SESSION 1—12:00 – 1:15 PM


"ODE: Operation Defend Education" is a project led by the Revolutionary Poets Brigade of Chicago, dedicated to inspiring, gathering, and promoting creative expressions about the education system from students directly impacted by the education funding crisis. In this session we will simulate an ODE writing workshop with educators, who will then be able to use the same lesson (or a variation) with students, or bring in an ODE teaching artist (free of charge). 

Room: A 209.

2. Restorative Justice in Schools: Abolishing the Schools to Prison Pipeline. (Jason Ware).

Restorative Justice, a philosophy and practice of addressing harm, violence, and trauma in communities has been used as an alternative to the current criminal justice system. As we imagine a world that is more holistic, equitable, sustainable, and without prisons, we must invest in Restorative approaches to violence and harm. This session will explore Restorative Justice in schools as an approach to reduce the school to prison pipeline as we build a world without relying on policing systems. Room: Classroom 200.

3. Deschooling Ourselves and Liberating Education. (Uplift Community High School Students and Teachers).

We, the Uplift High School students, have been working on deschooling ourselves and liberating education while better understanding oppression and resistance in the real world. You will get to see how this happened in Biology, World Studies, and in our Poetry Slam club. We will present exciting results and actions such as writing powerful papers on what we feel needs to be changed around Uplift, creating powerful art on deschooling ourselves, and showing how we analyzed police profiling and brutality using scientific analysis - which we presented to the Chicago Police Board. These are a few examples of social justice education we want to present. Room: A 200.


The military model is conflict resolution by violence. Over $3T has been spent on war since 2001 and over $600M of our tax dollars are spent each year convincing us that the military model is good for youth and good for this country. CPS has over 10,000 students receiving military training. A team of veterans and a CPS teacher will provide information about the realities and social/economic costs of militarization, and provide resources to bring about systemic change. Room: Classroom 219.

5. WE ARE STILL HERE: Building a People of Color-Led Ethnic Studies Movement in Chicago (Ethnic Studies Educators of Color - Chicago)
Despite centuries of miseducation of Peoples of Color in U.S. public schools, WE ARE STILL HERE. Ethnic studies has been a movement by and for communities of Color to resist our dehumanization and reclaim education as a tool for liberation and self-determination. In this workshop, a collective of educators and organizers of Color will share what we are doing to invigorate an ethnic studies movement in Chicago that is trauma-informed and centers an indigenous, queer, feminist praxis. Room: A 208.

NOTE: This workshop is designed to be a healing and building space for people of Color.

6. Creating a Sustainable Community School District: From the Dyett Hunger Strike to the CTU Contract Victory (Johnaé Strong, Grassroots Education Movement, Chicago; Monique Redeaux, TSJ/CTU; Jitu Brown, Dyett Hunger Striker/Journey for Justice Alliance)

The recent Chicago Teachers Union contract won substantial funding for 20-55 “sustainable community schools” which are deeply rooted in community and include real supportive services, restorative justice approaches, teaching (not testing), and critical/relevant curriculum. The Bronzeville community struggle and hunger strike for Dyett HS proposed a vision of such a school. This workshop will provide an update on Dyett, and inform participants and solicit input about the struggle for a district of sustainable community schools. Room: B 200.

7. Anti-Racist Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education. (Sarah E. Dennis, Ph.D., Loyola University).

Pervasive inaccurate beliefs exist that young children (0-8 years old) are too young to understand characteristics of the dominant culture across race, ethnicity, gender, class, ableism, religion, etc. “In a social world that is so riddled with discrimination and oppression, it is imperative that young children gain proficiency with key concepts early on” (Van Ausdale & Feagin). This workshop will focus on age-appropriate ways to help young children process emotions and resist society’s biases. Room: Classroom 201.

SESSION—2:00—3:15

8. '63 CPS Boycott: The Legacy of Racial Inequalities in Chicago Public Schools (Rachel Dickson, Kartemquin Films).

