



But Is It Operationally Feasible? Lessons Learned from Pursuing Public Value

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But Is It Operationally Feasible? Lessons Learned from Pursuing Public Value

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.)
Capstone

Submitted by

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To the Harvard Graduate School of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education Leadership.

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Dedication

I dedicate this capstone to my brother, Daniel Christopher Hampton, and my Daddy, Travis Ball.

Two lights dimmed far too soon.

Acknowledgements

To Julie Burnett: thanks so much for bringing me onto the EDHS team and shepherding me through residency. I am forever grateful for all the ways you've advocated for me and leveraged your relationships on my behalf. The Mayor's Office is lucky to have you!

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Abstract

In May 2019, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot was elected as Chicago's 56th Mayor. From the very beginning of her tenure, Mayor Lightfoot's administration prioritized building a more equitable city by expanding opportunity and creating inclusive economic growth across Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. Less than a year into Mayor Lightfoot's tenure, Chicago, and cities across the country, was negatively impacted by COVID-19. As COVID-19 progressed and took an economic toll on the city, Mayor Lightfoot created a Recovery Task Force to provide recommendations on how Chicago could ensure an inclusive and equitable recovery from COVID-19. Expanding access to career opportunities and diversifying the workforce emerged as key recommendations from the task force. Ultimately, these recommendations underscored a unique opportunity for the mayor's office to work alongside Chicago Public Schools, workforce partners, and local community-based organizations to improve career pathways among the city's diverse and underserved students.

This capstone, based in the Office of the Chicago Mayor, explores the process enacted by a policy manager to create and implement a work-based learning program aligned to the city's economic recovery goal and emerging need for scalable violence reduction strategies. This is a first-hand account of how Mark Moore's Strategic Triangle, and associated Entrepreneurial Advocacy Framework, can be leveraged to mobilize support in an authorizing environment. The capstone culminates with lessons learned regarding how a political environment's operational structure can either support or inhibit innovative programs being authorized and ultimately implemented at scale.

The Review of Knowledge for Action offers necessary background information regarding the governing relationship between the Office of the Mayor and Chicago Public Schools, the history of summer youth employment programs in the Chicago Mayor's office, the importance of soft skill development in workforce preparation, and an overview of the Strategic Triangle framework.

Introduction

In May 2019, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot was elected as Chicago's 56th mayor. She is the first Black woman and first openly gay mayor to lead the nation's third largest city. Early in her tenure, Mayor Lightfoot demonstrated her belief in the role of schools in supporting the city's economic stability. In October 2019, after 5 months in office, Mayor Lightfoot launched *Career Launch Chicago* - a collaborative apprenticeship initiative between the City of Chicago, Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) and local businesses. *Career Launch Chicago* focuses on creating work-based-learning opportunities for CPS students that connects them to college pathways and careers in the areas of information technology, manufacturing, and healthcare (City Colleges of Chicago, 2019). Slated to start in 2020, *Career Launch Chicago* planned to begin with 50 apprentices and scale to 1,000 by 2024. In the initiative's press release, Mayor Lightfoot shared the following long-term vision for *Career Launch Chicago*:

Career Launch Chicago will bring together CPS, CCC and some of our city's leading businesses and institutions to build a more equitable and dynamic economy by creating apprenticeships, which will allow our young people to take college courses in high school, continue to earn a record-level of college credentials, and get paid to build experience in a field their passionate about," said Mayor Lightfoot. "To prepare our students for the jobs of today and tomorrow, I challenge businesses in every industry to participate in programs like this one and build an unparalleled talent pipeline.

(City Colleges of Chicago, 2019, pg. 1)

Three weeks after *Career Launch Chicago* was initiated, Mayor Lori Lightfoot convened CCC and other universities to discuss the ways higher education contributed to her vision of a more equitable city. During this convening, she stated:

We need to step up and do more to show our children that they can rise above their current circumstances. I want to challenge you to dig deeper to find opportunities for Black and brown students from admissions to retention. Your universities need to be intentional to set students of color up for success. I want to challenge you to think about ways in which to achieve this goal. We are going to be profoundly transforming the lives of those students and their families.

These two moments laid the foundation for the mayor's education team to create connections between schools, career pathways and higher education. Three months after this momentum began, Chicago, and cities across the country, were negatively impacted by COVID-19. In addition to fundamentally changing how the city's education team worked, COVID-19 caused the mayor's education team to shift their focus from career pathways to supporting remote learning. As COVID-19 progressed and took an economic toll on Chicago, Mayor Lori Lightfoot created a *Recovery Task Force* to provide recommendations for how Chicago and the surrounding region could ensure an inclusive and equitable recovery from COVID-19.

In July 2020, the Recovery Task Force released *Forward Together: Building a Stronger Chicago*, an advisory report that integrated feedback from stakeholders representing Chicago's communities and various business sectors and offered recommendations to address existing inequities created and exacerbated by COVID-19. Among the 17 total recommendations, The Task Force named "**Reimagine the region's workforce infrastructure and create a plan to invest in displaced and young workers**" as a priority (Chicago Recovery Task Force, 2020, p. 40). To reach this priority, the Task Force offered two strategic levers:

1. Create a Regional Workforce Strategy for the Future: Partner with stakeholders, including educational institutions, industries, unions, and CBOs to develop a comprehensive and coordinated regional workforce strategy and system
 2. Expand access to career opportunities and diversify the workforce: dramatically increase engagement with inclusivity of workforce training programs and pipelines
- (Chicago Recovery Task Force, 2020, p. 40)

Organization Context

I began my residency on the Education and Human Services team (EDHS) in the Office of the Mayor on June 21, 2021. The 7-person EDHS team had recently returned to working in City Hall full-time and the city was slowly re-opening to recover from the economic devastation created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The EDHS team includes three portfolios: Social Services Policy, K-16 Policy, and Early Learning. Across these three portfolios, the team partners with the following organizations: Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, Chicago Department of Public Housing, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Library, Chicago Public Schools, City Colleges of Chicago, Department of Family Support Services and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (See **APPENDIX A** for the team's org chart). My manager, the Director, K-16 policy, directly manages the relationships with Chicago Public Schools and City Colleges of Chicago - two of the team's largest partner organizations.

When I joined the team in June 2021, my manager was balancing two key priorities: (i) preparing for students to safely return to classrooms for SY 21-22 and (ii) managing the leadership transition within Chicago Public Schools (CPS). For the former, this looked like working with CPS to leverage city resources to ensure all students would be in school on the first day of school and throughout the school year. For the latter, the Mayor's office was supporting the search for CPS's new Chief Executive Officer. On May 3, 2021, Dr. Janice Jackson, announced her resignation from the district with her last day being June 30th. Her resignation also resulted in increased turnover among the district's executive leadership team (i.e., Chief Academic Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Talent Officer).

Given the significant transition within CPS and my manager's ongoing responsibility in managing CPS, my presence on the EDHS team was meant to add capacity to a section of the portfolio that needed additional support: higher education. I was empowered with creating a postsecondary agenda that would improve postsecondary attainment for underserved students across the district and support the Mayor's commitment to improving career pathways. The postsecondary strategy would need to incorporate or extend the higher education initiatives already underway.

Because the first few months of my residency were situated within a highly violent summer, the Mayor prioritized community safety. This led to a shift in the focus of my strategic project from broadly improving postsecondary education among the city's most underserved students to improving access to postsecondary pathways for students attending Chicago Public Schools' Options Schools. Options Schools (i.e alternative schools) have been part of the CPS portfolio for two decades and were designed to serve students who were not being successful in their traditional schools. Specifically, Options Schools offer flexible scheduling, continuous enrollment cycles, culturally responsive schooling environments, and credit recovery for students who had too few credits to graduate from a traditional high school (University of Chicago Urban Education Lab, 2021).

Options Schools are concentrated on Chicago's South and West sides, two areas of the city that have been historically underserved. Students attending Options Schools are more likely than non-Options School students to possess one or more of the following risk factors: live in low-income households (84% vs. 76%) experience homelessness (21% vs. 4%), experience serious school disciplinary incidents in the past year (13% vs 5%), previously victimized in a crime (38% vs. 12%) and have at least one prior arrest recorded in Chicago Police Department data (38% vs.

3%) (See **APPENDIX B** for complete student comparisons). Additionally, for Options Schools, the 6-year high school graduation rate is 38.6%, while non-options school students are 91.1%. Options Schools students enrolled in college at a rate of 30.7% while their non-Options School peers enrolled at a rate of 78.5% (University of Chicago Urban Education Lab, 2021).

Options Schools are not only concentrated on the city's South and West sides, but also are in the communities that experience a higher percentage of the city's crime. As stated above, Options School students are 40% more likely to be a victim or arrested for a crime. This violence data coupled with the glaring high school graduation gap between Options and non-Options students (38.6% vs 91.1%) were the impetus for creating a policy that offered direct support to Options students.

Taken together, the ~10,000 students attending Options Schools are one of the most vulnerable and underserved student groups within Chicago Public Schools. This capstone will describe how I leveraged One Summer Chicago's summer youth employment framework to create an Options School work-based learning strategy meant to improve postsecondary attainment over the long-term and decrease violent crime involvement and/or victimization in the short term. This capstone will offer an overview of the process I underwent to get the work-based learning concept legitimized by necessary stakeholders. Ultimately, this capstone will offer a response to my primary learning question: **How do I lead change within the mayor's office?**

In the forthcoming **Review of Knowledge for Action**, I explore the following key questions:

- What history informs the relationship between Chicago Public Schools and Chicago's Mayor? Why is Chicago Public Schools' governance intertwined with the Mayor's city priorities? Has it always been this way?
- How might summer youth employment programs, a work-based learning program leveraged by Chicago mayors over the last 32 years, be adapted to support Options School students during the academic school year?

- What is work-based learning; and how might work-based learning directly support improving the education of at-risk students?
- What is the process for implementing a new, meaningful policy within a government agency?

Answering these questions made it possible for me to create a research informed strategy for supporting Options Schools and informed my (best) understanding of how to navigate city government.

Review of Knowledge for Action

The Chicago Mayor's Office and Integrated Governance

Key Question: *What history informs the relationship between Chicago Public Schools and Chicago's Mayor? Why is Chicago Public Schools' governance intertwined with the Mayor's city priorities? Has it always been this way?*

As president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, I believe that education is the greatest challenge facing our cities today," Daley said. Menino agreed: "Mayor Daley and I share a very important philosophy. Neither one of us is willing to wash our hands of public education. We refuse to let our schools fall by the wayside and join the chorus of politicians saying the failure of the schools isn't their fault. No, Mayor Daley and I believe that when it comes to educating our kids, the buck stops in the mayor's office.

(Brown, 1996, p.1)

Dating back to 1872, Chicago's mayors have played a central role in Chicago Public School's (CPS) governance. There have been two distinct moments of reform, though, that fundamentally changed CPS's governance model and served as a proof point for the rest of the country. These two legislative reforms were the *Chicago School Reform Act of 1988* and *The Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act of 1995*.

The *Chicago School Reform Act of 1988* has been referred to as the "most significant and potentially far-reaching school improvement strategy yet attempted in a large school district in the United States (Pink, 1992, p. 97)." Implemented during Harold Washington's mayoral administration, the legislation included: a set of goals to be met by each school by 1994, a reallocation of resources to the individual schools, and the establishment of local school councils at every school (Downes & Horowitz, 1994). As a result of this legislation, local school councils or LSCs became the primary lever for each school to meet the outlined goals. LSCs included a combination of six parents, two community members, two teachers and the principal and this group

became responsible for managing the school budget, retaining and/or hiring a principal, and engaging the community in the school governance process (Downes & Horowitz, 1994).

By the early 1990s, Chicago received national attention for reversing course and championing recentralization, mayoral control of schools, corporate management practices, and punitive accountability measures (Wilkerson, 1989). Chicago was now being led by Richard M. Daley and he, along with state policy makers and other stakeholders, became dissatisfied with the decentralized nature of the district. The dissatisfaction was rooted in the following realities: student performance did not show significant improvement, LSCs did not bring about significant increase in parental involvement in school-related matters, a budgetary crisis ensued and jeopardized schools opening on time in September 1995, the school board was unable to restore confidence in the public school system and its top administrators, and Mayor Daley's ability to select board members was limited (Wong & Sunderman, 1995).

Thus in 1995, the *Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act* was passed, and its primary purpose was to centralize governance and infuse the school system with stricter accountability. The 1995 Amendatory Act affected CPS governance by changing the: management structure, fiscal areas, the Board's relationship with the Chicago Teachers Union, and school board governance (Haney, 2011). Because of this legislation, Mayor Richard M. Daley, and future mayors, were given complete authority to appoint the CPS Chief Executive Officer. Similarly, the district would begin to resemble a corporate-style management system where CPS positions were given corporate titles and the system would be led by key chief positions (i.e. chief financial officer and chief education officer). As for board governance, the fifteen-member board became a five-person board and Daley, along with future mayors, was given the power to appoint all board

members of his choosing (Haney, 2011). See **APPENDIX C** for summary of changes in CPS's Board of Education.

Wong (2007) further summarizes the Chicago School Reform Amendatory Act's overall impact on the governing relationship between CPS and the mayor's office.

Although the 1995 legislation left intact some features of the previous decentralized arrangements it reduced competing institutional authority and re-centralized administrative authority. As a result of the 1995 reform, appointment decisions emanating from the mayor's office closely link the board, top administration, and the mayor's office. The law decreased the size of the fifteen-member board to five and put the mayor in charge of appointing board members, the board president, and the chief executive officer in charge of the schools.

Ultimately, the Amendatory Act of 1995 ushered in a new form of governance for urban schools known as integrated governance. Within integrated governance school district governance is no longer isolated from but is incorporated into the governance model of the local municipality (Wong K., 2007). For this reason, Chicago Public Schools is commonly referred to as a mayoral controlled district. Though mayoral control and integrated governance are similar, integrated governance extends beyond mayoral control because it is a form of partnership between the mayor's office and the school district. According to Wong (2007), integrated governance is characterized by a strong political will to improve the operations of the city's school system; partnerships between city hall, the schools, teachers' unions and civic groups dedicated to system wide improvements; a focus on systemwide standards and performance outcomes; and district leadership using a mix of intervention and support strategies to meet the challenges faced by urban schools.

Integrated governance became a cornerstone of the district's management after the Amendatory Act of 1995. Thus, then mayor, Mayor Richard M. Daley, began to treat schools as

essential to retaining the city's middle-class residents. A strong public school system, in his view, could also attract businesses to Chicago (Wong 2007). Daley's belief that schools were directly connected to the overall economic health of the city would be reflected throughout his 22-year tenure as Chicago's mayor. This belief would be mirrored in future mayoral administrations including that of Chicago's current mayor: Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot.

