning project, students in a Spanish class partner with community members participating in a local Citizenship class (a class provided to residents who are seeking citizenship). Each student conducts an interview with a community member about his/her immigration story. Students explore the similarities and differences between their partner's stories and their own family histories of im/migration. Students write up the stories of their community partners in Spanish as a final assessment.</p> | | | | |
| <p>School staff reflect on their own identities and consider how that impacts their role, their instructional practices, and their support of students.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Teachers read and discuss Ta-Nehisi Coates' book <i>Between the World and Me</i> in small professional learning communities (PLCs). They reflect on how their relationships with their own parents or children have shaped their racial identities, and their relationships to the education and justice systems. Teachers share with students how their own in-school and out-of-school education around identity has impacted their ongoing understanding of their content area and offer students an opportunity to ask questions and share reflections. PLC participants bring students' reflections back to their group to share how this teacher-student dialogue about identity impacts teachers' understanding of and work with their students.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = On a school improvement day, teachers are divided into teams to complete a community asset mapping walk of the three neighborhoods surrounding their school. Each group visits a community organization or local business to interview leaders in the community and learn more about the history, culture, and people of the local neighborhood. Upon return, teachers jigsaw into new groups to share their learning and reflect upon the ways in which the visits informed, inspired, and challenged their perceptions of students, families, and community members.</p> | | | | |
| <p>>-----Needs Improvement-----Area of Strength-----></p> | | <p>Look for It Here (Evidence)</p> | | | |
| <p>SEF Score Scale</p> | <p><i>Score 1 - None or few of the practices are evident.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 2 - Few of the practices are consistently evident and/or for few students and staff.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 3 - Most practices are consistently evident for some or all of the students and/or staff. The principal is generally the sole driver of practices for school improvement.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 4 - Nearly all practices are consistently evident for all students and/or staff. There is evidence students, teachers, and community are co-driving practices with the principal.</i></p> | <p>Unit maps/curriculum 5Essentials student survey Student focus groups Parent surveys Family engagement opportunities School-community partnerships</p> |
| <p><i>Reflective Notes:</i></p> | | | | | |

Exercise Student Voice

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| <p>Students can participate in multiple decision/policy making bodies and their perspectives are regularly included in decisions at their school.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = The school has an active Student Voice Committee that regularly engages with and shares ideas with the Local School Council (LSC). In addition, students are regularly invited to attend and participate in the meetings of various school based committees including the Bilingual Advisory Council and the School Climate Team.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = A school that is working towards increasing ownership and agency decides that before a policy can be decided upon, stakeholders must ensure affected parties have an opportunity to voice their opinion. Therefore, before teachers voted on a schedule for the year, they created a survey and administered it in advisory in order to collect students' input. They also held discussions with students about the merits and deficits of both 50 and 100 minute classes before they took the survey. The information was presented to teachers before they voted.</p> | | | | |
| <p>The Student Voice Committee represents the diversity of the school, addresses school-based issues, and regularly gathers input from their peers to inform and impact school policy and decisions.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = A principal is concerned that the school's approach to addressing the social and emotional needs of students has not been effective and is looking for a way for students to weigh in. She invites the school's Student Voice Committee (SVC) to a presentation by the School Climate team on a new program that they are considering purchasing for the school. The SVC isn't sure that the program will answer the needs of students. They decide to administer a student survey and conduct a follow-up focus group to better understand the needs of their peers. The SVC develops a presentation with recommendations for the School Climate team.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = After working together for two years, a school's SVC has become a strong team. However, they have not had any new members join this year and worry that their members are not representative of the entire school as they are mostly Juniors and mostly African American. Also, most of them have strong grades and are in the IB program. The team decides to to recruit students from other grade levels via advisory classes. They also ask teachers and administrators to nominate students that are in different programs and courses in order to diversify their team.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Teachers respond to and integrate students' lived experiences, perspectives, and interests in class.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = In addition to the beginning of the year survey, teachers administer quarterly student surveys in class to request feedback on the class curriculum and learning activities. Teachers report back to students trends they have seen in the feedback and their plans to address student ideas in the upcoming quarter.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = In order to ensure equity of voice and perspective, teachers in an English Department decide to conduct an audit of the texts/authors they use in their courses across grade levels. Also, they conduct a department observation cycle where they look specifically at who is participating in class discussions, and who is not. The team learned that white male authors are represented at a much higher rate than any other race or gender, and that there are not texts/units that explore transgender perspectives. Further, teachers see that in most classes, African American girls are less likely to participate in classroom discussion. The team used this data to inform their instructional focus for the semester and revamp their text selection.</p> | | | | |
| | <p>>-----Needs Improvement-----Area of Strength-----></p> | | | <p>Look for It Here (Evidence)</p> | |
| <p>SEF Score Scale</p> | <p><i>Score 1 - None or few of the practices are evident.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 2 - Few of the practices are consistently evident and/or for few students and staff.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 3 - Most practices are consistently evident for some or all of the students and/or staff. The principal is generally the sole driver of practices for school improvement.</i></p> | <p><i>Score 4 - Nearly all practices are consistently evident for all students and/or staff. There is evidence students, teachers, and community are co-driving practices with the principal.</i></p> | <p>Unit maps/curriculum 5Essentials student survey Student focus groups Parent surveys Family engagement opportunities School-community partnerships</p> |
| <p>Reflective Notes:</p> | | | | | |

