



Sustainable Community Schools Initiative Contract Update

An important win in our current contract is **Article 12-2, pages 56-57**, born of years of struggle with community partners in the Grassroots Education Movement, calls for a joint CTU-CPS project to fund Community Schools. The ultimate goal is for all schools to have robust staff, programming, and parent and community engagement, and we were able to win additional funding for 20 pilot schools initially, beginning in school year 2018-2019. Article 12-2 encapsulates many of the issues important to CTU members and our students: health services, STLS needs, after-school programs, social-emotional supports, parent mentor programs, and restorative justice coordinators. CPS has secured \$10 million dollars to be used to fund substantial investment in each of the 20 pilot schools and to cover the top-level initiative costs. We will need to make expansion of this work a key priority in our upcoming contract campaign.

What are Sustainable Community Schools (SCS)?

This term is used to indicate that providing needed services to students is not a one-shot, temporary arrangement, but a *sustainable* change to the way we think about educating the whole child, with family and community partner involvement at the core. More information about the success of SCS around the country and key necessary components can be found in the report ***Community Schools: Transforming Struggling Schools into Thriving Schools*** (<https://populardemocracy.org/news/publications/community-schools-transforming-struggling-schools-thriving-schools>).

CPS already has community schools that do good work as a part of their Community Schools Initiative (CSI) with students after school and parent engagement (such as mentoring) strategies, but all of the strategies used by successful SCS are not necessarily employed. The CTU and its community partners envision Sustainable Community Schools as places where shared leadership is the norm.

A Sustainable Community Schools (SCS) model will build transformational schools where the students, parents, and community play a key self-deterministic role in their children's education in partnership with educators. This model also supports the notions of racial and social justice because it aims to provide real equity to the mostly students of color who attend Chicago Public Schools. What will make these community schools sustainable is both a commitment to funding and resources, and a commitment to the long-term process of developing school-community relationships that support implementation of proven strategies to the fullest extent.

What is the process for determining the 20 pilot schools?

As a result of the contract language, a Sustainable Community Schools (SCS) Task Force of CPS and CTU representatives have been meeting for well over a year to develop the process for implementation.

The Task Force has qualified a list of Lead Community Partners eligible to work with the SCS, and identified a list of 109 elementary and 28 high schools to be considered for selection for the 2018-19 school pilot year. This pilot will set the precedent to fight for all CPS schools to receive funds and resources to become sustainable community schools. The 137 schools eligible for selection this year are neighborhood or small schools, are located in community areas with significant hardship (economic and violence), have middle range student mobility rates (so not the worst or the best rates), high rates of free/reduced lunch eligibility, and SQRP scores of 1, 2, or 2+.



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What do I need to know as a delegate if my school is invited to apply?

Invitation emails will be sent to principals, APs, and CTU delegates asking them to RSVP for an Information Meeting on May 16, 2018. The principal or AP is invited to attend with at least one more member of their school community. CTU delegates will want to communicate with their principals to ensure that their school RSVPs for and participates in the meeting. After the Information Meeting, CTU delegates will want to encourage principals to indicate (on a survey they'll receive by email) their school's interest in being considered as one of the pilot schools so their school can remain eligible.

Subsequently, schools who indicate interest will be eligible to receive bids from the qualified Lead Community Partner organizations. These organizations will produce bids to schools expressing their interest and qualifications for being selected the school's single Lead Community Partner. Schools that receive and select a bid or bids will write a letter to express why their school should be selected as a pilot school and why they selected a particular bid. The SCS Task Force will designate a Selection Team and use an agreed upon criteria to evaluate the applications received, and select the final 20 pilot schools over the next few months.

Schools will have a strong application if they have some capacity and infrastructure to show success in a short period of time, may have relationships with community partners that can be leveraged, can form a strong Leadership Team including teachers and other school staff, school leadership, students, parents and community members.

What happens after the 20 pilot schools are selected?

The 20 pilot schools, once chosen, along with a qualified Lead Community Partner, will hire an SCS school-based Coordinator, send representatives to a Summer SCS Initiative Institute, and engage in a school and community Needs Assessment and Asset Mapping process. They will be given funds to implement programs such as SEL support for students, out-of-school programs, restorative practices, parent mentoring and engagement, and also school staffing. Pilot schools will develop an inclusive Leadership Team that will meet regularly to ensure that the SCS Initiative is implemented effectively using a shared leadership model. The 20 pilot schools will also be treated as a cohort and representatives from each school will participate in meetings and professional development provided for the SCS Initiative.

What are our individual and collective next steps?

Share this update and the report described on page 1 with colleagues and families. Consider whether your school could form a more collaborative leadership model where staff are included in decision making in order to form the basis of a leadership team that could champion a sustainable community school model for your school. Consider what voices currently have decision making power in your schools and how you can advocate for more parent, student, and community involvement. While only 20 pilot schools will be chosen for next school year, advocacy for transforming our schools throughout CPS into Sustainable Community Schools will continue in the contract campaign. Familiarizing yourself with the concept of community schools and having conversations about it, will help our advocacy to expand this pilot. Consider what partners already work in your school and your community and how to increase and improve relationships with community organizations and members. *For more information, contact Jen Johnson, the CTU Education Issues Manager, JenniferJohnson@ctulocal1.com.*