Screening of short Kartemquin Films’ work-in-progress documentary, '63 Boycott, which tells the story of the largest northern, anti-segregation demonstration at the time, while exploring the legacy of the deep roots of racial segregation, especially in public education. Discussion afterwards about using the film in the classroom. Room: Classroom 201.


The challenges marginalized students, specifically Black students, face in teacher education programs often go missing in education discourse. This issue exposes the commitment of the education field to accommodating white women educators at the expense of Black teachers
under the guise of social justice praxis, and to engage participants in a dialogue that situates local resistance struggles by faculty and students in the UIC College of Education in a larger context.  

**Room:** B 200.

10.  The Struggle for Social Justice Adult High Schools in Chicago: Politics and Possibilities (Byron Sigcho, Rita Sacay, Megan Wells, Janise Hurtig, UIC Center for Literacy, Community Writing Project, Centro Autónomo Popular Education Adult High School, Dorothy Stang Adult High School)

This bilingual workshop engages participants in reimagining adult high schools as spaces for social justice education. Discussion will review the neoliberal, political-economic context delimiting adult high school education and credentialing, and explore perspectives and pedagogies of current Chicago adult high school projects. Through critical dialogue around challenges and possibilities for adult secondary education, this workshop initiates a coalition to develop and advocate for adult high schools based in critical pedagogy and social justice education.  

**Room:** A 209.

11.  “Coins, Cops, & Communities.” A toolkit for youth workers & educators (Melisa Stephen, Alexandra Marie, Nicole Trinidad, Debbie Southorn, American Friends Service Committee, Chicago)

This youth-produced toolkit contains activities & supplemental materials to facilitate education around the city’s spending on policing, conversations about what communities really need to be safe, and generate action steps to support ongoing work to defund policing and fund community needs in Chicago. In our workshop, we will demonstrate the activities, offer time for Q&A with the youth who created it, and brainstorm how educators can use this in their own classrooms and youth centers.  

**Room:** Classroom 200.


White people, we need to step up our action against white supremacy strategically and immediately. This interactive workshop is a space for white people committed to actively fighting white supremacy. The purpose is to strengthen the capacity of white teachers and youth workers to unlearn and interrupt racism in our daily lives, within our institutions, and within our communities.  

**Room:** Classroom 219.

13.  The Attacks on Special Education: Know Your Rights and Fight! (Sarah Chambers, Natasha Carlsen, Tammie Vinson, Katie Osgood, Chicago Teachers Union).

CPS and the corporate education reform movement is waging an attack on special education in public schools. Since Federal Law protects special education, CPS created workarounds to defund and dismantle expensive, but necessary, special education services. They changed funding formulas to pit general education against special education; slashed special education budgets, staff, and services; and prevented services from being allocated. We will overview current attacks, teach specific “Know Your Rights” information, and discuss possible ways to fight back.  

**Room:** A 200.
14. Build Your Dream School! (Georgette Boateng & Hira Siddiqui, Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago [KINETIC youth program])

What would it look like if our schools were equipping us to end oppressing? What if we thought about our schools as community centers -- how would that help us to reimagine the space and the role that schools play in our lives and the lives of our families and communities? In this creative and interactive workshop, participants will think beyond our current system of schooling to imagine opportunities for transformative change in our classrooms and our campaigns around education. Room: A 208.


Paul Siegel, longtime activist and community historian, will lead a tour of key sites and events in the decades-long fight against gentrification and displacement in Uptown. Room: C 208 and outside in the Uptown Neighborhood.


Mexican federal government has committed state violence against teachers and civilians resisting federal education reforms, in Noxchitlan, Oaxaca 9 people were killed. Oaxaca has a history of resistance and is where La CNTE formed and is strongest. It is also a place of creativity and the birth of secondary schools that embrace and build on indigenous culture & knowledge. As we prepare for a president who has verbally declared war on immigrants, Mexicans, Muslims, African Americans and other non-whites, we can learn from the resistance of sister communities continuously under attack. Room: C 200.