



**K'é binahji' | Bayanihan | Convivencia | Sangham sahakaram |
In Relation: CISD-CU Boulder Summer Research Institute**

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Executive Summary



This report presents the results of a formative, process evaluation of Summer Research Institute (SRI) in the Cuba Independent School District (CISD). The SRI is a 4 ½ - week long program designed to encourage student voice by engaging high school students in research that addresses questions of equity and social justice in the CISD community. The SRI is offered through a partnership between CISD and the University of Colorado Boulder Research Hub for Youth Organizing (CU Boulder). It was first offered in 2021 and then again in 2022. The SRI is part of a broader, CISD transformation initiative intended to increase educational equity by addressing racial/cultural tensions and supporting students who have historically been marginalized within the school system. It builds on CU Boulder experience with summer bridge and civic education programs to center the voices and experiences of CISD's primarily Native American and Latine^a student population.

The 2022 SRI ran from July 6th to August 5th, 2022. Students attended the program each week day, from 9 am to 2 pm. Breakfast and lunch were provided. SRI activities typically took place on the CISD campus, in indoor or outdoor classrooms and other spaces in or around the high school or middle school. On some days, activities took place in other outdoor spaces in the Cuba area or community/educational spaces in Santa Fe or Albuquerque. During 2022, the SRI shifted online for four days because of COVID-19 concerns or weather conditions.

The SRI involves a rich range of activities designed to support distinct goals and outcomes.

- Co-design of the SRI fostered positive relationships between CISD and CU Boulder teachers and ensured that the SRI reflected the knowledge and skills of both groups.
- Field trips and guest speakers served to incorporate community knowledge in the SRI curriculum and provide students with information about higher education opportunities.
- Culturally sustaining teaching/learning strategies supported student voice and agency by centering students' everyday practices in learning about food and food systems.
- Research and communication activities supported students' development of skills that enable them to share their knowledge and highlight their community's strengths and needs.
- Professional development activities helped students build project management and completion skills while supporting social and emotional learning relevant to the workplace and higher education.

During the 2021 SRI, students engaged in interviews, photovoice, and survey methods. Through data collection and analysis, students leveraged their community knowledge and connections, to develop educational

^a The language used to identify ethnic identity can be place-specific and can shift over time. Many members of the Cuba community identify as Hispanic. For the purpose of this report, we mirror the move in academia towards more inclusive language and use the term Latine.

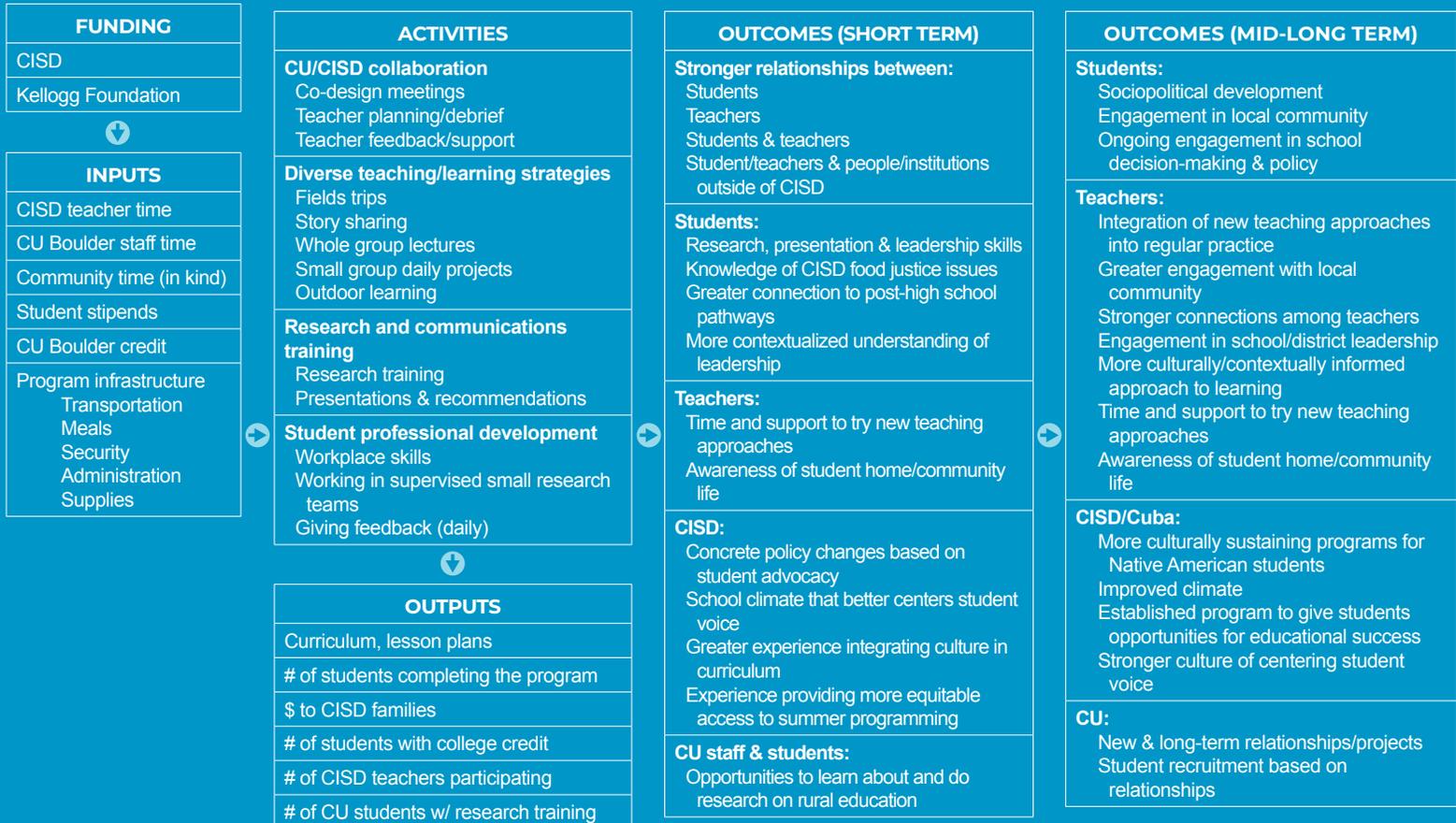
recommendations for CISD. During 2022, the SRI adopted a focus on food justice and integrated new research practices, while maintaining the focus on student voice, civic engagement, and using research to address questions of equity and social justice.

In keeping with CISD system transformation goals of achieving greater educational equity, the intent of SRI was to provide *all* CISD high school students with the opportunity to participate in a paid research internship through the SRI. Significant steps were taken between 2021 and 2022 to increase program participation. These measures included the expansion of transportation offerings to ensure every student could fully participate in both regular days and field trips, the provision of breakfast, and a diversified approach to student recruitment. As a result, overall enrollment increased from 30 students in 2021 to 78 in 2022. Twenty of the 30 students enrolled in 2021 returned in 2022 and an additional 54 joined for the first time. Student participation remained high throughout the summer; attendance averaged 65-70 students per day. Native American students represented 70% of SRI Participants in 2021 and 75% in 2022. Thus the growth in program size was primarily driven by the increased participation of Native American students. This is particularly noteworthy because Native American students at CISD had an alternative summer option - an Indigenous Education Program that provided paid internships to engage in growing and farming practices.

In interviews and focus group sessions, teachers, students, and other CISD community members highlighted a complex range of positive, short term SRI outcomes. Both students and teachers developed stronger relationships and connections as a result of SRI. Both teachers and students developed strong relationships with CU Boulder staff and with community members and institutions in the region. Students got to know each other and their teachers in new ways. They gained concrete research and presentation skills, and increased knowledge of food justice issues within the CISD community and leadership skills. The SRI also provided opportunities for students to develop more contextualized understandings of leadership and increased comfort exercising leadership in local settings.

Teachers gained greater awareness of their students' home and community lives and stronger connections to each other. They also had time and support to try out new approaches to teaching. At the institutional level, the SRI afforded CISD new experience with programming that centered student voice. CISD implemented concrete policy changes based on the recommendations that students made at the end of the 2021 institute. Through the SRI, CISD staff also gained experience in integrating culture in the curriculum and in providing more equitable access to summer programming. For CU Boulder, SRI provided opportunities to learn about and do research on rural education. The figure below depicts the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the SRI.

The Logic of the SRI



Participants in interviews and focus groups conducted for this evaluation carefully considered how to maintain and build on program strengths, ensure ongoing alignment with CISD's system-wide efforts to ensure educational equity, and achieve long-term sustainability for the SRI. Their reflections focused on six areas: Teacher retention and recruitment, student enrollment and social dynamics, curriculum content, student

presentations and public speaking, and community engagement.

Across each of these areas, they identified innovations that could be realized within the scope of existing SRI resources as well as more complex and/or resource intensive strategies that CISD may consider implementing in ways that promote the sustainability of and equitable access to the SRI. Their suggestions are summarized in the table below.

Considerations for the Design and Implementation of SRI 2023

Clear and achievable priorities

Prioritize clear, universal communication around recruitment in order to recruit as many staff as can be supported by the SRI budget.

Clarify behavioral expectations for students in advance (or at the start) of the SRI, in order to set a strong foundation for active engagement throughout the program.

Renew the focus on the morning story telling activity, and on student engagement in this activity, to facilitate relationship building.

Scaffold the final presentations by giving students practice presenting throughout the SRI.

Advertise and plan the final presentations in order to increase community engagement.

Ensure that the SRI focuses on issues that have direct connections to/benefits for students; educational and career pathways were highlighted as one possibility.

Take a 2-stage approach to ordering supplies for the SRI, in order to ensure supplies meet the needs and interests that emerge during the program.

Measures to prioritize if resources permit

Shift the timing of SRI in order to eliminate overlap with other programs and ensure all staff have a chance to rest, and time to plan, before the start of the new year.

Increase the number of teachers, teachers' aids, or program assistants to help reduce/manage class size and more efficiently handle logistics.

Incorporate weekly time for the CISD and CU Boulder staff to collaborate around implementation of curriculum.

Integrate greater connections to and expanded roles for community members, particularly members of the neighboring Diné communities.

Incorporate additional fields trips, particularly those that highlight Native American cultures and facilitate connections to educational institutions and career-pathways.

Possibilities to consider in tandem with goals of achieving educational equity

Establish a clear enrollment cut off date.

Establish enrollment criteria/guidelines.

Take a more intentional approach to creating small groups.



Chapter 1

Why offer the SRI in Cuba, New Mexico?



The goals and impact of the CISD-CU Boulder SRI must be understood against the backdrop of the northwestern region of New Mexico served by CISD, the broader context of educational equity in New Mexico, and the still broader context of a world partially shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this chapter, we describe the context for the SRI: the primarily Latine^b and Native American rural region served by CISD, the legal requirement for New Mexico school districts to undertake broad reforms, and the concerted efforts of CISD to ensure greater educational equity for its students during a period in which COVID-19 reshaped both the expectations and the possibilities for schools to play a meaningful role in students' lives.

Cuba, New Mexico, and the surrounding region

Cuba Independent School District (CISD) is a rural school district in the northwest region of New Mexico. It is located in Sandoval County, at the base of the west-facing end of the Nacimiento Mountain Range, along the Continental Divide. Na'azísí Bito' (Gophers'Water)/ Cuba is on the traditional

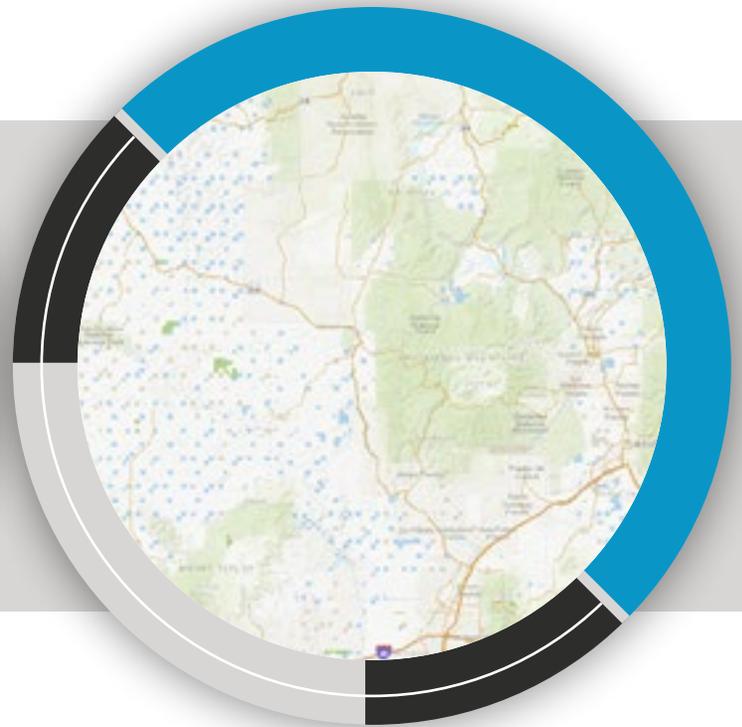
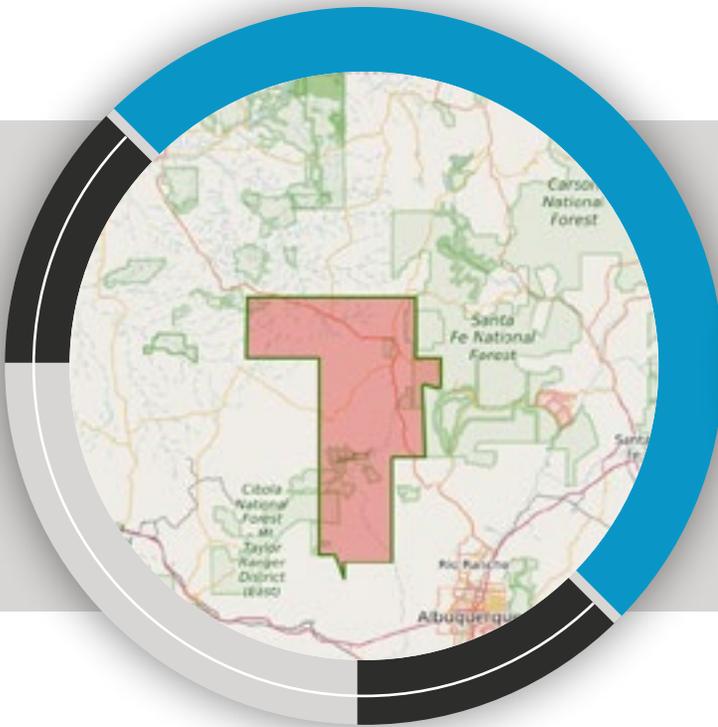
lands of the Apache, Diné, and Pueblo peoples.¹ The town of Cuba started as a Spanish settlement on the banks of the Rio Puerco, in 1736, and was first named Nacimiento. Nacimiento was abandoned in the following decades and then resettled in the 1870's. In 1887, four decades after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Nacimiento was renamed Cuba after a United States post office was established there.²

The region has a high desert climate with heavily forested areas and most of the surrounding area is managed by the US Forest Service, the US Bureau of Land Management, the Diné² Nation, or the State of New Mexico. The land holds many high desert flora and fauna with piñon trees, sagebrush, and chamisa bushes growing unencumbered along the mountain range until the elevation steepens and larger coniferous trees become more prominent. Cuba is within the greater southwest region where, throughout the summer months, the monsoon season often brings short, high volume storms that present a risk of flash flooding and leave the land smelling pleasantly of rain.