Chicago's Mayors & Summer Youth Employment

Key Question: *How might summer youth employment programs, a work-based learning program leveraged by Chicago mayors over the last 32 years, be adapted to support Options School students during the academic school year?*

Chicago mayors have a history of convening city resources to provide summer employment opportunities for students. The summer youth employment program under Mayor Richard M. Daley's administration (1989-2011) was *Youth Ready Chicago*.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration (2011-2019) partnered with the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) to launch *One Summer Chicago (OSC)*. Over the course of OSC's implementation, the program provided more than 190,000 youth, ages 14-24, with jobs and internship opportunities to gain valuable work experience and critical support services. As a departure from Mayor Daley's *Youth Ready Chicago* program, OSC included targeted support for at-risk youth through a program called *One Summer Chicago Plus (OSC Plus)*. OSC Plus was a specialized violence prevention summer workforce program for high-need youth, ages 16-21, who reside in the highest risk communities. Participating students were provided with safe and well-defined experiences that allowed them to gain valuable work readiness skills.

Mayor Lightfoot's administration (2019-Present) continued the partnership with DFSS to re-implement OSC's programming during the COVID-19 pandemic. During summer 2021, OSC

provided 23,000 youth, ages 14-24, with remote and socially distanced in-person job and life-skills training via paid summer opportunities. Additionally in 2020, Mayor Lightfoot's administration launched *My CHI. My Future. (MCMF)* - an initiative designed to connect Chicago's youth to meaningful out-of-school experiences. MCMF's focus is on ensuring the City's youth can access opportunities that are aligned to their interests and in the community of their choice. Taken together, MCMF and OSC helped provide 200,000 summer opportunities to the city's youth in summer 2021.

Summer Youth Employment & Violence Prevention

As detailed above, Chicago's most recent mayors have used summer employment programs as a strategy to prepare the city's youth for the workforce by providing paid job opportunities for 6-8 weeks during the summer. Mayor Emanuel's OSC, and OSC Plus, was the first summer youth employment program, among Chicago's mayors, to target at-risk youth and leverage summer youth employment as a strategy for violence reduction in the city. OSC Plus offered 8 weeks of summer employment at \$8.25/hour in a nonprofit or government job. Youth were also given a job mentor, an adult who helped them learn to be successful employees and to navigate barriers to employment (Heller, 2014).

In 2014, Sara Heller published the results of a randomized controlled trial of 1,634 OSC Plus youth, grades, 8-12. The study analyzed the year 1 implementation of OSC and OSC Plus.

Below is a brief description of the youth who applied and participated in the study:

Applicants are on average 16 years old, and almost all are African American. Over 90% are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (a proxy for family poverty), with average grade point averages around a C in the prior fall semester. Study youth missed 18% of the pre-program school year, or around 6 weeks. About 20% had been arrested at baseline, and just over 20% had been victimized. Applicants live in highly disadvantaged neighborhoods: Unemployment averages over 19%; a third of

households are under the poverty line; and violent crime rates are extremely high.
(Heller, 2014, p.25)

The study randomly assigned the 700 participating students to two groups: jobs-only or jobs + social-emotional learning (SEL). The jobs-only youth received 25 hours per week of paid employment. The jobs + SEL youth were paid for 15 hours per week of work and 10 hours of SEL support. The SEL support was based on cognitive behavioral therapy principles, aimed at teaching youth to understand and manage the aspects of their thoughts, emotions, and behavior that might interfere with employment (Heller, 2014). When compared to a control group of youth who did not participate in the program, Heller's study determined OSC Plus supported a 43% reduction in violent crimes over 16 months with much of the decline occurring after the program ended. Violent crimes are defined as crimes that "stem from conflicts between people, so problematic cognitive and emotional responses to social interactions - including hostile attribution bias, uncontrolled anger, and "hot" decision-making - are thought to be proximal causes of youth violence (Heller, 2014). The study also analyzed the impact on arrests for property crimes, drug abuse, and other crimes. There were no significant changes in the other kinds of arrests.

According to this study, participating youth's behavioral change can be attributed to the following factors: the coaching and providing the program to youth who are still in school. The SEL curriculum focused on emotion and conflict management, social information processing and goal setting (Heller, 2014). Taken together, these skills could directly contribute to violence reduction. Focusing on youth who are in-school versus those who are out of school makes OSC Plus a preventive strategy. According to Heller, previously studied youth employment programs served as tertiary prevention, targeting youth already out of school struggling in the labor market (Heller, 2014). Thus, by teaching youth to be successful employees, facilitating connections to

employer networks, and providing work experience before they drop out of school (Heller, 2014), OSC Plus is preventive and, overall, less intensive than programming required for youth who are already disconnected from schools.

It is important to note that the jobs-only and jobs+SEL groups were equally effective in decreasing violent crime arrests among participants. Thus, the SEL programming was not the only means for youth to receive conflict management and soft skills training. Heller states: one possibility is that the substance of the SEL curriculum - teaching youth to process social information, manage thoughts and emotions, and set and achieve goals more successfully - was taught equally well on the job (Heller, 2014). To be sure, previous studies with SEL programming have reduced violence, but OSC Plus job related programming was enough to generate a steep drop in violence independently (Heller, 2014).

Heller's research suggests summer youth employment programs have remained a consistent offering among the last three mayors, spanning a total of 32 years, because the program structure is cost effective, requires low-intensity implementation, and serves as a lever to reduce violent crimes among at-risk youth.

Work-Based Learning & Soft Skill Development

***Key Question:** What is work-based learning; and how might work-based learning directly support improving the education of at-risk students?*

Work-based learning has proven beneficial for youth, especially for those with low-income backgrounds, and those who may not have access to the career exposure educational opportunities, professional networks, and social capital that often plays a critical role in career success (Maag, Moschella & Altstadt, 2021). The purpose of this section is to define work-based learning and offer an overview of how work-based learning helps youth build soft skills integral to their lives beyond high school.

Work-based learning (WBL) is defined as learning technical, academic and employability skills by working in a real work environment. The purposes of WBL can be organized into three categories:

- **Cognitive development:** Learning through engagement with ideas and things
- **Social/Emotional development:** Learning through engagement with self and others
- **Career development:** Learning through engagement with work processes and places (Stone, Stern, Hopkins, & McMillion, 1990)

To accomplish these purposes, WBL is commonly structured in the following types of programs:

- **Internship:** Expands classroom learning, connects to the world outside of school, and can run from a few weeks to a full academic year; Often implemented during summer
- **Co-operative Education:** Places students in companies during the school year as part of a course for credit, and the student's experience is monitored by a coordinator and/or teacher for the course
- **Apprenticeships:** Students are regarded as employees and taught by experience experienced workers at a job site and practice their skills in real work assignments
- **School-Based Enterprise:** Students are learning to work in a business inside the school, and the mentor is a teacher rather than an external employee (Stone, Stern, Hopkins, & McMillion, 1990)

To be sure, summer youth employment programs, like OSC Plus, have proven to reduce youth involvement in violent crimes. It is also important to note that summer youth employment

opportunities are categorically work-based learning programs; and, as a result, can play a significant role in preparing students to transition to postsecondary pathways of their choosing. Based on the research above and the program description for OSC Plus, OSC Plus is a WBL program structured as an internship. OSC Plus, as it was initially structured, also fulfilled the purposes of cognitive, social/emotional and career development.

As students engage in WBL programs, they not only acquire technical skills associated with workplace success, but also the necessary “soft skills”. Soft skills are a broad set of skills, competencies, behaviors, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals (Lippman, Ryberg, Carney, & Moore, 2015). According to Kautz, Heckman, Diris, ter Weel, & Borghans (2014), soft skills are central to workforce success and rival academic or technical skills in their ability to predict employment earnings, among other outcomes. Despite their demonstrable importance, soft skills preparation remains a challenge. The demand for soft skills has increased over the last 20 years as the world has modernized. Increased demand coupled with limited training has created a “soft skill” gap where job candidates lack the soft skills needed to fill available positions (Man Group, 2013).

WBL programs are uniquely positioned to address the emerging “soft skill” gap by equipping youth with the soft skills to be successful and competitive in the workplace. Lippman, et al. reviewed 380 resources that examined the relationship between soft skills and key workforce outcomes, including employment, performance on the job, wages, and entrepreneurial success. Based on the literature review and input from stakeholders, the following skills were identified as being important aspects to success in the workforce.

Soft Skills	Description
Social skills	Helps people get along well with others. This ability includes respecting others, using context appropriate behavior, and resolving conflict
Communication skills	The specific communication used in workplace, and include oral, written, non-verbal, and listening skills
Higher-order thinking skills (i.e. problem solving, critical thinking, decision making)	The ability to identify an issue and take in information from multiple sources to evaluate options to reach a reasonable conclusion
Self-control	One's ability to delay gratification, control impulses, direct and focus attention, manage emotions, and regulate behaviors
Positive self-concept	Self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-awareness, and beliefs, as well as self-esteem and a sense of well-being and pride

(Lippman, Ryberg, Carney, & Moore, 2015)

These skills were supported across all literature and stakeholders and were elevated as priorities for youth workforce success. Even more importantly, the skills are developmentally appropriate for the 15-29 age group and can be directly improved with youth workforce development programs. According to, (Lippman, Ryberg, Carney, & Moore, 2015), youth who possess these skills are more likely to be hired, retained on the job, and promoted.

In a separate study that highlights the post-high school experiences of graduates of Cristo Rey Northeast, a pseudonym for a U.S. Catholic high school where work-based learning is used to prepare young people from urban, low-income families for a successful future, themes regarding the importance of soft skills development were also elevated. The schools WBL model included: spending one full day in the workplace weekly, a weekly holistic reflection seminar where students discussed their workplace experiences, and quarterly student evaluations by workplace

supervisors. Among the 18 alumni interviewees, the following themes arose about how school and work-based learning prepared them for meaningful work and life:

- All alumni possessed future orientation that included continuing their education despite current circumstance and/or hardships
- Alumni reported encompassing self-control and self-regulation, self-reflection, and social skills and workplace communication
- Alumni perceive the aforementioned qualities to have been fostered through the unique education and work-based learning settings where they were immersed

(Kenny et al. 2016)

WBL programs are proven to support students in acquiring soft skills needed for the workforce. As previously mentioned, soft skills have become as, if not more, desirable than technical skills needed to perform specific jobs. Unlike countries such as Switzerland, Germany, Singapore, and the Netherlands, the US does not have a system of highly developed or comprehensive WBL programs (Hoffman 2015). Implementing a WBL program for Options School students would be a research-driven strategy to ensure students are being equipped with the skills most needed in the workforce and expand the district's current programming for Options Schools. Currently, Options School offer WBL in two ways: 1. CPS provides career exposure programming where companies come to schools to discuss career pathways and 2. Individual Options Schools have created their own CTE partnerships (i.e. barbering program, forklift and unarmed security).

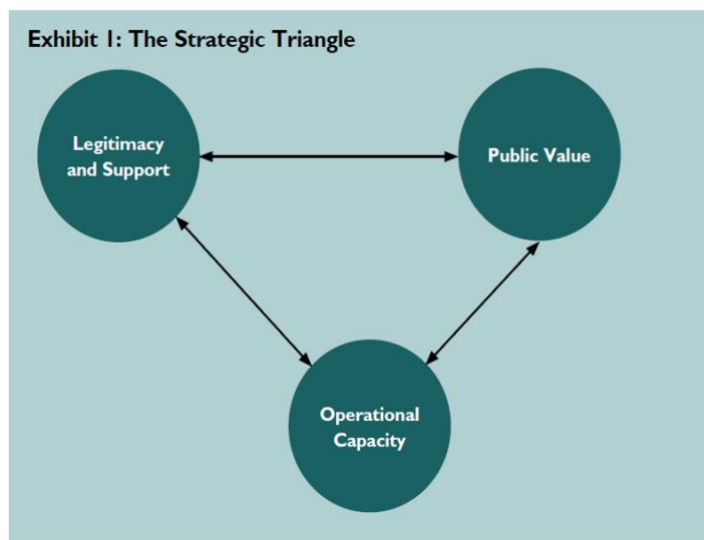
This strategy would also serve as a proof point for creating and implementing a yearlong WBL program that serves Chicago Public Schools students but is spearheaded by the mayor's office.

Political Management and Creating Public Value

Key question: *What is the process for implementing a new, meaningful policy within a government agency?*

The **content** of my strategic project focuses on creating an Options School strategy that dually reduces youth participation in violent crimes and prepares them for the workforce. My strategic project also seeks to answer the question: what is the **process** for implementing a new, meaningful policy within a government agency? To answer this question and to guide my actions in the mayor's office, I leveraged Mark Moore's Strategic Triangle. The Strategic Triangle consists of the following three questions managers in government should consider when determining the overall usefulness of a new strategy:

1. **Is it publicly valuable?** The strategy must be valuable in that it produces things of value to overseers, clients, and beneficiaries at low cost
 2. **Will it be politically and legitimately supported?** The strategy must be able to attract both authority and money from the political authorizing environment
 3. **Is it administratively and operationally feasible?** The proposed actions/activities can be accomplished by the existing organization with help from others as needed
- (Moore, 1995, p. 71)



Ensuring the answer to each of these questions is “yes” indicates the proposed strategy is valuable to the authorizing environment and is likely to be legitimized for implementation. Managers responsible for ensuring and/or creating the value of a proposed strategy are political managers. As a political manager, I needed to engage stakeholders in the authorizing environment for two key reasons:

1. Permission to use public resources in pursuit of a given enterprise; or,
2. Operational assistance to help produce the results for which they are responsible

(Moore, 1995, p. 113)

I possessed neither the resources nor operational capacity to execute my proposed strategy, so successfully engaging the authorizing environment in these two ways was tantamount to the progress of my strategic project. Thankfully, Moore (1995) proposes the following six techniques political managers can use to mobilize beyond the scope of their authority: Entrepreneurial Advocacy, Managing Policy Development, Negotiation, Public Deliberation, Social Learning and Leadership.

I utilized the entrepreneurial advocacy framework because of its focus on improving the chances that a political manager gets their policy authoritatively adopted and solidly backed. The Entrepreneurial Advocacy framework requires political managers to leverage a combination of diagnostic skills and tactical skills. The diagnostic skills focus on identifying who must or might play a role in making the decision. The tactical skills focus on finding ways to mobilize support for the choices I, the political manager, want made (Moore, 1995). Below is an overview of the questions and specific steps included within the diagnostic and tactical aspects of the Entrepreneurial Advocacy Framework:

Entrepreneurial Advocacy Framework

Diagnostic	Tactical
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Diagnosis 1: Who will be involved?● Diagnosis 2: Estimating Stands of Players	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tactic 1: Choosing Paths to Decisions● Tactic 2: Framing Issues for Discussion● Tactic 3: Waiting for a Favorable Moment● Tactic 4: Changing the Setting

(Moore, 1995, p.151-161)

The Entrepreneurial Advocacy Framework created an action plan for me to follow as I worked to acquire operational assistance for the Options School strategy. I will detail how I enacted this framework in the Strategic Project description.

