



Bringing Chicago Public High Schools into the 21st Century

Students' Ideas on How to Use 21st Century Technology to Improve the Rigor, Relevance and Relationships of High School

**Mikva Challenge Education Council
Produced Summer 2010**

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Introduction to Who We Are

We are the Mikva Challenge Education Council, a group of fifteen students from different public high schools throughout the city who meet regularly with Chicago Public Schools CEO, Ron Huberman to give our recommendations on improving school. Together at the beginning of this summer, our council and CEO Huberman chose the summer research question. We researched how 21st century technology can improve the rigor, relationships and relevance of high school. Collecting data and gathering the much needed research for our report was not an easy task. We walked down the streets of downtown Chicago to gather information from professionals such as lawyers and professors, read numerous articles and publications on the subject of technology, spoke with experts in different fields, held panel discussions and conducted our own research which consisted of 380 student surveys.

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Executive Summary

Imagine if every teacher could utilize technology fluidly in their lesson plans. Imagine if students could take classes at other schools via video conferencing. Imagine if students used their cell phones to text in response to last night's reading. Imagine if a Spanish class in Chicago had daily speaking sessions in English and Spanish with a classroom in Mexico City. We believe if our recommendations are adopted those dreams could be a reality. Our ultimate goal is to improve high schools by creating and enforcing strong, innovative recommendations for Chicago Public Schools.

After more than 120 hours of intense research, we found out how schools nationwide implement technology engaging their students in learning both inside and outside of the classroom. We also found examples of new devices and programs that could expand and improve the techniques teachers use in the classroom. The recommendations that we viewed as most essential were broken into six areas that we call "buckets." The six buckets are: Teaching, Learning, Technology Policy, Resources, Communication and School Culture.

The Education Council has chosen 6 recommendations we considering most important. We believe these 6 recommendations are the most crucial and organic to our movement of bringing CPS into the 21st Century.

- CPS should offer mandatory semester workshops for teachers on successfully utilizing technology in the classroom.
- If a course is not offered at a student's school, he or she should be allowed to take the course at a different school through video conferencing, while still being in his/her school.
- Teachers should have a personal password for the use of unblocking CPS 'restricted' websites for educational purposes. The principal's discretion will determine which websites can be viewed.
- Cell phones should be allowed during passing periods, lunch and as a teacher-defined learning tool (e.g. as for research, surveying students and background knowledge).
- CPS should be equipping schools with iPod touches, Mac Books, Flip Cams, and Smart boards to enhance the classroom experience by building sponsorships with companies who can provide them.
- There should be a video that CPS shows city-wide, as well as student-led programs for students in schools about the dangers of sexting and cyber-bullying and their consequences.

We look forward to this report generating conversations throughout the city and the nation. Integrating technology into education is not an easy task, but it is necessary for education in the 21st century. We believe that these recommendations can help make it possible.

Complete List of Recommendations

Bucket: Teaching

1. Teachers should use video conferencing (e.g. Skype and Cisco Systems) to bring in guest speakers. (pg. 8)
2. Teachers should incorporate video and audio recording in a number of their lessons to both review the events that took place during the lesson and to constructively help students. (pg. 8)
3. CPS should offer mandatory semester workshops for teachers on successfully utilizing technology in the classroom. (pg. 9)
4. Create a "Chicago Teaching Exchange" (CTX) - a website where teachers can share their teaching ideas, tools and games. All CPS teachers can download, rank and comment upon the resources present on the CTX. (pg. 10)

Bucket: Learning

5. If a course is not offered at a student's school, he or she should be allowed to take the course at a different school through video conferencing, while still being in his/her school. (pg. 13)
6. Have students do projects that require them to use professional programs (including, but not limited to MS Office, Google Docs, Adobe, etc.) so they can be prepared for the 21st century. (pg. 13)
7. CPS should partner with youth organizations (e.g. YouMedia, True Star Media and Free Spirit Media) so that students who participate in technology projects outside of school get service learning hours or elective credits. (pg. 14)

Bucket: Technology Policies

8. Teachers should have a personal password for the use of unblocking CPS 'restricted' websites for educational purposes. The principal's discretion will determine which websites can be viewed. (pg. 17)
9. Cell phones should be allowed during passing periods, lunch and as a teacher-defined learning tool (e.g. as for research, surveying students and background knowledge). (pg. 18)
10. Allow students to bring their personal laptops to class for the use of note-taking and class work. (pg. 19)

Bucket: Resources

11. CPS should be equipping schools with iPod touches, Mac Books, Flip Cams, and Smart boards to enhance the classroom experience by building sponsorships with companies who can provide them. (pg. 21)

12. Principals should create an annual report detailing their school's distribution of technology funding so that their Chief Area Officer (CAO) will know the exact percentage going towards the necessary technology, while both enforcing and monitoring it. (pg. 21)

13. Since electricity is an issue with technology, CPS should reach out to private companies to sponsor pilot schools on energy efficient items/appliances or solar panels for schools to better accept the implementation of new technology. (pg. 22)

Bucket: Communication

14. With the use of video teleconferencing, students in different schools can connect to each other on a one to one basis. This will benefit high schools for the use of clubs and to help school-to-school relationships. (pg. 25)

15. The text message alert option on Student Portal should be better advertised to students. (pg. 25)

Bucket: School Culture

16. Teachers should be allowed to do video recording in order to develop strategies to improve behavior, teaching and learning and share the videos with students and parents. (pg. 28)

17. There should be a video that CPS shows city-wide, as well as student-led programs for students in schools about the dangers of sexting and cyber-bullying and their consequences. (pg. 28)

18. Give teachers recognition for their accomplishments and openness to using new and innovative approaches (i.e. technology) in their classrooms. (pg. 29)

Teaching

One of the biggest problems with teaching in CPS is that students are not being engaged enough in class. They are also not being taught how to properly use 21st century technology, which serves as a necessary tool to get students more engaged and prepared for the workplace. Teachers cannot show them how to use this new technology because the majority of teachers do not know how to integrate technology in the classroom in an interesting, effective way. Teachers have not been given the necessary amount of training needed for the technology that they receive from Central Office. Integrating technology with classroom instruction has proven to get students more academically involved. These recommendations aim to help teachers bring technology into their classrooms in creative and productive ways.

The Dos and Don'ts of Teaching with Technology

Do

1. Record teachers' lectures and put them on the school website so students can refer back to them.
2. Have teachers effectively use technology in their lesson often.
3. Have teachers keep records of how students are responding to their lessons when they try new technology and ask their ideas on how to improve.

Don't

1. Replace teachers with technology. Technology should only be used as a teacher's aide.
2. Supply teachers technology without training them first.

Teaching Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1: Teachers should use video conferencing (e.g. Skype and Cisco Systems) to bring in guest speakers.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Video conferencing in the 21st century has allowed us to personally communicate with people all around the world with just the click of a mouse. With tools such as Skype and Cisco Systems, classrooms can expand beyond the four walls that surround them. These tools enable students to interview authors, converse with a native French speaker, or receive homework assistance at home or after school. We need to take advantage of the endless possibilities video conferencing has to offer.

EVIDENCE:

- Skype has been used successfully in the classroom to conduct interviews with authors, political powers, and many different types of people with power (TeachingDegree.org).
- Skype has been used to help students learn different languages by listening to native speakers and comparing themselves to them to become better (Dale 2009).
- Skype is proven to be a helpful tool for students who need after school tutoring, as teachers, tutors and librarians have tutored students using Skype (TeachingDegree.org).

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Supply schools with the necessary tools (computers, web cams, microphones) to be able to use video conferencing effectively in the classroom.
2. Have schools download the free video program such as Skype, Oovoo, etc.

Imagine...if after the earthquake in Haiti, CPS students spoke to geologists studying Haitian plate tectonics and collaborated on ways to rebuild Haiti.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Teachers should incorporate video and audio recording in a number of their lessons to both review the events that took place during the lesson and to constructively help students.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT: Teachers have classes filled with students at different learning levels. The student to teacher ratio is about 30:1; with this ratio, it is practically impossible for a teacher to be able to attend the needs of all the students in that specific class. In return, some students are left behind because they cannot get the individualized learning they deserve. But, with the help of new video and audio recording tools, the following options are available:

- Students can record themselves talking about a specific subject, reading an essay, or speaking a different language and being able to listen to his/her speaking skills and improve upon them.

-
- With video and audio recording, a teacher's lecture does not have to be only for that specific class period. With the help of various websites and even blogs, teachers can upload their lectures and lessons plans for students to view any time they want.
 - Teachers can record the way they teach their class and look back on it in order to improve their teaching method.
 - A teacher can pinpoint students having a difficult time with a certain subject, group them together, and present to them the video of him/her explaining the lesson. Therefore, students who did not grasp the lesson at first are able to learn again without slowing the rest of the class.