^b The language used to identify ethnic identity can be place-specific and can shift over time. Many members of the Diné community interchangeably use both the terms Diné and Navajo to identify their ethnicity. For the purpose of this report, we mirror the move in academia towards more inclusive language and use the term Diné, which is the traditional name that ties the people to lands, water and people. However, when quoting study participants or drawing from documents that use the term Navajo, we mirror this terminology.

The Rio Puerco river runs through the town and snakes down alongside the major state highway, moving southeast and carrying much needed groundwater to other communities. The state highway runs through the center of the main village of Cuba, connecting it to communities in a nearby region of commonly known as the “checkerboard” because of the distribution of Native American Nations (including the Diné and Jicarilla Apache Nations and the Zia and Jemez Pueblos), privately owned land, and public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the National Forest Service.

Both Santa Fe and Albuquerque are roughly an hour and a half drive from Cuba and offer more affordable grocery options and expanded infrastructure, such as emergency medical care and specialized stores. Some school staff commute from larger cities in the area, and others regularly travel to access urban conveniences, purchase supplies, and stock up on necessities such as bottled water, which is commonly used because of water quality issues in Cuba. Thus, in some ways, Cuba is quite close to larger cities. Yet, in others, it remains very separate. Pointing to the decline over time in mining, logging



Maps of the CISD school district and the checkerboard region.

and agriculture jobs, Cuba residents spoke of shrinking economic opportunities and a related pattern of migration away from Cuba. One resident and school staff member noted:

There's not a lot of jobs in Cuba, I would say our people work at the school, the co-op, the Forest Service or they own their own business and that's about it. There's not a lot of options for employment so a lot of our graduates tend to leave and not stay here to put into the community because there's no jobs.³

At the same time, interviewees noted that the distance from neighboring large cities has also made for strong connections to the smaller towns and communities surrounding the village. Though the village of Cuba has only slightly more than 600 residents,⁴ it has diverse infrastructure. This includes

highway services, such as multiple gas stations, auto parts and repair businesses, motels, restaurants, a grocery store, and discount stores. The town also serves as a regional administrative and service hub, housing schools, a medical clinic, a monthly newspaper, a Forest Service office, state and county highway departments, municipal governance offices, an electric cooperative, and cell phone and internet service providers.

Many of the surrounding communities have fewer services and amenities. As a result, they often rely on the village of Cuba for many of their needs. A long time Cuba resident described the connections between communities this way:

Cuba isn't one community, it's really a cluster of communities that are geographically proximate. So you have the



Village of Cuba, you have a lot of people that live in the county within about a five mile radius of Cuba. You've got small villages further away like Lindrith and Regina, and Gallina ... And then of course you have the Diné Chapters to the West, which is a big portion of the population. Some people live around San Luis to the South and West.⁵

Expanding on the connection between Cuba and nearby Diné communities, he continued:

I think most people realize that the economy of the village more than anything else, depends on services for the Navajo population that lives near it because they comprise a majority of those who use the health services, those who use the educational system, those who primarily shop locally instead of shopping in Albuquerque or more distant places.⁶

The economic links between communities are layered on top of long and complex histories of interactions between peoples and cultures in the region. Residents emphasized the multicultural milieu as being central to Cuba's identity, noting that the mixing of cultures could be seen in both food and language. One lifelong resident described the mix of peoples and cultures this way:

We have Spanish [Latine] people, we have Anglo people. We have Natives, which mostly are some of the Pueblo, majority of the Diné, and some Jicarilla. Then, we have

a lot of migrants, Mexican people that are moving into the area that have been here for quite a while also.⁷

Later in the same conversation, he summed up his perspective on relations between different groups in the community this way: "We all work together. We all strive to do better for our community."⁸ People we spoke to acknowledged the existence of some tensions between different groups in the area, but they also noted that such tensions exist everywhere. Several people described overall relations as "supportive," "symbiotic," and "loving." An international teacher living in Cuba described it this way:

[It's] a beautiful place to live where people are very warm. At the moment you step outside, even if you don't know them, they always blow horns like that. I said, "Who's that? How come they know me?"⁹

Cuba Independent School District (CISD)

CISD serves the Village of Cuba and also the neighboring towns and Diné Nation communities within the checkerboard region. Families within the region do have choices in terms of schooling systems, but CISD serves as the preferred option for many families who opt out of more local elementary and secondary public schools and choose not to attend neighboring Catholic schools.^c In addition to serving students from the CISD

^c The history of school systems in the region dates back to Spanish colonization. During this period, a formal Catholic school system was established long before state sanctioned public schools became the central public serving system.

middle school, the CISD high school draws students from four different school districts/ systems: four small, primarily Diné, k-8 schools and one k-12 school.¹⁰

Families in the neighboring towns of Regina and La Jara, as well as other towns in the area are members of the CISD community, as are families in three communities on the easternmost portion of the Diné Nation: Counselor, Ojo Encino, and Torreon. Students from these communities may live far out from the town center, on unpaved roads or areas that are otherwise difficult to access. Thus, while some CISD students live in the

Village of Cuba, the majority travel long distances to reach school. Many rely on the CISD transportation system to get to and from school. The challenge of transporting students across a vast geographic area is increased after heavy rains, which can leave the dirt or unpaved roads in the area unpassable.

In 2020-2021, 605 students were enrolled in CISD, distributed across one high school, one middle school, one elementary school, and two preschools (one in the village of Cuba and one in Ojo Encino). The student population is 71% Native American, primarily from the Diné Nation, 27% Latine, and 2% Other.¹¹



100% of the students in CISD qualify for Title I, and 99% qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program. According to a CISD administrator, within New Mexico, all students whose parents indicate that a language other than English is spoken in the home are classified as English Language Learners (ELL) and must pass a standardized test in order to change designation:¹² Accordingly, 40% of Cuba's students are identified as English Language Learners. In addition, 15% are part of the Special Education program, and 19% experience homelessness.¹³

With respect to the teaching force, there are approximately 149 employees within Cuba Independent School District: 75% are Latine, 15% are Native American, 6% Asian, 2% White, and 1% African American.¹⁴ The district has prioritized recruiting staff that resembles their student population, with increased recruitment of Native American staff members and increased promotion for Native American staff members to higher level positions within the district. Some teachers and staff are from the local community (several teachers even graduated from Cuba High School), or from



surrounding communities such as Regina and La Jara. Others are from further away, including several international teachers. Some teachers and staff live in Cuba or surrounding communities such as Regina or La Jara; others commute from more distant cities, such as Albuquerque.

Within the CISD campus, in the village of Cuba, there is an elementary school, middle school, high school, and an administrative building. Each building is within walking distance of the others. The high school sits at the front of the district campus. An indoor swimming pool that opens for community swimming and a gymnasium used for basketball and volleyball games are located in between the high school and middle schools. The elementary school and central office are located at the east and west side of the district campus, respectively. The campus also includes two cross country tracks that run up into the mountains located at the northwest side of the district and a football field. Recent additions to the campus include a traditional style Diné hogan, greenhouse and garden plots, two uncovered outdoor classrooms, and one covered outdoor classroom space. In addition, during 2022, CISD updated the high school main office, renovated the high school library (which is the only library that serves the town), and created a technology resource center in their central entry way.

The CISD campus is lively, and active, even in the summer. The cafeteria offers free hot lunches for families that qualify due

to food insecurity through the middle and high school cafeterias, with the cafeteria staff coordinating if one campus runs out of hot food for families. In addition to the SRI, students are able to attend an Indigenous Education Program that engages them in growing and farming practices. For younger students, the elementary school runs summer programming and accelerated summer school lessons for students that missed days due to the remote nature of the school year at times. In addition, as the summer winds down, fall sports begin captains' practices, which bring students to campus to train for the upcoming football and cross country seasons alongside their peers.

CISD - System transformation during turbulent times

The context of schooling in CISD during the last few years has been shaped by factors that extend far beyond Cuba and the surrounding region. Most notably, these include the responses to a court case charging the State of New Mexico with failing to provide at-risk students with sufficient education (*Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico*) and the COVID-19 global pandemic. For CISD, these two events created new obligations and responsibilities, but also presented important new opportunities to undertake a system-wide transformation intended to advance educational equity for all CISD students.

The Yazzie/Martinez case highlighted failures, within the State of New Mexico, to provide



Photo credit: Richard Kozoll

the programs and services needed by low-income students, Native American students, English-language learners, and students with disabilities to learn and thrive. In a 2020 ruling on the case, the presiding judge pointed to metrics such as low graduation rates and standardized test scores as evidence that the state failed to comply with state and federal laws and failed to prepare at-risk students for college and careers. The ruling required New Mexico to take steps to ensure that New Mexico schools had the resources required to provide all students with a “uniform and sufficient education that prepares them for college and careers” by April of 2021. The measures to be supported by a new funding model included, but were not limited to: extended learning, dual language programs, culturally/linguistically relevant education, smaller class sizes, and teacher recruitment, retention, and training.¹⁵

The ruling in the Yazzie/Martinez case highlighted the need for, and mandated the provision of funds to support, changes that CISD was already in the process of prioritizing.

In late 2019, CISD conducted a survey to understand the ways in which it could better support its students to succeed in school. The survey results shaped a CISD strategic plan that focused on increasing educational equity by addressing racial/cultural tensions and supporting students who had been marginalized within the school system. Speaking about the issues that took priority, a CISD administrator focused on attendance and expulsion policies:

[For] boys overall, but predominantly Native American males, [the situation was] terrible ...Every 10 days, if a kid was absent 10 days, the school districts, they would follow the state policy, you're out ... 10 days. They would just drop them. It was crazy. So we just started changing some of that.¹⁶

Table 1, from CISD's 2021-23 strategic plan, outlines some of the broad-ranging actions that CISD took to move towards greater educational equity. Efforts spanned from attending tribal chapter meetings to build better relations with Native American communities in the CISD region, to hiring

Native American staff and developing an Indigenous language curriculum. From the outset, the approach to transformation involved building connections to institutions of higher education, first by working with professors from the University of New Mexico to offer training and education on race relations to both teachers and students and then, as discussed in chapter 2, by partnering with researchers from the University of Colorado, Boulder, on the SRI.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit during the same period that CISD was turning its attention to educational equity initiatives and social support services. With COVID-19 and the public health response that restricted in-person gatherings came both new responsibilities to meet the need of CISD students and their families and new opportunities for funding and other resources to support CISD in meeting these new obligations.

Table 1. CISD Equity Initiatives

PROMOTING EQUITY IN THE DISTRICT	
<i>Key Reflection:</i> What evidence or examples point to successes the district has had in addressing equity over the past two years?	
School Year	CISD Equity Successes
2018-2019	Collected student survey results on school safety and inequities. Added a Native American book collection to high school library to better serve the majority of our student population. Attended tribal chapter meetings.
2019-2020	Used at-risk funds (\$500K) derived from Yazzie/Martinez court settlement to hire more Native American staff, develop an Indigenous language curriculum, and establish a division of culture and equity. Collected CISD Climate Survey results to gauge how well the district is serving students and families. Participated in state equity council meetings. Established an equity council to serve the district. UNM Professors developed high school lessons on race and ethnicity. Cuba Cares Team created to serve students and families during remote learning. UNM Professors held a Summer Institute for staff on self-identity and race relations. Attended tribal chapter meetings. Developed and signed MOUs with Navajo Nation, held yearly tribal consultations with NMDODE. Held summer institute for students on Navajo planting and weaving. Took Native students to UC Berkeley on college visit. Ordered new instruction materials in English, Spanish, and Diné.
2020-2021	UNM Professors conducted PD on race and equity. Embedded more culturally relevant materials in curriculum. Problem-Based Learning (PBL); work focuses on culturally relevant themes. UNM Professors work with students on self-identity and race relationships. Attended tribal chapter meetings. Order new instruction materials in English, Spanish, and Diné.

Throughout the COVID pandemic, CISD leveraged available resources to break down barriers to CISD students attending online and in-person school.

- Many families did not have access to reliable and fast internet at the advent of COVID-19. CISD was able to access funds for COVID related infrastructure improvement. They used this to install high speed satellite internet and provided hotspots so that students could access remote instruction, throughout the year, at no cost to them.¹⁷
- CISD also utilized their transportation system to do food distribution and check on the needs of families and students throughout the remote school year of 2020-2021.¹⁸
- CISD increased technology access so that every student had one-to-one laptop access and USB drives with a week of course material.¹⁹
- During the summer, the district opened its cafeteria to provide the local community with access to hot food for breakfast and lunch.

CISD achieved all of this during a time in which public health measures limited in-person gatherings across New Mexico and the Diné Nation, which was hit particularly hard by COVID 19, and had additional public health measures in place that posed challenges to collaboration.

CISD continued to pursue system transformation aimed at achieving educational equity and, by 2022, made additional progress in multiple areas. CISD has:

- Reshaped its curricular focuses and funding structures to support student voice and interests. The district received grant funding to initiate projects on student voice and food justice to promote greater equity with respect to food access for families across the district.²⁰
- Increased funding for student internships to allow greater flexibility for post secondary studies and post-secondary career advancement.²¹
- Implemented a number of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs in response to student concerns throughout the COVID pandemic. These include: online meditation resources, therapy dogs on the various campuses throughout the week, increased counseling services for students, and time for SEL curriculum in homeroom classes.²²
- Increased teacher salaries and led the state among salaries for teaching staff in order to recruit and retain high quality teachers.²³

By 2020, the graduation rate for the 4-year cohort was 89%, a significant increase from the 62% graduation rate in spring 2017.²⁴ Speaking in 2022, a CISD administrator noted:

We've gone from 62% graduation rate at the high school to almost 95. Last year, we were recognized at the state for the highest in the area of rural high schools.²⁵

In some areas, measures initially tied to the equity focus of the systems transformation effort have further evolved due to additional contextual factors. For example, CISD initially hired campus safety officers in 2018-19, in response to survey findings which showed that “bullying, social and emotional trauma, and racial tensions were root causes of ongoing strife, which often culminated in violent altercations on the high school campus—students often felt worried about their safety on campus.”²⁶ In 2022, the level of campus security was increased because of an incident of threatened gun violence, set against the backdrop of national school shooting tragedies. In order to allow for greater surveillance of the items coming onto campus, CISD also implemented clear backpack policies and installed a metal detector and temperature sensor. They have contracted a private safety service that installed multiple, armed school safety officers throughout the school and students go through daily bag searches.

CISD continues to actively work on system transformation through multiple, concurrent initiatives, and ongoing attention to engaging families/community members and elevating student voice. The SRI, which is described in detail in this report, is one key component of these ongoing efforts to ensure educational

equity for CISD students. Other, related, components include a series of student engagement sessions and surveys designed to elevate student voice, ongoing work in a community greenhouse, and school sponsorship of two community farmers markets. Through these, and other efforts, CISD continues to work towards the creation of a school environment that serves the needs, and advances the interests, of its diverse, rural New Mexico student population.



Chapter 2

What is the Summer Research Institute (SRI)?



A partnership between CISD and the University of Colorado Boulder's Research Hub for Youth Organizing has been the foundation for two years of SRI programming for CISD high school students. The 4-5 week long research institute centers the ideas and knowledges of Native American and Latine high school students. The first year of the program focused on student-led research pertaining to educational equity within CISD communities. During the second year of the program, which was co-designed and led by CISD teachers and CU Boulder researchers, students researched food justice within their community. During the second year, some students were able to get a university credit, through the School of Education at the University of Colorado (Boulder), for participating in the SRI .

