

Since its launch in 2010, the Hive Chicago Learning Network has nurtured a thriving community of organizations and educators committed to connected learning experiences for teens. Inspired by a passionate professional learning community, Hive Chicago along with other Learning Networks in New York, Pittsburgh, Toronto, and elsewhere is defining innovation in unique Hive-like way. While exemplary youth programming is an important part of our plan, “Hiveyness” describes more than a particular brand of youth programs. It has come to describe the way we **Hives are pushing forward the principles and practices of innovation in learning**, both in the form of experiences for youth and through collaborative problem-solving among adults.

Hive Chicago’s mission is to transform the learning landscape by empowering youth and educators to enact connected learning. We share a vision for Chicago as a connected community where all learning counts. Our mission, vision, and goals have emerged from our members through a reflective process that began in the spring of 2013. Through a series of meetups, Hive members were asked to envision the kind of learning we wish to provide today’s kindergartener when she reaches high school as a teen. Our three-month visioning sessions were occurring against the backdrop of widespread Chicago public school closings that year. These goals are a response to the needs of those we wish to serve. And recognizing the important role of passion in our work, these goals reflect not only professional convictions but personal ones as well.

Since spring 2013 the Network has grown in membership, participation, staffing, and in its grant-making capacity. Our 2014 strategic plan is a reflection of that growth and it pushes us to address challenges we must overcome to achieve our vision of the city as a classroom. Our goals are to:

- Enable **equitable access** to Hive Chicago opportunities by extending the network’s reach beyond the youth we currently serve
- Cultivate and illuminate network connections to create **learning pathways**
- Spark and sustain **innovation in learning**
- **Establish the value of Hive** beyond the Network in support of our goals

Throughout our plan are some cross-cutting themes that reflect the values of the Network. We believe in:

- **Empowering youth** to explore, create, and share connected learning experiences. As we shift traditional roles between youth and adult learners, we recognize the importance of youth voice as a legitimate source innovation, as well as a means or deepening youth engagement.
- **Developing connectors** by which young people link one aspect of their life of learning to another. Even as we embrace the power of digital media for learning, social connection remains a core value. For example, when helping young people discover the next step along their citywide learning pathway, we don't merely send them to a website of opportunities; we connect them to a person--an adult mentor or a knowledgeable peer--who can help ensure that learning never stops.
- **The ability of the Network to generate solutions** to its own complex problems is driven by a commitment to
 - Collaborate
 - Take risks
 - Share
 - Learn
- **Maintaining relevance of the Hive** within and beyond the Network. This was implicit in the first three goals generated by our members. The added fourth goal makes this explicit.

As we move forward with these Network goals we recognize another foundational element of our work: connected learning has inspired a shared vision for what's possible when you give youth a context where all learning counts. Empowered with this shared vision, the Hive is modeling a fundamental shift in the principles and practices of innovation in learning, which empowers us to confront a shared set of challenges facing urban teens in Chicago and beyond.

Outline and notes below. Ignore.

- Empower the Network through solution-oriented approaches to achieving its goals of more equitable access for youth, cultivation of learning pathways, and sustained innovation in learning
- Illuminate Hive opportunities through the strategic collection, analysis, and presentation of data
- Extend collaboration among the adults and youth enacting connected learning
- Amplify and celebrate Hive member programs and Network contributions
- Demonstrate the value of Hive principles, practices, and tools among an ever widening community

Strategic Plan Narrative - Draft

Outline

- I. Brief reflection on the Hive to-date
- II. How the plan originated
 - A. From Hive membership
 - B. Resonant with their own personal and professional convictions and with the missions of our member organizations
 - C. Developed in the context of
 1. The proposal to renew Hive funding through a grant from MacArthur to the Mozilla Foundation
 2. Against the backdrop of school closings
- III. Where the plan is reaching
 - A. The planning process was seeded with a question about the experiences of Chicago's future youth
- IV. Cross-cutting convictions and opportunities--Embedded in these strategies are some cross-cutting themes
 - A. Empowering youth to experience and shape connected learning
 1. Empowering youth--peer-to-peer instructors and sources of youth
 - B. Developing connectors, the mechanism by which young people link one aspect of their life of learning to another
 1. Social connection--When helping young people discover the next step along a learning pathway, we don't simply direct them to a website of opportunities; we connect them to a knowledgeable person (a caring adult or other youth) who can help them find opportunities to ensure that learning doesn't stop.
 - C. A belief in the ability of the Network to identify and solve its own complex problems, rooted in what we do - Explore, Create, Share
 1. Collaborate
 2. Take risks
 3. Share
 4. Learn
 - D. A commitment to maintaining relevance within and beyond the Network
 1. This was implicit in the three goals generated by our members. The fourth goal makes this explicit
 - 2.

At the heart of the Hive's approach is a commitment to:

- Collaboration - the power of unlikely partnerships
- Innovation - reflective risk-taking that leads toward novel solutions to old problems

- Shared Goals - agreement about the change we wish to create
- Shared Passion - the collective capacity of committed professionals to confront complex challenges together
- Commitment to Youth - the importance of youth voice and participation as a valuable source of innovation
- Incubation of Powerful Ideas - providing support for glimmers of creativity that have the potential to grow into catalysts of sustained change

Hiviness is **pushing the principles and practices of innovation in learning**, both in form of connected learning experiences for youth and in the refinement of collaborative problem-solving among passionate adults.

Pushing the principles and practices of innovation in learning in a Hive-like way by:

- Amplifying youth engagement through connected learning experiences
- Empowering a network of organizations and educators to identify and solve even complex problems through shared passion, vision, and resources

Shamelessly embrace the fact that a major source of activity in the Hive is the connected learning happening among adults.

Set quarterly benchmarks that let us know if we're on track and overall bottom line statements (e.g. we must enable the Network to know itself).