Theory of Action

Ultimately, the success of the strategic project depended on my ability to persuade key stakeholders to authorize and implement the summer youth employment framework during the academic school year, as a lever for violence reduction and soft skill development among Options School students. To accomplish this, I leveraged the following theory of action:

If I...

- Consult with a broad set of stakeholders in CPS and Options Schools to understand Options School student experience and current work-based learning offerings
- Consult with the Community Safety Coordination Center to its understand current violence prevention programming and strategies
- Examine research literature that analyzes the impact of work-based learning opportunities on at-risk students

Then..

- I will use the information gathered to create a postsecondary strategy that supports the City of Chicago's violence reduction efforts, aligns to the Mayor's commitment to diversifying the workforce, and expands postsecondary opportunities for Options School students
- I will persuade my manager and the CSCC's Chief Coordination Officer to endorse the proposed strategy because it is mutually valuable for both organizations
- Then the CSCC will legitimize the strategy with monetary resources, and I will work to operationalize the strategy

And Then...

- The Mayor's Office will be able to elevate a proof of concept for systematically improving support for one of the CPS's most vulnerable student population
- The Mayor's Office will have implemented a policy that dually supports violence prevention and increased postsecondary attainment among the city's most vulnerable students

Description, Evidence and Analysis

Description

My overall learning question for this strategic project is **How do I lead change in the mayor's office?** My strategic project seeks to answer this question by intentionally leveraging Moore's Strategic Triangle framework as a guide. My strategic project is organized into the following three phases: **PHASE 1: The Pivot**, **PHASE 2: Creating a Valuable Strategy and Gaining Support**, and **PHASE 3: Making Things Operationally Feasible**.

As the name suggests, Phase 1 offers a high-level overview of how my strategic project pivoted to focusing on Options School students. Phases 2 and 3 are aligned to the Strategic Triangle's key questions a political manager should consider when determining the overall usefulness of a strategy:

1. **Is it publicly valuable?**
2. **Will it be politically and legitimately supported?**
3. **Is it administratively and operationally feasible?**

This forthcoming description will detail the process I underwent to acquire a "yes" to each of these questions resulting in my proposed strategy for Options School students being authorized and legitimized for implementation.

PHASE 1: The Pivot (June - September)

I joined the EDHS team in June 2021 with the understanding I'd be creating a postsecondary strategy. My strategic project initially focused on working with CPS and City Colleges of Chicago to create a city-led strategy that increased postsecondary attainment among the city's most underserved students. To get up to speed on the postsecondary landscape, I conducted interviews

with individuals who represented Chicago's education ecosystem in the following sectors: **K-12 Public Education, Public Higher Education, Local Government and Philanthropy**. I also leveraged the interviews to gather insight regarding what the Mayor's Office could do to accelerate postsecondary degree attainment. Across these interviews three distinct themes emerged:

- **Theme 1:** Over the last ten years, Chicago Public Schools has made significant progress with increasing graduation rates across the district. This progress began with the creation of a postsecondary department under Arne Duncan's tenure as CPS CEO (2001-2009) Why did this happen? What were the successful strategies?
- **Theme 2:** The Chicago Roadmap, implemented in FY2021, is meant to codify best practices related to improving CPS's graduation rate and create a clear pathway for postsecondary degree attainment
- **Theme 3:** The Mayor's Office is uniquely positioned to convene higher education institutions for the purpose of collectively moving toward a goal. Previous mayors have leveraged their power in this way. Scaling the successful strategies?

My understanding of the postsecondary landscape was further deepened by my participation in higher education working groups. I joined and/or led the following working groups and meetings, respectively, during Phase 1 of the strategic project:¹

- The Chicago Roadmap Leadership Committee
- The Career Launch Chicago Working Group and Advisory Council
- America's Urban Campus Advisory Group²
- Bi-weekly meeting between the Mayor's Office and City Colleges of Chicago
- Monthly City Colleges of Chicago Board Meeting Prep

The informational interviews, working groups and weekly meetings, helped me get acclimated to how the Mayor's Office collaborated with CPS and CCC to support postsecondary degree attainment among CPS students. During this time, I learned the disparities with the district's

¹ My participation in the working groups continued throughout the duration of my residency

² America's Urban Campus - a consortium of 20 of Chicago's higher education institutions formed a non-profit collaborate on branding the city for higher education, building the talent pipeline, and supporting communities

postsecondary support - namely, that not all CPS students had equitable access to the resources meant to expand career pathways and improve degree attainment.

For example, *Career Launch Chicago*³, a mayoral initiative geared toward increasing access to competitive apprenticeships, was not being implemented in Options Schools because Career Launch's program model did not align with the Options School's half day school model and transient student population. Similarly, the Chicago Roadmap, a collaborative initiative between the Mayor's Office, CCC and CPS meant to provide a pathway for postsecondary degree attainment had only been implemented in 7 out of 38 Options Schools because of governance challenges. Despite the structural and governance challenges Options Schools faced, I learned CPS had not created targeted postsecondary support suitable for the Options School's unique structure.

I leveraged the learning from the informational interviews, working groups and weekly meetings to create a draft postsecondary strategy. To create the postsecondary strategy, I identified the mayoral initiatives being led in collaboration with city's sister agencies (i.e. CPS and CCC) and key partners (i.e. America's Urban Campus) and summarized key outcomes/outputs for each initiative. I initially thought creating a postsecondary strategy in the Mayor's office meant identifying a problem and creating a hypothesis about how to solve it with city resources. What I ultimately created, though, was a document that would be used as an accountability tool to (i) manage the work already being led by sister agencies and (ii) effectively communicate their progress/wins. See **Appendix D** for a copy of the priority document, as it is referred to internally, that summarized the higher education initiatives and outcomes.

³ Full description of Career Launch Chicago was provided in the introduction

Phase 1 of the strategic project equipped me with necessary knowledge of the postsecondary landscape and key relationships with core stakeholders. I also learned the high school graduation gap between Options and non-Options students had as much to do with Options Schools receiving inequitable distribution of resources for postsecondary support as the risk factors Options School students faced.

From the beginning of my residency, my manager deputized me with authority to lead. Thus, I had the necessary positional power to lead the originally scoped strategic project. During the first four months of my residency, as I became more proximate to the postsecondary work, it also became clear the initiatives were already creating public value and they already had very capable leaders moving things forward. For the first four months of my residency, my leadership in the mayor's office showed up as thought leadership; but my desire - as indicated by my learning question - was to directly lead an effort that created public value for the mayor's office.

The Pivot

It is important to note the first few months of my residency were situated within an unusually violent summer in Chicago. According to a CNN report published on June 22, the second day of my residency, Chicago recorded more than a 30% increase in murders compared to 2019, and a nearly 60% jump over the same period when it came to shootings (Jimenez, 2021). Earlier in the summer, Mayor Lightfoot launched a *Summer Safety Strategy* - a whole government approach to public safety that leveraged city departments, violence prevention organizations and community partners to curb summer crime in the 15 areas responsible for 50% of the city's violence (Jimenez, 2021).

In August 2021, Mayor Lightfoot launched the Community Safety Coordination Center (The CSCC)⁴ as a direct response to increased violence in the city. The CSCC goals were:

1. To ensure violence prevention and reduction is community-led with support from City staff and resources, which are identified by the community.
- 2. To create new collaboration amongst City staff, community organizations, and others with existing roles in the violence prevention and reduction space**
3. To create the systems for data collection, analysis and mapping needed to ensure a comprehensive, data-driven approach to violence prevention and reduction

In alignment with the organization's second goal, the CSCC's Chief Coordination Officer met with each city department, the EDHS team included, to discuss the goals of the CSCC and invite team members to consider opportunities for collaboration. I took the Chief Coordination Officer up on her offer to discuss opportunities for collaboration. During our conversation, she elevated the CSCC's desire to better align the city's resources to programming rooted in research-based violence prevention strategies. From a school's perspective, she mentioned there was growing interest in working with Options Schools because of students' 40% likelihood of being victims or perpetrators of crime. She invited me to come back to her with potential ideas for Options School programming that aligned to CSCC's violence prevention mission

I had a hunch that if I created a strategy that addressed the Mayor's important priority to expand career pathways *and* the CSCC's urgent need to expand violence prevention efforts in the city, then I'd be able to lead an effort that offered new value. **Thus, I set out to use all the postsecondary background knowledge I'd acquired to create an Options Schools strategy that addressed violence prevention and expanded access to career pathways.**

⁴ The CSCCC is a multi-agency coordination center that coordinates government and nonprofit resources to holistically reduce and prevent violence in Chicago's communities.

PHASE 2: Defining the Strategy & Gaining Support (September - December)

It is no mistake we are here today at one of our Options Schools which supports some of our most vulnerable students. I believe, and I am told, this is the first time on the first day of school that we've visited a school of this kind. It showcases our commitment to uplifting and encouraging these young people who choose to come to school every single day to advance their academic careers despite facing a number of challenges and stressors outside of the classroom. We need to make sure we are supporting them as well. To the school communities of Ombudsman Chicago and all of our other Options Schools, know that we hear you, that we see you, and that we are glad to have another opportunity to serve you this school year. To my Options School community writ large, I want you to know that I'm making a personal commitment to you and your success. You will no longer be ignored. You will no longer feel like an afterthought because your success is the success of the entire system. Today marks an important new day.

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, August 30, 2021, First Day of School Remarks

Mayor Lightfoot's first day of school remarks signaled a "new day" in a few ways. To begin with, August 30, 2021 was the first day Chicago Public Schools students returned to in-person learning after a full academic year of remote schooling. Secondly, as mentioned in her remarks, it was the first time an Options School was included on the mayor's first day of school tour. This "honor" has historically been reserved for traditional and/or exemplary CPS schools, and including an Options Schools was because of my manager's advisement. Lastly, Mayor Lightfoot's remarks at Ombudsman underscored the city's emerging commitment to deepening Options School support.

Defining the Strategy

Similar to **PHASE 1**, I jumped into thinking about the Options School strategy by leading a number of information interviews to better understand the Options School landscape. I interviewed **three CPS Board of Education Members, two Options School principals and four CPS**

central office leaders responsible for different components of the Options School governance.

I learned the following:

- CPS recognized the need for improved support of Options Schools, but had not determined the best way to move forward; Significant leadership turnover contributed to this
- There was a significant amount of mistrust between CPS and Options School operators that made progress, on both sides, difficult
- Because Options Schools are governed by external operators, CPS is limited in what it can “require” school leaders to do
- Before Dr. Jackson transitioned, there were conversations about the need to revamp the district’s vision for alternative career pathways as a viable alternative to college attainment

Secondly, I conducted research on national best practices for increasing access to career pathways among at-risk student populations; specifically, among high school students. This research revealed **youth employment programs** were not only proven to improve students’ career preparation, but also serve as a strategy to increase high school graduation rates. I did a scan of Chicago’s youth employment programs and the most popular, by far, **was the City of Chicago’s summer youth employment programs.**

For the last 32 years, Chicago’s mayors have convened city resources to provide summer youth employment programs (SYEP) for youth across the city. Each administration has had its own name, but the mission remained the same. Mayor Rahm Emmanuel’s SYEP, *One Summer Chicago (OSC)* and *One Summer Chicago Plus (OSC Plus)*, proved to be the most applicable to the strategy I aspired to create for Options School students. In partnership with the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), OSC provided more than 190,000 youth, ages 14-24, with jobs and internships to gain valuable work experience and critical support services. OSC Plus was created as a specialized violence prevention summer workforce program designed for at-risk youth in high-risk communities.

A randomized controlled trial of 700 OSC Plus youth determined that among participating youth there was a 43% reduction in violent crimes over 16 months. If an 8-week program could significantly decrease violence reduction in such a short amount of time, I thought there'd be an opportunity to improve the percentage decrease by extending the length of the youth employment program through the full academic year. Similarly, from my work-based learning research, I learned that the nation was facing an emerging “soft skills” gap. That is, the demand for soft skills has increased over the last 20 years as the world has modernized. Given these modernizations, soft skills have become as, if not more, desirable than technical skills needed to perform specific jobs. Not surprisingly, work-based learning programs are uniquely positioned to address the soft skills gap by strategically equipping youth with the soft skills needed to be successful in the workplace.

I leveraged the SYEP framework and work-based learning research to create a work-based learning concept for Options School students. Below is a high-level overview of the concept:

Category	Options School Concept Strategy
Vision	<p>Leverage the One Summer Chicago Plus’ youth employment framework to create an Options School work-based learning program that (i) serves as a targeted violence prevention strategy and (ii) equips students with necessary soft skills to be successful in the workforce</p> <p>This approach would offer workforce development, while immediately supporting CSCC’s violent crime reduction strategy</p>
Targeted Audience	~30 Option School students will participate in a youth employment program during the academic school year through the summer
Key Alignment Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aligns to CSCC prioritization of programming that supports individuals and families at-risk and systemic transformation ● Aligns to EDHS focus on improving postsecondary options for historically underserved student populations ● Aligns with City of Chicago’s Recovery Task Force priority:

	Equitable Economic Recovery
Time Commitment	March 2022 - March 2023 or April 2022-April 2023; 15 hours per week
Key Partners	CPS, CPS-approved CBOs for job placement, and mentors who will serve as soft skill coaches
Anticipated Cost	\$500,000

The full concept deck can be found in Appendix E.

Gaining (some) Political Support

I pitched the strategy concept to my manager first and then the CSCC’s Chief Coordination Officer. The Chief Coordination Officer confirmed the CSCC would fund the year-round work-based learning concept as a pilot under two conditions: I firmed up the details regarding how to operationalize the pilot and identified partners who would execute the pilot’s programming. The Chief Coordination Officer suggested I connect with two entities that might be interested in serving as partners: CPS’s Choose to Change Program and the CSCC’s Youth and Education Committee.

My manager connected me to Choose to Change’s senior leader to learn about their work, and I also connected with the CSCC’s Youth & Education Committee to deepen context knowledge. **Choose to Change** is an anti-violence program for high-risk teens. The program spans 6-months and connects students with weekly therapy and dedicated mentors. The program is funded by CPS, the city of Chicago and philanthropy. In October 2021, CPS committed \$7.5 million to expand the program. The Choose to Change program is operated by the Chief of Safety Security and her Deputy Chief.