EVIDENCE:

- Devices such as cell phones, iPods, and other handhelds that have Bluetooth connections can be used to record audio or video, and then be sent to the teacher via Bluetooth so that the teacher can witness several different students at once in the class (Lambert 2009).
- Students can record themselves talking about a specific subject, or reading off an essay, to be able to listen to his/her speaking skills and become better (Apple Inc. 2010).
- With video and audio recording, a teacher's lecture does not have to be only for that class. Using various websites and blogs, teachers can upload their lectures and lesson plans and students can view them any time they want.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Supply schools with the technology like Flip Cams and voice recorders, which are relatively inexpensive (CPS can partner with different organizations or companies to get the technology).
2. *Most importantly*, teach teachers how to use the new technology effectively. Give them clear examples they can build upon. Show them ideas from our report or bring in a technology specialist to train teachers.

Imagine...if English Language Learners listened to their own mistakes after creating recordings of themselves, therefore increasing their fluency dramatically.

RECOMMENDATION 3: CPS should offer mandatory semester workshops for teachers on successfully utilizing technology in the classroom.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Even though teachers are given new technology, they are often intimidated by it because they have no idea how to use it effectively and have never been properly taught how to use it effectively. Therefore the technology is not used to its fullest extent and might as well be useless. Teachers do not automatically know how to use this type of equipment. They need to be taught how to use the technical skills they have in the most effective way. They also need to be genuinely enthusiastic about the technology they are implementing, otherwise they won't use it. Therefore, workshops must be innovative and engaging.

EVIDENCE:

- "Only 10 percent of teachers [feel] 'very well prepared' to use computers and the Internet for classroom instruction" (Goral 2000). Among the 90% who do not feel well prepared are those who have been in the field for ten or more years. This group may be reluctant to incorporate technology

because they lack the technology skills needed. This lack of skills is due mainly to not having been trained or not having technology modeled during their early academic career” (Rosenfeld & Martinez-Pons, 2005)

- According to Charlie Martin, Technology Director at North Lawndale College Prep, “teachers are given all this technology, but they have no idea how to use it. They become scared and intimidated by it.”
- “At Urban Prep every student received a Mac Book, and the greatest challenge that technology presented was integrating it into our curriculum in a meaningful way. Lack of effective integration strategies allowed the technology to become a distraction in our classroom. Technology is not a means to an end, rather a catalyst for engaging students in learning.” -Jelani McEwen, former teacher at Urban Prep Englewood.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Have a team within CPS or outside organizations partner with CPS to organize teacher seminars on how to use the technology.
2. Have actual teachers mentor other teachers to use the technology by giving them relevant examples of how to implement it in an everyday lesson plan.
3. The workshop should have two sections: intermediate and beginners. Teachers pick which level they feel comfortable.
4. Have actual teachers mentor other teachers to use the technology given by giving them examples of how to use it and ways to implement it in an everyday lesson plan.
5. Make some sort of follow up available so when teachers go back to their schools they have someone to consult with about the technology and best uses.
6. Have college students or education students be “Tech Assistants” to veteran teachers.

Imagine...every CPS teacher becoming one with technology, using it as a second-nature learning device in keeping students engaged.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Create a “Chicago Teaching Exchange” (CTX) - a website where teachers can share their teaching ideas, tools and games. All CPS teachers can download, rank and comment upon the resources present on the CTX.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Students are often bored in class. They stop paying attention and eventually stop going to class. Using online games is a great way to grasp students’ attention. Teachers also have excellent methods on how they run their class that they can share with other teachers outside of just their schools. The problem is not all teachers know what the most effective games are or the coolest new teaching techniques. But with the Chicago Teaching Exchange, teachers can post links to games, share lesson plans/teaching methods and have other teachers rate each other’s ideas. Teachers will be able to ask questions and get feedback about how to improve their lesson plan. It will be a social network where teachers teach *teachers* how to teach.

EVIDENCE

- There have been more than 60 studies conducted by classroom teachers on the effects of games on student achievement. These studies showed on average, students made a 20 percentile point gain in student achievement (Marzano 2010).
- Current research suggests “Net Gen” students are more likely to engage in online games, rather than interact with other students or the instructor in a face-to-face learning environment (Annetta et al. 2006).
- Video games have a great potential to educate students. (“Video Games and Learning” YouTube.com).

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Assign a web developer to create and maintain the page.
2. Link it to the CPS website to be accessed easily.
3. Broadcast to teachers to send in good ideas on their teaching methods and online games they found were effective in their class.

Imagine...a struggling first year teacher goes to the CTX to download a master teacher’s physics lesson, integrating her expertise within his classroom.

Learning

Technology is such a valuable learning tool that can be utilized in many ways. This bucket gives solid, technology based recommendations that can be used to help learning within the school. With these recommendations, students can learn what they want, not just what they are told, all while preparing them for the 21st century.

The Dos and Don'ts of Learning with Technology

Do

1. Teachers should take the time to visit workshops that will both improve and enhance their skills on using technology.
2. Teachers should always be open to getting help from their co-workers when having trouble with using technology.
3. Teachers should become more open to implementing technology within their lesson plans.

Don't

1. Teachers should not get frustrated with the technique of using technology in the classroom when a lesson does not go as planned.
2. Teachers should not hesitate to ask others for help when struggling with technical problems.
3. Teachers should not teach at the same pace to all their students nor should they teach exactly the same way due to different learning styles of their students when it comes to technology.

Learning Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 5: If a course is not offered at a student's school, he or she should be allowed to take the course at a different school through video conferencing, while still being in his/her school.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

This recommendation is important because students should be able to learn what they want and what interests them. Almost every student is being left behind because of the way CPS unequally funds schools. Why should students be held back because of the lack of classes that their school offers? CPS constantly pushes both teachers and students on improving academically. Students excel when they are presented with subjects or ideas that interest them.

EVIDENCE:

- “No matter where the space is, but of course with a teacher present, you can still have learning opportunities [with Skype]. The idea is not far-fetched. It’s another way to bring the reality of our society into schools. I think that teleconferencing is a great for that.” -Brother Mike, Associate Director of the Digital Youth Network
- More than half a continent away, assistant professor of chemistry Ruomei Gao supervises students taking the same class at Jackson State University in Jackson, Miss. They're all connected via an Internet-based webcast that, thus far, has proved to be very effective (UCSB Engineering 2010).

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Set up a network between schools that will link CPS High Schools to a database that will allow students to take classes at other schools.
2. Give students a list of classes that other schools offer during the time when he/she selects his/her classes for the upcoming school year.
3. Students will take the course in the library as if they were in any other class while using either a Smart board system or laptops/computers with webcams.
4. He/she will communicate with the teacher in regards to class work and student help via Google Docs, Email, and Student Portal.

Imagine...if CPS became more than a big school system, transforming into one online learning community where students can experience classroom instruction outside of their school building.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Have students do projects that require them to use professional programs (including, but not limited to MS Office, Google Docs, Adobe, etc.) so they can be prepared for the 21st century.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Many students are not familiar with Microsoft Office or Google Docs. When asked to do a project using these programs, they do not understand what they are doing. This is important because in order to prepare for a career, you have to be familiar with these programs.

EVIDENCE:

- The Education Council surveyed working men and women in downtown Chicago. We interviewed a variety of professionals, from attorneys to optometrists. We were told on a daily basis all of these hardworking men and women use Microsoft Office and/or Microsoft Excel.
- The 2010 National Education Tech Plan (NETP) states in its learning bucket that “professionals routinely use the web and tools such as wikis, blogs, and digital content for the research, collaboration, and communication demanded in their jobs.”
- “Google Docs is a good tool for collaboration. There are tools such as power point, excel, and word that are very important in the workplace and are skills that all candidates should know in order to compete in the workforce. These tools can be used in the classroom in various subjects.” -Rohan Barrett, Grants and Communication Director at Mikva Challenge).

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Have adequate opportunities for students to use Microsoft Office, Google Docs, etc. in the classroom.
2. Teachers should be taught how to operate the software so when asked by a student for help, they know how to assist them.
3. Teachers should show students how to use and operate the software such as Microsoft Office and Google Docs.

Imagine...a group of students collaborating on a project using Google Docs at 10:30pm from the comfort of their own homes.

RECOMMENDATION 7: CPS should partner with youth organizations (e.g. YouMedia, True Star Media and Free Spirit Media) so that students who participate in technology projects outside of school get service learning hours or elective credits.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Currently, a number of students are doing academically rigorous projects in public places such as YouMedia or individually during their own time, and we believe they should be rewarded for their hard work! These students are devoted and self-motivated. Current budget cuts are targeting the creative side of the curriculum. Killing creativity can demolish the dream for young entrepreneurs. Therefore, it's important for creativity to exist so students can follow their passion and not get discouraged because they learn differently. Adopting this recommendation helps keep creativity alive in schools.

