



MEMO

Name: Paul Sznewajs, Executive Director, Ingenuity

Transition Committee: Education

Prompt: Please pick one objective to focus your memo on from among the objectives that were shared with you on your invitation letter: *Ensure all students in CPS have access to the schools, teachers and supports they need to succeed.*

A potential initiative (one sentence):

Bring equity and make CPS the most creative school district in the nation by ensuring every child, in every grade, in every CPS school has access to the arts as part of their ongoing education—with a focus on closing the gap for the one-third (105,000) of CPS students who do not receive regular access to the arts.

How the new administration can infuse the values of equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation in this initiative:

Ingenuity shares Mayor-elect Lightfoot and CPS' visions for a public school system that provides equal opportunities for all students, and that is inclusive, supportive, and responsive to the needs of our city's children, particularly those who are most at risk. The Lightfoot administration's values are strongly aligned with and central to our initiative: **equity** – providing access to quality arts programs for all CPS students; **transparency** – making data-driven decisions and sharing information broadly; **accountability** – publicly measuring our collective progress against stated goals; **diversity and inclusion** – ensuring that our efforts incorporate, represent and benefit the multitude of stakeholders in CPS arts education; and **transformation** – leveraging public-private partnerships to transform the complex and multi-faceted CPS system.

Ingenuity engaged more than 2,000 CPS students, parents, teachers, principals, city, philanthropy, and cultural leadership to ensure CPS is a national leader in arts access, quality and equity for students. Based on their feedback, a collective community effort over the past six years has led to a sea change in arts education across Chicago's schools. Access to high-quality arts programming has risen 117% over the past six years (from 29% to 63%), with two-thirds (250,000) of CPS students now attending a school that is strong or excelling in the arts. These data are collected and analyzed annually and shared publicly via through Ingenuity's *artlook* data-mapping platform, and our annual *State of the Arts in Chicago Public Schools* report. These cumulative successes are impacting the intellectual, creative, and interpersonal development of hundreds of thousands of CPS students.

While we celebrate this great progress, work still remains. 84% of CPS students are Black or Latinx, and 77% come from economically-disadvantaged households; data reveal that one-third (105,000) of CPS students lack consistent access to robust in-school arts programming. In alignment with the District's five-year vision and Mayor-elect Lightfoot's goals for ensuring a world-class education system for all CPS students, we have identified the following areas of focus to "Close the Arts Opportunity Gap":

- **Support and fortify our teacher pipeline:** Retain and elevate the accomplishments of high-quality arts teachers in the district, and – in partnership with CPS, Ingenuity, Arts Alliance Illinois, and local higher education institutions – develop a teacher pipeline for the arts, addressing teacher shortages in high-needs opportunity schools.

- **Provide resources for arts education programs in schools by increasing** Arts Essentials funds at CPS (currently \$1,000 per year for each school that provides data on its arts education programming and infrastructure); supports for Fine and Performing Arts schools; and competitive grants through the Creative Schools Fund.
- **Engage Communities:** Using annual data, engage Aldermen in developing ward-specific plans that enhance, increase, and sustain access and equity to quality arts programs and public arts initiatives in schools.
- **Expand college & career pathways for high school students**, and, by extension, economic opportunities for teaching artists and members of the creative industries, by engaging higher education leadership.
- **Increase the capacity of our school leaders and LSC's:** Elevate the knowledge and skill sets of principals and LSC members that support the prioritization of high-quality, school-day arts education for all CPS students through professional development, peer-to-peer collaboration with leaders of exemplar schools in the arts, and through the observation of CPS demonstration sites across the district.

And as it pertains to this initiative:

- What is happening today that we need to keep?

Continue to pursue the vision and goals set forth in the CPS Arts Education Plan through:

- Finishing the job and ensuring arts learning for the 105,000 CPS without access
- Driving change and innovation through classroom-level partnerships with cultural agencies
- Supporting the current funding strategies that bring critical resources to teacher-designed arts programs

By maintaining this approach, we will continue to make gains in our schools and ensure that every child, in every school, in every grade has access to the arts as part of a well-rounded education.

- **What we need to implement in the next 100 days**

- Capitalize on the alignment and momentum behind the District's and Dr. Jackson's five-year vision for equity in schools—including in the arts.
- Mayor-elect Lightfoot was the only candidate to issue a cultural platform, along with publicly championing the importance of arts in schools. We must ensure Mayor-elect Lightfoot's Education and Arts & Cultural first-term strategies meaningfully intersect with each other from the beginning.

- **What we can plan for longer-term implementation**

- Include the arts in the District's school accountability system (School Quality Rating Policy, and On Track metrics), paralleling state ESSA policy.

- **What challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative**

While substantial progress has been made in arts education in CPS in recent years, there are still more than 100,000 students who do not have consistent access to robust arts education. These gaps are predominantly in high-needs communities on the South and West sides of the city.

Analyses of CPS arts education data are informing specific strategies to drive systemic change:

- **Scheduling:** while many school leaders prioritize the arts, data confirm that scheduling the recommended minimum of 120 minutes of weekly arts instruction is an identified challenge.
- **Staffing:** the District has identified the arts as one of the curricular areas facing teacher shortages.
- **Resources:** current EBF funding limits principals' ability to hire the adequate amount of staff or provide the necessary equipment and supplies to successfully implement high-quality arts instruction.