The **CSCC Youth & Education Committee** is comprised of members from three sister agencies who have been detailed⁵ to the CSCC. The sister agencies are City of Chicago Parks, City of Chicago Libraries and Chicago Public Schools. Overall, the Youth and Education committee was responsible for leveraging city resources to create violence prevention programming.

In PHASE 2 of my strategic project, I made demonstrable progress on two of the three questions posed in Moore’s Strategic Triangle:

Strategic Triangle Question	Progress
Is it publicly valuable? The strategy must be valuable in that it produces things of value to overseers, clients, and beneficiaries at low cost	✓
Will it be politically and legitimately supported? The strategy must be able to attract both authority and money from the political authorizing environment	✓
Is it administratively and operationally feasible? The proposed actions/activities can be accomplished by the existing organization with help from others as needed	?

Phase 3 would focus on determining whether or not I’d be able to make the Options School concept administratively and operationally feasible. Getting a “yes” to this question required me to solidify a partner who would be willing to use its resources - namely, time and human capital - to execute the proposed Options School concept. As stated in the RKA, the work of a political manager is to not only create the value of a proposed strategy, but also acquire operational assistance to help produce the results for which they are responsible.

⁵ Detailed is a term used in local government, and maybe other orgs, to describe when a person is formally employed by one organization, but is asked to join a team within another organization for designated period of time

PHASE 3: Making Things Operationally Feasible (January - March)

I leveraged Moore’s **Entrepreneurial Advocacy Framework** to determine which organization should be involved in operationalizing the pilot. As outlined in the RKA, the Entrepreneurial Advocacy Framework offers two diagnostic templates for political managers:

1. **Who will be involved?;** and
2. **Estimating Stands of Players**

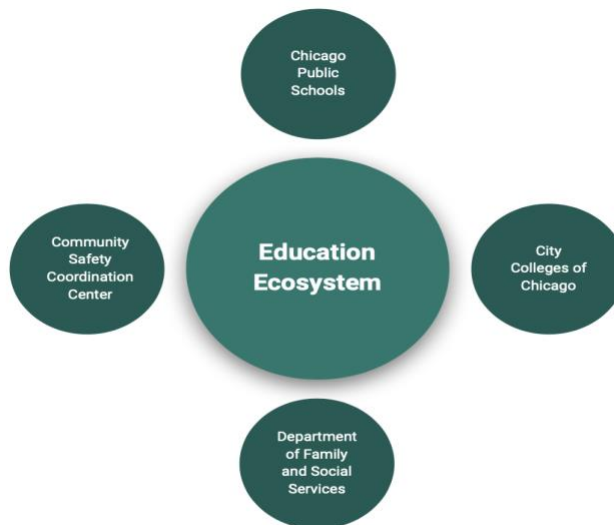
Diagnosis 1: Who Will Be Involved?

Generating the list of players involved in supporting or resisting an initiative is the crucial first diagnostic step in entrepreneurial advocacy.” This process includes two methods of diagnosis: looking at actors in positions and looking at actors with interests.

(Moore, 1995, 151-152)

To determine who would be involved, I created a map of key actors in Chicago’s ecosystem. I based the list on my best thinking regarding which actors would have mutually beneficial interest in operationalizing the Options School pilot. See Figure 1 for the chart I used to visualize the education ecosystem for myself:

Figure 1



Diagnosis 2: Estimating Stands of Players

Once an advocate has identified the players involved in the decision, he or she must guess their likely stand. If an advocate cannot rely on history, he or she can try to guess how players' interests will be engaged. This depends, in turn, on knowing how the issue will appear to them as well as what they value."

(Moore, 1995, 155-156)

Once I clarified who the potential actors were, I engaged in the second diagnostic exercise from Moore's Entrepreneurial Advocacy Framework: **Estimating Stands of Players**. See Figure 2 for a chart that captures my thinking about how the actors would be engaged based on what I knew about them.

Figure 2

Organization	Diagnosis	Position	Interest	Likely to Support Yes/No/ Maybe
CPS - Choose to Change	Positional authority to formalize an Options School strategy, but interested parties were limited because of the district's ongoing turnover. Potential opportunity to partner with Choose to Change given same focus area	✓	✗	Maybe
CSCC - Youth Committee	CSCC agreed to provide pilot funding and the org was deputized by mayor to do highly visible violence reduction work. Youth & Ed Committee actively developing ideas to create programming aligned to violence prevention framework	✓	✓	Yes

DFSS	Historically responsible for delivering SYEPs; Would have to navigate bureaucratic hoops; Given DFSS history, Options School Pilot would be lumped into work that was already being done	✓	✗	Maybe
CCC	CCC already had an apprenticeship program and informational interviews elevated CCC struggled to navigate Options School governance structure.	✗	✗	No

Based on the above diagnosis, I moved forward with two actors with the most promise: CSCC’s Youth Committee and CPS - Choose to Change. After doing the diagnosis work, I leveraged the tactics outlined in the Entrepreneurial Advocacy Framework: **1. Choosing Paths to Decisions 2. Framing Issues for Discussion, 3. Waiting for a Favorable Moment and 4. Changing the Setting**

Choosing Paths to Decisions

I began with exploring what could be possible with the CSCC’s Youth Committee since they were attached to CSCC - the funding source for the pilot - and were actively trying to create programming aligned to violence reduction. To do this, I became an honorary CSCC team member. As an honorary team member, I joined the CSCC weekly team meetings, worked at the CSCC office one day a week and joined the Youth and Education Committee as a representative of the Mayor’s Office. When I joined the Youth and Education Committee, I informed them I was working to launch a work-based learning program for Options School students. When I joined the committee, the group informed me they were exploring two questions:

- 1. How might Chicago Parks & Libraries do a better job of informing youth about programming?**

2. How might Chicago Parks & Libraries create a formal program structure for students who had recently completed the Choose to Change Program?

The Youth and Education Committee prioritized gathering qualitative data via focus groups to inform answers to the above questions. As a member of the committee, I was responsible for helping plan and execute the youth focus groups. The focus groups included former and/or current Choose to Change participants.

To support my efforts in launching the work-based learning pilot, the committee allowed me to do two things: 1. include work-based learning questions in the focus group questions gauging participants' understanding of Parks & Libraries programming; and, 2. permitted the first focus group to be entirely composed of former Choose to Change participants who were also Options School students.

Waiting for a Favorable Moment

During the Options School focus group, students elevated their desire to see meaningful and paid work-based learning opportunities. Two students stated:

Student 1: Getting paid will also keep motivation high. There should be programs kids like and they should be given a stipend. It'll help them want to keep going and not give up. Like, I have a coach and I'm doing what I'm interested in and getting paid⁶. Like, for girls...if there were programs to help them do hair...and give them stipends. More programs with real life stuff that kids like to do.

Student 2: The generation we are in now...the kids are more advanced and it should be easier to have a job. Some kids are on their own...and their mom's will not buy them everything. They should have help finding a job and coach them on how to spend their money. Chicago has been getting better with jobs but it could be better. People are on Facebook looking for jobs...and only the youth will see it because we are all connected. Why is it only One Summer Chicago jobs for 15-year-olds? It should be easier to get a work permit because some of them really have to take care of themselves.

⁶ Direct reference to the mentoring and financial support provided to Choose to Change participants

Students' insightful responses to the work-based learning questions not only underscored the relevance of the pilot I was shopping around, but also expanded the committee's considerations for what could be possible for programming at Chicago Parks and Libraries. Initially the Youth & Education Committee thought about work-based learning as distinct from Parks & Library programming. After the Options School focus group, the committee considered work-based learning as an avenue to offer programs and increase engagement.

This connection was a welcomed outcome of my participation on the Youth & Education Committee. Around the same time the committee began noticing synergy between my proposed pilot and programming for Parks and Libraries - a favorable moment happened! The CSCC, at the direction of the Mayor, committed to giving **Choose to Change** additional funding if they did targeted programming at Options Schools. After the favorable moment, I began working directly with the CPS **Choose to Change** team to make the pilot operationally feasible. That is, once youth complete their 6-month Choose to Change commitment, they would be referred to this work-based learning program.

Changing the Setting

Given Choose to Change's interest in increasing support for Options Schools students, the team was interested in leveraging the pilot as a warm hand-off for Options Schools students who complete the **Choose to Change** program. Although I initially diagnosed Choose to Change as a "maybe", the Choose to Change team turned out to be an ideal partner for operationalizing the pilot because of their long-standing relationships with CPS-approved employer partners, community based organizations, and the University of Chicago EdLabs.⁷ The core structure of the

⁷ EdLabs team has conducted research on One Summer Chicago Plus and Options Schools

proposed work-based learning pilot remained the same, but collaborating with the Choose to Change team added two important elements: 1. a pathway for providing soft skills training and employer matching and 2. partners to evaluate the efficacy and impact of the pilot.

Pathway for soft skills training & Employer Matching

Choose to Change worked with Youth Advocate Program (YAP) a nationally recognized community-based organization, that provided emotional development skills training for youth in Choose to Change. YAP also possessed the expertise to offer workforce soft skills training for students in the pilot via their work skills training program, YAPWORX. As outlined in the RKA, soft skills training is central to student success in the workforce. We tweaked the format of the pilot program such that students would focus on soft skills training for the first 12 weeks of the pilot and then transition into the workforce. Similarly, because of YAP's mission and decades of experience in Chicago, the organization also possessed relationships with sufficient employers for the 30 students in the pilot. See **APPENDIX F** for the proposal YAP submitted detailing how the organization would adapt YAPWORX for the yearlong work-based learning pilot.

Partners to Evaluate the Efficacy and Impact of the Pilot

Because of Choose to Change's long-standing relationship with UChicago Ed Labs, the EdLabs team agreed to work with the Choose to Change team and me to evaluate the efficacy and impact of the pilot. As of mid-February, we are working to iron out the evaluation metrics.

Framing Decisions for Discussion

As of mid-February, enough programmatic components were in place to execute a minimally viable pilot, but I still faced a barrier to operationalizing the pilot: securing funding.

With only a few months left in my residency, the persistent decision for discussion was: would the CSCC still be able to provide funding on a reasonable timeline? If not, what would happen to the pilot concept I'd been working to operationalize?

Strategic Triangle Question	Progress
Is it publicly valuable?: The strategy must be valuable in that it produces things of value to overseers, clients, and beneficiaries at low cost	✓
Will it be politically and legitimately supported?: The strategy must be able to attract both authority and money from the political authorizing environment	✓
Is it administratively and operationally feasible?: The proposed actions/activities can be accomplished by the existing organization with help from others as needed	✗

The CSCC is funded by \$45 million in American Rescue Plan dollars allocated to the City of Chicago and earmarked for violence reduction interventions (Valentine, 2021). From a structural standpoint, the CSCC was created as an organization separate from city government departments. This separation was meant to give CSCC the flexibility to explore innovative, data-driven and coordinated solutions to violence reduction.

Ultimately, this structural separation posed an insurmountable roadblock for securing necessary and timely funding for the work-based learning pilot. Although the CSCC was a separate, autonomous organization, its funds were situated under the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) - a traditional city government department. After a series of conversations throughout February and early-March, I learned the CSCC did not have access to the budget line initially intended for the work-based learning pilot. Over the course of those conversations, it was unclear when those funds would become available for immediate use. As a potential path forward, the CSCC Chief Coordination Officer recommended I pursue partnering with the city's DFSS team

for two reasons: 1. DFSS received ARP funding to expand its youth intervention programs and 2. DFSS is the traditional department responsible for operationalizing the city's youth employment programs.

As of mid-March, I am having preliminary conversations with DFSS and EDHS's youth program team to pursue two potential outcomes: 1. The proposed work-based learning pilot might be folded into DFSS's current Requests for Proposals (RFPs)⁸ for youth employment programs or 2. If determined to be distinct from DFSS's youth employment programs and approved by DFSS, the work-based learning pilot might require its own RFP.

Given the time constraints of my residency, it is uncertain how much further I'll be able to move the pilot concept forward in the time I have left.

⁸ An RFP is a business document that announces a project and solicits bids from qualified contractors to complete it. Government agencies, like DFSS, are not permitted to disburse funds without a procurement process that ensures potential contractors have been thoroughly and equitably vetted.

Evidence of Progress

Overall, I made the most progress with the “if statements” of my Theory of Action. This included gathering information to shape my understanding of the postsecondary landscape, violence prevention efforts in Chicago, and unique challenges facing Options Schools. The primary evidence for my “if statements” are the informational conversations and research I conducted.

Next, I made moderate progress with the “then statements” of my Theory of Action. The work in this section included leveraging all the information I’d gathered and shaping it into a yearlong work-based learning strategy. Relatedly, I progressed with not only identifying necessary authorizers, but also persuading them to legitimize and resource the work-based learning strategy in the form of a pilot. My work in this section of the strategic project slowed down when it was time to actualize the operational feasibility of the pilot. I was able to identify partners to execute each core aspect of the pilot, but I faced significant roadblocks with finalizing funding that was initially offered by the CSCC.

The progress I made in the “and then” section of my Theory of Action looked different than I intended. Initially, I anticipated being able to create and lead the work-based learning strategy during my residency - ultimately yielding a proof of concept for the Mayor’s office. Alternatively, I created a work-based learning strategy that was authorized, and components of this concept will likely be operationalized within DFSS. At the beginning of my residency there were no key initiatives in the Mayor’s Office directly targeting Options School students. Now, as my residency comes to an end, the Mayor’s Office recently partnered with CPS to execute a Skilled Trades Career where 3,000 CPS students were exposed to career pathways in the skilled trades. As a condition of receiving funding from the City, the CSCC held CPS accountable for ensuring

Options School students attended. Similarly, regardless of whether my work-based learning concept is implemented with DFSS, the department is now discussing ways Options School students can be better connected to its youth programming. Though separate from the Mayor's Office, CPS recently hired a work-based learning specialist to focus on Options School support. For the entire month of May, CPS will offer a deep dive on soft skill development to all Options Schools - a known component of my work-based learning concept.

When I think about impact, it is certainly important to me to be recognized as the leader of an initiative, but I have also learned to think about impact as leaving the environment changed by calling attention to an area of need. I believe my strategic project has left a lasting impact on the Mayor's Office because I elevated the need to support Options Schools and offered concrete, easy to implement solutions to do so.

The below table summarizes the evidence of progress for each section of the Theory of Action.