EVIDENCE:

- YouMedia has a large number of students attending their organization to use a variety of technology to create projects. Students gain experiences and use their time wisely to pursue their passions.
- Gallery 37 is another youth organization that works well. Gallery 37 is an art-related program where students from all over Chicago attend classes. CPS can actually reach out and replicate this method of learning all around Chicago.
- In Columbus, Ohio, a student at Upper Arlington High School will receive half a credit for devoting his time during the school year and the summer for his commitment in researching a new drug for nicotine addiction. According to the Ohio Bill 311, “high-school students will be able to earn credits by completing coursework; pursuing an educational option such as a senior project, internship or college classes; or demonstrating mastery of a subject” (Boss 2010).

Ideas for Implementation:

1. *CPS should partner with outside organizations.*
2. *Students can do projects after school and present them to their adult ally at the organization they attend.*
3. *Adult allies should write a recommendation and decide on whether that student should receive an elective credit or service hours based on their work.*
4. *After students attend the program, the organization’s adult ally will determine the grades given.*
5. *Even though no specific curriculum needs to be created, there should be a common standard for student mastery.*
6. *Program coordinators at each student’s school should be in charge of following up with the progress and collaboration between students and their work at the organization.*

Imagine...students coming together to write, produce and perform their music, while receiving high school credit to follow their dreams.

Technology Policy

In the "Student Code of Conduct" book, Guideline 3-11 states that the use of pagers, cellular telephones, or other electronic devices is prohibited on CPS premises. This policy is being broken by students every day. These new policies we are introducing will allow students to bring electronic devices for educational purposes and to bring CPS into the 21st century.

The Do's and Don'ts of Technology Policy

Do

1. Allow teachers to use blocked websites responsibly but keep passwords in order to access those sites private.
2. Allow students to bring cell phones on school property.
3. Teach students how to use technological tools responsibly.

Don't

1. Give students access to the passwords for blocked websites.
2. Have cell phones out after the bell rings.
3. Take away students' technology privileges unless they break their contracts.

Technology Policy Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 8: Teachers should have a personal password for the use of unblocking CPS ‘restricted’ websites for educational purposes. The principal’s discretion will determine which websites can be viewed.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

It is a way that teachers can get their students to pay attention in class. Students use YouTube every day, so why not show them that it can be used *educationally*, in addition to being entertaining? CPS is blocking important websites that can be helpful in expanding students’ learning (e.g.: YouTube, Funbrain, etc.). Teachers can engage students by implementing YouTube and educational games into their lessons and make it fun.

EVIDENCE:

- In our survey, 93% of students use YouTube. Two-thirds of students agree that YouTube can help students learn better, and 40% already use YouTube for their own for learning purposes (Appendix A.4).
- "There should be a teacher password allowing teachers to access these sites. Many times I see a great video on YouTube that has an experiment or demo I would like to use in my class but because it is a blocked site it is not allowed. Teachers could also then selectively unblock videos or sites depending on particular instruction plans with their passwords. This would give students access but restricted and monitored access." -Anonymous CPS teacher
- We spoke with 8 teachers and an administrator, all of whom said access to YouTube would help their teaching.
- “At York Community High School in Elmhurst, IL, teachers can access YouTube and other restricted websites upon teacher request.” -English teacher at York Community High School, Elmhurst, IL.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. *CPS should make a system for each school that will allow teachers to receive a password that will give them access to restricted sites.*

Imagine...if teachers were given the liberty to expand their resources, harnessing the power of YouTube to show different world perspectives in their classroom.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Cell phones should be allowed during passing periods, lunch and as a teacher-defined learning tool (e.g. as for research, surveying students and background knowledge).

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

The CPS Student Code of Conduct states, "Possession of pagers or cellular telephones [is prohibited] without prior permission of the Principal." However, cell phones are a crucial part to students' lives and have the ability to engage students and expand their learning. Permitting cell phones in schools would decrease confrontations between students and teachers and discipline problems would drop substantially. Our survey data show that schools are not enforcing this policy and that most students are breaking it. This begs the question whether current CPS policy is effective and useful.

EVIDENCE:

- According to our survey, 86% bring their cell phones to school every day and 96% agree that CPS should allow cell phones in school. The data show that most students have cell phones and that CPS could incorporate them as learning tools for virtually no cost (Appendix A.4).
- "I let my students use their cell phones in my class and it decreases the amount of discipline problems involving cell phones." -Mrs. Thurman, Lincoln Park High School
- "In a [lawsuit] filed in State Supreme Court in Manhattan, [parents argued] that [the cell phone ban] is so broad and blunt that it violates their constitutional right as parents to keep their children safe and to raise them in the way they see fit...they said, because it interferes with the relationship between parents and their children, without a compelling education reason for doing so" (Hartocollis 2006). Both students and parents agree that the cell phone bans are unnecessary in high schools.
- Other schools and school districts have changed their cell phone policies to adapt to our changing world. For example:
 - Milton High School: Students may use their cell phones during lunch and between classes. Phones must be silent and out of sight during instructional time. After a first offense, the phone is taken away until the end of the day. On a second offense, the phone must be picked up by a parent or guardian. On a third offense, either the student is suspended for one day or the phone is taken away for five school days (parent's choice).
 - Beloit Turner High School: Cell phones must be turned off and kept out of sight during the school day. At the end of the school day, students may use cell phones throughout the building but must have teacher permission to use the cell phone in a teacher's classroom. If a student wants to use a cell phone for medical, family, vocational, or other reasons, permission must be obtained from the building administration. Students use cell phones outside the building and during lunch.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Create a cell phone contract (See A.1 for a sample cell phone contract)
2. The cell phone contract must be signed and turned into the discipline office before students are allowed to bring a cell phone into the school building. Students will receive a cell phone sticker on their ID (after getting a contract on file) notifying staff that they can bring their cell phone to school

property. Without the cell phone contract on file, students are prohibited from bringing a cell phone on school property.

Imagine...if school administrators expect students to be young adults and entrust them to use cell phones in school responsibly.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Allow students to bring their personal laptops to class for the use of note-taking and class work.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT: Students should be able to use their own personal devices to improve their learning. Schools lack computers and other devices that students need to excel in their education. What the school lacks, students can make up for by bringing their own devices.

EVIDENCE:

- One member of the Education Council, Carlos Ballesteros, uses his personal laptop to take notes and complete assignments at his school, Phoenix Military Academy. Furthermore, he saves an enormous amount of paper by typing notes and other necessary information on his computer.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Create a Laptop Contract (See A.2 for a sample Laptop Contract)
2. Laptop contract must be signed and turned into the discipline office before students are allowed to enter the building with their laptop. Without a laptop contract on file, the student is prohibited from bringing a laptop on school property.

Imagine...a student who took notes on his/her laptop emailing those notes to another student who missed class.

Resources

The current budget crisis is preventing CPS from properly funding their schools. Almost all schools have faced dramatic cuts in teachers, extracurricular activities and resources, lowering the quality of education in Chicago. In order to keep schools at peak performance, we should look for new ways to save money, while still acquiring beneficial technology and resources.

The Dos and Don'ts of Resources

Do

1. Invest in cloud computing.
2. Look outside of CPS to seek more funding opportunities for technology.
3. Test new ways of using technology in the classroom with pilot schools to open up opportunities for the rest of CPS.
4. Expose CPS students to technology-based programs that are outside of CPS.

Don't

1. Limit students' learning by prohibiting the use of technology in the classroom.
2. Underestimate students' knowledge of technology and how to operate it.

Resources Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION 11: CPS should be equipping schools with iPod touches, Mac Books, Flip Cams, and Smart boards to enhance the classroom experience by building sponsorships with companies who can provide them.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Schools do not always have adequate technology. By providing schools with the right tools to use in the classroom, students will learn better. How can students compete with their classmates in the 21st century with 20th century tools? Today, all schools have books, no exceptions. However, technology is today's most critical learning tool, and it should be in all schools, no exception. The way students process information is different from a decade ago. High-tech gadgets are now widely being used, so schools should be funded with the money to purchase these essential tools.

EVIDENCE:

- Our survey shows that a 69% of respondents think they could learn better from using technology rather than just textbooks (Appendix A.4).
- According to Catalyst Chicago's "Technology and Books," 42 percent of students say their schools do not have enough computers for them to use.
- iPod Touches have transformed the learning experience for fourth-grade students at Central Elementary School in Escondido, California. These students are excited about learning and they have the test results to prove it.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. *There needs to be direct connections from CPS to companies who can provide schools with high-tech tools such as Apple.*
2. *Parents, teachers and students can all contribute by e-mailing, calling and/or writing letters to the companies.*
3. *In addition, principals and CAOs should talk to the companies interested in sponsoring CPS.*

Imagine...if all CPS high schools were equipped with state-of-the-art technology so that all students have the same learning experience, no matter where they go to school.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Principals should create an annual report detailing their school's distribution of technology funding so that their Chief Area Officer (CAO) will know the exact percentage going towards the necessary technology, while both enforcing and monitoring it.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT:

Most schools waste money on things that are not benefiting CPS students. Students often feel that textbooks are a waste at CPS Schools; we are using outdated information that may not be beneficial for students in the future. Having principals create an annual report detailing where the money goes can benefit students. Students should all be able to have access to technology that enhances learning whenever they need it.