This chapter gives a descriptive overview of the CU Boulder - CISD partnership and the resulting summer programming,

placing both the partnership and SRI in the context of the broader CISD system wide transformation effort. It describes the initiation of the partnership, the two years of SRI, the continuation of the partnership, and curriculum co-design between the 2021 and 2022 research institutes. The chapter closes with a brief discussion of the ways in which CISD has continued to build on the work of the SRI and pursue greater equity for CISD students during the 2022-23 school year.

The CISD - CU Boulder partnership and development of the 2021 SRI

The partnership between CU Boulder and CISD emerged in a serendipitous fashion. The Research Hub for Youth Organizing, which is based in the School of Education at CU Boulder, was contacted by a representative of the federal Department of Education with regards to rural school districts serving their students and community throughout the COVID pandemic. In March of 2021, a CU Boulder Research Hub team member, who has family members in the Cuba community, connected with CISD officials in order to learn about the special services and programs that CISD developed in response to the COVID pandemic. These services included using the existing school bus route as a food and clothing distribution route, implementing a technology repair route where laptops and personal wi-fi hotspots could be distributed to



Art Credit: Abrianna, Jose, Kailee

households or brought back to CISD for repair, bringing CISD staff to families in order to check on their physical and mental well-being, and establishing a satellite internet network for CISD families.

In learning about CISD's work to respond to the COVID pandemic, CU Boulder Research Hub team members also learned that this work was part of a larger system-wide transformation effort, aimed at ensuring greater educational equity for CISD students. The CISD superintendent was looking for opportunities to partner with higher education institutions and, building on their initial contact, began to discuss the potential for an ongoing partnership with CU Boulder. Their discussions focused on ways that the Research Hub might support CISD in centering the ideas and knowledges of their predominantly Native American and Latine middle/high school students. The Research Hub had supported young people's capacity to claim power and create more just communities through field-driven research through several projects that seemed to overlap with CISD needs and interests.

The CU Boulder Research Hub team was able to put together a menu of options, within the scope of team member experience and expertise, that might be of interest to CISD. One of those options was a summer research institute with high school students, a model that multiple team members had previously experienced through work with programs such as the Aquetza summer bridge program for Latino youth²⁷ and models of engaging

high school students in Critical Civic Inquiry.²⁸ CISD leadership agreed that a SRI would be beneficial to their students and provided initial funding to the CU Boulder Research Hub (henceforth referred to as CU Boulder or the CU Boulder team) to begin the planning and implementation process for the first iteration of the summer program.

The CU Boulder team developed an initial SRI curriculum, with a focus on educational equity, and then met with CISD teachers, administrators, and counselors in May of 2021 to get their feedback on the initial curriculum. They also discussed the logistics of running a summer program at CISD, as they had not worked with the district before. Planning meetings took place online throughout the month of May. Attendees self-selected groups based on expertise, splitting into logistics and curriculum planning groups in order to quickly develop a culturally and geographically tailored curriculum while also completing the planning and administrative steps needed to offer a SRI within just a couple of months.

Implementation of the 2021 SRI

The 2021 SRI ran from June 21 to July 30, 2021. During this period, students researched educational equity in their communities. At the end of the research institute, they built on their research to recommend policy changes to school/community leaders. Students who participated were paid \$13/hr for this research internship. The institute was designed by the CU Boulder team and co-led with

CISD teachers/administrators, who offered feedback on the curriculum and process. 30 CISD student-researchers participated in the SRI. Four district teachers facilitated small groups throughout the program, with support from five CU Boulder graduate and faculty researchers, one CISD logistics support staff, and two CISD administrators who oversaw district and high school specific programming. With respect to the CU Boulder team, one faculty researcher was on-site for the entirety of the program while the other faculty researcher and graduate students cycled in and out to facilitate sessions that aligned with their expertise. The program was 4 ½ weeks long, with a break in the middle for the Fourth of July holiday and transportation staff professional development.

The activities of SRI focused on the past, present, and future of educational opportunity within CISD communities. Each week included a photovoice session,²⁹ through which students used photos to tell a story and evoke a response from viewers. Each week started with discussion of the past, present, or future theme and how it could be captured through photographs. Students were given time throughout the week to take photos and then engaged in an analytic discussion of photo themes at the end of the week. In addition, students conducted interviews with family members to understand their experiences of education in order to capture the past, they conducted surveys with their peers to understand the present, and they created

presentations based on their own hopes and imaginings for the future of programming in their schools.

2021 SRI activities also included field trips and guest speakers that were coordinated to reflect the overall theme of the week



Art Credit: The Boogies

(past, present, or future). During the week focused on the theme of 'the past', a local educational historian talked with students about the history of the schooling system in the community and students went on a hike to visit the old school house that many of their grandparents attended. During the present week, students hiked up to a viewpoint that overlooks the town of Cuba and discussed the fossil record that is preserved in the area. A former Cuba High School student that worked in the state legislature also visited and spoke about state-level policy changes that he was able to put in place. Lastly, for the week focusing on the future, students took a field trip to the University of New Mexico and spoke with faculty that oversaw the American Indian Student Services Center, toured the campus, and attended an admissions presentation.

One or two members of the CU Boulder research team led activities each week, with different members coming from Colorado to lead a week of activities aligned with their expertise. Students spent much of the day divided into small research groups of 7-8, discussing their interviews, surveys, or presentations, and making sense of overlapping themes in their data. Each research group was facilitated by one of the four CISD teachers. These groups were formed by the district logistics staff, based on student interest, age/school year, and knowledge of students' educational needs. In a context of significant apprehension about participation, as students returned to

in-person programming for the first time following a 2020-21 school year that was fully remote because of COVID-19, district staff also took social groupings and knowledge of educational supports students received during the academic year into account. Students stayed in their same small classroom groups throughout the summer program. CU Boulder researchers checked in with each group to offer support around the theme and research method of the week. Given that the central aim was to have students offer insight and feedback to the school district, the activities often focused on explicating what existed within the community already and identifying unmet needs.

The culmination of the program was a public-facing presentation. Community members who were involved with the SRI, as well as other stakeholders, were invited to hear from the students about their school policy recommendations. These recommendations were meant to inform CISD leaders of students' perspectives on the most pressing issues they faced through the COVID-19 pandemic and the solutions that might effectively address these challenges. Students worked in small groups of 2-5 to prepare their policy recommendation presentations during the final week of the program. They based their recommendations on the informal research they had conducted through interviews, surveys, and photovoice sessions. Each group developed independent presentations,

although many had overlapping ideas and data. Many addressed student mental health and suggested programs that students saw as beneficial to their mental health concerns. Seven central recommendations encapsulate recommendations across the eleven student presentations:

1. Additional mental health services, both during and outside of the regular school day/year.
2. Increased after-school programming and extracurricular activities that connect to students' interests and identities.
3. Support for the administration of after-school programming and extracurricular activities.
4. Increased access to information about college pathways.
5. Diversified school activities and pedagogical tools for teachers and students.
6. Increased attention to student's rights and voice with respect to larger school decision-making.
7. Opportunities for meaningful relationship building between teachers/staff and students.

These recommendations and the actions that CISD has taken to implement them are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this report.

Building the 2021 SRI

Once the presentations wrapped up, the CU Boulder team compiled the list of student suggestions and published a policy memo outlining student work and describing the diverse research methods they employed to compile and represent student needs in a COVID-stricken world.³⁰ The memo highlighted the work of Cuba students and made connections between CISD student needs and those of other students across the country. The policy memo was published in early 2022. After that, the CU Boulder team reached out to CISD to gauge their interest in continuing the partnership and the SRI. The district was enthusiastic about continuing and was able to fund a second iteration, due in part to a Kellogg Foundation grant to support student engagement with food justice issues. CISD asked the CU Boulder team if a SRI with a food justice and student voice focus was within the scope of their expertise. From there, CISD and CU Boulder began a more intentional co-design process with teachers that would be facilitating the 2022 SRI.

SRI 2022 - Co-design & curriculum

The 2022 SRI began with a co-design process involving a graduate researcher, eight teachers, two CISD students, and one CISD teacher/administrator who met regularly for co-design team meetings. Of the eight teachers, two had been a part of the program the previous year. Both students also

previously participated. The co-design team was selected by the teacher/administrator designated to oversee the 2022 SRI. In an initial feedback session, the co-design team reflected on their own experiences of the first SRI, and on what they had heard from other teachers, parents and students that were involved in the program. This feedback process was integral to identifying what aspects of the program were seen as useful and important for students and teachers, as well as what aspects could be revised.

Building on the initial feedback session, the co-design team settled on program logistics (e.g. duration of the program, central locations at the school site, teachers that would be research team leads, etc.) and began creating guiding principles for the second SRI. Team members individually noted their understandings about food justice, what they thought students should leave the programming knowing, and what skills should be central to the curriculum. Each person ranked their top priorities for SRI. The collective priorities for the co-design team were defined based on priorities featured most commonly on individuals' lists. The seven priorities listed in Table 2 were included in

every co-design team member's priorities.

Building on these priorities, the co-design team integrated a focus on food justice, to align with a grant from the Kellogg Foundation. They also identified the skills/knowledge that students needed to be successful in their final presentations. The graduate student researcher then suggested potentially aligned research methods and the co-design team outlined a scope of conceptual units that they thought were important for student learning. These are summarized in Table 3. The first week centered introductions and relationship building, the last week focused on student presentations. The plan for each of the three weeks in between focused on a central theme and a research method that would help students conduct informal research on that particular week's theme. The second week was organized around the theme of local context and practices, including flora and fauna. The research method of participant observation was practiced through the use of video-blogging in order to capture both their surroundings and naturally occurring practices. Week three included the topic of water quality and conservation, with students using survey methods to estimate

Table 2. Co-Design Team Priorities

Overarching Goals

Each student can become a better listener and effective speaker, a more creative and critical thinker, to develop moral imagination, ethical values, and a sense of vocation.

Students can set goals and have time for planning and executing, they have a thoughtful visions and plans, but maintain realistic expectations about outcomes and impact.

Equity for all voices to be heard and valued.

Engaging in joyful learning that privileges what students already know.

Students can freely express thoughts and have experiential and interactive learning.

Celebrating student growth, empower students to be independent thinkers and leaders, and take ownership.

Creating opportunities for students to make or create together.

water usage and perceptions of water quality amongst their peers and community members. Week four was about food systems, consumption, and waste, with interviews used to document how families prepare their food and interact with food systems around them.

Throughout the co-design process, the co-design team emphasized the question of what food justice would look like within CISD's rural, high-desert community. In searching for research articles, resources, and similar programming, members of the co-design team found that the food justice work highlighted often occurred in urban locations, with vastly different growing seasons, access to food and clean water, and waste management practices. Accordingly, the co-

design team saw a need to center community-based cultural practices and traditions around food justice in order to make the curriculum culturally relevant and pertinent to students within this rural area. The co-design process began from CISD teachers' experiences with food justice and the types of food practices that were commonly used in the community. Many of the teachers working with the SRI were international teachers whose practices brought together both Cuba-based and international experiences that were useful in the design of the curriculum.

Over the course of the co-design process, there was also a concerted effort to keep practices of Cuba students and families central to the curriculum design.

Table 3. Curriculum Scope

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3-Jul	4-Jul	5-Jul	6-Jul	7-Jul	8-Jul	9-Jul
			Program Start	Introduction to food justice	Food justice & interview methods	
10-Jul	11-Jul	12-Jul	13-Jul	14-Jul	15-Jul	16-Jul
	Participant observation & practices within Cuba	Native flora & fauna in Cuba	Field trip to fresh water source	Reviewing harvesting & preparing practices	Accessibility and difference in other communities & problem posing	
17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul
	Water conservation introduction	Water conservation metrics & statistics	Field trip to food pantry	Field trip to Fischer Trail	Access to clean water and problem posing	
24-Jul	25-Jul	26-Jul	27-Jul	28-Jul	29-Jul	30-Jul
	Food systems broadly & food systems in Cuba	Food production in industrial context in comparison	Data analysis & consolidation	Presentation preparation & assistance	Presentation preparation & assistance	
31-Jul	1-Aug	2-Aug	3-Aug	4-Aug	5-Aug	6-Aug
	Field trip to Agricultura	Field trip to IAIA in Santa Fe	Presentation run throughs & Feedback cycle	Presentation	Celebration field trip	

 Field Trips  Online days

As the curriculum was being developed, flyers advertising the SRI were posted and sent out throughout the district. CISD teachers had informal conversations to inform students about the SRI. Students who had participated in the 2021 program also talked with their peers, highlighting both the experiences they had and the opportunity for summer compensation throughout the research institute. In keeping with the 2021 approach, students were paid as research interns (\$15/hr), and tasked with building on their research to make recommendations to CISD and the CISD community about ways that CISD could support food justice.

SRI 2022 - Implementation

The 2022 SRI began on July 6th and wrapped up on August 5th, lasting a little less than five weeks. Initially, 80 students were signed up to participate. Enrollment continued for two weeks and the number of students with continued attendance and enrollment was 78. Given COVID cases and other summer commitments, the number of students participating on any given day was between 65-70 throughout the program. Within the program, roughly 75% of students identified as Diné and the other 25% identified as Latine. Table 4 shows that the majority of SRI students in 2021 identified as female.

Each day of SRI began with all the students and teachers gathered together, and a CU Boulder staff member highlighting the

Table 4. Enrollment by Gender & Grade

Demographic Category		# of Students
Gender	Male	30
	Female	47
	Nonbinary	1
Grade	7th	1
	8th	5
	9th	10
	10th	20
	11th	23
	12th	19
Total Enrolled		78

Table 5. Daily Schedule

Time	Activity
8:15-8:30	Morning Meeting
8:30-9:00	Sharing Our Stories
9:00-9:30	Whole Group Research Methods
9:30-10:00	Small Group Activity
10:00-10:30	
10:30-11:00	
11:00-11:30	
11:30-12:00	
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:00	Small Group Research Time
1:00-1:30	
1:30-1:40	Closing & Feedback

taking attendance, and running through any programmatic changes based on student feedback. During these meetings, the group often made strategic use of the outdoor classroom, which easily accommodated the large group. Once the whole group meeting wrapped up, there was a “story of self time” where people shared stories about their experiences with food and food justice. While this was, at first, predominantly a space for school staff members to share their stories, students also chose to share stories later in the program.

On most days, following the sharing of stories, the whole group broke up into research teams (classroom groups) and worked on either the research method for the week or on building content knowledge around the theme. Similar to the first year of programming, students were assigned research team groups. CISD and CU Boulder teachers led the groups, which were designed to give students small group spaces to work, in collaboration with one another, on their research projects. There were six research groups of 12-15 students each. At the midpoint of the morning time, students got a snack from the cafeteria and then came back to work in their research teams until lunch.

Afternoons were predominantly spent in research teams, applying either the research method or content knowledge. At the end of each day, the whole group gathered to give feedback on the day. These sessions

often centered around what practices, skills, content or parts of the day went well for students and what aspects were not going well. Students were asked to give feedback on anonymous post-it notes so they could speak freely. The teaching and research team emphasized that each piece of feedback would be read and implemented as long as it was within programmatic control. This process was created within the first iteration of the research institute to help youth to understand the voice and agency they had within the program and, in so doing, to highlight youth roles as policy stakeholders and change makers.

One important change in the context of SRI, between 2021 and 2022 was an increase in security. In response to threats of violence within CISD, and a national context in which there had recently been several mass shootings, CISD implemented stronger security measures in 2022. These included having students use clear backpacks and pass through a metal detector and temperature sensor. It also included the presence of private security officers. Whether on-site on a field trip, there was security present. They accompanied every field trip and monitored the outdoor classroom space while the group was in session on site.