If statements	Evidence	
Consult with a broad set of stakeholders to understand Options School student experience and current work-based learning offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Three CPS Board members ● Two Options School leaders ● Two student focus groups ● Three CPS Central Office leaders 	
Consult with City of Chicago’s Violence Coordination Center and CPS Student Safety Security Team to understand violence prevention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chief Coordination Officer, CSCC ● CPS Chief of Safety ● CSCC Youth & Education Committee 	
Examine research literature that analyzes the impact of work-based learning opportunities on at-risk students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporated local and national research into the proposed work-based learning strategy 	

Then statements	Evidence	
I will use the information gathered to create a postsecondary strategy that supports the City of Chicago’s violence reduction efforts, aligns to the Mayor’s commitment to diversifying the workforce, and expands postsecondary opportunities for Options School students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See Appendix E for initial Options School Strategy 	
I will persuade my manager and the CSCC’s Chief Coordination Officer to endorse the proposed strategy because it is mutually valuable for both organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CSCC approves funding for pilot ● Identified CPS’s Choose to Change and YAP as operational partners ● See Appendix F for final Options School work-based learning pilot 	
Then the CSCC will legitimize the strategy with monetary resources, and I will work to operationalize the strategy		

And then statements	Evidence	
The Mayor’s Office will be able to elevate a proof of concept for systematically improving support for one of CPS’ most vulnerable student populations	Toward the end of my residency, DFSS is considering implementing key components of the WBL	
The Mayor’s Office will have implemented a policy that dually supports violence prevention and increased postsecondary attainment among the city’s most vulnerable students	No evidence of progress	

Analysis

My strategic project was organized into three phases: **PHASE 1:**The Pivot, **PHASE 2:** Creating a Valuable Strategy and Gaining Support, and **PHASE 3:** Making Things Operationally Feasible. This analysis section will break down strategies I used to get the associated outcome for each phase of the strategic project. For each section, I will elevate distinct strategies instead of pulling from one continuous framework.

PHASE 1: The Pivot

I began my residency with the understanding that I'd be creating a postsecondary education strategy for the Mayor's office. When I began considering where my work fell in the context of other work in the mayor's office, I situated the postsecondary strategy within the Important and Non-Urgent quadrant of Stephen Covey's *Time Management Matrix*. Important and Non-Urgent (Quadrant 2) is often considered the sweet spot of the matrix because the work in this quadrant, when prioritized, moves organizations closer to their big goals. Projects in this quadrant are rooted in planning, relationship building and issue prevention (Covey, 2020, 172-173). Initially, I believed the core of my strategic project would similarly be rooted in the above functions: important, but not urgent work.

As I mentioned in the introduction, the beginning of my residency overlapped with an unusually violent summer and the onboarding of a new CPS CEO. Whereas I had created a postsecondary strategy with the hope of allocating time and human capital resources to one of the areas, I noticed resources (i.e. time, money, and human capital) were immediately dedicated to issues which fell into Quadrant 1: Important and Urgent Tasks of Covey's matrix.

Quadrant 1 issues include deadlines, pressing problems, crisis management and firefighting. Onboarding the new CPS CEO, for example, was important and urgent because it aligned to a deadline publicly declared by the mayor. Relatedly, addressing the citywide uptick in violent crimes was, unequivocally, a crisis. Based on this diagnosis, I reasoned the best way to lead meaningful change in the mayor's office was to become attached and/or associated with a problem that was **Important and Urgent**. I further reasoned that if I could begin working on a problem that was important and urgent, then resources and momentum would follow. This mental shift resulted in me recognizing the need to pivot the strategic project's focus to better align with important and urgent work.

After recognizing, for myself, the need to pivot the focus of my strategic project, the next step was getting the buy-in of my manager because she played a key role in scoping the initial project. As I outlined in the introduction, my manager was a senior leader on the EDHS team. She was responsible for managing the execution of the Mayor's education priorities and managing the relationship between the associated sister agencies: Chicago Public Schools, City Colleges of Chicago and Chicago Parks & Libraries. Taken together, these entities represent the K-16 education portfolio – the largest portfolio on the EDHS team. My manager possessed a significant amount of positional and relational power that she wielded very successfully in her role and for the furtherance of my strategic project.

My manager and I held weekly meetings to check-in on my residency experience; and, specifically, the progress of the strategic project. The weekly, one-hour meetings gave my manager line of sight into my work and gave me an opportunity to exercise two influence tactics in service of building a meaningful and trusting relationship with her: *bridging and joint problem solving*.

Bridging is an influence style that uses connection with other people to achieve desired outcomes. The core behaviors associated with bridging include: disclosing and exchanging information, careful listening, and actively involving the other person in the discussions (Ramarajan, Spring 2021). The weekly meetings with my manager were an opportunity for my manager and me to disclose and exchange information about the work we were both leading, carefully listen for ways to support one another, and actively seek each other's opinions and insight. Consistently practicing ***bridging*** deepened the trust and vulnerability between my manager and me; and laid the foundation for ***joint problem solving*** to exist between the two of us.

Joint problem solving is an influence tactic that focuses on entities working together to define the problem, the goals, and the best solution for a problem (Ramarajan, Spring 2021). During one of our check-ins, I told my manager I was floundering and was neither feeling successful nor doing the kind of work I'd initially hoped to do. I invited her to engage in joint problem solving regarding how best to move forward. **As a result of joint problem solving, my manager and I agreed on the need to pivot my strategic project.** My manager then graciously leveraged her relational currency to connect me to CPS Board Members, CPS Central Office leaders and Options School leaders. Authorizing the strategic project pivot and connecting me to stakeholders who provided key input is central to the work-based learning strategy I proposed for Options Schools. Ultimately, I was able to create the Options School strategy because of the relationship built between my manager and me during our weekly meetings.

PHASE 2: Creating a Valuable Strategy and Gaining Support

Strategic Triangle Question	Key Outcome
<p>Is it publicly valuable?: The strategy must be valuable in that it produces things of value to overseers, clients, and beneficiaries at low cost</p>	<p>Developed work-based learning strategy aligned to CSCC violence reduction goal, Mayor’s vision of diversifying the workforce, and the district’s overall goal to improve outcomes for at-risk students</p>
<p>Will it be politically and legitimately supported?: The strategy must be able to attract both authority and money from the political authorizing environment</p>	<p>CSCC agreed to fund Options School work-based learning strategy as a \$500k pilot</p>

I created a strategy that was legitimized in the authorizing environment and has great *potential* to offer public value both for the mayor’s office and the city’s most vulnerable students. The work-based learning strategy for Options School students was legitimized not only because I designed it as a compelling concept, but also because of the following actions I undertook:

1. Widening the scope of who will be involved
2. Prioritizing short-term execution over long-term planning
3. Understanding the mission and vision of the political environment

Widening the Scope of Who Will Be Involved

Leveraging Moore’s diagnosis question: Who Will Be Involved? greatly contributed to Phase 2 outcomes because it encouraged me to broaden the scope of who should be a partner in executing support for Options School students. Because Options Schools are CPS schools, I initially assumed CPS would be the entity to authorize and move the Options School strategy forward. I spent the first few months of my residency trying to finesse the right kind of partnership with CPS which was difficult because ongoing central office transitions and competing priorities

within the district. As a result of making little progress, I realized I was positioning the project as completely dependent on working with CPS.

The question: **Who Will Be Involved?** encouraged me to broaden the scope of who should be considered as a potential partner. In *Power, for All: How it Really Works and Why It's Everyone's Business*, Battilana and Casciaro offer the following four strategies for shifting balance of power between parties in any relationship:

1. Attraction: Increasing the value of your resources in other's eyes
2. Consolidation: Decreasing the other party's alternatives to you,
3. Expansion: Increasing your alternatives to the other party
4. Withdrawal: Decreasing your interest in other's resources

(Battilana & Casciaro, 2021, p. 8-9)

Battilana and Casciaro state that these strategies are applicable for all relationships and can emerge between organizations (Battilana & Casciaro, 2021). To move forward, I leveraged expansion - increasing alternatives to CPS - to consider who else shared mutual interests in serving Options Students. From this exercise, I realized working in the Mayor's Office uniquely positioned me to work with other sister agencies and organizations (i.e., CSCC, DFSS, City Colleges of Chicago and DFSS) who also serve, or could serve, Options School students.

Prioritizing short-term execution over long-term planning

A key contributing factor to getting approval for the pilot was rooted in elevating the distinction between what could be accomplished in the short-term versus what could be delegated to long-term. The informational conversations I had with CPS leaders about work-based learning and other career pathway programs highlighted a recurring challenge: **creating career pathway**

programs aligned to the district's academic standards and the job market was time intensive and costly. Ultimately, this barrier limited the kinds of career pathways programs that could be launched at scale, within the district.

As a way of circumventing these challenges, I proposed a work-based learning program that focused on 1. developing competitive soft skills versus technical skills, 2. ensuring students had the opportunity to apply the soft skills in a work environment; and 3. pairing students with a job mentor to support their overall experience. Focusing on these three program characteristics made the work-based learning program feel doable in the short-term and contributed to the CSCC agreeing to fund the program as a minimally viable pilot. As part of the pitch for the program, I noted that the long-term goal would be for students to not only work in roles aligned to workforce sector needs, but also to receive credentials that aligned to a career and/or postsecondary degree. Taken together, front loading what could be accomplished in the short-term and what could be left for the long term was an effective strategy for moving the work-based learning program forward.

Understanding the mission and vision of the political environment

Mayor Lightfoot campaigned as a political outsider and reformer. When she was elected in May 2019, she did so by disrupting the city's history of insider politics and championing a more equitable and inclusive Chicago. Almost immediately, Mayor Lightfoot delivered on this mission by creating an agenda that would demonstrably expand opportunity and create inclusive economic growth across Chicago's neighborhoods. For example, one of Mayor Lightfoot's hallmark policy initiatives is INVEST South/West - a first of its kind equitable development strategy focused on

revitalizing 10 historic neighborhoods on Chicago’s South and West sides.⁹ Over the long-term, Lightfoot’s agenda for a more inclusive Chicago seeks to eradicate a persisting narrative that suggests the city “has become two cities separated by socioeconomics and race, and the broader sense that the government has not been attentive to what people want (Guarino, 2019, p. 2).”

At the time of my residency, the City of Chicago was allocated \$1.887 billion for the Local Fiscal Recovery Fund under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) (Valentine, 2021). Based on an extensive process¹⁰: Lightfoot’s administration created a plan for targeted investments in two areas: “(i) the well-being of people and communities to allow them to thrive and collectively improve community safety (\$776.1m) and (ii) strategic investments to create an equitable economic recovery for Chicago’s neighborhoods and the communities hardest hit by the pandemic (\$450.9m) (Valentine, 2021).” Figures 3 and 4 summarize fund allocations for each investment area:

Figure 3

Thriving & Safe Communities	\$M
Affordable Housing	\$ 157.4
Assistance to Families	157.0
City Priorities for Health & Wellness	108.0
Violence Prevention	85.0
Environmental Justice	86.8
Homelessness Support Services	117.0
Youth Opportunities	65.0
Total	\$776.1

Figure 4

Equitable Economic Recovery	\$M
Arts & Culture	\$ 16.0
Community Climate Investments	101.3
Community Development	166.0
Parks & Infrastructure	60.6
Small Business & Workforce Support	87.0
Travel & Industry Support	20.0
Total	\$450.9

(Valentine, 2021)

Together these investments were meant to further Lightfoot’s initial commitment to a more equitable Chicago and address the emerging and urgent needs of the city (i.e. violence reduction). The Options School work-based learning concept gained initial approval because it aligned to the

⁹ INVEST South/West has acquired more than \$1.4 billion in public and private investment in its first two years. The initiatives success to-date is summarized in this [Two-Year Update](#)

stated and funded priorities: violence prevention and workforce support. Thus, the concept was approved not only because of its potential to expand postsecondary pathways, but also because if implemented the concept would support **more than one** policy priority being pursued in the mayor's office.

Derrick Bell's Interest Convergence Theory states: **“Black rights are recognized and protected when and only so long as policy makers perceive that such advances will further interests that are their primary concern (Bell, 2005).”** Bell's Interest Convergence theory is often used as a critique against white policymakers who only take interest in things concerning Black people when those two things work together to advance larger policy agendas. I propose the Interest Convergence Theory is *also* applicable in a political environment where the mayor's primary concern are the interests of historically marginalized citizens; and the mayor intentionally uses her political power to recognize, protect and further those interests. Mayor Lightfoot is leveraging her political positioning to prioritize the needs of historically marginalized communities and those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Their interests are her interests.

Options Schools have been a part of the CPS portfolio for over two decades. Despite predominately serving Black and Latino students who possess significant barriers to graduating from high school and matriculating to college, prior to Lightfoot's administration neither CPS nor the mayor's office created a targeted district-level plan to improve support of Options Schools. For example, when asked about the district's Options Schools, Dr. Janice Jackson, the district's former CEO, stated: “even as the district pushed to instill more of a college-going culture in traditional schools, [Options] students interested in continuing their education past high school did not get the same support (Koumpilova, 2021).” The need to support Options Schools more equitably has been known, but the environment was not positioned to prioritize the needs of Options School

students. Yet, as Bell’s Interest Convergence Theory suggests, it was not until the challenges facing Options School students *converged* with the mutual interests of policy makers that targeted support for Options students was thoroughly considered.

In this scenario, Options School students’ challenges converge with this administration’s commitment to diversifying the workforce, creating innovative violence reduction strategies, and youth opportunities. For the City of Chicago, both priorities are central to the ongoing economic recovery and stability of the city. My work-based learning concept aligned with the mission and vision of the administration, and this contributed to the concept being approved.

PHASE 3: Making Things Operationally Feasible

Strategic Triangle Question	Key Outcomes
<p>Is it administratively and operationally feasible? The proposed actions/activities can be accomplished by the existing organization with help from others as needed</p>	<p>Partnered with CPS program, Choose to Change, and community-based organization, YAP to plan pilot operationalizing</p> <p>Partnered with Choose to Change to identify Options schools for work-based learning pilot</p> <p>Pilot execution stalled because of complications with securing funding from CSCC</p>

Securing the operational feasibility for the work-based learning pilot is where I experienced the greatest challenge in my strategic project. Phase 3 outcomes were because of the following actions:

1. Misunderstanding the business of innovation
2. Opting for a path that prioritized speed **and** an opportunity for *me* to lead

Misunderstanding the Business of Innovation

O'Reilly and Tushman's concept of ambidextrous organizations is a helpful framework for understanding how the CSCC's structure supported getting an initial "yes" on the Options School work-based learning strategy *and* resulted in not securing funding that was core to operational feasibility. O'Reilly and Tushman use **ambidexterity** to describe the way organizations navigate two governing structures at one time: one that exploits the status quo and one in service of exploring new, yet to be proven opportunities (O' Reilly III & Tushman, 2014). For ambidextrous organizations, achieving innovation requires careful maneuvering between exploitation and exploration - a necessary dance these organizations must engage in to disrupt within their sector.