EVIDENCE:

- We collected surveys and discovered that 56% of students are not using computers regularly in schools, but 99% know how to use computers at basic functions or better (Appendix A.4). Thus, we are not fully realizing the potential of students when it comes to technology.
- One student in our council informed us how her school is using its money frivolously, for example buying flat screen TVs.
- According to the Chicago Reporter, “schools basically do their own thing, and they do not report to us what they do.” With our new method of keeping school funding equal, CPS will be able to decide what is best for each school.
- “I cannot think about a single teacher that I know in Chicago, myself included, that feels that they have enough access to technology to do the things with their students they want to do. Including basic technology such as DVDs players and computers.” -Jill Bass, former teacher Sullivan High School and North Lawndale College Prep

Ideas for Implementation:

1. *Create an online form for principal to submit this report. This report should be streamlined to make it easier for principals.*
2. *There should be a penalty for not doing the report. For example, CPS could withhold a school’s funds if they do not complete this report.*
3. *CAOs will review the reports and routinely visit schools to check funding.*
4. *If the report shows that an adequate amount of money is not going towards technology that promotes student learning, an assessment should be done to improve the school budget by providing the necessary changes that will allow more funds to be spent on learning technology.*

Imagine...if every single dollar CPS spends was used purposefully to provide all students with excellent education and technology.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Since electricity is an issue with technology, CPS should reach out to private companies to sponsor pilot schools on energy efficient items/appliances or solar panels for schools to better accept the implementation of new technology.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT:

This recommendation is important because it will help to cut cost of technology during a time of financial trouble by:

- Sponsoring schools so they would not have to pay for the technology.
- Decreasing the energy bills, thus CPS will accumulate a good amount of money that can be spent elsewhere.

-
- Opening doors for other CPS schools being sponsored so that in the future the whole school system could be saving money through energy efficient items.

EVIDENCE:

- Motorola has given a grant to Curie High School for two solar panels to add to Curie's already existing energy efficient direction (the school currently has a solar panel).

Ideas for Implementation:

1. *CPS reaches out to companies who make "Energy Star" appliances. They could advertise their products by donating their products to the pilot schools.*
2. *CPS reaches out to very profitable companies that would like to help sponsor pilot schools in order to help education in CPS.*

Imagine...if every CPS school saves hundreds of thousands of dollars each year, and used that money to equip schools with more teachers and technology.

Communication

There are 21st century communication tools that are easily available and should be better utilized by CPS. Our recommendations will increase the interconnectedness of students and staff, both inside and outside the classroom.

The Dos and Don'ts of Communication

Do

1. Let students from all across the city interact through technology.
2. Give students online projects so they can collaborate at home remotely.
3. Connect different schools through technology.

Don't

1. Limit classroom instruction to lectures and Powerpoints.
2. Shut out students' ideas: use technology to hear them!

Communication Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 14: With the use of video teleconferencing, students in different schools can connect to each other on a one to one basis. This will benefit high schools for the use of clubs and to help school-to-school relationships.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Chicago is one of the most segregated cities in the world. Often students at different schools never get the chance to interact. Through video teleconferencing, students will have different ways to communicate and connect with each other from all over the world.

EVIDENCE:

- At Glenelg Country School in Maryland, one of the Lower School teachers worked with her Divisional Technology Coordinator to use Skype as a classroom-to-classroom video connection with students in Afghanistan.
- Skype is software that enables the world's conversations. Millions of individuals and businesses use Skype to make free video and voice calls, send instant messages and share files with other Skype users. Every day, people also use Skype to make low-cost calls to landlines and mobiles.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Teachers will have their students sign a contract at the beginning of the school year that allows the schools to videotape students.
2. Teachers will have to set up a video in their classroom that will be used for all of these purposes.

Imagine...if a Spanish class in Chicago has daily speaking sessions in English and Spanish with a classroom in Mexico City.

RECOMMENDATION 15: The text message alert option on Student Portal should be better advertised to students.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

Students often fall behind in their work and do not realize it until it is too late. Even though students can get their grade updates via text messages, most students do not know about it. CPS needs to do a campaign to make more students aware of this option to help increase students' ownership of their academic achievement.

EVIDENCE

- 86% of students bring their cell phones to school. This is beneficial because students already have the tools that will allow them to access Student Portal.
- "It is a good idea because if I am not doing well in a class, text message alerts will make me aware of it and give me the opportunity to put that much more effort to boost my grades up." -Jesus Martinez, student at Curie Metro High School

-
- “I am aware of Student Portal in my school, but I was not given a password until the middle of the second semester. If text message alerts were sent to my phone, I would know my missing assignments and bring my grades up.” -Shavonda Corley, student at Roberto Clemente High School

Ideas for Implementation:

1. *Teachers as well as other faculty members should let their students know either in class time or in a school wide assembly that Student Portal offers the option of allowing grade updates to be sent via text message.*
2. *CPS should do system-wide messaging about this student tool.*

Imagine...whether a student passes or fails a class could be solved with just one text message.

School Culture

Technology has the potential to improve school culture. Without a positive school culture, high school would not be a place where students want to go. This section gives teachers new ideas to improve their classrooms and change the environment of their school.

The Dos and Don'ts of School Culture

Do

1. Teach students to use technology wisely and respectfully so it can be an asset to the school environment.
2. Think outside the box about ways technology can improve the classroom.
3. Utilize students and teachers who have expertise in technology to improve the whole community.

Don't

1. Limit your students of a particular school to just stay within their own school network.
2. Exclude students that are digital learners and those who are not.
3. Let not having the tools stop you from being innovative.

School Culture Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 16: Teachers should be allowed to do video recording in order to develop strategies to improve behavior, teaching and learning and share the videos with students and parents.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

It goes without saying: you have to see it to believe it. When a teacher sees his/her teaching in action, s/he can better understand what to improve. When students see their misbehavior, they are more likely to own up to their mistakes. This is important because students can be more aware of their actions in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers can use these video recordings as documentations for student behavior and employ it in parent-teacher conferences. If everyone is committed to improving the classroom, it helps eliminate distractions and puts in more time for learning.

EVIDENCE

- Studies have found that more familiar student-teachers use this videotaping method to self-assess and have them assessed by teachers and professors to help themselves become more competent in class.
- Teach For America, an organization that places college graduates in high-need schools, uses video recordings as both a reflective tool and to illustrate master teachers in action.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. Provide all schools with a video media contract stating that the parent gives CPS permission for the students to be videotaped and photographed.
2. Teachers will videotape their classrooms for either student behavior or for their own personal gain.
3. Teachers can watch their videos and reflect upon why some lesson plans did not work.

Imagine...if teachers became more effective every year, regardless if they were teaching for one or twenty years.

RECOMMENDATION 17: There should be a video that CPS shows city-wide, as well as student-led programs for students in schools about the dangers of sexting and cyber-bullying and their consequences.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Sexting and cyber-bullying have become a big social and legal issue with high school students, and it is relevant for students to know the serious effects of sexting and cyber-bullying.

EVIDENCE:

- Sarah Migas, Internet Safety Specialist for the Illinois Attorney General, emphasized that we must focus on prevention when it comes to cyber-bullying and sexting. It is important to work with students and the school community to increase awareness.
- CPS is getting more serious about penalizing cyber-bullying, but it also needs to get at the root cause through education (Wojciechowksi 2010).

-
- The Rape and Abuse Crisis Center (RACC) of Fargo-Moorhead and Verizon announced a partnership to develop a domestic violence prevention education curriculum for North Dakota eight-graders.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. CPS should either create or find a video on the dangers of sexting and cyber-bullying (“When Privates Go Public” MTV.com).
2. Students could make a video that deals with the misuse and abuse of texting and online social networks.
3. This video will be shown city wide at orientations, “Freshman Connection” and at school assemblies.
4. Schools create a club of students to combat sexting/cyber bullying at their schools. The students do workshops for other students.

Imagine...if a youth-created video effectively engaged students and stopped sexting and cyber-bullying in CPS.

RECOMMENDATION 18: Give teachers recognition for their accomplishments and openness to using new and innovative approaches (i.e. technology) in their classrooms.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

It is important for teachers to feel appreciated and know that their efforts are not going unnoticed. Recognizing great teachers will encourage them to continue ensuring that their students get the most of their high school education. We know it takes extra time and energy to adopt new classroom practices, and we believe teachers should be honored for that!

EVIDENCE

- Many education leaders suggest that the most effective way to improve education in this country is to give teachers the status, support, and recognition they genuinely deserve. To help focus national attention on the outstanding contributions teachers make to us individually and collectively, the National PTA® has designated the first full week in May as Teacher Appreciation Week.
- Teachers have one of the toughest jobs. They are there for our children day in and day out, often under trying circumstances and with less than adequate resources and support. Their professionalism, dedication, and expertise form the cornerstone of our nation's public education system. Without the hard work of teachers, American scientists, artists, and political and business leaders would not be among the best in the world.