Field trips

The program included multiple field trips that aligned with the overall theme of the week. Field trips included trips to local, outdoor

Table 6. Field Trips

Field Trips	
Local Fresh Water Source	New Mexico Fish and Wildlife came to the Richard A Becker Nature Area and Ted Mace Trail, a watershed area a few miles from the school, and took a mile walk with students. They discussed Cuba watershed, the Continental Divide trail, illegal dumping, land preservation, and geological formations.
Fischer Trail	About a 2 mile out and back, forested trail that goes to the top of Cuba Mesa. A guide from Step into Cuba shared about the geological formations and the work in takes to keep up a trail system.
Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA)	IAIA shared all of the programs they offer and students enjoyed the skydome, where films made by other graduates were displayed. Students also got to see the garden, cornfield, and greenhouse that provide ingredients for the food served in the cafeteria, where they ate lunch.
Santa Fe Farmers Market	Student visited the Farmer's Market at the Santa Fe Farmer's Market Pavilion.
Albuquerque Agricultura	Students went on a tour led by a farmer (Zuni) and the leader of the program (Diné). Both shared their Indigenous knowledge of planting with students. Students enjoyed picking peaches, plums, and apples from the trees.
Main Event	Student's final day included a celebration of their participation at Main Event where they had an arcade center, bowling, laser tag, and gravity ropes.

areas, such as a freshwater source and a hiking trail, and to places in Santa Fe (the Farmer's Market and the Institute of American Indian Arts) and Albuquerque (Albuquerque Agricultura and Main Event). These field trips are listed and described in Table 6.

Unexpected interruptions

In addition to the intentional shift away from the regular daily routine associated with field trips, the daily schedule was interrupted twice by accommodations for COVID-19 outbreaks and once more, after a heavy rainfall, by muddy conditions that left the roads to many students' homes impassable. On these occasions, the summer program shifted to online learning. Students had access to the internet through a CISD initiative that installed

high speed satellite internet and provided hotspots so that students could access remote instruction throughout the year. However, students were accustomed to asynchronous online learning, and it took some initial effort for them to adjust to interactive online activities. An average of 43 students logged on during the online days, and teachers noted that the online engagement provided students an opportunity to share their home life and family in a way that was not possible through in-person instruction. Since students were home with their families during online class sessions, they also completed video-blogs capturing naturally occurring food production and waste practices, and shared these with one another online. The shifts to online sessions not only impacted activities during those days, they had larger impacts on

the planned flow of SRI activities. As a result of unexpected interruptions, much of the thematic analysis that had been planned for earlier in the program was completed during week four, in small breakout groups.

Continued work throughout the school year

After the end of the SRI in August 2022, CISD staff continued connected activities and programs that built on the SRI and advanced the goals of CISD's system-wide transformation. Some students were able to connect their research and advocacy work during the summer to work during the school year by running a farmers market with assistance from teachers. Others participated in student voice sessions in which they shared the recommendations and learning from SRI with other CISD students. By December of 2022, students had also developed plans to present to the CISD school board, the broader CISD community, Diné Nation leaders, and other stakeholders.³¹



Photo credit: Alejandro Ortega



Photo credit: Richard Kozoll



Chapter 3

How does the SRI benefit students, teachers, and CISD?

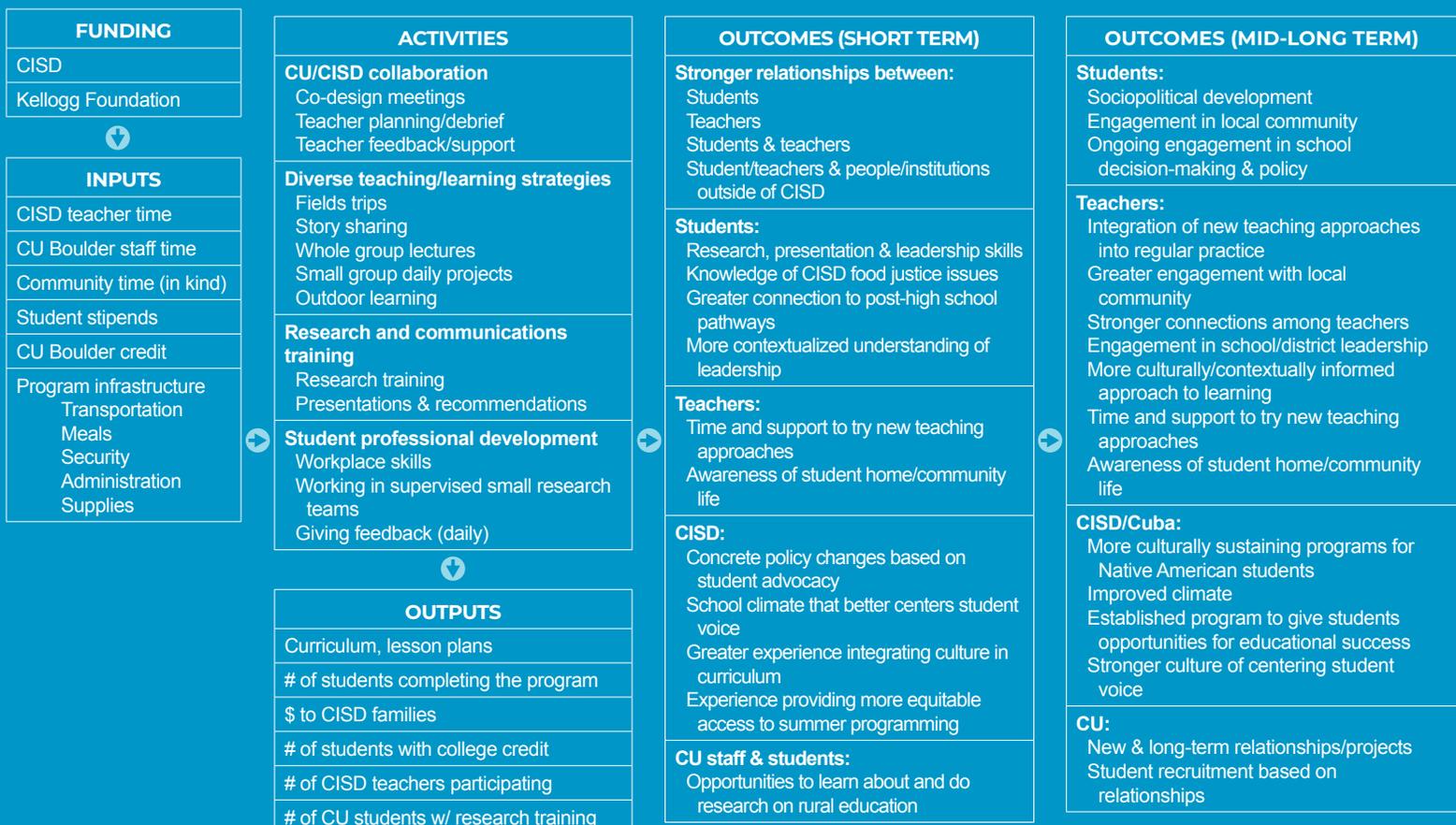


The CISD-CU Boulder SRI grew out of conversations between a CISD administrator and a CU Boulder Research Hub for Youth Organizing member. Plans for the 2021 institute were based on the experience and expertise of CU Boulder and CISD staff. The development of the 2022 SRI featured more intentional and extended engagement of CISD staff in co-designing the curriculum but also built on the framework established through the 2021 institute and incorporated a food justice focus aligned with CISD funding commitments.

A key goal of this evaluation is to take a step back from the implementation of the SRI and map out the goals and logic of a program that

evolved organically. This chapter develops and explains a logic model for the CISD-CU Boulder SRI. As summarized in Figure 1, the SRI incorporates a broad range of activities that are intended to produce positive outcomes for students, teachers, CISD, and CU Boulder staff and students. The short and potential long-term outcomes described here align with CISD's broader system-wide transformation goals. By centering the knowledges and experiences of CISD's diverse student population, elevating student voice, and developing the collective capacity for CISD to implement additional teaching strategies and programming designed to promote educational equity.

The Logic of the SRI



Program goals and objectives

The initial design of SRI was built on the expertise of CU Boulder researchers that had worked with summer bridge programs and research partnerships with high school youth. In particular, the Critical Civic Inquiry and Aquetza programs were central influences. Both programs are designed around student research and culminate in civic engagement projects, connecting education with community and personal goals.³² Critical Civic Inquiry is a study that takes place during the school year, within Denver Public Schools and engages high school students (primarily students of color) in investigating problems within their immediate community or school to understand the issues better and make a change.³³ Aquetza is a summer bridge program for Latine high school students from Colorado. It is hosted by the University of Colorado, Boulder, and staffed by Latine undergraduate and graduate students. The program is based on the Mexican American Studies program in Arizona. Aquetza, recognizes the need for a culturally responsive and asset-based approach in designing with low-income communities of color and highlights how centering the academic, cultural, and ethnic identities of students can be impactful for students.³⁴

Both Aquetza and Critical Civic Inquiry can be seen as part of a larger program category that engages youth with research and provides culturally competent programming for young

people. Such programs can help young people connect their everyday lives to their academic work and give them hope to create change in their communities.³⁵ Similarly, programming that allows for university students and high schools to come together in order to center the cultural, ethnic, and academic identities of youth can help students feel more empowered within their education.³⁶ Such programs may also draw from knowledge about youth organizing, which involves a complex web of supports and relationships that yield positive short-term outcomes across multiple domains: social identity, academic empowerment, hope, civic empowerment, commitment to future engagement, and thinking critically about justice.³⁷ Existing research on youth organizing also suggests longer-term impacts on civic engagement as well as academic and career trajectories.³⁸

The CISD-CU Boulder SRI built on the knowledge of these programs to address CISD goals around educational equity and center the voices and experiences of their primarily Native American and Latine youth student population. The first iteration of the SRI was designed to encourage student voice through engaging in interviews, photovoice, and survey methods as a weekly research cycle. These weekly research cycles (data collection and group analysis) were then used as spaces for students to leverage their identities and community and put forth educational recommendations for their district. The second iteration built upon the first, focusing

on food justice and integrating new research practices but maintaining the focus on student voice, civic engagement, and student engagement in research to address equity and social justice questions.

funding, community members volunteered their time for field trips and other activities. CISD also covered transportation, meals, administrative time, and other expenses tied to supporting the SRI and other CISD summer programs.

Funding and inputs

Inputs into SRI include direct funding cobbled together from different sources of in-kind contributions and extensions of CISD core funding. Direct funding included a grant from the Kellogg Foundation, multiple rounds of federal stimulus funds to support school operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, course credit subsidies by CU Boulder, and allocations from within CISD operational funding. Direct funds and funding sources are summarized in Table 7. The total direct funding for the program was \$253,616. This translates to a per-student cost of \$3,251 for a 4 ½ - week program, including the cost of one college credit for participating juniors and seniors. Of these funds, 69% were used to support salaries for CISD interns and teachers, with 39% of the total direct funds spent on salaries for 78 interns and 30% on CISD teacher salaries. In total, 23% of funds went to supporting CU Boulder staff time (for co-design and implementation of the program) and travel/lodging. In addition to the direct

Table 7. Funding Sources

Input	\$	Source
CISD teacher time	\$76,503	Operational funds, ESSER II, ESSER III, Kellogg Foundation
Student stipends	\$99,393	Operational funds, ESSER II, ESSER III, Kellogg Foundation
Supplies	\$3,900	Kellogg Foundation
Travel/lodging (CU Boulder)	\$14,857	Kellogg Foundation
CU Boulder staff time	\$42,243	Kellogg Foundation, ESSER II
CU Boulder credit	\$14,320 \$2,400	In kind CU Boulder Kellogg Foundation (from CU Budget)
Community time	-	In kind contribution of community members and organizations that assisted with field trips

Activities

The SRI involved a rich and varied range of activities designed to support distinct goals and outcomes. These activities are summarized in Figure 2, and described in detail in the previous chapter. We group them into five overarching categories: co-design and implementation, community engagement, culturally sustaining teaching/learning strategies, research and communication

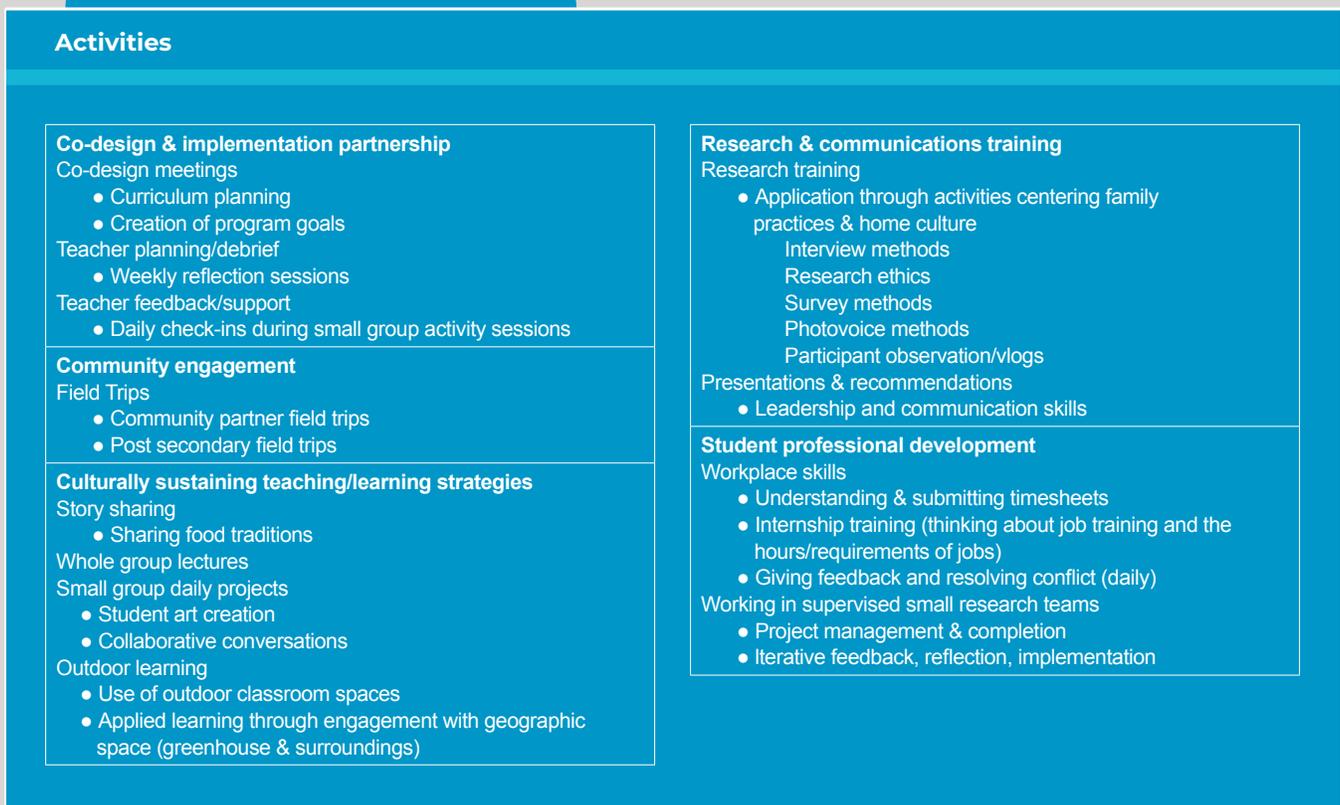
training, and student professional development.