The CSCC was created as an organization separate from city government departments to explore innovative, data-driven and coordinated solutions to violence reduction - effectively making it the exploratory component of the city government. For my capstone project, it's important to note the CSCC was modeled after the Racial Equity Response Team (RERRT) – a data-driven, community-based and community-driven team that worked to mitigate COVID-19's impact in Chicago's Black and Brown neighborhoods. The RERRT was central to the City's targeted response to COVID-19. The CSCC was meant to mirror RERRT's data-driven and coordinated way of working because it yielded great success during the pandemic. RERRT's success happened because of city leaders leveraging executive authority typically reserved for crises. This authority allowed the city to be responsive to the needs of citizens and implement solutions without navigating the prolonged bureaucratic process.

Too late in my residency, I learned the executive authority extended to the CSCC was different because the CSCC's financial resources were also situated within a traditional city government department - the City Department of Public Health. Practically, these structural

circumstances meant CSCC's resource deployment process mirrored the complex and sometimes burdensome processes of traditional government departments. O'Reilly and Tushman highlight this tension as a common structural challenge exploratory units encounter:

It is frequently the case that in the pursuit of exploration, senior managers fail to provide the requisite integration or, worse, burden the new business with systems and thinking from the old business. This can leave exploratory units without sufficient resources or at risk of being overwhelmed by the mature business. For instance, units may be asked to comply with the demands of the legacy business (e.g., financial reporting, IT systems, or HR processes) that burden them.

(O'Reilly & Tushman, pg. 184, 2021)

The CSCC had a mission of pursuing coordinated and innovative approaches to violence reduction but had to "comply with the demands of the legacy business": i.e., traditional city government funding structures and approval processes. This compliance ultimately limited CSCC's capacity to be fully exploratory. For my strategic project specifically, CSCC's structural constraints meant that instead of the work-based learning pilot being adopted and tested via the CSCC, the concept would need to go through the city government's traditional RFP approval process. From beginning to end, the RFP approval process typically takes about nine months. The timebound nature of my residency coupled with the timing of when I began pursuing the work-based learning concept ultimately made getting the strategy approved and implemented, by any city department, highly unlikely. My project required flexibility, and a quick turnaround that traditional government agencies do not provide. The decision to work with the CSCC, a newly funded team, was based on the perceived ability to move quickly.

A key reason why the work-based learning concept did not move forward was because I waited too long to interrogate what needed to be true to operationalize the concept. I prioritized the authorization process (i.e., who would offer legitimization and support) above operational feasibility, and consequently waited too long to iron out the path toward operational feasibility

(i.e., how funding would be disbursed). In hindsight, I thought about the strategic triangle in sequential steps: Step 1: Get the project legitimized, Step 2: Gain Support and Step 3: Acquire Operational Feasibility. I have learned pursuing public value is necessarily complex and the steps should be pursued simultaneously to maximize potential outcomes. Instead, I should have placed equal weight on each section of the strategic triangle and diagnosed the viability of a pathway based on whether each strategic triangle question yielded a “yes”. When I engage in this process again, my diagnosis framework will look closer to the table to in Figure 5:

Organization	Recognizes Concept as Valuable	Willing to Authorize	Positioned to Support Operational Feasibility	Pursue as Path to Public Value
CSCC	✓	✓	✓	Yes
DFSS	✓	✓	✓	Yes

Figure 5

Opting for a path that prioritized speed and an opportunity for *me* to lead

Analyzing the process I undertook clarified that I also opted for a path where the work-based learning concept would be adopted quickly. Getting the concept adopted quickly was important to me because of the very pressing need to adopt violence reduction strategies and a belief that providing jobs is central to that. I also wanted the concept to be quickly adopted because I was seeking an opportunity to lead the implementation process over the course of my 10-month residency. Sure, I was drawn to the CSCC because of the organization's nimble structure and the initial funding approval. I also pursued partnering with CSCC because I knew the organization's exploratory nature meant I would have more space to lead with autonomy and create the kind of work-based learning program I envisioned. In hindsight, had I been primarily focused on the

success of the work-based learning pilot, I would have chosen to partner with DFSS - a city department with the historic knowledge and operational structures to actualize my concept. Regardless of how long the approval and implementation process was. **I pursued a path that prioritized speed of implementation and space for my individual leadership over a path governed by bureaucracy and more capable of shrouding my individual leadership.**

Implications for Self, Sector and Site

Implications for Self

My strategic project taught me a great deal about interrogating the operational feasibility of an initiative. I've learned it is insufficient to create a concept and only consider **who** might support the concept in the authorizing environment. It is imperative, from the very beginning, to thoroughly understand **what** resources are available and **how** those resources will be attributed to the initiative. All these considerations should be included in the process policy managers undertake when they are diagnosing a path forward in the authorizing environment. A failure to consider *what* and *how* alongside the “who” increases the likelihood of an initiative getting bogged down once policy managers reach the implementation phase.

My learning question for the strategic project was “**How do I lead change in the Mayor’s Office?**” I chose to work in the mayor’s office because I wanted experience leading at the forefront versus influencing through thought partnership - which is the work I did in philanthropy. Situating my desire to lead at the center of the learning question had negative implications for how my theory of action unfolded. For example, when I look at my theory of action now, I notice there’s no consideration of anticipated student outcomes. As reflected in the “And Then” statements in my Theory of Action, my goal was to create a strategy that would be seen as valuable to furthering the mayor’s priorities.

In this way, the work was about my benefit and the benefit of those I intended to serve. That said, I’d love to say I’ll do less to situate myself at the center of my work, but that would be a false assertion. As a Black woman who has led in each part of the education ecosystem, I am ready to be a leader at the forefront of systems change and creating public value. What I can say,

though, is that I will do a better job of disentangling what I want to accomplish in the work from what I want to accomplish in my leadership.

I am leaving my residency with a clear understanding that my preferred leadership role is that of an innovator (Battilana & Kimsey, 2017). I enjoy leading in environments where there is a need to develop new and innovative solutions for persisting systemic challenges. My propensity to create actionable and innovative solutions also makes me less likely to notice negative consequences and potential impracticalities of my proposed solution (Battilana & Kimsey, 2017). For example, thinking I could create a concept, and have it operationalized over a 10-month period was impractical, but I was undeterred. In addition to disentangling the goals I have for the work and the goals I have for my leadership; I will approach future system level work with a greater understanding of my perspective as an innovator and the associated blind spots.

In addition to possessing a deepened understanding of my preferred leadership role, I also have increased clarity about how to move work forward in complex and ever-changing environments. As an example of this, in the analysis section, I mentioned leveraging the relationship with my manager to pivot the focus of my strategic project and gain greater authorization. I also learned the quickest way to build relationships, and ultimately gain buy-in from partners, was to be clear about how varied interests converge for the purpose of reaching a common goal. For example, the CSCC was primarily focused on funding violence prevention and considered funding the work-based learning concept because it aligned to the organization's mission. From my perspective, though, I was primarily interested in developing a postsecondary pathway that offered access to economic mobility, workforce exposure and, over the long-term, an opportunity to engage in college courses. As a result of this lesson, in future leadership roles,

I will think about developing relationships based on how diverse interests converge for the purpose of achieving a common goal.

I began my residency focused on leading a change effort – generally speaking. Over the course of my time in the Mayor’s Office, I learned I am not just interested in leading *any* change effort, instead I have become deeply committed to creating postsecondary pathways that prioritize economic mobility and stability for all learners. As detailed above, I encountered roadblocks, setbacks, and frustration as I sought to get the work-based learning concept authorized and implemented in the mayor’s office. I was inspired to persevere through these circumstances because of the realization that countless youth choose between going to a traditional 4-year college and working a job to take care of themselves and their families. The need for new postsecondary pathways resonates with my personal journey because not long ago, as a first-generation college graduate, I attended a 4-year private institution and had to work three jobs to ensure my tuition was paid and my personal needs were met.

In this work, we often talk about creating equitable access to postsecondary pathways for underserved students. I think this framing is outdated because it assumes the existing postsecondary pathways are delivering appropriate outcomes. Moving forward, my commitment is to *reimagine* postsecondary pathways that consider the needs learners have, especially those from underserved backgrounds, to acquire an education and create an economic foundation for themselves.

Implications for the Sector

According to a report conducted by the National Clearing House Research Center, undergraduate student enrollment has fallen 6.6% between fall 2019 and fall 2021– that is roughly 2.2 million students who have chosen not to opt into a traditional post-secondary education. To

me, this data also represents the reality that soon, postsecondary institutions will no longer be the primary path to economic mobility and stability. As an implication, I believe K-12 districts and postsecondary institutions must work intentionally to form blended pathways for learners to pursue postsecondary education and work. If our sector does not work to reimagine postsecondary pathways to better reflect the needs of today's learners, we will continue to see a downward trend. To be sure, the downward enrollment trend will negatively impact the sustainability of postsecondary institutions, but it will also negatively impact the quality and competitiveness of the nation's workforce over the long-term.

I began my residency with the learning question: **How do I lead change in the mayor's office?** Over the last ten months, I've learned leading in the mayor's office requires stamina. My time in city government has been equal parts gratifying and exhausting. Moving work forward in city government requires navigating important and urgent circumstances, strategically wielding political savviness, and persevering in the face of repeated roadblocks. City government leaders must possess these characteristics while holding on to their core belief in the impact of public service. This stamina necessary to do this work should be complemented by systems of care within city government. City governments must create systems of care for leaders working to carry out the mission and vision of the administration. In an environment that takes great pride in providing services for local citizens, more resources must be dedicated to supporting the overall well-being of the people leading within city government. Creating these systems of care will result in not only retaining city government leaders, but also ensuring those leaders give equal attention to executing their visions of creating public value and taking care of themselves in the process.

My strategic project elevated the need for city governments to not only create exploratory units dedicated to innovation, but also operational structures that can adopt and scale the innovative

approaches once they are identified. Very few organizations like CSCC exist in relationship to city governments, in fact, CSCC may be the first of its kind. As a topic for future consideration, I think more research should be done regarding how city governments become ambidextrous organizations that can adopt and scale innovative practices at a rate that is timely and responsive to citizens' urgent and important needs.

Implications for Site

I spent much of residency trying to figure out the best way to get my concept authorized and operationalized. More than once I heard the saying, "Working in city government can feel like running into the same brick wall over and over again." This phrase basically suggested that making progress in the mayor's office can feel like a dead-end street, but city government leaders should persevere until they find a path forward. This saying resonated with my personal experience, but I noticed this phrase was not true for all individual actors in city government. Running into a brick wall acutely applied to individual actors, like myself, who had neither positional power nor necessary resources to move policy solutions forward. Alternatively, city government leaders who possess the aforementioned resources and an understanding of how to navigate the internal decision-making systems can move work forward and, in some cases, circumvent the brick wall.

Thus, there is a need to implement a process where all city government leaders, no matter where they are situated in the organization, understand the decision-making processes that lead to getting policy solutions considered and authorized. Failure to implement clear decision-making processes places an unnecessary weight on individuals to wade through ambiguity and uncertainty when that same energy could be used to move work forward. One long-term impact of working in this way is that individuals may believe their lack of success correlates to their inability to succeed

versus the reality that they are working within a system that rewards perseverance over strategic action. Another implication for this way of working is that the mayor's office may miss out on valuable strategies for change because policy managers, like me, are unable to follow a process that ensures the concept will be thoroughly and equitably considered for authorization.

In addition to creating clear and equitable decision-making processes, there is also a pressing need for knowledge sharing structures that account for human capital turnover and the fast-paced nature of the mayor's office. Toward the end of my residency, I began initial conversations with DFSS about the future of the work-based learning pilot and learned a similar concept had been shared years before. Despite pitching the work-based learning concept to numerous team members in the Mayor's Office, and the EDHS team, there was no mention of anyone championing a similar work-based learning concept. In this scenario, having a knowledge sharing structure that provides historical context about team initiatives and/or pilot concepts could prevent future team members from re-creating the wheel or at least believing they must start from scratch on a concept. This kind of knowledge sharing structure is a present need for me as my residency in the Mayor's office comes to an end. The future of my work-based learning pilot is uncertain and a knowledge sharing structure would ensure, at minimum, the work-based learning concept for Options School students would be available for future policy managers to reference as an idea of what could be possible.

It has been an honor to work in the Office of the Chicago within an administration that not only values equity, but also centers equity in policy priorities. The last time an administration came remotely close to centering the needs of marginalized communities was during Harold Washington's reign as mayor (1983-1987). I believe my work-based learning concept gained traction because it aligned to the mayor's push for a more equitable city. Yet, I cannot help but

consider if this would have been the case had the administration's priority been different. It has taken 36 years for Chicago to be led by another mayor who chooses to leverage the city's resources in service of those who have been historically marginalized and underserved. My concern is that the prioritization of issues primarily concerning Black and Brown people is contingent upon mutual convergence versus standing as pressing and urgent priorities on their own merit. My hope for the site is that this administration's capacity to marry the interests of the marginalized and the interest of the city becomes a permanent way of operating and not just the hallmark of one administration.

