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Clerk Valencia partners with CPS for NextGen City Council

The youth civic engagement program gives students firsthand experience in local government

CHICAGO- Clerk Anna Valencia and Chicago Public Schools Social Science Department continued their eight-year partnership this school year, bringing more than 50 high school students to City Hall for NextGen City Council, a mock City Council meeting, on Thursday.

“This partnership is a testament to what can be accomplished when two institutions come together to uplift our young people,” Valencia said. “By bringing together government experience and educator expertise, we’re able to provide a learning experience that expands on work being done in the classroom and create a lasting impact on our students. They’re also learning tools to hold their government accountable, which helps create trust between community and their elected officials.”

This year’s NextGen program began in February with Clerk Valencia visiting each classroom for a civics lesson, followed by simulations at City Hall that brought two classrooms from different high schools together for exercises around building policy. The policy ideas from those simulations were expanded on at NextGen City Council and voted on to choose an idea that Clerk Valencia will later bring before the Chicago City Council.

“District students were given an opportunity to become key collaborators in curating policies that will have an effect on them and their peers for generations to come,” said CPS CEO Pedro Martinez. “Our students seized this unique opportunity, and are making the most of it.”

To tie in the work students are doing in the classroom, teachers used inquiry-based, standards-aligned curriculum to engage students in deeper learning about the issues and policy solutions in between the program’s key events.

Since 2018, NextGen has served more than 500 students. This year’s participating schools include Amundsen High School, Crane Medical Preparatory High School, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, Lake View High School, Michele Clark High School and Greater Lawndale High School for Social Justice.

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About The Office of the City Clerk

Led by Clerk Anna Valencia, the Office of the City Clerk is responsible for serving as the secretary of the City Council, administrator of the City's Wheel Tax, also known as a City Sticker, and administrator of Chicago's municipal ID, CityKey. The Office also partners with CPS on the NextGen youth civic engagement program, works with community partners on fines and fees reform and is a part of efforts to improve the lives of women and girls. Learn more about OCC at www.chicityclerk.com and connect with OCC on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Chicago Public Schools

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is dedicated to providing a high-quality education to all students, beginning with the District's free full-day preschool programming for four-year-old scholars and continuing through neighborhood, magnet and selective-enrollment elementary schools that provide a rigorous K-8 education with schools that specialize in the fine arts, world language and culture, dual language, STEM, International Baccalaureate (IB), classical programs, and more. The rising District-wide freshmen-on-track and high school graduation rates reflect the hard work of the CPS community, including families, staff, and students across 635 schools. CPS celebrates the diversity of its more than 325,000 students who cite 182 home languages. Learn more about CPS at www.cps.edu and connect with CPS on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).