Co-design and implementation - This category captures the partnership work between CU Boulder researchers and CISD staff and teachers as they designed the curriculum for the program. It also includes collaboration during SRI implementation. Co-design and implementation encompasses the curriculum planning meetings and programmatic goal creation, the weekly reflection sessions throughout the program, and daily check-ins between CU Boulder researchers and the CISD teaching staff. The activities in this category were intended to foster positive relationships between CISD and CU Boulder teachers, ensure the SRI built on both groups' knowledge and skills, and ensure teacher agency.

Community engagement - This category includes field trips where students visited community programs and institutions of higher learning. The activities in this category were intended to provide opportunities for students to access local knowledge, build relationships between school, students, the community, and local organizations, and gain information about educational opportunities.

Culturally sustaining teaching/learning strategies - This category includes activities such as: facilitating the sharing of food traditions with students and the teaching staff, whole group lectures that included information on food systems and connecting to the area, small group time with students where they were able to create art and collaborate, and the ongoing use of outdoor learning spaces as applied learning spaces.

Figure 2. Activities in the SRI



The activities in this category were intended to center students' everyday lives and practices in learning about food and food systems to sustain and support student voice and agency.

Research and communication training

- This category includes research training that centered on family food practices and home culture. The topics covered included interviews, research ethics, survey methods, photovoice, and participant observation. The research and communications training also included activities to develop leadership and communication skills that students required for their final presentations. The activities in this category were intended to support students' research and communication skills development. Students used these opportunities to share their knowledge and highlight their community's needs and strengths.

Student professional development -

This category includes activities such as understanding and submitting timesheets, completing internship training and requirements, giving feedback, resolving conflict, working in small groups to give and receive iterative feedback, and reflecting on and implementing a project. The activities in this category were intended to help students build project management and completion skills and to support social and emotional learning relevant to the workplace and higher education.

Outputs

The SRI had several direct outputs, which are summarized in Table 8. The most direct output was that of students completing the program. Thirty students completed the program in 2021. This number jumped to 78 in 2022. In both years, student participants were paid as research interns who received financial compensation for their time in the program. In 2021, student participants received a total of \$36,900 (approximately \$1,230 per youth) through their participation in the program. In 2022, student wages increased from \$13 an hour to \$15 an hour. That year student participants received an estimated total of \$99,400 (approximately \$1,275 per youth) through their participation in the program.

For the program's second iteration, the CU Boulder staff arranged for 30 upper-level high school students (juniors and seniors) to receive one college credit, through the CU Boulder School of Continuing Education, for participating in SRI. College credit was tied to the research methods and final projects that students presented. The School of Education and the Research Hub arranged for CU Boulder to subsidize the college credit cost, so there was no cost to students and families enrolled.

Both iterations of the program resulted in 4 ½ week curriculum guides that include unit and individual lesson plans. These curricular outputs are complemented by

the development of a core of CISD teachers. Four CISD teachers participated in 2021; one continued as a teacher in 2022, and five new teachers joined the team. On the CU Boulder side, three graduate students gained teaching and research experience through the program: two graduate students worked with the program in 2021, one continued to 2022, and another joined the program. One of these graduate students is currently completing her Ph.D. dissertation, focusing on the SRI co-design process.

- Students got to know each other and their teachers in new ways.
- Teachers gained new connections to their students and stronger connections to other teachers in SRI.
- Both teachers and students developed strong relationships with CU Boulder staff, community members, and institutions in the region.

Table 8. Program Outputs

	2021	2022
# of students completing program	30	78
\$ to CISD students	\$36,900	\$128,800
# CISD students with college credit	-	30
# of CISD teachers w/ experience co-designing and teaching in the program	4	6
# of CISD teacher assistants	-	1
# of CU students w/ teaching and research training	2	2

Students gained concrete research and presentation skills while increasing their knowledge of food justice issues within the CISD community. They also gained leadership skills while developing a more contextualized understanding of leadership and increased comfort exercising leadership in local settings. Teachers gained a greater awareness of their students' home and community life and had time and support to try out new approaches to teaching.

There were also positive short-term outcomes at the institutional level. The SRI gave CISD added experience with programming that centered student voice. CISD implemented concrete policy changes based on the students' recommendations at the end of the 2021 institute. Through the SRI, CISD staff also gained experience integrating culture into the curriculum and providing more equitable access to summer programming. For CU Boulder, the SRI provided opportunities to learn about and do research on rural education.

Short-term Outcomes

In the interview and focus group sessions, teachers, students, and other CISD community members indicated a complex range of positive short-term outcomes of the SRI. Both students and teachers developed stronger relationships and connections as a result of the SRI.

Relationships between staff, students, researchers, and community members

CISD students and teachers established stronger relationships through the SRI. Students could connect with their peers at a deeper level, and teachers could also make meaningful connections with their students and with each other. Through the program, students and staff also established connections with CU Boulder staff/students and local community members.

The SRI provided students with spaces in which they could interact with their peers throughout the school day. Small group meetings gave students an intimate learning environment that allowed for relationship-building with peers. In these groups, students saw each other's family members and after-school lives through video blogs and had a chance to forge connections in ways that were atypical during school time. Larger group activities provided opportunities to connect with more students. Through structured activities, students discussed things that affected their communities. This provided them with the space to be vulnerable with each other. Unstructured time after breakfast and lunch allowed students to engage in informal conversations with each other, to play basketball, or to talk with teachers and other summer staff. Through these daily interactions, students who had not built relationships with one another during the regular school year were able to connect around shared interests, family life, or topics

connected to the day's activities. Students noted their appreciation for a chance to get to know each other in a way that did not happen during the regular school year, and for the level of collaboration and communication in the SRI.

One teacher described the development of relationships between students this way:

One thing I think this program also made the students learn more about their fellow students and to get to know more of their friends or other students in the camp because they learned about their families, about their lives. In one way or another, they could see some similarities in their lives and that's why they ... They don't know each other, but since they have learned that this family is almost the same as their family, so they show connection, so they bonded and they became friends.³⁹

These shared experiences also supported the development of more positive relationships between students and teachers. Teachers had the opportunity to better understand students' personal lives throughout the academic and nonacademic time. Student work in small groups gave teachers time to meet with students about their work and their outside of school lives. Teachers also felt that students were able to get to know them on a more personal level through the activity of morning storytelling. Teachers chose an aspect of their education or food practices that they wanted to share with students; this sharing allowed students to learn more

about teachers and their cultural heritage as it related to food. This then translated into better relationships during the school year. One teacher noted:

Yeah, and it also help us teachers for the coming year because we already build connection with them. They know us, so I think that's also why they do respect us more because they know us and yeah, it helps us preparing for the year for this group of students.⁴⁰

Through participating in the program, teachers also developed stronger relationships with one another. For example, one teacher described a group text that teachers used to stay connected:

We have that good vibes group in our text, like 'oh if you need help, you know, just come to the house and we have water here'. Sometimes like that, so we already have that, spirit, togetherness that we already have that from UC Boulder. So we've become closer . . .we have that spirit of camaraderie.⁴¹

The development of relationships also extended beyond teachers and students within CISD. Both teachers and students had a chance to build relationships with CU Boulder graduate students and staff. CISD students who were a part of the program in 2021 remembered CU Boulder staff, were eager to work with them, and expressed their fond memories of CU Boulder teachers who could not attend in 2022. CISD teachers and CU Boulder team members also

developed strong relationships, starting from the initial co-design and planning of the summer curriculum and continuing to work together closely throughout the program. Their interactions extended beyond strict collaboration on the SRI, for example, to CISD teachers and CU Boulder graduate students exchanging food from their cultures.

In addition to positive relationships established between CISD teachers, students, and CU Boulder teachers, community relationships were formed through the integration of local knowledge in the curriculum. One teacher addressed this in her interview when discussing a community member that led a hike during the summer program:

He went on the field trip with us and he was so knowledgeable and I thought gosh we have all these resources right here in Cuba that we could be bringing into our classrooms. So that was eye opening and I know there's people in the community that are really good but that was like there's more than we know, there's more than we realize ... I didn't know he was so knowledgeable.⁴²

Throughout the summer program, CISD teachers, students, and CU Boulder teachers were able to experience and learn from local community members. Some community members joined for morning storytelling time or led field trips that gave teachers a greater understanding of the community supports and local expertise that exist in Cuba. CU

Boulder staff also reached out to the Director of Indian Education and Federal Programs at CISD to ensure that the curriculum included Diné cultural perspectives. In addition, local community members were brought in to work directly with students on food justice issues, which led to new opportunities for teachers and students to establish positive relationships in the areas CISD serves.

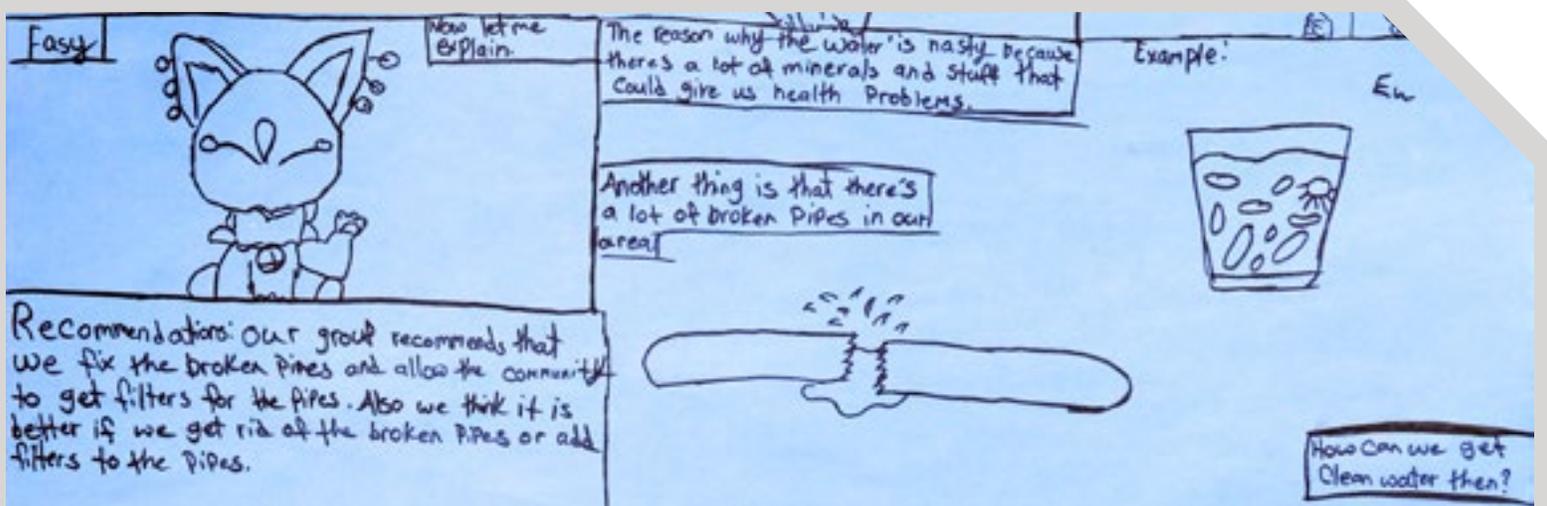
Student outcomes

Participants in interviews and focus groups pointed to diverse, positive outcomes for students in the SRI. These included: the development of research and presentation skills, greater knowledge of CISD food justice issues, greater connection to post-high school pathways, a more contextualized understanding of leadership, and increased comfort exercising leadership. Teachers noted that, during the SRI program, students were able to have experiences with presenting their ideas on a topic and were able to speak to community members about their concerns and recommendations. Teachers

found it impressive that students were able to formulate their own ideas, craft short presentations, and translate their ideas into something tangible for their community and district leaders to make changes. For example, students created their own research questions and gathered their own data. One teacher described how this work connected with students' home and community contexts:

When they do interviews, they're going home. Parents or family members are watching them doing the vlogs [video blogs]. Then they're interviewing the grandparents and family members, aunts and uncles. When the parents call, it's like wow, is this going still, learning, summer, too, learning is happening in summer, too? That is, I feel, so good because that learning engagement they can seek from home, too, where the students with the interviews are a blast, I should say.⁴³

Through this process, students built a bridge between their home and school life, sharing their out-of-school experiences with teachers and peers.



Art Credit: The Chosen One and Human

As research interns, they were paid by the district to put forth recommendations and create a product in the form of school-based programs or policy changes. Both students and teachers appreciated that students were paid for their time and given college credit for participating in the program. Teachers within the program also felt that students could grow and learn through the research process:

I see the students growing as inquirers, thinkers, open minded and balanced. Accepting other ideas into their small group settings.⁴⁴

The program also served as an important space for students to learn about post-secondary education or career pathways. Students noted an appreciation for being in a professional environment, which felt like an internship, where they could learn about issues in their community. One teacher described how important the Boulder program is in supporting students' understanding of options for their post-secondary education:

We are really proud of them because we want them to go forward in their career. Cling to any of the universities. We do have college fairs, but it's a couple of times in a year. But the bond they have ... for all these four to five weeks with the Boulder program. And I can see it's brainstorming in them due to the Boulder program that they want to continue the career further with the university.⁴⁵

Teachers also mentioned that they have noticed more students engaged and curious

about what is happening within their community and voicing that curiosity to community members like bus drivers and community members holding political office. Students also asked for potential future programming to have greater engagement with community members that hold political office, such as the President of The Diné Nation. Teachers saw that through the program, students could identify problems and important strengths in their community and advocate for changes that highlight community strengths and address unmet needs.

Teacher outcomes

Participants in interviews and focus groups highlighted two primary outcomes for teachers. Teachers gained a greater awareness of students' home and community lives through the SRI. Through the SRI, they also were able to access time and support to try out new teaching approaches.

The SRI offered CISD teachers a chance to get to know their students in new ways. As a result, their perceptions of some of their students changed. For example, one teacher stated:

For me, I guess what I've learned here is that I learned more about my students, like where they're coming from. Sometimes, I learn now why ... some kids are behaving this way, why some kids are always asking for food. Yeah, because I learned that they don't have much food in their home, so I get to know my students better because of this program, their families, not only them,

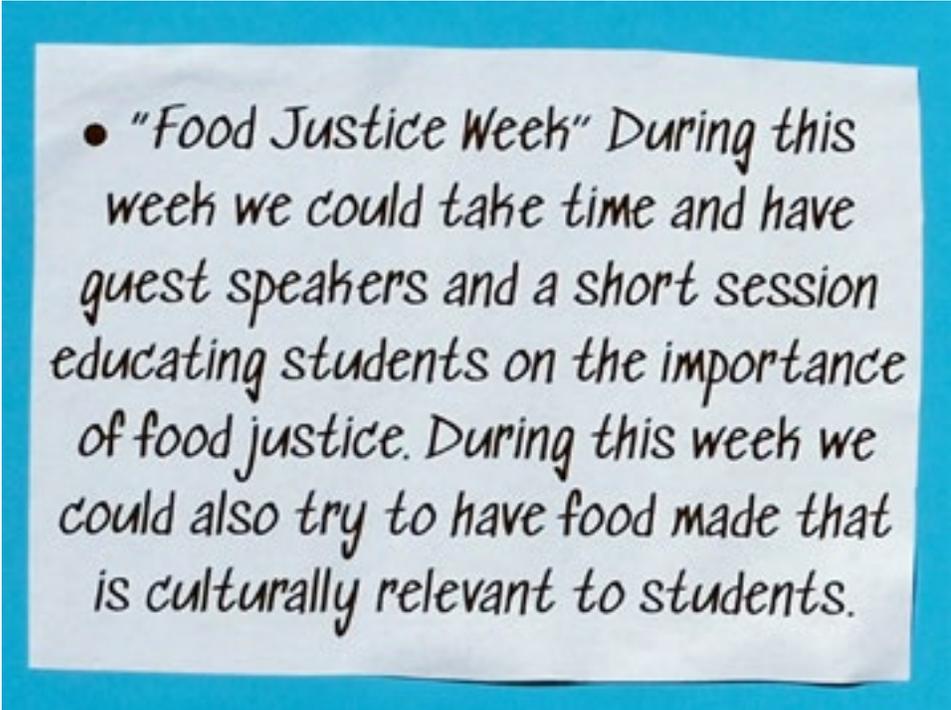
but their families, where they're coming from, a lot of things I've learned. ⁴⁶

Through small group interactions and engaging with student research, teachers began to understand the backgrounds of their students. Teachers also better understood the Cuba community and what is happening in their students' lives. They noted that the SRI helped them: develop greater awareness of what was happening within their district, gain experience with planning and implementing summer programming that served more of their student population and was responsive to student needs, and reflect on what improvements they might make to the programming for the school year.