Conclusion

I created a work-based learning concept for Options School students that had the dual purpose of reducing violence and increasing access to postsecondary pathways. I leveraged the Strategic Triangle to guide the process of getting the concept legitimized in the authorizing environment. Over the course of my 10-month residency, I have acquired the following lessons about what it takes to lead change in the mayor's office:

- Spend time on the front end understanding how decisions are made in the authorizing environment and whether any historical knowledge might compliment or inhibit the initiative that's being pursued
- Aligning a proposed initiative to the administration's core priorities increases the likelihood of it being supported and legitimized
- Before engaging in the authorization process, clarify what success looks like for yourself as a leader in the work and for the work itself
- Choosing a path forward should be dependent upon understanding the key players (who), clarifying available resources (what), and interrogating the process for accessing resources (how)
- Prioritize creating boundaries and rituals that promote self-care

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Appendices

Appendix A: Education and Human Services Organizational Chart (Relationship View)

Updated September 2021

Education and Human Services Org Chart (RELATIONSHIP VIEW)

DEPUTY MAYOR FOR EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES VACANT	SENIOR ADVISOR FOR POLICY AND OPERATIONS VACANT	DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES POLICY Jaye Stapleton	DIRECTOR OF K-16 POLICY Julie Burnett	DIRECTOR OF EARLY LEARNING Nataly Barrera (ACTING)	DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS JD Van Slyke	PROJECT MANAGER - EARLY LEARNING Nataly Barrera	PUBLIC INTEREST PROGRAM FELLOW Stender Von Oehsen
Mayor Lightfoot Chief of Staff Senior Staff EDHS Department Heads CCC (Ops) CPL Parks The Partnership	1 st Deputy Chief of Staff Senior Team Deputies EDHS Department Heads & Deputies CCC (Ops) CPL Parks The Partnership (w/ BEND)	CDPH DFSS MOPD	CPS CCC (Policy) CPS CCC America's Urban Campus Private K-12 Schools	CPS (Office of Early Childhood Education) DFSS (Children Services Division)	FLAE MCMF Partners Youth & Education Funders	CPS (Office of Early Childhood Education) DFSS (Children Services Division) PROJECT MANAGER - YOUTH PROGRAMS Sahrish Saleem DFSS (Youth Services Division) Parks (Youth Programs) The Partnership (Youth Programs) Mayor's Youth Commission MCMF Partners	MCMF Partners CCC (Chicago Roadmap) EDUCATION LEADERSHIP FELLOW Jessica Ball CPS CCC America's Urban Campus

Appendix B: CPS Options School Data

Figure 1. Comparison of student characteristics for students attending Options Schools and non-Options Schools

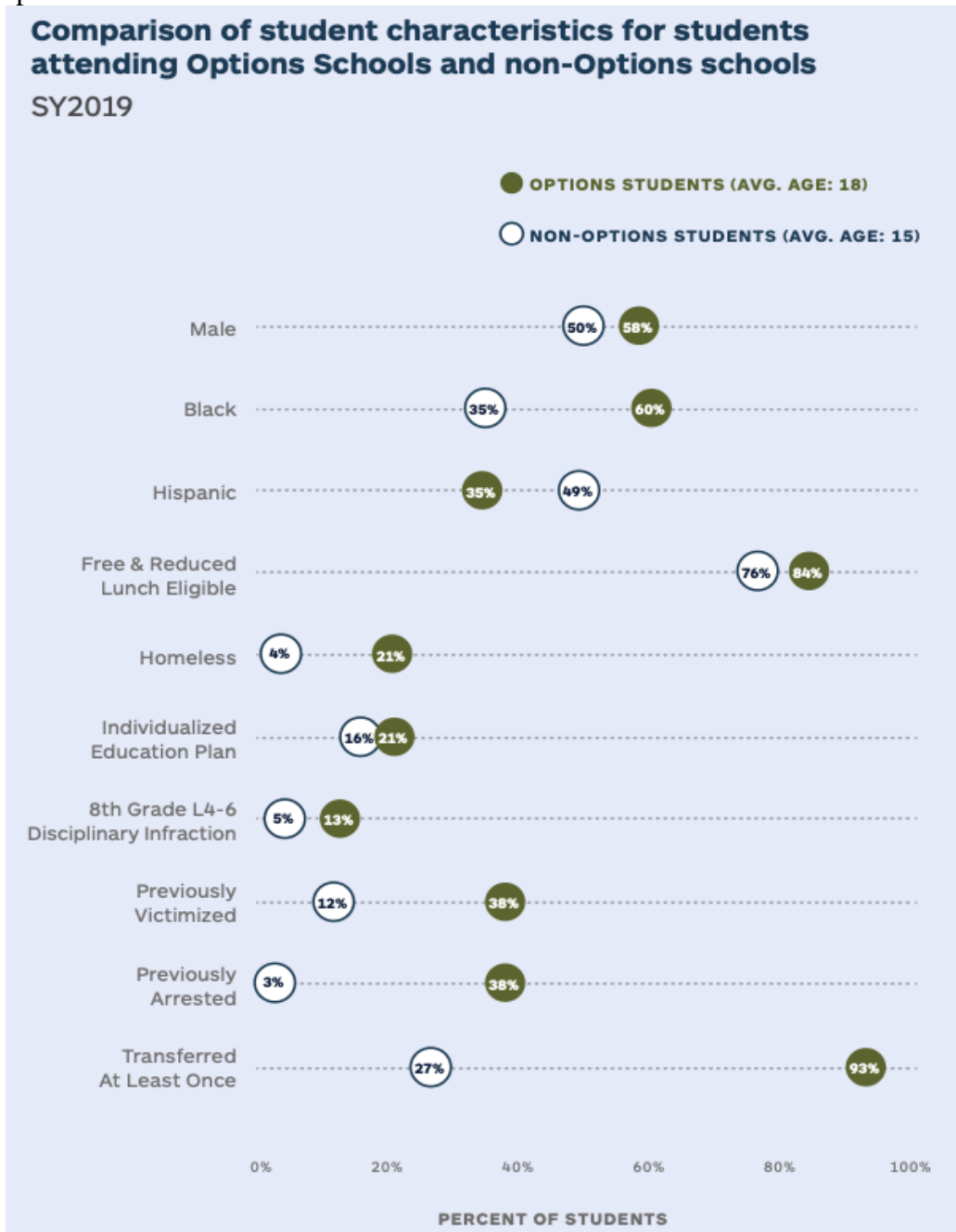
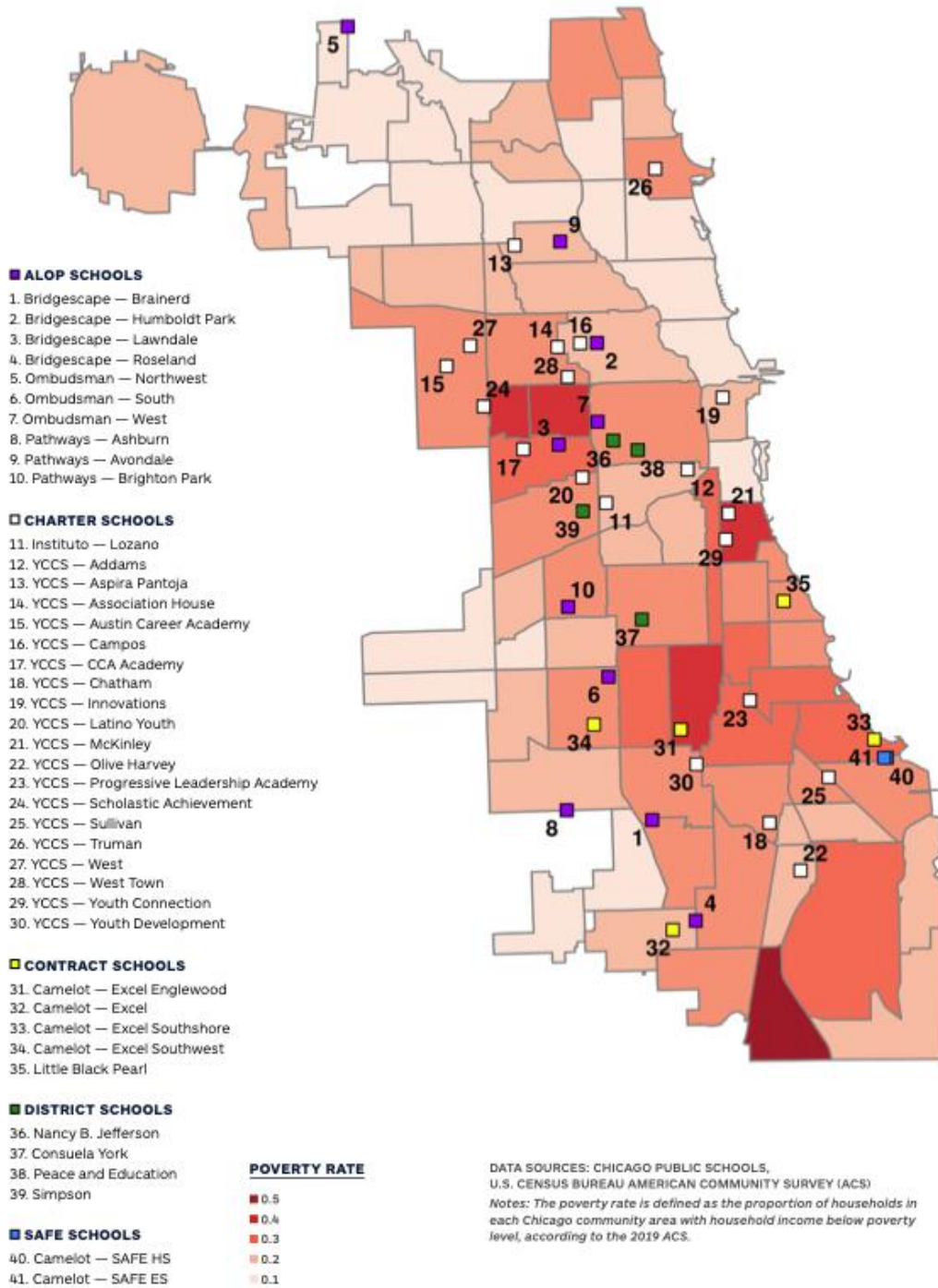


Figure 2. CPS Options School Map



Appendix C: Changes in the Selection of the Chicago Public Schools Governing Board

Changes in the Selection of the Chicago Public Schools Governing Board			
Year	Event	Governing Board	Appointment Method
1872	Chicago Board of Education established	11-member Board of Education	Mayoral Appointment
1988	Chicago School Reform Act	15-Member Board of Education	Mayor selected Board from names proposed by 23-Member School Nominating Commission
1995	Chicago School Reform Act Amended	5-Member Board of Trustees	Mayoral Appointment
1999	Chicago School Reform Act Amended	Size of Board increased to 7; name changed to Board of Education	Mayoral Appointment

Appendix D: Higher Education Priority


Higher Education Priorities	
Statement of Need	<p>Why is this needed, especially now? What gaps do we have that need filling? Who is most impacted (use Equity Tracker)? 250 words or less</p> <p>Given the impact of COVID-19 on the economic infrastructure of the city, Mayor Lori Lightfoot created a Recovery Task Force to provide recommendations for how Chicago and the surrounding region could ensure an inclusive and equitable recovery from COVID-19. Within the advisory board’s suite of recommendations, “Expand access to career opportunities and diversify the workforce” was named as a priority. Additionally, the advisory board proposed the following lever to accomplish this priority: “Expand early outreach and HS-level training programs and connect to higher education and certification opportunities”</p> <p>Thus, these priorities serve as an opportunity to re-elevate a previously stated priority of the Mayor’s office and incorporate the newly articulated economic recovery plan.</p> <p>Additionally, despite increased access to post-secondary opportunities, completion rates among Black students have steadily decreased over the last few years. According to the University of Chicago, the following is true regarding Black students and post-secondary completion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “[CPS] Black graduates who immediately enrolled in two-year colleges had significantly lower degree completion rates than the district average and were the only group that saw a decline in completion rates between the 2007 and the 2012 cohort, going from 20 percent to 19 percent for Black young women and 16 percent to 11 percent for Black young men.” ● “Among students who did not immediately enroll in college, young men of all race/ethnicities had completion rates below those of their female peers. However, while Asian/Pacific Islander and White young women saw growth in their rates of completing any credential between the 2007 and 2012 cohorts, Black and Latina young women had a decline in their completion rates.
Headline	<p>What a reporter would find newsworthy and simply describes the impact to person on the street. It should have a “hook” to grab the reader’s attention. Clear articulation of Mayoral accomplishment. 20 words or less.</p>

	<i>City of Chicago is committed to increased completion rates within postsecondary institutions and competitive career pathways – see the numbers!</i>
Vision Statement	<p>An inspirational, aspirational, and bold statement written as if we are sitting in a future reality. This is about painting a picture of the ideal state, written in present tense, and anchored in a clear outcome or intended result for Chicago residents or a specific population of residents. 1 paragraph / ~100 words or less.</p> <p><i>The City of Chicago has cultivated a post-secondary ecosystem where higher education institutions and career pathway partners are collectively invested in the post K-12 plans of all students.</i></p> <p><i>The goal is to ensure every student believes they can have a meaningful life and career in Chicago regardless of their race and socio-economic background.</i></p> <p><i>The Office of the Mayor will support the creation of this ecosystem by focusing on three core goals within its higher education strategy:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase completion rates among Black students at post-secondary institutions and within competitive credentialed pathways via partnerships with sister agencies (CPS, CCC, AUC, and Partnership for College Completion) 2. Ensure high school students are prepared to succeed after they graduate by increasing the quantity and quality of work-based opportunities in high-school 3. Guarantee employer partners can sustain and scale student work-based opportunities over the next two years and beyond with a comprehensive fundraising plan.
Goals/Outcomes	Each bullet should represent a distinct goal you want to achieve for that year. Each goal should align with outputs and metrics you list below.
By 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Ensure the citywide post-secondary strategy aligns with and accelerates MLL’s economic vision and goals for historically underserved young people.</i> ● <i>Successes of Career Launch Chicago and partnerships with AUC and Partnership for College Completion ensure all students see Chicago as the leading choice to pursue their postsecondary and career plans</i>
By 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement system for ongoing monitoring of completion rates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (win)Create quarterly data summary that captures trends from Accelerating Completion dashboard and summarizes key

	<p>successes and key challenges in post-secondary/ career pathway ecosystem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create clear, actionable sustainability plan for Career Launch Chicago <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (win) Plan will include fundraising and partnerships necessary to reach 1,000 student work-based learning opportunities by 2024
<p>By 2021</p>	<p><i>What are specific wins that you can point to this year?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (win) Collaborate with AUC, Partnership for College Completion and CPS, to increase postsecondary completion rates among Black students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Leverage AUC and Partnership for College Completion relationships as the foundation for increasing completion rates</i> <p><i>Leverage AUC and CPS relationships as the foundation for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (win) Develop the Accelerating Completing Dashboard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>A tool for collectively monitoring completion rates among postsecondary institutions and competitive career pathway partners</i> ● (win) Work with CPS to execute 50 work-based learning opportunities within Career Launch Chicago <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spring 2022 deadline
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>Outputs are products and tangible things created through the work (e.g. dashboards, surveys, new protocols) that align with the goals. Each bullet should represent a distinct output.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Increase completion rates among Black students at post-secondary institutions and within competitive credentialed pathways</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Work with AUC to prioritize increasing completion rates among Black students by regularly tracking and reporting completion data</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborative and actionable strategy for increasing completion rates among Black students ▪ <i>Accelerating Completion Dashboard</i> - a tool that captures completion metrics across higher education institutions and competitive career pathways ▪ Quarterly data summary that captures trends from Accelerating Completion dashboard and summarizes key successes and key challenges in post-secondary/ career pathway ecosystem ○ <i>Partner with CPS to realize the goals of the Chicago Roadmap</i> ○ <i>Partner with CCC to expand the Fresh Start initiative to increase debt forgiveness among new and returning CCC students</i> ● <i>Ensure high school students are prepared to succeed after they graduate by increasing the quantity and quality of work-based opportunities in high-school</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Work with CCC and CPS to execute the vision of Career Launch Chicago – ensuring 1000 high school students have access to</i>

	<p><i>work-based learning opportunities in competitive career pathways by 2024</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Work with CPS to ensure the district can provide every student with exposure to CTE opportunities by 2023 and beyond</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Guarantee employer partners can sustain and scale student work-based opportunities over the next two years</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Work with CPS and CFF to ensure financial sustainability of Career Launch Chicago and other CTE programming</i>
Metrics	<p>Metrics are indicators that measure success and show whether we are making an impact (e.g. changes to funding allocation over time, change in diversity of stakeholders over time) that align with the goals and vision. Metrics should emphasize equity values. Each bullet should represent a distinct metric.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AUC institutions agree to report completion rates, especially Black students, to MLL on a quarterly basis ● 50 CPS students enroll in Career Launch Chicago ● 1000 CPS students enroll in Career Launch Chicago by 2024 ● All CPS students experience 1 CTE experience by 2023 ● Sustainability plan for Career Launch Chicago completed by Spring 2022

Appendix E



Options School Pilot

DRAFT for Internal Review
Submitted by Jessica Ball Johnson and Julie Burnett, EDHS

12/20/21 1

The Problem

- Options School students are neither graduating nor matriculating to college at the same rate as other CPS students
- Options School students face more graduation risk factors than other CPS students; namely, they are 40% more likely to be victimized or arrested

Key Facts

- 6-year high school graduation rate is 38.6% while non-options school students is 91.1%
- Options school students enrolled in college at lower rates than their peers in non-Options Schools – 30.7% vs 78.5%

2

The Opportunity

The CSCC is uniquely positioned to support Options School students in two ways:

1
Strategically Mitigate Violence Involvement

2
Expand Access and Exposure to the Workforce

The CSCC can leverage a year-long youth employment framework to strategically equip Options Students with competitive soft skills and reduce opportunities for violence

3

Summer Youth Employment Program

Chicago mayors have a history of convening city resources to provide summer employment opportunities for students

- Youth Ready Chicago (Richard M. Daley)
- One Summer Chicago and One Summer Chicago Plus (Rahm Emanuel & Lori Lightfoot)

Chicago's most recent mayors have used summer employment programs as a strategy to prepare the city's youth for the workforce by providing paid job opportunities for 6-8 weeks during the summer.