Experience a Schoolwide Civics Culture

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| <p>School leaders articulate a commitment to and vision for the importance of civic learning; students are civic leaders in the school.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = A new principal of a local high school wants to revisit the school’s mission statement. He decides to ask the Student Voice Committee to take the lead in drafting a new statement. Students interview their peers, teachers, and parents. They also visit the Local School Council and ask them to share their hopes and dreams for the school and students. Based on the feedback of the community, students meet with the principal and staff members to draft a new mission statement. The mission statement is posted throughout the school and community members are invited to submit commentary/suggestions on how the school can live up to its mission.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = A school’s mission and vision statements articulate a commitment to civic learning and the importance of student voice in school processes and decision-making. These statements are visible on the school’s website, in the school’s materials, and on campus. Civic learning and student voice are also regularly considered when reflecting on the school’s performance in relation to their goals and priorities.</p> |
| <p>Schools integrate civic learning across the curriculum, including projects that address relevant issues in the school and community.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = A high school has developed a service learning plan in which each grade level addresses a unique social or theme through various courses. At the end of the year the students choose an organization or cause addressing the issue that they have chosen to focus on. The school hosts a culminating event in which parents and community members are invited into the school to celebrate and learn about the student projects. Donations are collected to support the organization that students support.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = A school principal has decided to partner with the Student Voice Committee (SVC) in implementing a participatory budgeting project. He sets aside a small portion of funds from his budget for a student selected school improvement project. The SVC creates a process in which the student body is invited to develop a series of proposals for projects. The student body votes on the project that they would like to see implemented using the funds the Principal has set aside.</p> |
| <p>School staff have professional development, collaboration time, and curriculum resources in order to infuse civic learning across disciplines.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = The school’s Instructional Leadership Team, after conducting a survey of students, recognizes that their students would like an opportunity to discuss more issues that are relevant to them embedded in the curriculum. Teachers develop a year long professional learning plan to incorporate current issues and discussion models into their classrooms.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = The principal schedules multiple professional development trainings throughout the year for all teachers focused on cross-disciplinary avenues for integrating students’ voices and interests as well as high-quality civic learning into curricular projects and activities. The PDs are planned in partnership with the CPS Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement and local civic education organizations. Following up on these PDs, the principal works with department leaders to set aside collaboration time for each team to discuss and plan civic learning lessons and units within their subject area.</p> |
| <p>Systems and structures exist where students are invited to participate in shaping the school’s policies, goals, instruction, and climate.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Students are included along with members of the ILT and the LSC (representing parents and community) to observe various classrooms during Learning Walks. Beforehand, students are included in designing the rubric around what to look for when in the classroom. The Learning Walk team also meets beforehand to calibrate around the rubric, set norms for the walk, etc. Once in the classroom, students observe through the lens of student-teacher relationships, student-student relationships, level of academic and social engagement, etc. After visiting various classrooms and collecting data, students are part of the debrief session discussing what they saw, and also contributing to the conversation around next steps. The student walkers then take the findings back to the Student Voice Committee and together they present their recommendations to the whole staff during a staff improvement day.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = A school’s Local School Council (LSC) decides to partner with the Student Voice Committee (SVC) and their school’s LSC Student representative to increase student participation in their regular meetings. Students Voice Committees are given an open section on the agenda to raise issues that they are concerned with and with which they would like feedback or support. The LSC student representative creates an online “suggestion box” and develops regular surveys on relevant issues to share with the LSC.</p> |

| | >-----Needs Improvement-----Area of Strength-----> | | | | Look for It Here (Evidence) |
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| <i>Reflective Notes:</i> | | | | | |

Interact with Civic Leaders

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| <p>Students learn about community, city, state, and national civic leaders and their roles in civil society.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = In an English class, students read a series of essays on the meaning of neighborhoods and community. Students begin to find news stories on their neighborhood. They are upset with how their neighborhood is portrayed in the media. Students conduct interviews with their principal, local community leaders, business owners, the alderman, state representatives, and religious leaders to uncover the positive stories of their neighborhood. Students develop a series of “Hidden in Plain View” op-ed pieces in which they share the treasures and talents of their community.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = Students work in small groups to identify a local civic or political leader they are interested in and research their career path. Students explore the leaders’ upbringing, education and training, what drew them to the work, their campaigns including the role technology and/or new media has played, the issues they champion, and the role they play in the community. Students write to the leader and ask to interview them or someone on their staff via email, phone, or video hangout. Students then use the information from their research and interview to develop a visual timeline that portrays how the leader came into prominence in the public and political sphere and the role they are currently playing. Students share their timelines with their classmates via an online or classroom gallery walk.</p> | | | | |
| <p>School supports engagement with civic leaders by inviting them into classrooms/the school and identifying face-to-face or online avenues for students to share their feedback and perspectives with civic leaders.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Environmental professionals are invited to speak with students to discuss the various college and career opportunities and pathways which brought them into the environmental field. A select group of environmental professionals work with students in small groups to identify an environmental issue that affects the local community and, using current and varied media resources, support students in developing real-world solutions to combat these issues.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = Students identify a civic or political leader who advocates for an issue they are interested in and who is active on social media. Students find two recent online posts and analyze how the leader is using social media to engage with the community, raise awareness, and/or mobilize others to get involved as well as how people respond to the post. Students share what they have learned and the class synthesizes a list of strategies that leaders are using on social media. The class discusses what strategies appear to be most effective and ineffective. Students then draft a comment, message, or question to send to the leader via social media sharing their feedback or perspective. Finally, students invite one leader to their class to engage with them in a discussion about the role of social media in civic and political dialogue and engagement in the digital age.</p> | | | | |
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| <p><i>Reflective Notes:</i></p> | | | | | |