Ideas for Implementation:

1. *Teachers can give students the option to email them any positive feedback.*
2. *Teachers can create an online survey that students can fill out at the end of every quarter so that the teachers know what they personally need to improve on.*
3. *The school system can create a “Teacher Innovation Award.”*
4. *In individual schools, principals can regularly recognize teachers who are going above and beyond to bring students into the 21st century.*

Imagine...preventing our best teachers from quitting or burning out because they feel appreciated for implementing the most innovative strategies into their classroom.



Conclusion

Imagine if every Chicago Public School student left high school equipped with the 21st century skills necessary for college and the workplace. We believe that if these recommendations are implemented, CPS students will be more prepared for the 21st century, enjoy learning more and learn to use technology more responsibly. The Education Council hopes to improve the high school experience for all students and believes that with these recommendations at hand, things will change for the better. We hope that teachers, Chicago Public School administration, and students thoughtfully examine our recommendations and implement these essential ideas into their schools. This report was 100% researched and written by youth. We are young, but we are going to prove that YOUTH have a voice and can make a difference.

Appendix

A. CPS Sample Cell Phone Contract¹

Chicago Public School Cell Phone Contract and Registration

- Cell phone contract must be signed and turned into the discipline office before students are allowed to possess a cell phone in the building. Without a cell phone contract on file the student is prohibited from bringing a cell phone or electronic device into the building.
 - Student with a cell phones are required to have a sticker on their student I.D stating that student has permission to have a cell phone on school premises. The sticker will notify the staff that that student can bring that cell phone in class.
 - By signing this contract, parents and guardians agree not to contact students while they are at school building via cell phone during the prohibited times.
 - Cell phones are permitted during passing periods, lunch times and in class **only** when the teacher approves it as a learning device. If the teacher has not approved cell phones being out, they must be stowed away during class.
 - **On the 1st offense=** The cell phone is confiscated it will be kept in a safe and secure location until the end of the day.
 - **On the 2nd offense=** The contract will be terminated and that student cannot bring a cell phone on school premises.
 - **On the 3rd offense=** Group 2-12 in the student code of conduct will be in effect.
 - Refusal to comply will result in an automatic 2 day suspension.
 - The use of camera phones is strictly forbidden in private areas such as locker rooms, washrooms, dressing areas, classrooms, and offices at any **time. Such use may also be in violation of the criminal code.**
- Hours to pick up confiscated cell phones or electronic devices: Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (may vary for different schools) Only Parents or Guardians

Students Name	
Student I.D.	
Phone Manufacturer	Model#
Cell Phone #	Division#
Reason For Request	
Student Signature	
By signing this contract, parents and students have <i>read and agreed</i> to the CPS contract.	
Parent Signature	Date:

A.2. CPS Sample Laptop Contract

¹ Cell phone and laptop contracts are based on the cell phone contract from Von Steuben Metro Science High School



Chicago Public Schools

Laptop Contract and Registration

- Laptops contract must be signed and turned into the discipline office before students are allowed to possess a laptop in the building. Without a laptop contract on file the student is prohibited from bringing a personal laptop into the building.
- CPS schools are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged laptops when brought on schools premises.
- If the laptop became lost or stolen parents should call the school at XXX-XXX-XXXX and authority will be notified.
- Students may use their laptop during class time for the purpose of note taking, research, and/or projects. Because of these allowed usages, there is no reason for a student to disrupt the educational process in CPS schools due to the lack of paper and/or pen.
- Students using their personal laptop have to follow section 604.2 in the student code book.
- **On the 1st offense=** The student will not be able to bring his/her laptop on school premises.
- **On the 2nd offense=** The laptop would be confiscated and a parent/Guardian would have to pick it up.
- Refusal to comply will result in an **automatic 2 day suspension.**
- Hours to pick up confiscated laptops: Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (may vary for different schools) Only Parents or Guardians

Students Name			
Student I.D.			
Laptop Manufacturer		Model#	
Cell Phone #		Division#	
Reason For Request			
Student Signature			
By signing this contract, parents and students have read and agreed to the CPS laptop policy.			
Parent Signature		Date:	

A.3 Technology in the Classroom - CPS Student Survey

Welcome

We are the Education Council at Mikva Challenge. We are high school students not much different from you, and we would like for your voice to be heard. By completing this survey on your experiences with technology in your life and school, you will contribute to our final meeting with the CEO of CPS (Ron Huberman) by helping us create the best recommendations that would benefit the majority of CPS students. We assure that this survey is anonymous and that all personal information received will be confidential.

1. How would you rank your computer skills?

	I can only turn it on		I can use it for basic functions		I can operate a computer professionally
I can...					

2. What do you use YouTube for? Check all that apply.

Academic learning Entertainment Non-Academic learning Personal expression Other (Please specify)

3. How often do you use computers in school?

a. Daily b. 1-2 days per week c. 2-3 times per month d. Never

4. Using YouTube in the classroom would help me learn better.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

5. How often do you bring cell phones to school?

Everyday 1-2 Days a Week 3-4 Days a Week Never

6. Should students be allowed to bring cell phones to school? (Yes / No)

7. Could cell phones be used for educational purposes? (Yes/No/Maybe) If yes, how?

8. How often do you use your textbooks?

a. Daily b. 1-2 days per week c. 2-3 times per month d. Never

9. Technology (e.g. computers, cell phones, iPod Touch) can replace textbooks.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. I can learn just as well from computers (e.g. online classes, Google, educational games, etc.) as I can from teachers.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I...					

11. Have you ever received disciplinary action for being caught with a cell phone? (yes/no)

12. If so, what was your punishment? (Check all that apply)

Formal write-up Detention In School Suspension Out of School Suspension Parent-Conference
 Does not apply Other

Demographics

Sex: M__ F____

Grade: 9__ 10__ 11__ 12__

Race: Caucasian____ African-American__ Latino/Hispanic__ Asian/Pacific Islander____ Native-American____
Other_____

Types of School:

