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Hundreds of CPS High School Students Compete in City Championship Debate Tournament

Chicago Debates wrapped its 2020-2021 high school debate season with its virtual City Championship Tournament this past weekend. The City Championship was the culminating event of the season, which brought together nearly 200 high school students from 26 Chicago Public Schools, all vying for the title of 2021 High School Debate Champion. In teams of two, students debated the topic of Criminal Justice Reform: *The United States federal government should enact substantial criminal justice reform in the United States in one or more of the following areas: forensic science, policing, sentencing.*

Chicago Debates presented Gregorio Chavez of Pritzker College Prep with the 2021 [Debater of the Year Award](#) and Ryan Howell from Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center as the 2021 Coach of the Year. Chicago Debates Associate Board member and recently appointed Cook County Public Defender, Sharone Mitchell, was also recognized as Chicago Debates' Alum of the Year (Morgan Park, Class of 2001). Sharone credits the power of debate for much of his success: *"I think Chicago Debates is a great engine of social change because we are building up the leaders of our city. We're putting them on a path to change the world. I have this incredible debt of gratitude to this program, to this activity. Our city needs people who are going to be actively engaged in our betterment and improvement. I think Chicago Debates does such a great job of molding those leaders,"* he said.

Saturday's awards ceremony featured remarks by Chicago Public Schools' Academic Competitions Manager, Sylvia Nelson Jordan: *"I'm incredibly proud of the work we've done and accomplished; our common goal is to provide unlimited opportunities to our future leaders. We are determined to collectively provide virtual opportunities for our debaters. When you have the passion, you find a way—and we found a way."*

The full tournament results will be available this week at [Resources.ChicagoDebates.org/tournaments/](https://resources.chicagodebates.org/tournaments/). Special thanks to all of the schools that participated this weekend:

Amundsen High School
Brooks College Prep
Chicago H.S. for Agricultural Sciences
Chicago Military Academy Bronzeville
Goode STEM Academy
Hancock College Prep
Hubbard High School
Jones College Prep

Lake View High School
Lane Tech College Prep
Lincoln Park High School
Lindblom Math and Science Academy
Little Village Lawndale High School
Michele Clark Academic Prep Magnet High School
Senn High School
Northside College Prep

Pritzker College Prep
Solorio Academy High School
South Shore International College Prep
Thomas Kelly High School
Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center
Walter Payton College Prep
Whitney Young High School
Taft High School

Chicago Debates quickly pivoted to virtually deliver debate programming when school was shut-down over a year ago due to COVID-19. Within the last school year, nearly 1000 students have participated in 45 tournaments hosted by Chicago Debates. *"It's been a remarkable year and very exciting to culminate that with the City Championship. We look forward to an even bigger and better next year,*

and we look forward to seeing you back. For the seniors: this is the end for you; congratulations as you take your next steps forward. I'm sure you'll always remember debate," said Executive Director Dr. Toinette Gunn.

You can support Chicago Debates by making a donation at ChicagoDebates.org/donate or by texting **CHIDEBATES** to **243725**.

About Chicago Debates: Chicago Debates is bridging the opportunity gap for Chicago Public School (CPS) students by providing them with an after-school program that supports their academic, career, and leadership success. Our mission is to advance the educational achievement, community contributions, and life success of Chicago's youth through the transformative power of academic debate. We envision a world in which Chicago youth are empowered to find their voice, succeed in college and career, and become leaders in their community. Debate may not fix all of the world's problems, but it can shape the next generation of leaders who will. We exist to ensure that next generation includes some of Chicago's most marginalized youth.