Teachers engaged in designing and implementing the curriculum for the 2022 SRI and, by participating in feedback and reflection sessions, they also had the opportunity to consider the improvement of the SRI curriculum across years of programming. They integrated activities centered on students' home lives and tried out curriculum that centered on students' interests, moving away from the standards they typically abided by during the school year. The SRI allowed them to engage in different activities, like hands-on role-playing, and to emphasize research methods and outdoor learning opportunities. Teachers could watch their co-

educators do an activity and consider integrating it into their classrooms or lean on other teachers and their curriculum implementation processes. One teacher described her personal gain from the program:

I really love to join the Boulder. Just for me, just more on public speaking I'm not really good in talking to everybody, like sharing stories and with a small group we have to do that, right? So for us teachers, so I really have chance to be comfortable, confident telling my story. So it really adapts me as a teacher.⁴⁷



● "Food Justice Week" During this week we could take time and have guest speakers and a short session educating students on the importance of food justice. During this week we could also try to have food made that is culturally relevant to students.

Art Credit: Mama, Payton Rae, and Anna

One teacher shared that they wanted to integrate family backgrounds and student interests into their work during the academic year. Another highlighted the feedback and reflection cycle of thinking about what went well and what could be improved upon each day; they noted that they are using that reflection cycle in their teaching throughout the school year.

Support from CU Boulder staff was critical to ensuring CISD teachers had the time and space to try out new teaching strategies. One teacher described support from the CU Boulder team during the summer program:

It was a flexible learning environment. If it's not working this way, we could have just switched the groups or take Ms. Kate's help. We have so many resources. Ms. Kate and the other professor was always ready to come and help. And them coming and checking on us was a great encouragement because the students want recognition.⁴⁸

CISD outcomes

The outcomes of SRI extend beyond those for individual students and teachers to broader changes that impact the structure and culture of CISD. These outcomes included: concrete policy changes based on student advocacy, developing a school climate that better centers student voice, greater experience integrating culture into curriculum, and

greater experience providing equitable access to summer programming.

Concrete policy changes based on student advocacy

Table 9 summarizes the recommendations made by students who participated in the 2021 SRI and the actions taken by CISD concerning each recommendation. Some of the CISD recommendations, such as the formation of an LGBTQ+ club and expanded after-school sports, were a direct result of student advocacy. Other actions, such as the increase of teacher wages, were part of the broader CISD system-wide transformation. The breadth of recommendations and actions taken collectively demonstrate both the ongoing need for equity-focused transformation and CISD's commitment to achieving educational equity for all students. CISD sustained its focus on achieving educational equity through the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic while also implementing many important reforms. The district also responded to SRI student recommendations with substantive changes in several domains. CISD's responsiveness to student recommendations also reflects CISD's sustained focus on student voice, demonstrating CISD's commitment to centering student needs and experiences in its system-wide transformation efforts.

Figure 9. 2021 SRI Student Recommendations

Recommendations	Actions taken by CISD
<p>Provision of additional mental health services both during and outside of the regular school day/year. Specific recommendations included meditation rooms, healing and behavioral circles, therapy sessions, and support groups.</p>	<p>Meditation rooms created in nurses offices and work is continuing to establish more meditation rooms.</p> <p>Restorative justice being used as a discipline model, with work to establish student mediation processes and healing circles.</p> <p>16 at-risk-personnel provide increased therapy and support to youth and families throughout the school year. This includes a student grief support group, with work to establish other groups.</p>
<p>Provision of increased after-school programming and extracurricular activities. Specific interests included informal sports, a gay-straight alliance, astronomy and Anime clubs, and increased flexibility in transportation to support participation.</p>	<p>LGBTQ+ club started last year is open to all LGBTQ+ students and allies.</p> <p>Soccer, chess, after-school tutoring, and a mixture of clubs based on student interests established.</p> <p>81 youth participating in new, informal after-school programming that includes informal sports opportunities.</p> <p>Increased flexible transportation opportunities so students can participate.</p>
<p>Support for the administration of after-school programming and extracurricular activities. Specific recommendations included paying teachers to sponsor clubs, raising money for activities, and allowing time for student planning of activities.</p>	<p>As after-school and extracurricular activities expand, teachers continue to be compensated for their time supporting these activities.</p> <p>Students raising money for horticulture, football, Homecoming and other events.</p> <p>CISD provides supplies for student groups and school sponsored events during and after the school day.</p> <p>The Cuba Cares community support program provides school/other supplies and clothes for students in need.</p>
<p>Increased access to information about college pathways. Specific recommendations included more college counselors, access to scholarship information, and more campus tours.</p>	<p>One counselor added to the high school college and career team.</p> <p>More opportunities for college and career tours based on student interests.</p> <p>A website that supports access to scholarship information in multiple languages is in development.</p>
<p>Diversified school activities. Specific recommendations included more field trips, storytelling, and hiking trips.</p>	<p>Student internships place students in the community every month, at job sites and supporting community partners with fields trips.</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning time gives students and adults time to build community, learn more about one another and build social, emotional skills.</p> <p>CISD working with a local non-profit, Step into Cuba, to increase trail access and engage students in trail maintenance.</p>
<p>Increased attention to student's rights. Specific recommendations included off campus lunches and student involvement in decision-making.</p>	<p>Off campus lunches have been deemed not possible because of safety concerns.</p> <p>Weekly student meetings, district wide surveys, and on-going student voice sessions provide opportunities for student involvement in decision-making.</p>
<p>New opportunities for meaningful relationship building between teacher/staff-students. Specific recommendations included initiatives to build connections between students and teachers/staff, decrease disrespectful behavior towards teachers, and ensure adequate compensation at work.</p>	<p>CISD has not yet undertaken official initiatives to improve teacher/staff and student relationships.</p> <p>CISD has increased teacher and student wages and offered staff retention bonuses in order to remain competitive within the state.</p>

Student voice

From the outset, one goal of SRI was to center student voice to help ensure that CISD was addressing student needs and priorities. The SRI centered student voice by incorporating feedback from daily check-ins with the students and allowing students flexibility and choice within their groupings and the topics of their research. The SRI also used comments and feedback from students' participation in the first year of programming to make changes in the second year.

The short-term impact of the SRI focus on student voice is evident in ongoing work to center student voice within CISD. Fall programming has included student voice sessions in which SRI participants shared the recommendations and learning from the SRI with other CISD students. By December 2022, CISD had also developed plans for students to present to the CISD school board, the broader CISD community, Diné Nation leaders, and other stakeholders. One of the summer program teachers highlighted the connections between SRI and these ongoing efforts:

I think that's one of the skills that the program, the summer institute, is helping the student voice. And we have the Kellogg grant that is led by Mr. Delgado. And then tomorrow we have UC Boulder students that will be assembling tomorrow for convening what would be the UC Boulder, the impact of UC Boulder, and how community issues and needs to

improve on. So I think that's one of the biggest, that the summer institute is helping for the district, the student voice.⁴⁹

The centering of student voice links directly with CISD's goals of ensuring educational equity and supporting students in identifying and advocating for changes that will allow CISD to meet their needs and interests better.

Greater experience integrating culture into curriculum

Through the SRI, CISD teachers gained experience integrating culture into their curriculum. Activities and practices that served to integrate a focus on culture were interwoven throughout the SRI. The curriculum was intentionally designed around the belief that the collective community held important cultural values and practices around food justice. Starting from a place of excavating and elevating those practices, then understanding how food justice efforts could fit with them, the goal was to center students' and teachers' cultures in the creation of the curriculum.

SRI teachers were involved in designing and implementing activities that allowed students to share how their families and communities viewed and produced food. This also gave the predominantly international teachers a chance to share their cultural practices and foods with their students. These activities included morning storytelling and the application of research methods to document family food practices and home

culture. Students interviewed family members or trusted adults in their lives. They asked about the types of food families have access to, the quality of accessible food, and how they produce and conserve food within their households. They also captured their families' food justice practices through participant observation through video blogging (vlogging).

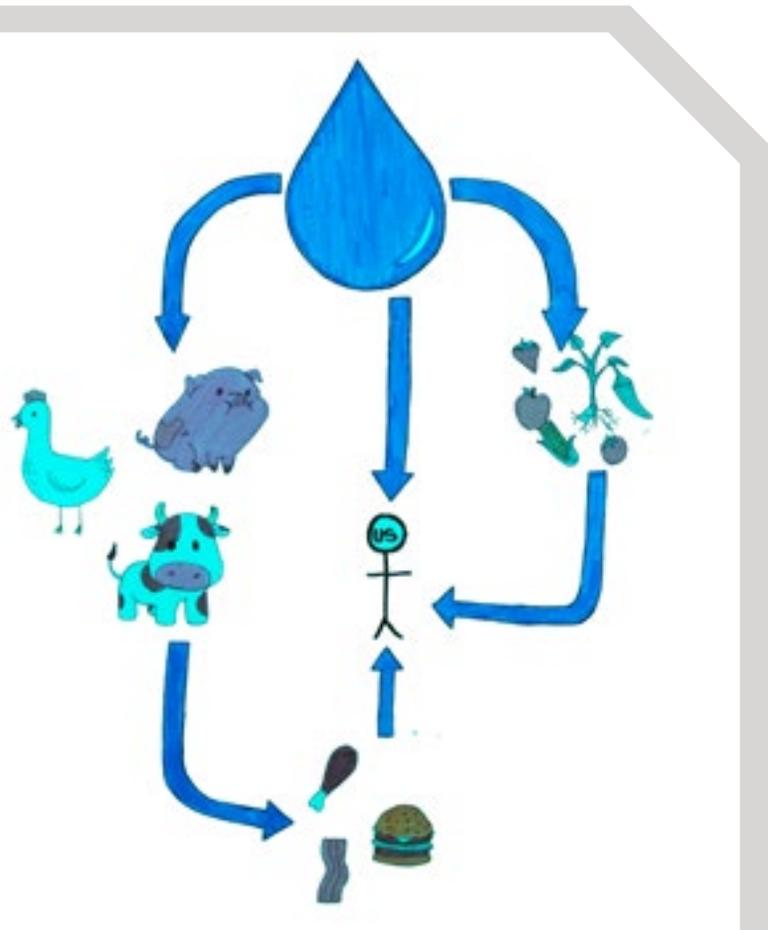
The integration of culture in SRI also extended to embracing students' biliteracy and bilingualism. Most students spoke more than one language at home and were encouraged to conduct interviews and vlog conversations

in the language they and their families preferred. Students were also encouraged to make their recommendations and artifacts in multiple languages (Navajo, Spanish, and English) so that families could see themselves and their language honored in the recommendations that students were putting forth. As a result, students were encouraged to use the full range of their linguistic resources within SRI, and CISD teachers gained the experience of supporting students in this work.

Experience providing equitable access to summer programming

In keeping with CISD's system transformation goals, the SRI has also afforded CISD greater experience designing and implementing more equitable summer programming. Drawing on the experience of the 2021 SRI, CISD and CU Boulder staff worked to incorporate many changes in the program's second year. CISD staff identified four related changes as being of particular importance for program equity: providing breakfast for all SRI participants, expanding the transportation offered to SRI participants, supporting an equitable approach to recruiting students, and the inclusion of more Native American students.

In the first year of the SRI implementation, students and staff noted that students who lived in other surrounding communities did not have equal access to the program because of transportation constraints.



Art Credit: Julian and Panda

One CISD staff member described this challenge in their interview:

Last year they had an alternate bus schedule. And the bus schedule was set up to where it was very hard for many students from the reservation [to] actually get on it. And then they were scheduling stuff after hours, and offering some stuff after hours, to where some students could do it and other students couldn't.⁵⁰

Because of these constraints, students who did not have reliable transportation ended up being excluded from some SRI activities. Another CISD staff member discussed the school's approach to handling field trip transportation in their interview:

They would tell the kids we're going to take them to Cliffs or to these amazing places that kids don't get to normally go to in the program. But they would tell the kids, well ... unless your parents can pick you up, you can't go.⁵¹

The CISD staff noted that, because of the transportation restrictions, students living in the town of Cuba or nearby were the ones who typically participated in field trips during 2021 SRI.

During the second year, CISD provided all students with transportation. The school bus was made available after school hours so students could participate in all activities offered by SRI. One of the teachers made a note of this change in their response:

This year, the program, our leaders in that program ... arranged to ensure that we

had late buses because they were going to come back from wherever they were. They were in Santa Fe yesterday. Everybody was able to go.⁵²

Because of the changes in transportation schedules, students who did not have full access to the program during its first year could participate more fully in 2022.

The changes to transportation also helped ensure more equitable provision of meals to students. One staff member described the situation this way:

Last year, a lot of the students told me, "Well, we really wanted to eat breakfast at school." And some people just don't realize that that's a real concern for parents and for students. And I have some students that were really embarrassed to say it, but they said, "We really were hungry last year and we didn't get to eat breakfast at the school because the bus would come and get the Boulder [SRI] kids after the other kids." So the kids that came to summer school could eat breakfast, but the other kids couldn't.⁵³

By addressing the transportation challenges, CISD also ensured that students participating in SRI had a chance to eat the free breakfast provided by the school.

The transportation challenges in 2021 are linked to another equity issue identified by CISD staff. Staff noted that, within the CISD community, there was sometimes a divide between "locals" - students, families, and even staff, who lived in Cuba or nearby - and those

who lived further away. Staff noted concerns that this context may have influenced the identification of students for the 2021 summer program. One CISD staff mentioned the possibility that program recruitment was targeted to local youth. They stated:

I think because sometimes they ... in their heads thought, "Well, this is a kid who gets in trouble," or whatever it is.⁵⁴

They noted that the combination of transportation issues and targeted recruitment led to some students being excluded in the program's first year. In 2022, a concerted effort was made to ensure the program was advertised to all students and emphasize that all students were welcome to participate. Students were recruited through multiple methods, including the posting and wide distribution of flyers and word-of-

mouth recruitment by teachers and past SRI students. Another CISD staff member described their understanding of the revised approach to program recruitment as:

One of my big issues with the community is that sometimes in small schools, and in any small rural area, because the kids grow up together, people say, "Okay, this kid was smart all the way through. This kid's going to do good. This kid's going to do good. Oh yeah, this one's really smart." So those kids get more opportunities sometimes over other students that would really like a shot or that might surprise people if given the opportunity. So from my perspective, it's always about doing programs with the lens of opening it to any student, regardless of who they are or where they come from and not really having all these criteria for selecting students for programs, it should be really open and students should be able to interact with each other.⁵⁵

In 2022, the number of students enrolled in SRI more than doubled, growing from 30 to 78. Native American students represented 70% of SRI Participants in 2021 and 75% in 2022. The increased participation of Native American students primarily drove the growth in program size. This increase is particularly noteworthy because Native American students at CISD had an alternative summer option - CISD offers an Indigenous Education Program that provides Native students paid summer internships to engage in growing and farming practices.