__Neighborhood __Charter __Magnet __Selective-enrollment __Military __Other

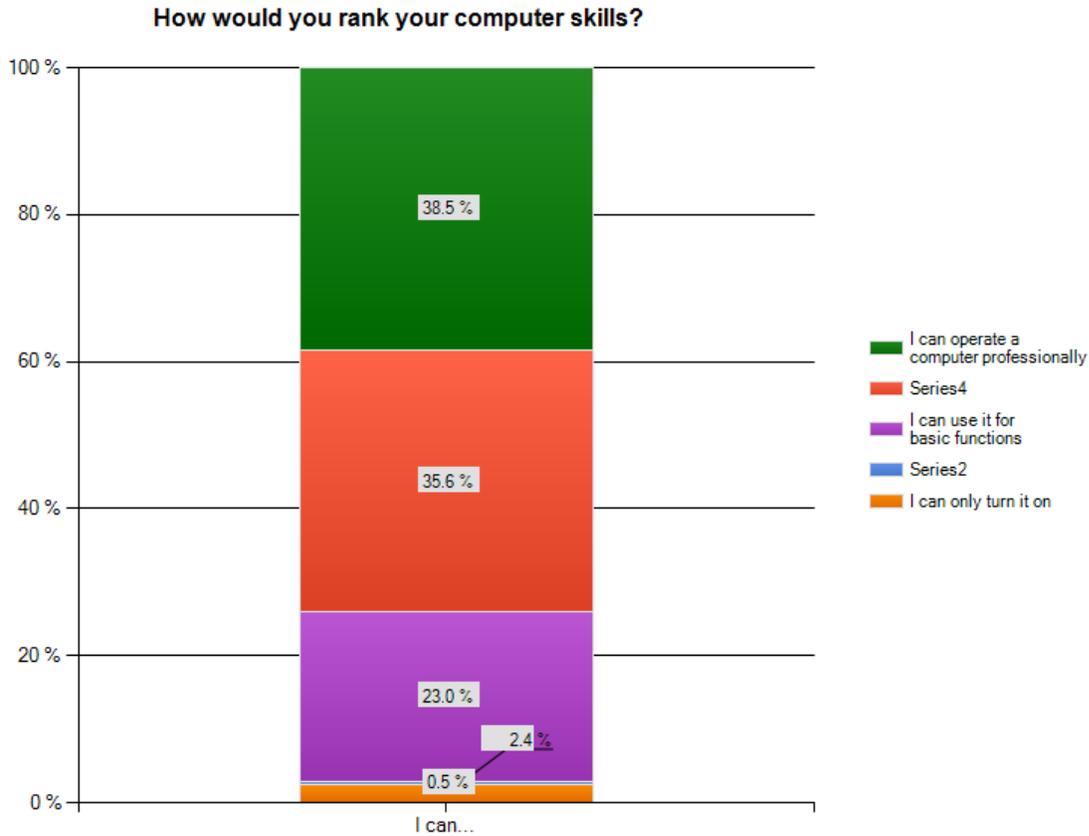
Name of School _____

A.4 Technology in the Classroom - CPS Student Survey Results and Analysis

Overall Number of Respondents: 377

Overall Schools Represented: 74

Question 1



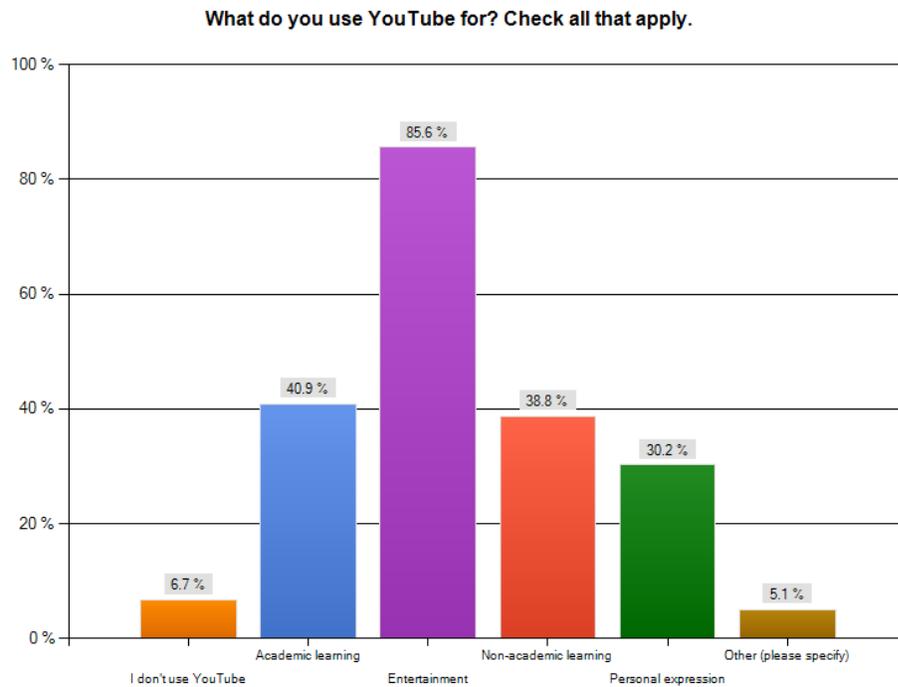
Facts

- Powerful fact: 99% of students can use a computer.

Inferences

- If 99% of students know basic functions or above, many students may know more than teachers.
- Students would embrace the technology given to them

Question 2



Facts

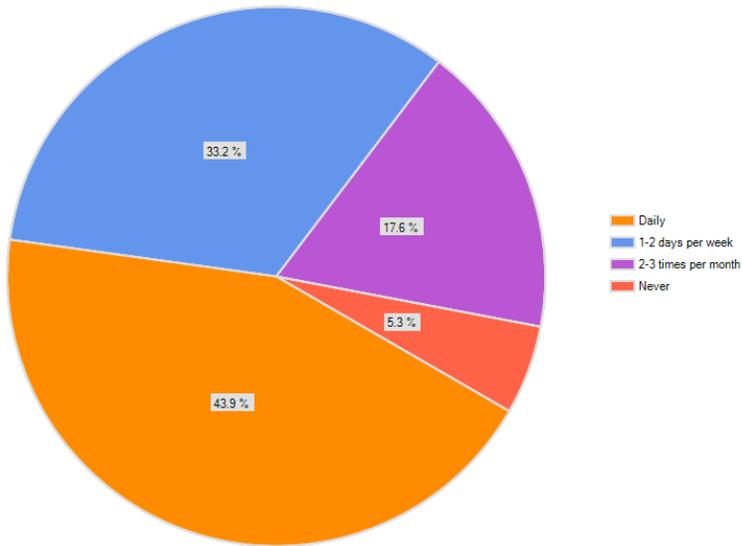
- 93% of students use YouTube.
- 40% of students use YouTube for academic learning.
- About 40% of students use YouTube for non-academic learning.

Inferences

- Students can embrace YouTube.
- Students on their own use YouTube for learning.

Question 3

How often do you use a computer in school?



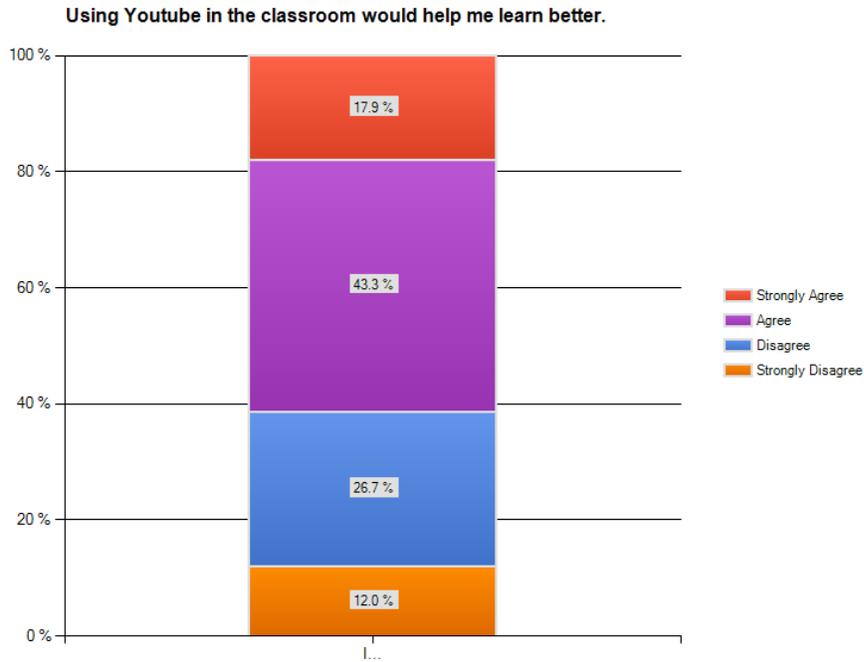
Facts

- 56% are not using a computer regularly in school, but 99% say they can use computers at basic functions or better.

Inferences

- We believe students should use a computer at least once a day.
- Students are being limited on their computer skills at school.

Questions 4



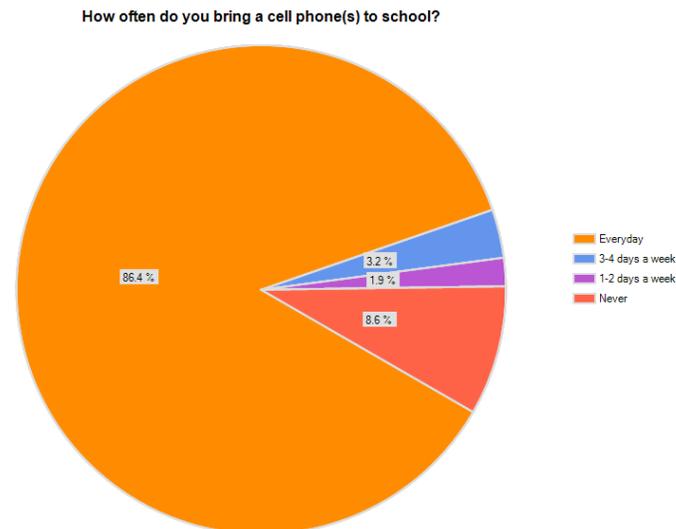
Facts

- 61% agree that they would learn better with YouTube.

Inferences

- Students do not know how YouTube can be used educationally because teachers and CPS reject it.

Question 5



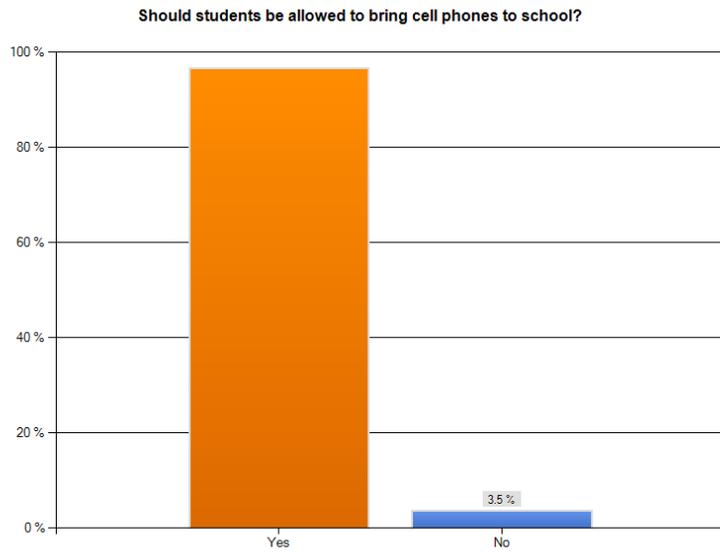
Facts

- 86.4% of students bring their cell phones every day.

