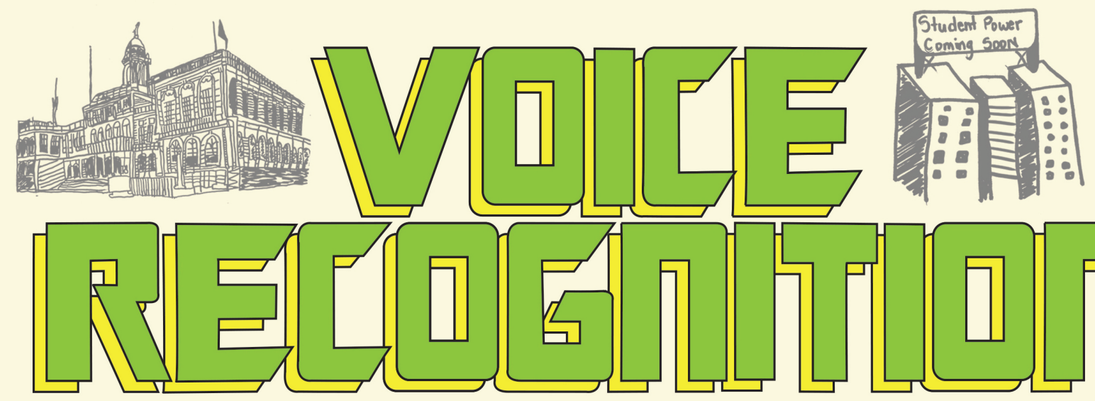
In the fall of 2013, CUP collaborated with teaching artist Max Allbee and students from Vanguard High School to find out who has a say in the public school system, and where students' voices can be heard.

We investigated the different bodies that make up the NYC school system, and learned about student and community decision-making power at the school, district, and city level by interviewing parent and student advisory groups, academics studying education systems, and school administrators. We designed this robot to show how decisions are made and where students can find a voice in the machine.

These circuits show how strongly different parts are connected. The more wires, the stronger the connection.

This bullhorn shows where public high school students have a say in school policies.



VOICE RECOGNITION

WHO MAKES DECISIONS IN NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

In New York City, the MAYOR is responsible for leading the school system. The mayor got the state to give him more control over the schools and he appoints a chancellor who is in charge of running the schools.

»Judith Kafka, Baruch College

The PANEL FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY votes on all policies, budgets, contracts, regulations, and changes to buildings and programs that the Department of Education proposes.