Art Credit: Antonio Montoya,
Serenity Harrison, and Jasmine Ga

CU staff and student gains

The CISD-CU Boulder SRI has benefited CU students and staff. The project has increased CU staff and student understanding of work with rural school districts, particularly those that serve majority Latiné and Native American students. It has also provided opportunities for new research - including one Ph.D. dissertation - and developing new relationships in the Cuba region. The opportunity to develop partnerships with the Diné Nation is particularly timely given the 2021 decision by the Colorado legislature to offer in-state tuition to members of tribal Nations with historical ties to Colorado. As more states and educational institutions take similar measures, meaningful partnerships will be key to attracting Native American students to CU Boulder.

Potential long-term outcomes

Given that SRI has been implemented twice and that data collection for this evaluation focused solely on the summer and fall of 2022, this evaluation cannot speak to long-term outcomes. However, based on the data collected and work with the advisory committee, it can point to potential long-term outcomes that might be examined in future research and evaluation.

For student participants, we hypothesize that participation in SRI may support concrete gains across multiple domains, including engagement with Cuba and CISD communities, sociopolitical development, and consideration of educational and career pathways. Existing literature on the types of programs that SRI

was modeled after suggest a broad range of potential short-term outcomes, ranging from increased feelings of educational empowerment within their education to positive impacts on social identity, academic empowerment, hope, civic empowerment, commitment to future engagement, and thinking critically about justice.⁵⁶ Existing research on youth organizing also suggests longer-term impacts on civic engagement as well as academic and career trajectories.⁵⁷ The specific activities associated with SRI might generally support increased sociopolitical engagement and, more specifically, greater engagement in the local community, school decisions, and policy-making. In addition, the exposure to CU Boulder staff and other higher learning institutions visited on field trips, as well as the opportunity to earn college credit and engage in professional development through the SRI, might result in students making more informed/realistic decisions about education/career pathways.

Concerning long-term outcomes for teachers, interviews conducted at the close of the 2022 SRI suggest that participation may support integrating new teaching approaches into regular practice and more culturally and contextually informed approaches to teaching. These interviews also suggest the possibility of additional long-term outcomes, including: greater engagement with local community, stronger connections among teachers, and increased engagement in school and district leadership.

Potential long-term outcomes for CISD and the communities it serves align with the goals of CISD's system-wide transformation. The focus on culture and the success of SRI in attracting Native American students might contribute to the development of additional culturally sustaining programs for Native American students. The strong relationships developed through the SRI may, over time, contribute to a more generalized improvement in the social climate of CISD for both students and teachers. The successful implementation of SRI may also bolster ongoing CISD transformation efforts by providing a concrete example of district efforts to provide students with opportunities for educational success. Finally, the links between SRI and ongoing CISD work around student voice suggest that the institute may contribute to a stronger culture of centering student voice.



Chapter 4

How do CISD and CU Boulder sustain and improve the SRI moving forward?



As documented in the previous chapter, the SRI is a multi-layered program with complex goals. The success of the SRI is clear in the expanded enrollment and retention of students across the years and in the short-term outcomes discussed by participants in this evaluation. Looking at success and challenges across two years of program implementation affords the opportunity to identify key considerations for the program's future. Interviewees and focus group

participants considered how to maintain and build on program strengths, ensure ongoing alignment with CISD's system-wide transformation efforts, and achieve long-term program sustainability. Six overarching themes encompass their reflections: Teacher retention and recruitment, student enrollment and social dynamics, curriculum content, student presentations and public speaking, and community engagement. Their recommendations are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. Considerations for the Design and Implementation of SRI 2023

Clear and achievable priorities

- Prioritize clear, universal communication around recruitment in order to recruit as many staff as can be supported by the SRI budget.
- Clarify behavioral expectations for students in advance (or at the start) of the SRI, in order to set a strong foundation for active engagement throughout the program.
- Renew the focus on the morning story telling activity, and on student engagement in this activity, to facilitate relationship building.
- Scaffold the final presentations by giving students practice making presentations throughout the SRI.
- Advertise and plan the final presentations in order to increase community engagement.
- Ensure that the SRI focuses on issues that have direct connections to/benefits for students. Educational and career pathways were highlighted as one possibility.
- Take a 2-stage approach to ordering supplies for the SRI, in order to ensure supplies meet needs and interests that emerge during the program.

Measures to prioritize if resources permit

- Shift the timing of the SRI in order to eliminate overlap with other programs and ensure all staff have a chance to rest, and time to plan, before the start of the new year.
- Increase the number of teachers, teachers' aids, or program assistants to help reduce/manage class size and more efficiently handle logistics.
- Incorporate weekly time for CISD and CU Boulder staff to collaborate around implementation of curriculum.
- Integrate greater connections to and expanded roles for community members, particularly members of neighboring Diné communities.
- Incorporate additional field trips, particularly those that highlight Native American cultures and facilitate connections to educational institutions and career pathways.

Possibilities to consider in tandem with CISD goals of achieving educational equity

- Establish a clear enrollment cut off date.
- Establish enrollment criteria/guideline.
- Take a more intentional approach to creating small groups.

Teacher recruitment and retention

In 2022, the SRI was staffed by six CISD teachers and two CU Boulder staff. CU Boulder maintained its commitment to two graduate students staffing the program. The complement of CU Boulder staff who joined the SRI was intentionally reduced in order to prioritize continuity and relationship building. The initial plans for one additional CU Boulder staff member to travel to Cuba to help with the first week of SRI and another to spend a week later in the semester for evaluation data collection did not go as planned because of COVID and family concerns. Regarding CISD staff, one teacher from 2021 returned, and CISD hired five new teachers. Two additional teachers initially committed to teaching in the SRI and participated in the co-design process but shifted to teaching in the Indigenous Education Program before the start of the SRI.

The original intention was for the SRI to be staffed by eight CISD teachers, with CU Boulder staff floating between small groups to consult on implementation strategies and provide support as needed. To compensate for the two lost CISD staff, the CU Boulder staff also took on regular teaching roles, sharing responsibility for one classroom and small group while providing support to the CISD staff. This allowed the SRI to operate smoothly under regular circumstances, but left staff stretched too thin to manage unplanned disruptions easily. When a CISD or CU Boulder staff member was absent, teachers sometimes

had to double up and manage a curriculum designed for a small group with two groups in a classroom. The challenges in SRI staffing highlighted the importance of teacher recruitment and retention.

CISD staff shared suggestions around practices that might facilitate recruitment and retention, including attention to the timing of summer programs and communication of job opportunities. CISD offers multiple programs during the summer, sometimes leading to competition between programs for staff. Interviewees suggested that coordinating the timing of programs to reduce concurrent offerings could help expand the pool of teachers available to work with the SRI. In addition, they suggested that timing the SRI so that staff have adequate time for rest and planning before the start of the academic year might also increase the applicant pool. In 2022, some SRI staff moved directly from another program to the SRI and/or from SRI to the regular academic year without being able to rest fully over the summer. Reflecting on the 2022 schedule, an SRI teacher noted:

One suggestion I think everybody agrees [with] if next year, we can plan ahead and give us at least this last week so that we can prepare for the ... the school year.⁵⁸

Some CISD staff suggested that engaging SRI teachers to continue SRI work during the school year might increase teacher investment in the program. CISD staff also noted that this might motivate some teachers to commit to the SRI despite other summer commitments.

CISD staff also noted the importance of clear, universal communication about SRI job opportunities. In the context of the school district undertaking the sometimes divisive project of transformation for educational equity, staff noted the importance of the extra effort to ensure that job postings were distributed to all staff members. They also noted the importance of ensuring parity of workloads and pay scale across summer job opportunities. In addition, the specification of hiring criteria could also help ensure staffing that supports other SRI goals. For instance, some interviewees suggested that integrating culture might be facilitated by having more SRI teachers that shared the cultural/linguistic background of SRI students. If this is a priority for CISD, it could be specified in job postings.

Student enrollment and social dynamics

The SRI enrollment more than doubled from the first year of its implementation to the second year, growing from 30 students in 2021 to 78 students in 2022. The enrollment growth speaks to the success of the SRI. It reflects both a format and curriculum that appealed to students. Enrollment growth also reflects the positive impact of CISD's work to address logistical challenges (e.g., expanding transportation) so that a greater range of CISD students could participate

in the program. The expansion of the SRI program aligns with CISD's goals of ensuring educational equity and providing educational opportunities to all students. It also poses important considerations for the design and implementation of the SRI moving forward. Participants in interviews and focus groups highlighted increased staff, intentional approaches to group assignment, and the introduction of SRI enrollment criteria as possible innovations to consider. They also highlighted the importance of ensuring that any innovations introduced aligned with CISD's educational equity and inclusion goals.

The teacher recruitment and retention challenges discussed above resulted in an increase in class and research group size. In 2021, with 30 students and four teachers, 7-8 students were in each classroom. In 2022, there were 78 students spread across six classrooms,^d with 12-16 students in each class. With the larger number of students participating in the program and in each classroom, student grouping and social dynamics challenges surfaced. Teachers noted that some students were often off task or socializing instead of working. They also noted that some students routinely left work unfinished and that they had to redirect some students multiple times to focus them on work.

In keeping with the suggestions around

^d One CISD staff member and one CU staff member who were not able to participate in the co-design process and were teaching at the SRI for the first time, were paired with other staff members.'

recruiting and retaining teachers, CISD teachers suggested that one way to address the challenges around managing larger student groups was to have teacher's aides in the classroom or increase the number of teachers. One teacher suggested:

So next year, one of my plans is to incorporate, to actually get some of the teacher's aides to be in with us. I think that will be a really great thing. I think that because the teacher's aides can monitor, they can help with getting things here, supplies, they can help with taking stuff around. We really need that.⁵⁹

Participants also highlighted group formation as an area for possible innovation. Noting that the larger group size reduced opportunities for intentional approaches to forming groups, participants saw potential for intentional group formation to mitigate issues with student dynamics. In 2022, some students were purposefully placed with friends due to a need for emotional and social support. However, larger group size diminished the ability to purposefully structure groups based on needs and interests, and to assign groups with an eye to social dynamics. Some teachers



suggested that, even with the limitation of larger groups, it might be possible to ensure each group had a mix of students that did not know each other well. They suggested splitting up friends and couples might help address problematic social dynamics.

We should also not put together those who are friends because we are also teaching them teamwork and we are also teaching them how to mingle with other people, so if we just keep them in one group, that's not good, so I suggest that by next time, we should not let those friends be together.⁶⁰

Students participating in a feedback session indicated support for splitting up couples, noting that this happens in the “real world.” Some also voiced support for splitting up friend groups. However, others highlighted the importance of the social aspects of the SRI, noting that they were more comfortable and did better work when grouped with friends. Students cautioned that splitting up friend groups might hurt enrollment, participation, and retention. These comments echoed prior student feedback advocating for students to be able to self-select small groups when on field trips. Participants suggested an alternate approach might be to spend time clarifying behavioral expectations as students joined the SRI.

In addition, teachers and students suggested that the larger pool of students might call for some differentiation of SRI work and schedule because familiarity with research terminology/methods varied across students. In addition, students returning for a second year were already familiar with the SRI, while others were participating for the first time or joined the program after the start date. Both students and teachers noted differences in the student pacing regarding SRI work. Some students needed time to learn about the goals and structure of SRI or benefitted from greater attention/support in approaching the work; others were more ready to dive into work and wanted more time to focus on their research. Students and staff suggested purposeful grouping of students within the SRI as one

potential approach to better supporting the range of student needs and variation in the pacing of work. They also suggested that new enrollment be completed before the start of the SRI to reduce potential pacing differences between students who attended the SRI from the beginning and those who joined late and needed to get caught up. Implementing a cut-off enrollment date would allow for more effective planning and selection of small groups.

Some CISD staff also considered the possibility of setting enrollment guidelines or criteria in order to help ensure that SRI students would fully engage with the goals and work of the summer program. In keeping with student suggestions, one teacher suggested the possibility of clarifying student responsibilities before the beginning of the SRI:

Maybe we could send out flyers that when you join Boulder, these are the things that you're supposed to be doing.⁶¹

Other staff discussed a possibility, raised in multiple interviews, of introducing criteria for selecting SRI participants. Describing the range of 2022 participants, one teacher noted:

I think not all of them are passion[ate] to do the research, but some of them, they're just there for money. Some of them, they're just there for their friends and then they don't have that, what do you call that? The skills or what I mean capacity to really work on the program.⁶²

Some CISD staff, noting the limited funding

and the importance of small group size, suggested that reducing enrollment by introducing selection criteria would have positive effects. Others raised the question of educational equity, arguing that imposing selection criteria could reinforce existing disparities and would conflict with the equity goals of CISD's transformation efforts. Across interviews and focus groups, staff and students reflecting on the impact of SRI enrollment growth expressed consensus on the need to adapt SRI structure and function to address student dynamics and maintain program strengths. There was no consensus on the specific adaptations required as the SRI moves forward. Considering innovations that address student enrollment issues and social dynamics in ways that align with CISD transformation goals will be an important task in designing the 2023 SRI.

Curriculum content

In considering the creation and implementation of the SRI curriculum, teachers and students looked across two cycles of the SRI and highlighted ways to build on program strengths. Teachers called for the integration of collaborative time for CISD and CU Boulder staff to work on curriculum implementation during the weeks that the SRI is offered. They also recommended greater engagement of students in SRI co-design and implementation processes. Both students and teachers highlighted morning story-sharing as a significant activity and also called for greater integration of Native American culture. Finally, both students and teachers noted the importance of a substantive SRI focus that directly benefited students and highlighted greater incorporation of information about

postsecondary and career opportunities as an important goal for future iterations of the SRI.

CISD teachers working with the SRI noted that they felt well supported in curriculum development: the co-design process allowed them to shape the SRI curriculum while also getting support from CU Boulder staff. They indicated they would like to extend this type of collaboration



by incorporating more collaborative planning time during the weeks the SRI is offered. The focus of these planning sessions would be curriculum implementation, with the sessions serving as a forum for teachers to envision the implementation of lessons and discuss different implementation strategies. Teachers spoke of leaning on each other as resources to determine how to implement each lesson. Still, they noted that having a more systematic approach would be beneficial, with both the teaching and research team offering input on implementation.

I think more time to explain to us ... Discuss this or share this with our student because sometimes we have the plan and then I said, oh, we don't have time to reflect ourselves. How do we implement this?⁶³

The integration of regular, collaborative planning time during the SRI would also be useful in the case of shifts from in-person to online modality. The SRI experienced disruptions due to COVID-19 concerns, bus route changes due to the weather, and other unexpected events. Staff recognized that while the co-design sessions were productive for crafting a curriculum and defining the program scope, they were insufficient to support staff in implementing lessons online. Incorporating attention to potential shifts to online modality throughout the planning process and supporting the implementation of online lessons through ongoing planning sessions would ease the teaching burden and improve the delivery of lessons when modality shifts occur.