4

One Summer Chicago Plus

One Summer Chicago Plus was the first summer youth employment program to directly target at-risk youth for the purpose of offering career exposure and reducing violent crimes among participating students

Program Offerings

- Led by the Chicago Department of Family & Support Services
- 6 weeks of employment in CBOs at \$8.25/ hr
- Job coach to offer career coaching & guidance

In each year of One Summer Chicago Plus there was a 40% decrease in violent crimes among participating youth


5

CSCC and Violence Prevention

Youth employment programs like One Summer Chicago Plus directly align with the CSCC's commitment to violence prevention strategies that lead to systemic transformation

Youth employment programs targeting at-risk students align with the following intervention levels:

- Support for individuals & families at-risk
- Community revitalization & reinvestment



6

Work-based Learning Defined



Work-based learning is defined as learning technical, academic and employability skills by working in a real work environment. The purposes of work-based learning can be organized into three categories:

- **Cognitive development:** Learning through engagement with ideas and things
- **Social/Emotional development:** Learning through engagement with self and others
- **Career development:** Learning through engagement with work processes and places

Work-based learning opportunities can be delivered through the following types of programs:

- Internship
- Co-operative Education
- Apprenticeship
- School-Based Enterprise

7

Benefits of Work-based learning



Over the last 20 years the demand for soft skills has increased, but limited training has created a "soft skill" gap

Work-based learning programs are uniquely positioned to address the "soft skill" gap by equipping youth with the competitive soft skills. The table below summarizes soft skills central to success in the workforce:

Soft Skills	Description
Social skills	Helps people get along well with others. This ability includes respecting others, using context appropriate behavior and resolving conflict
Communication skills	The specific communication used in workplace, and include oral, written, non-verbal, and listening skills
Higher-order skills	The ability to identify an issue and take in information from multiple sources to evaluate options in order to reach a reasonable conclusion
Self-control	One's ability to delay gratification, control impulses, direct and focus attention, manage emotions and regulate behaviors
Positive self-concept	Self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-awareness and beliefs, as well as self-esteem

8

Pilot Proposal



Leverage the One Summer Chicago Plus' youth employment framework to create an Options School pilot that (i) serves as a targeted violence prevention strategy and (ii) equips students with necessary soft skills to be successful in the workforce

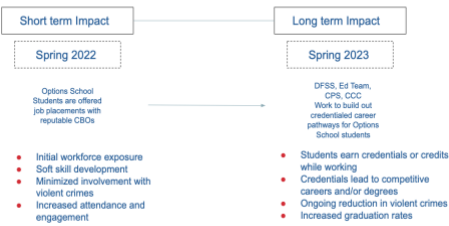
This approach would offer workforce development, while immediately supporting CSCC's violent crime reduction strategy

Implementation benefits

- Pilot will serve as a warm handoff for Choose to Change participants
- Actionable strategy to support violence prevention ramp up for 2022 summer
- Leveraging youth employment during the school year offers programming aligned to violent crime reduction
- Options School's half day schedules supports easy implementation of the pilot

9

Pathway to Systemic Change



10

Pilot Details



Participants	~30 Options students who have participated in Choose to Change will participate in a youth employment opportunity during the academic school year and through the summer
Time Commitment	March 2022 - March 2023; 15 hours per week at \$15/hr
Key Partners	CPS, CPS-approved CBOs for job placement, and mentors who will serve as soft skill coaches
Key Alignment Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns to CSCC prioritization of programming that supports individuals and families at-risk and systemic transformation • Aligns to EDHS focus on improving postsecondary options for historically underserved student populations • Aligns with City of Chicago's Recovery Task Force priority: Equitable Economic Recovery
Anticipated Cost	\$499,000 <LINK>

11

Appendix F

CHICAGO YAP'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

YAP is pleased to present this proposal to provide a Youth Employment Program for an average of 30 students annually referred by Chicago Public Schools. Participating students will be provided with an average of six (6) hours of service a week. The overall goal of the program is to build future economic opportunity for participating students. To achieve this, the program will incorporate tailored mentoring, community linkages and additional support provided by trained YAP Advocates with the following services:

✓ Weeks 1-2: Intake & Assessment

- A holistic and team-based intake and assessment process to identify individual needs and goals with a focus on employment and education.

✓ Weeks 2-16: YAPWorx Work Skills Training & Graduation

- Implementation of YAPWorx work skills training program to teach youth 21st century work skills and help them develop connections needed for employment
- YAPWorx stipends to promote engagement and financial responsibility.
- Organized visits to worksites, college campuses and other locations to support employment and education goals.
- Graduation ceremony to celebrate and honor the accomplishments of students who successfully complete the pre-employment training component of the program.

✓ Weeks 16-52: Supported Work & Ongoing Advocate Support

- Supported Work short-term subsidized employment opportunities to provide real-world job experiences
- Ongoing support by YAP Advocates.

YAP programs also feature 24/7 crisis intervention support, family engagement and transportation assistance as needed. YAP maintains a responsive approach so that service intensity can be stepped up or down depending on needs and the level of risk. YAP provides services in the communities of referred students and at days and times consistent with individual needs, including evenings and weekends. YAP also has the capacity to provide virtual services as appropriate and in response to public health and safety guidelines.

YAP's Core Service Model

YAP's core Wraparound Advocacy (YAP Wrap) service model is based on a three-pronged approach that includes: 1) the wraparound team-based planning process; 2) relationship with caring, trained staff recruited from the community who provide mentoring and other services when and where they are needed; and 3) meaningful community connections.

YAP's model is comprehensive, trauma informed and holistic, utilizing best practices found in the wraparound, mentoring, restorative justice and positive youth development fields. Empowerment of youth, families and communities is central to YAP's wraparound approach.

With its focus on strengths rather than deficits, wraparound services enable young people and families to develop their capabilities, rather than become dependent on external supports. While wraparound intervention addresses immediate needs, it also acts as a catalyst in creating permanency, independence and self-sufficiency.

Wraparound principles also emphasize the importance of unconditional care, which enhances trust and participation. No student referred to YAP's program is refused services and services are never terminated due to case management difficulties. This "*No Reject - No Eject*" practice permeates YAP's work.

The YAP model of service is based on a caring and trusting relationship between an Advocate and the student. YAP Advocates embody the agency's "whatever it takes" philosophy and constructively engage with youth and families. YAP Advocates are trained and paid mentors who provide direct services while linking students and their families with other services to help address needs identified during the assessment phase.

YAP's holistic and strength-based assessment and service plan development process provides the foundation for YAP Advocates to highly individualized and comprehensive support. Beginning at referral, YAP staff members seek to identify and understand a student's position in school and the community. The initial goal is to not only determine any specific challenges they are facing and difficulty with any system (i.e., problems in school) but also any relationship between two or more systems (i.e., peer/family conflict). To achieve this, YAP uses a team-based planning approach that actively engages school personnel, the student and their family and other individuals involved with the student and their family.

YAP also has four family-friendly assessment tools, available in English and Spanish, that can be used to gather additional information about strengths, needs, interests and family support.

Once issues are identified during assessment, individual, group and family services are used to address challenges while building student skills, competencies and positive community supports that will continue to support them after they complete the YAP program. YAP's assessment process can also incorporate safety and crisis intervention planning.

YAP Youth Employment Services

YAP will provide the following services for participating students:

YAPWorx

YAP’s experiential-based learning curriculum, YAPWorx, helps students gain exposure to skills, credentials, work and entrepreneurial experiences, positive networks and education. The YAPWorx curriculum builds valuable workplace skills, provides mentoring to support personal growth, and develops skills needed for success in areas such as financial literacy. It exposes youth to information about success in careers from people who achieved it and connects them to Opportunity Advisors who further mentor them in job readiness skills and expand their network of connections. Students will be provided with stipends to promote engagement and financial responsibility. YAPWorx can be conducted in-person or through virtual sessions if needed.

YAPWorx includes the following core components:

- A skills-building curriculum administered by trained staff where students learn about appropriate workplace attire, get help with resume/cover letter writing, are assisted with college and GED prep, and are provided with other practical skill building support.
- Assigning participating youth to a worksite in an industry of their choosing. Students are connected to “Opportunity Advisors” – trained adult supervisors who provide them with guidance and pre-employment training, as well as advice on the youth’s chosen field. After choosing an industry field, youth participate in experience-appropriate tasks to further develop skills for successful employment.
- By working in a real-world worksite, students gain valuable skills needed for workplace relationships and growth.

YAPWorx skills training uses an individualized strength-based learning system that can be tailored to the needs of program participants. Examples of individual modules are below.

Unit Title	Overview
<i>The 5 FEO Elements (future economic opportunity)</i>	Youth examine the five elements of future economic opportunity: Credentials, Work Experience, Skills, Connections & Degrees and how they can lead to their future economic success.
<i>Making Connections</i>	Youth explore effective job-hunting methods. Youth learn about the labor market and the importance of building solid workforce connections through working and/or communicating with others successfully

<i>RESUME: Documenting Your Economic Success Journey</i>	Youth examine the role of a resume in building future <i>Economic Success Journey</i> economic success
<i>Time and Attendance Strategies for Future Economic Success</i>	Youth examine the importance of time and punctuality in the world of work. Youth identify barriers to attendance and punctuality and puts a plan in place to overcome them.
<i>Working Effectively with Your Supported Work Supervisor</i>	Youth identify, examine and work on the skills necessary to improve relations with their supervisors and advisors, including anger management skills, coping mechanisms, etc.
<i>Building Your Verbal and Written Connecting Skills</i>	Youth examine effective ways for verbal and written presentation and participate in interviewing skills training.

Supported Work

Supported Work is a subsidized employment training that provides short-term, real work experience and that reduces barriers to employers taking on at-risk young people by having them supervised by and paid by YAP. YAP arranges, facilitates and coaches students through Supported Work opportunities in local businesses, charities, community service events or via in- house services within the YAP program. Employers are usually targeted to allow working age youth who are not yet ready for outside employment to begin working in a safe, structured environment and are designed to be a short-term transitional employment training service that leads to mainstream employment.

While working, students are provided with opportunities to build skills and experiences with ongoing support of YAP Advocates. YAP asks employers to share their personal stories with youth about their career ladder and help youth understand the credentials or skill sets that made them successful. Employers are encouraged to hire the student after the initial training period or to serve as a reference when that is not possible.

Field Trips

YAP will organize student outings to worksites, universities, trade schools, other post- secondary institutions and other locations. These outings will expose students to new opportunities and experiences and promote academic and employment achievement.

STAFFING & INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT RAPID START-UP & QUALITY ASSURANCE

Staffing

YAP's unique staffing approach reflects our commitment to communities and our organizational values of cultural competence, using a strength-based approach, and maintaining high quality services. YAP staff are provided with a thorough orientation and an intensive nine-course *Basic Advocacy Training (BAT)*, which is accredited by Rutgers University and includes the areas of: engaging youth and families; safety planning; setting and maintaining professional boundaries; understanding human development; cultural competence; developing community connections; setting goals and achieving progress; and employing a positive youth development approach. YAP staff participate in 20-hours of on-going training per year, weekly one-on-one supervision sessions, and monthly staff meetings to further cultivate staff skills and promote effective service delivery.

YAP proposes a comprehensive staffing structure to include a Program Director, Advocates, and an Administrative Manager. YAP also has a Leadership Team of national and regional experts who bring decades of experience and assist with rapid start-up of the program, and provide hiring, training, technical assistance and ongoing case management consultations as part of the agency's commitment to quality assurance.

YAP's national Business Support Center departments provide rapid start-up and ongoing support of local programs. The YAP Business Support Center departments include IT, Marketing, Development, Human Resources, Finance, Continuous Quality Improvement, Employee Development & Training and Compliance/Monitoring. *These value-added services make the YAP model a highly effective and cost-efficient option to support local communities.*

YAP has received accreditation from the Council on Accreditation (COA) since 2009. The COA accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of our operations and its service delivery practices. YAP's performance is "measured" against national standards of best practice. These standards emphasize services that are accessible, culturally responsive, evidence-based and outcomes oriented. *Achieving COA accreditation supports the premise that YAP services are provided by a culturally competent, skilled, and supported workforce.*

Program Quality Assurance & Data Tracking Capability

YAP has a robust data collection and tracking process that can be adapted to meet specific contract requirements. YAP's web-based systems, including Evolv, UltiPro and Social Solutions Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), enable YAP to provide regularly scheduled reports on service provision and outcomes for each individual program. YAP's integrated digital systems allow local Program Directors, Regional Leaders and National Leaders to access and monitor financial and program performance data on a regular basis. Program Directors receive quarterly outcomes reports allowing them to track changes within their programs and to make improvements when necessary. YAP's National Leadership Team reviews quarterly agency-wide outcomes reports and the Board of Directors reviews annual outcomes. Local program leadership also support quality assurance through training, weekly supervision with staff, case reviews and by contact with families.