Inferences

- Students are sneaking them in and not using them in a positive way.

Questions 6



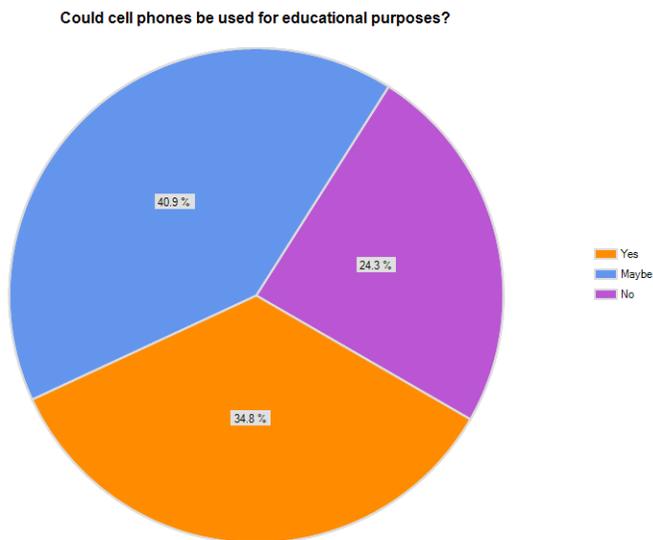
Facts

- 96% wants to bring cell phones to schools

Inferences

- Majority of students are low income, but still have cell phones. CPS can use that as a resource.
- Students have conflicts with CPS's "No Cell phones" policy.

Questions 7



Facts

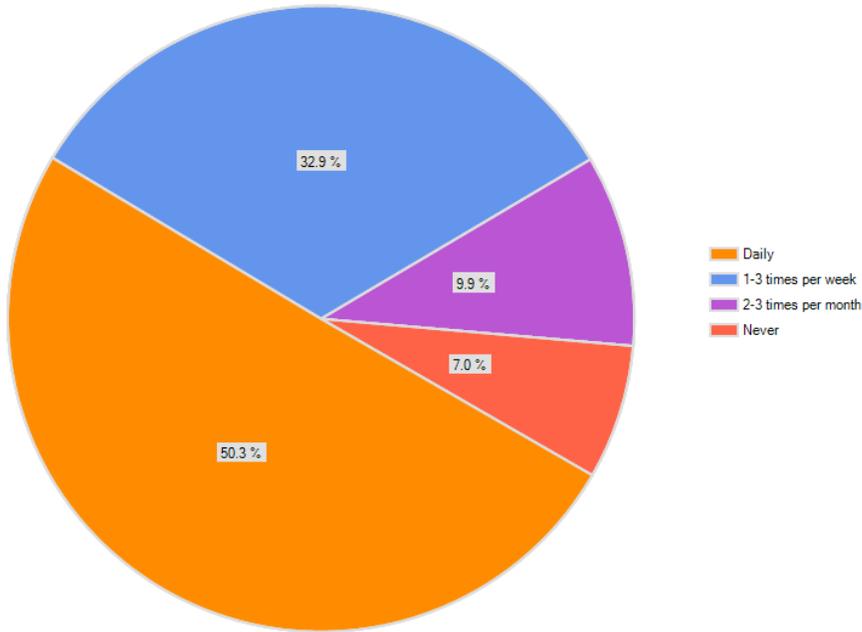
- The majority of students (75%) think that cell phones could be used for educational purposes.

Inferences

-
- It is a good way for preparing them to college.
 - Cell phones are useful for students.

Question 8

How often do you use your textbooks?



Facts

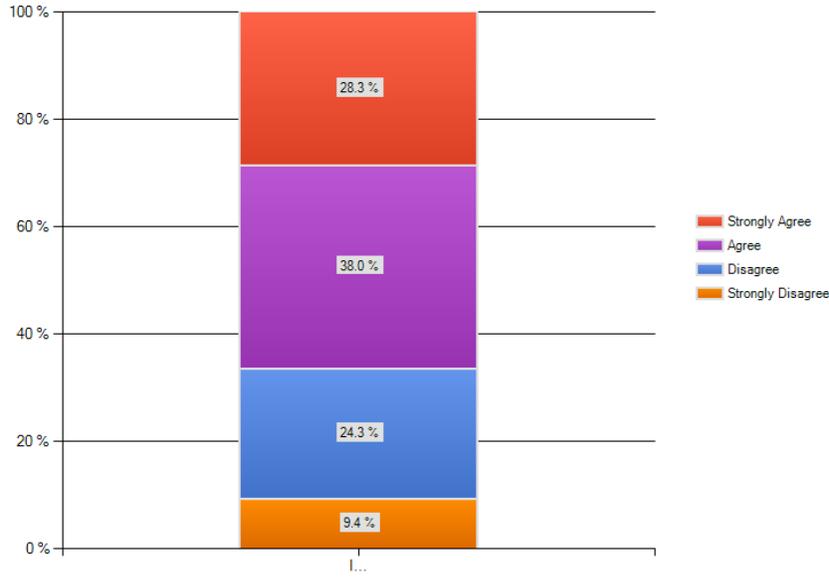
- 52% are using textbooks daily.

Inferences

- We do not know if students are using it in every class when they say “daily”.

Question 9

Technology (e.g. computers, cell phones, iPod Touch) can replace textbooks.



Facts

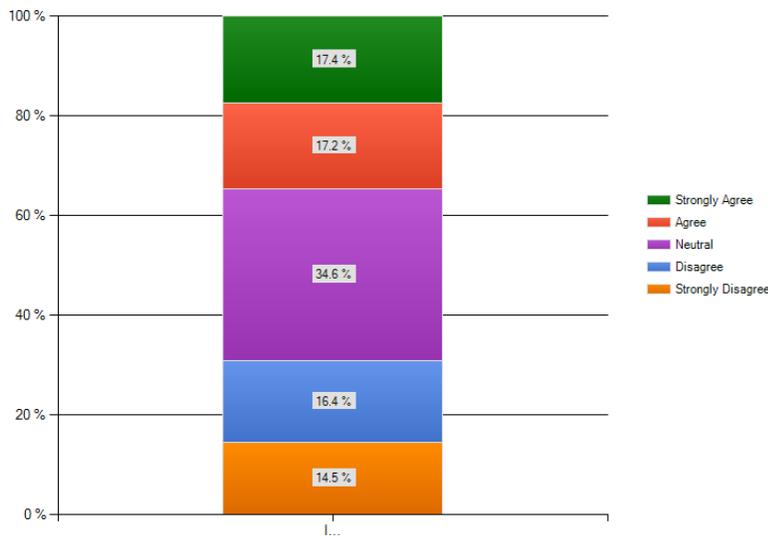
- 66% of CPS students agree that technology could replace textbooks.

Inferences

- Students will be more engaged if technology replaced textbooks.

Question 10

I can learn just as well from computers (e.g. online classes, Google, educational games, etc.) as I can from teachers.



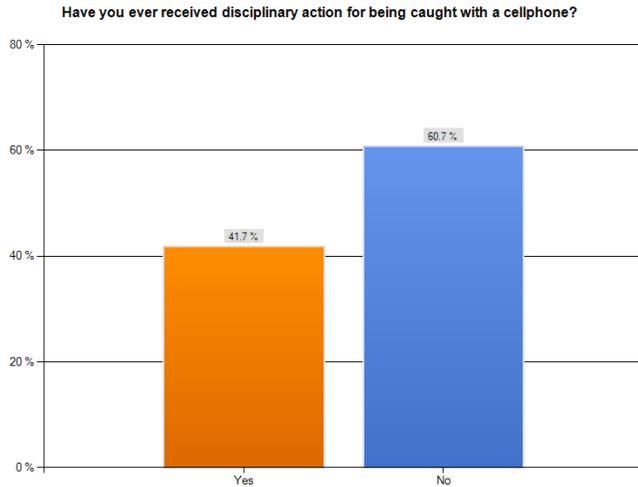
Facts

- Equal numbers of respondents agree, disagree or are neutral about whether they can learn just as well from computers as teachers.

Inferences

- We can infer that some students learn better than teachers while others learn better from computers.
- We think CPS should use both computers & teachers in the learning environment.