Noting the centrality of student voice in CISD's transformation efforts, participants also suggested expanding students' engagement in SRI co-design and implementation processes. Students were included in the 2022 co-design process, and during the SRI, they gave daily feedback on what worked well and what didn't. CISD staff voiced appreciation for these efforts while pushing for greater student engagement during the SRI co-design process and throughout the school year. Students were on the 2022 co-design team and gave feedback during the sessions when members asked their opinion. However, most sessions were held online because the co-design team was spread between Boulder and the greater Cuba region. Students primarily participated through the chat function, giving limited feedback. CISD staff suggested greater engagement through ongoing student voice feedback sessions on the curriculum and more structured feedback processes for students to have greater agency and voice in the program design. Further, there were suggestions for greater student involvement by allowing student research groups to have greater agency in selecting research project topics and presentations. In addition, CISD staff have already been working to support sustained student engagement during the 2022-2023 school year through student voice sessions. In these sessions, students garner feedback from their peers and work with adults in the district to implement the recommendations generated through the SRI and ongoing work.

Looking across the broad range of activities incorporated during two iterations of the SRI, CISD staff members highlighted the particular student engagement value of morning story sharing.

The bonding stories, sharing stories is more connecting to the student ... As a person, for me, it helped me to be more open minded, to know more, more informative, that morning starting of the day, that time, I feel like that it's more interactive and we're getting more attention from the students, more responses, so if we can continue that program, that event every day.⁶⁴

They noted that, within the second year of programming, student participation in story-sharing dwindled and called for a renewed focus on sharing stories. When asked about morning story sharing, students linked a decline in student participation to the growth in SRI enrollment. Noting that it could be intimidating to speak in front of a large group, particularly when they did not know everyone, they suggested a smaller group format might be more effective for future story-sharing activities.⁶⁵

Staff also highlighted a desire to further expand the integration of culture, particularly Native American student experience, heritage, and language in the SRI. The 2022 SRI included multiple activities and approaches that intentionally sought to integrate culture into the curriculum. Such activities included storytelling and story collecting (through

interviews and vlogs), which embraced students' biliteracy and bilingualism by allowing students to incorporate multiple languages in their collection of artifacts for their recommendations. Interviewees suggested expanding on this by bringing in more guest speakers from the surrounding Diné Nation, having more field trips to Native American and Latine art and cultural museums, and increasing the focus on students' cultural and language practices. There were also suggestions for greater engagement with culture and language by focusing on student experiences in the neighboring Nation, formally integrating Diné language support into the curriculum, and emphasizing students' expertise in ranching and cultivation. These suggestions for greater emphasis on Diné language and centralizing cultural practices would highlight the benefits of being multilingual/multicultural and encourage students to feel pride in their experiences. Lastly, there were suggestions for including perspectives from Native American staff within the planning committee. While there was feedback from Native staff on the program's focus, participants suggested greater engagement could occur throughout the planning process.

Finally, students and staff reflected on the substantive focus of the SRI. The focus in 2021 was educational equity, and the 2022 SRI focus was food justice. Both topics aligned with CISD system transformation goals. The 2022 focus was also chosen for alignment

with the focus of a grant from the Kellogg foundation. Both students and adults noted that the 2022 focus was more complex than 2021, with a scope less directly tied to CISD. In thinking about possible future topics, students highlighted the value of topics that “benefit us,” suggesting culture/race/ethnicity or career pathways. Adults interviewed also noted opportunities for growth in the curricular focus on postsecondary and career opportunities. They pointed to the possibility of helping students learn about the different educational/career opportunities. Field trips were important sites for learning about these options and connecting with community mentors. Students also suggested incorporating a more traditional internship structure, pairing students with companies/institutions.

Student presentations and public speaking

CISD staff highlighted the value of student presentations and noted opportunities for increasing community engagement and scaffolding presentation skills for students. Students were asked to create public-facing presentations in their groups and present



them to an outside audience. Teachers noted that creating a final project that asked students to engage in public speaking pushed students outside their comfort zone but also resulted in moments of great pride. One teacher pointed to the importance of public speaking skills, noting, “I tell them, ‘You’re going to be public speaking no matter where you go.’”⁶⁶

CISD teachers noted that the student presentation posed a challenge for students, whom they often viewed as introverted and averse to public speaking. Multiple teachers suggested ways to better support students in developing public speaking skills. One suggestion was to integrate students more

into the daily storytelling time. By doing this, students could practice speaking to larger audiences about their experiences and work through their nervousness around presenting. Teachers also suggested students could have opportunities to share their work within their small groups to practice presenting clear and coherent ideas. Teachers felt this would give students important practice without the pressure of presenting to a large group. This intentional scaffolding in small groups could also give students time to audit their presentations and organize their ideas before the final presentation week. Multiple staff members said this was something they felt was rushed in the second year of programming.

In keeping with the literature on the types of programs on which the SRI is based, adults also suggested that student engagement with the presentation could increase if they saw community members ready to authentically engage with their suggestions and felt their final presentations could contribute to critical change.⁶⁷ Some teaching staff noted a perceived decline in student interest in the presentations between 2021 and 2022. Therefore, the teaching staff suggested increasing the advertisement of presentations so that students could present their culminating work to a broad outside audience. Staff members noted the needed attention to multiple logistical issues. Logistical issues include a formally arranged venue that included food for outside community

members, recording the final sessions so others could watch asynchronously, and increasing community involvement in the presentations. One teacher highlighted that formalizing the event could also give students greater connections to local policy advocacy and real-world applications of their suggestions. The teacher stated, “[the final presentation] provides a real, a way of actually presenting what you have. So I think that’s really important to do, just making sure that last event is really well planned.”⁶⁸

Community engagement

Students, staff, and community members noted that students enjoyed the field trip experiences incorporated into the SRI. They noted that field trips emphasized the connections made to local organizations and institutions of higher education as significant. Both teachers and students highlighted the potential to include even more field trips and opportunities to connect with local community members and institutions throughout the SRI.

Multiple interviewees highlighted the benefits of greater communication and engagement with the surrounding communities. As discussed above, they suggested that greater community engagement could support increased student engagement in final presentations. They also saw the potential for community education to further the centering of students’ cultural and linguistic knowledge. Some adults felt that the incorporation of

additional field trips could also increase opportunities for students to see themselves and their experiences reflected in the program:

And in order for, I think, for it all to come together in what you guys are doing, the focus needs to be somewhat on their [Native American students'] land. Their exact community, or around their chapter houses, or just so they see it coming to them, not them coming to us.⁶⁹

Interviewees noted that a greater connection to the community within the program could increase the relationships between the surrounding communities and help inform students and families about post-secondary options. For example, they suggested that having students work with community mentors might support student learning around specific tasks while building important connections in the community.

So I wonder if the summer program couldn't recruit mentors from the community that might be available to a couple of students that are year round or something, in between summer programs. Maybe that would be an interesting thing to set up. And mentors that they would have comfortable contacting without their parents as intermediaries or anything.⁷⁰

Others emphasized that focusing on the community could allow students to better understand and feel more confident about their post-secondary opportunities. The field trips were seen as spaces to expand

on information about higher education institutions through campus visits and understanding career skills based on their interests and interactions with community members in those careers.

Logistics and programmatic supports

CISD's experience in offering the SRI in 2021 to 2022 demonstrated the vital importance of attention to logistical issues and the ways in which addressing logistics could be key to educational equity. Between 2021 and 2022, CISD expanded transportation offerings to ensure that all students participating in the SRI could arrive at CISD in time to eat breakfast and could easily return home after field trips. CISD administrators credited these logistical shifts with contributing to increased SRI enrollment. Participants in interviews and focus groups drew attention to additional logistical challenges, such as concurrent program offerings and the timing of supply orders, that impacted SRI implementation.

CISD staff highlighted their learning about the challenges related to the concurrent summer program offerings. The SRI and the Indigenous program were offered during the same weeks and had overlapping meal times. This strained cafeteria capacity; seats were limited, and students faced longer meal lines. Program staff quickly resolved those challenges by staggering program lunches' locations and timing. Still, interviewees and focus group participants noted that the timing of lunches

was an important logistical consideration in planning for future SRIs. Some staff also suggested that, if possible, program calendars have different programs running at different times.

Staff also highlighted their learning about the appropriate timing for ordering educational supplies. In 2022, CISD ordered the SRI supplies during the school year and co-design process based on teachers' expectations of program needs. An early order of some supplies was essential to ensuring a smooth start to the program. The early timeline for ordering supplies may serve as a model for timing other logistical tasks, such as ordering snacks and compiling information on students' health and educational needs. In addition, staff suggested that a program assistant focused on managing logistics might be a useful addition to the SRI structure. However, staff also noted that the projected educational supply needs did not match SRI's reality. As students planned and executed their final presentations amidst the shift to online programming, many were not able to use the supplies that were ordered, and others asked for materials that had not been part of the initial order. One suggestion was to supplement the early order of supplies with an additional order when students plan their presentations. By that point, the staff has a clearer understanding/idea of the needed supplies.



Key considerations moving forward

Participants in interviews and focus groups identified a number of suggestions for building on SRI strengths while addressing key challenges within the existing scope of SRI resources. These suggestions, which span both administrative and curricular domains, are summarized below and may serve as a useful reference during co-design and implementation of the 2023 SRI.

- Prioritize clear, universal communication around staff recruitment in order to recruit as many staff as can be supported by the SRI budget.
- Clarify behavioral expectations for students in advance (or at the start) of the SRI, in order to set a strong foundation for active engagement throughout the program.

- Renew the focus on the morning storytelling activity and student engagement within this activity, to facilitate relationship building.
- Scaffold the final presentations by giving students practice making presentations throughout the SRI.
- Advertise and plan the final presentations in order to increase community engagement and presence.
- Ensure that SRI focuses on issues directly connecting to and benefiting students. Educational and career pathways were highlighted as one possibility.
- Take a 2-stage approach to ordering supplies for the SRI, in order to ensure supplies meet needs and interests that emerge during the program.

Participants in interviews and focus groups also identified strategies for building on SRI strengths and addressing challenges that may require resources beyond those available for summer 2022. Long term sustainability of the SRI should be a key factor in consideration of strategies and innovations that affect program costs. However the relationship between sustainability and costs is not straightforward. In the long run, reducing the overall cost of the SRI may be key to sustaining the program. In the short term, however, increased investment may allow CISD to develop capacity and expertise that reduces costs by decreasing reliance on CU Boulder staff. Other

ways to sustain the SRI include facilitating greater community support and engagement and opening up new funding pathways. The list below summarizes key strategies, the challenges they address, and the resources that they may require.

- CISD staff called for careful attention to the timing of the SRI in order to ensure all staff have a chance to rest, and time to plan, before the start of the new academic year. They also suggested eliminating the overlap with the Indigenous Education Program and other summer offerings to reduce competition for teachers and school resources. Shifts to eliminate concurrent programming may also result in increased transportation and meal preparation costs.
- Increasing the number of teachers, teachers' aids, or program assistants to help reduce/manage class size and efficiently handle logistics. This may require an expansion of the SRI budget.
- Incorporating time for CISD and CU Boulder staff to collaborate around the implementation of curriculum. This time would support CISD capacity building, improve implementation of SRI curriculum, and support adaptation of curriculum and teaching when shifts from in-person to online modality become necessary. This might require an increase in SRI funding to cover the additional planning time.

- Integrating greater connections to and expanded roles for community members. There is a particular need to incorporate additional connections to neighboring Diné communities in order to center Diné students' culturally based knowledge and experience. This strategy is dependent on the ability to engage Diné staff and community members in SRI design and implementation. Additional resources may be needed to support their participation.
- Both students and staff recommended additional field trips, with a particular emphasis on field trips that highlighted Native American cultures and facilitated connections to educational institutions and career pathways. This may also increase transportation costs.

Incorporating these strategies will require careful consideration and creative thinking about ways to allocate and generate resources for future SRI considerations. For example, students participating in a focus group suggested one cost-effective possibility for expanding SRI staffing while also building on program strengths when they asked: Could we bring past students back as teacher assistants? Such suggestions will need to be carefully considered along with other participant and group recommendations.

Finally, participants in interviews and focus groups made some

suggestions around addressing group size and student dynamics that will need to be carefully considered in tandem with CISD goals around educational equity. Moderate measures such as establishing a clear enrollment cut off date in advance of the start of the SRI may be equitably implemented if paired with effective efforts to ensure the cut off date is clearly communicated to all CISD students. Suggestions around establishing enrollment criteria/guidelines, taking more intentional approaches to creating small groups such as separating friends and couples, or creating small groups based on student knowledge of research methods within SRI are more complex. Such efforts may address the social challenges that staff and students described, but strategies



involving tracking or exclusion of students also inherently include some risk of reproducing the biases and inequities that CISD seeks to eliminate through its system-wide transformation. Incorporation of any such strategies must only be undertaken if careful analysis of the potential equity implications indicate that implementation of enrollment criteria or intentional strategies for group formation can be accomplished in a way that increases educational equity.

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Appendix 1

How we did this evaluation



This report summarizes information from a formative evaluation of the CISD-CU Boulder SRI. This evaluation was commissioned by CISD, with the goal of understanding the scope of the program, the logic that drives the SRI, and key priorities for the design and implementation of future SRIs. The evaluation extends to capturing preliminary findings around short-term outcomes of the SRI and hypothesizing potential long-term outcomes for students, and district and research staff. However, the SRI has only been offered twice and, accordingly, these findings and hypotheses should be treated with caution. The SRI is still developing and evolving; rigorous assessment of outcomes should be undertaken only once the program has achieved mature implementation.

Nine key informant interviews were conducted and audio recorded at the end of the second year of programming, in Fall 2022. Key informants were identified through snowball sampling, starting with informants who were involved in the first and second year of the program and willing to participate in an interview. Once the second year of programming concluded, a focus group was conducted with students who volunteered to participate in an anonymous feedback session with one member of the research team who took anonymized notes on their experiences. Lastly, a concluding focus group was conducted with the teaching team of the second year of programming and audio recorded to capture their experiences within the program and thoughts on future programming. Evaluation data sources are summarized in the table below.

Once data was collected, and interviews and focus groups were transcribed, the research team used qualitative data analysis software to code an initial set of pre-identified themes and then inductively identify and code major themes in the data. Thematic findings from the qualitative coding were used to develop analytic memos. These memos provided a deep analysis that is the core of the chapters in this evaluation. Dr. Vandna Sinha, Revaline Nez, and Kate Baca from the Research Hub for Youth Organizing at CU Boulder conducted focus groups and interviews, as well as the analysis and writing, with support from Dr. Michelle Renée Valladares.

The evaluation was informed by collaborative feedback sessions with an advisory committee that included three CISD teachers, two district level administrators and one community member. All committee members participated in monthly meetings from November 2022-March 2023. Our analytic process paired deep collaborative conversations with an iterative drafting process. In collaborative meetings between the Research Hub and advisory committee we discussed emerging themes and findings. These conversations supported ongoing reflexivity, facilitating consideration of the ways in which our own experiences and positionalities might influence the data to which we had access, the framing of this evaluation, and the interpretation of the data. They also allowed for member checking and committee review of written work, supporting the integration of feedback from multiple perspectives throughout the analysis and writing process.

Methods Table

Source	Data Collection Method	Description
Key informant interviews	Snowball sampling from adults and community members involved in the past two years of programming.	9 Key informant interviews were conducted with 8 informants that were involved with the program across the two years of programming in order to understand the context of the SRI.
Teacher focus group	Teachers in the program during the second year.	Once the program concluded, a focus group was conducted with teachers involved with the program, to capture their reflections and thoughts on things to keep moving forward.
Student focus group	Self-selected students enrolled in the second year of programming.	Students selected to participate in a focus group, where their feedback was recorded without any key identifiers, to reflect on their participation and highlight any changes or improvements that could be made in the future.
District self-reported data	Documents including District Strategic Plan and grant reports for a Kellogg Foundation Grant.	CISD shared documents centering the district context, including (but not limited to) student and staff demographics and strategic plans.