Engage with their Community

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| <p>Students complete at least 2 service learning projects before graduation in which they gain exposure to civic organizations, leaders, and careers.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = In a photography class, students visit an exhibition at a local cultural museum with photos exploring how immigrant communities organized their lives in a new country. Students begin to draw parallels between the challenges of immigrants then and now. The class invites a local immigrant rights organization to talk with them about the current challenges faced by immigrant youth today. They interview CPS students who were DACA recipients about their family stories and their life goals. The students produce photo portfolios to present at an upcoming community event highlighting their stories.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = In English class, students are reading Zora Neale Hurston’s <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>, and researching legal and policy issues related to domestic violence. Students also learn about local organizations and recent efforts to support victims and survivors of domestic violence like the Free Bresha Campaign. Recognizing that this issue may be triggering for students, the teacher invites representatives of Project Nia, a community group that supports youth in addressing root causes of violence, to help guide the students’ discussion. Based on what they have learned from their research and their discussion of root causes, students participate in a Twitter campaign during Domestic Violence Awareness month by circulating key facts to raise awareness, dispelling myths and stereotypes to change the conversation, and sharing ways to get involved and help end domestic violence.</p> |
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| <p>Students gain tools to work cooperatively in partnership with peers, community members, and organizations to advance a specific cause.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Students in an elementary school physical education class have been learning about the risks associated with childhood diabetes and obesity. They decide to join a local “Let’s Move” campaign by organizing a field day for children in their neighborhood. They contact local businesses to donate prizes and, in groups, they develop activity and game stations. Each group designs a game or physical activity to not only get students moving but to teach them about the importance of exercise and healthy eating. The school staff also invite local organizations to set up tables sharing information about access to health services, local fresh food, and programs for youth.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = In Spanish class, students research the history of Columbus Day. They work in small groups to draft proposals in Spanish for changing the holiday to Indigenous People’s Day and other ways to recognize and respond to America’s colonial legacy. They send their proposals to Latino and Latina aldermen on City Council, asking that city council take up this question. They follow up, track responses, and collectively write a story in the student newspaper about the process.</p> |
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Reflective Notes:

Take Informed Action

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| <p>Students research and analyze issues that matter to them; identify root causes; develop a theory of action; determine relevant audiences; outline specific goals; implement a response; and reflect before, during, and after experiences.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Students in 5th grade social studies class have been reading the book “Seed Folk”. They conduct a neighborhood walk, taking inventory of the built environment and infrastructure of the school’s surrounding neighborhood. One area near the elementary school is overgrown and full of garbage and glass. The students map the various routes that students take to get to school and identify the danger this lot might present to young children and community members. Students conduct research to identify who in city government would be able to help them address this issue, students speak with members of the local block club, and they build a campaign to garner community support for rehabilitating this vacant space.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = In a Mathematics class, students learn about the redistricting process and gerrymandering as well as the history and root causes of such policies in the city of Chicago. Students then work in small groups to outline the demographics of each of the various voting districts in the city. Students analyze the extent to which the city’s districts are fair and explore whether mathematical strategies could be used to equalize them. Students develop a proposal of practical and sustainable solutions using math to equalize the districts. Students also identify key decision makers to whom they might present their plan and share feedback. At the end of the project, students write a reflective paper or blog post describing what they learned, how the project impacted their perspective on the issue and on taking action, and what they would do differently next time.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Students use social and digital platforms to raise awareness about issues, produce and circulate multimedia content, and mobilize involvement.</p> | <p>Looks Like/Example #1 = Students in a personal finance course have been learning about the dangers of payday loans, how these types of lenders target low-income earners, and the debt cycle that can be created. Students create a social media hashtag to draw attention to the issues as well as produce and distribute via social media 2 minute Public Service Announcements educating their peers about the pitfalls of payday loans.</p> <p>Looks Like/Example #2 = Students discuss the increasingly important role that visual information plays today in sharing information and raising awareness especially via online platforms and social media. Students study some examples of infographics and identify the successful elements in them. Students then research a civic or political issue they are interested in and identify a few critical and compelling pieces of information that they think are not fully understood. Finally, students design an infographic using an online platform, share it with a peer to get feedback, and then circulate the final version via social media in order to raise awareness about the issue.</p> | | | | |
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