Question 11



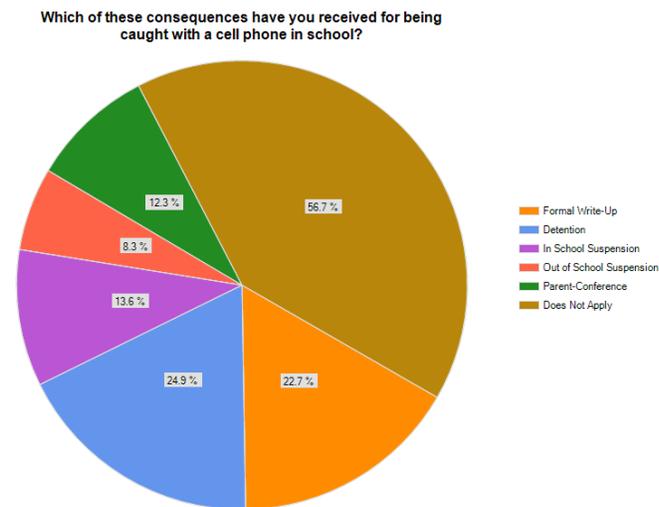
Facts

- 41.7% of CPS students are receiving discipline when being caught with a cell phone.
- 60.7% are not receiving disciplinary actions for being caught with cell phones

Inferences

- CPS schools are not following the cell phone policy

Question 12



Facts

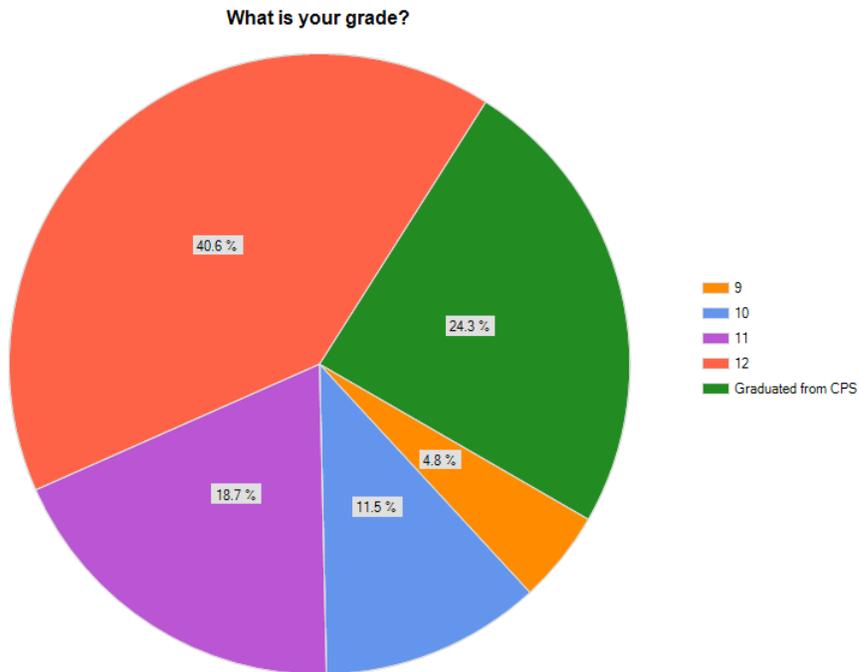
- 21% of students are missing class due to cell phones in class.

Inferences

- Cell phones are hurting student and teacher relationships.

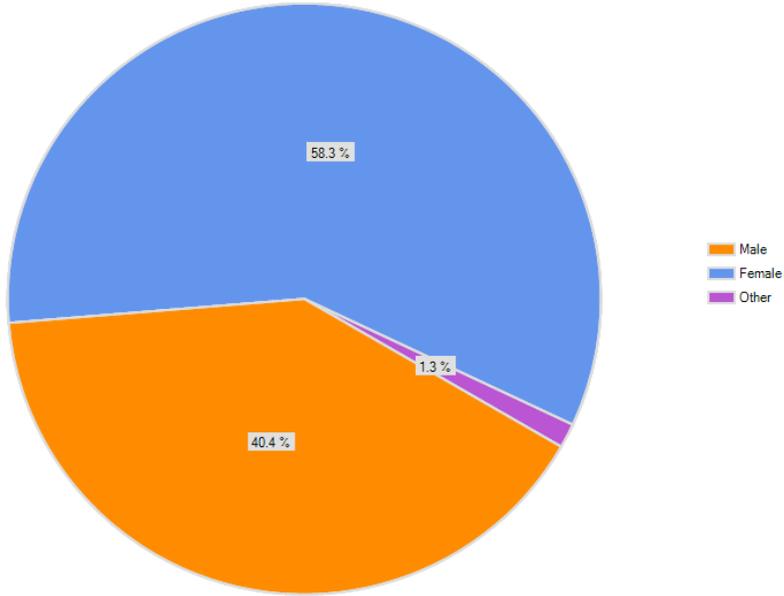
Demographic Data

- While our sample size is small, our demographic data closely matches that of CPS as a whole giving us confidence that our results can be roughly generalized to describe CPS students as a whole.

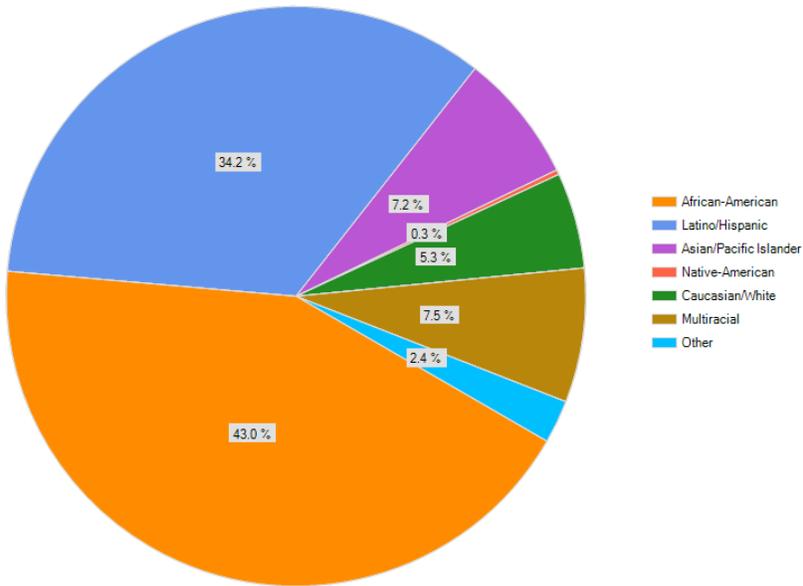


*Students were answering over the summer, so we are not sure if they were answering for the grade they were going into or the grade they just left. From the data, we infer they were answering for the grade they are going into.

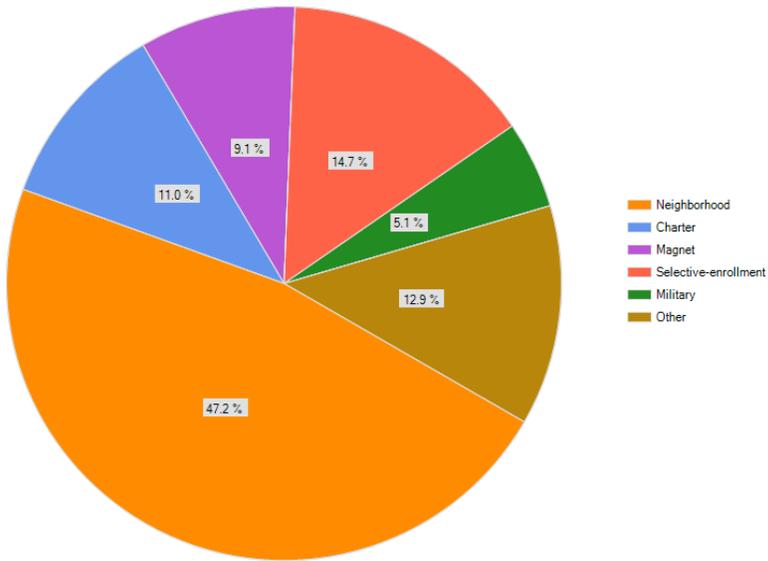
What is your sex?



What is your race/ethnicity?



What type of school do you go to?



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List of Guest Speakers/Site Visits

Mr. Dadezio	Technology Coordinator, Urban Prep Academy Charter High School
Nikhil Angelo	Former Teacher, Lopez High School (Brownsville, Texas)
Brother Mike	YouMedia Center - Harold Washington Library
Dr. Nicole Pinkard	Digital Youth Network
Jeanne Walker	Teacher, Orr High School
Jelani McEwen	Former Teacher, Urban Prep Academy Charter High School
Juanita Thurman	Teacher, Lincoln Park High School
Mr. Staley	Teacher, VOISE Academy
Mr. Yarch	Principal, VOISE Academy
Ms. Johnson	Teacher, VOISE Academy
Robert Runcie	Chief Administrative Officer, Chicago Public Schools
Sara Migas	Internet Safety Specialist, Illinois Attorney General's Office
Sarah Karp	Reporter, Catalyst Chicago
Tamara Hagan	Former Teacher, Al Raby School For Community and Environment

Acknowledgements

The Education Council would like to thank the expert panelists, organizations (especially VOISE Academy and YouMedia), students and CPS teachers that shared with us throughout the summer. Their knowledge helped guide our process for this summer and informed our final decisions in this report. Additionally, we would like to thank the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Albert J. Pick Fund and the Woods Fund of Chicago for providing the funds to make this program possible.

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