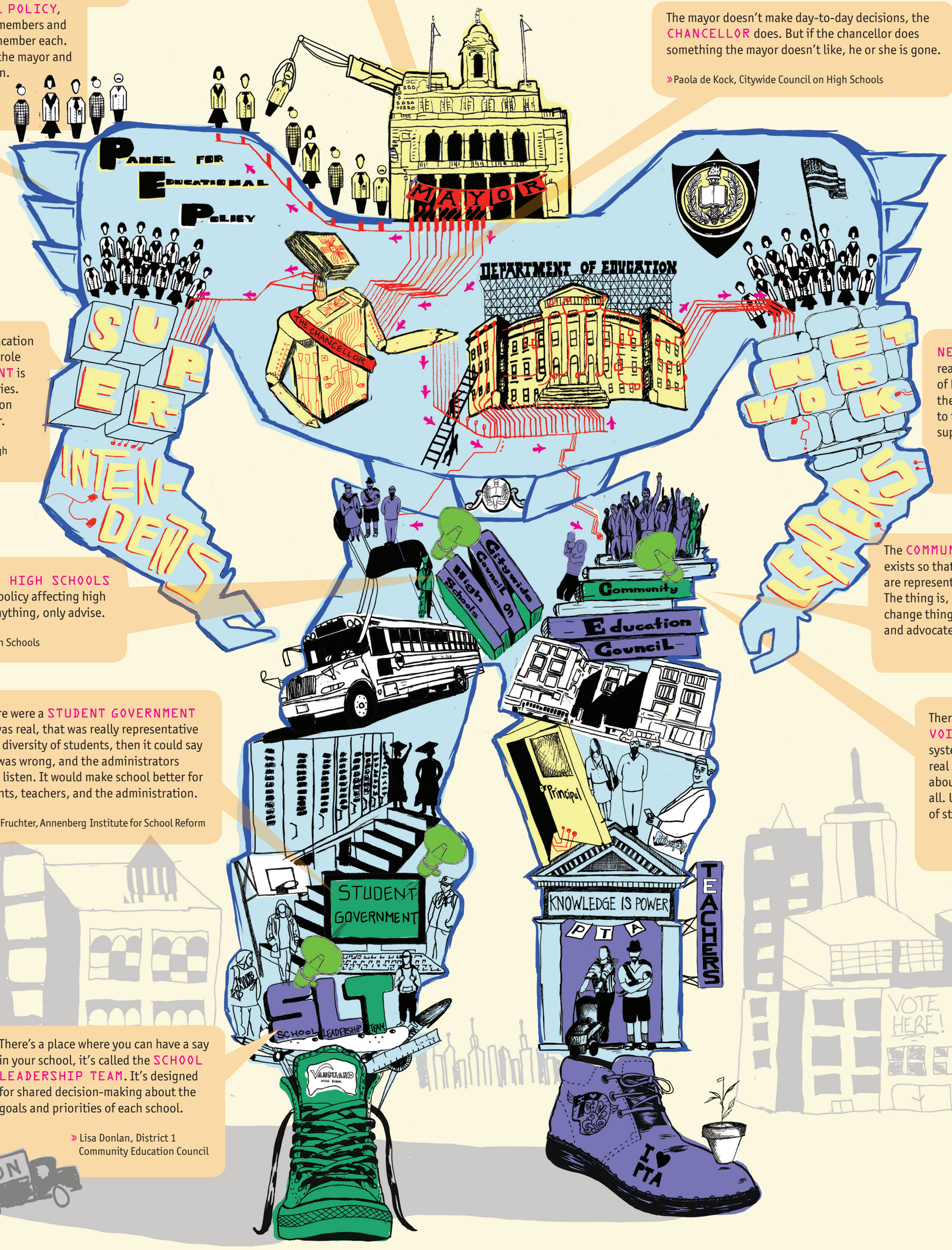
»Lisa Donlan, District 1 Community Education Council

In the PANEL FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY, the mayor appoints eight of thirteen members and the borough presidents appoint one member each. The panel passes on the policies that the mayor and the chancellor have already decided on.

»Norm Fruchter, Annenberg Institute for School Reform

The mayor doesn't make day-to-day decisions, the CHANCELLOR does. But if the chancellor does something the mayor doesn't like, he or she is gone.

»Paola de Kock, Citywide Council on High Schools



The Department of Education creates policy, and my role as SUPERINTENDENT is to implement the policies. The policies are based on the vision of the mayor.

»Karen Watts, Brooklyn high school superintendent

NETWORK LEADERS are the real connection in the Department of Education, they exist to support the schools and are more pivotal to the success of a school than a superintendent.

»Bill Klann, principal, Vanguard High School

The CITYWIDE COUNCIL ON HIGH SCHOOLS gives advice to the chancellor on policy affecting high schools. We don't get to decide anything, only advise.

»Paola de Kock, Citywide Council on High Schools

The COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL exists so that parents and community members are represented in how our schools are governed. The thing is, we don't have a lot of power to change things. We only have the power to inform and advocate.

»Lisa Donlan, District 1 Community Education Council

If there were a STUDENT GOVERNMENT that was real, that was really representative of the diversity of students, then it could say what was wrong, and the administrators would listen. It would make school better for students, teachers, and the administration.

»Norm Fruchter, Annenberg Institute for School Reform

There's some STUDENT VOICE in the NYC school system, but there's almost no real student decision-making about anything important at all. Urban systems are afraid of students.

»Norm Fruchter, Annenberg Institute for School Reform

There's a place where you can have a say in your school, it's called the SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM. It's designed for shared decision-making about the goals and priorities of each school.

» Lisa Donlan, District 1 Community Education Council

The **Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)** is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities.

CUP's **Urban Investigations** are project-based afterschool programs in which public high school students explore fundamental questions about how the city works. Students collaborate with CUP teaching artists to create multimedia teaching tools that reach audiences in the fields of arts and social justice. welcometoCUP.org

Vanguard High School is a Title 1 school in Manhattan committed to cultivating the resources necessary to become literate, articulate, analytical, reflective, and empathetic citizens. vanguardnyc.net

CUP
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