

PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED
CLOSURE OF FRANCIS SCOTT KEY ELEMENTARY

ORIGINAL

APRIL 17, 2013

5:30 P.M.

125 South Clark Street, Suite 1500

Chicago, Illinois

PHILIP BRONSTEIN

HEARING OFFICER

1
2 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Good evening.
3 My name is Philip Bronstein. I'm an attorney
4 licensed to practice law in the State of
5 Illinois. And have been selected by the Chief
6 Executive Officer to serve as independent
7 hearing officer in the matter of the proposal
8 to close Key Elementary School.

9 I have no employment relationship
10 with the Board, nor do I have a relationship
11 with the Chicago Public School, its employees
12 or staff, the Local School Council, labor
13 organization or any charter or contract school.

14 The purpose of this hearing is to
15 allow me to receive public comment from
16 concerned persons, including representatives of
17 the CEO, members of the Local School Council,
18 parents and guardians of students, students
19 themselves, principal, faculty and staff
20 members, union representatives and generally
21 members of the public concerning the CEO's
22 proposal.

23 I will review the documents to
24 ascertain notice is compliant with all

1 pertinent statutes and guidelines issued by the
2 CEO.

3 The record will reflect that this
4 hearing is scheduled to commence at 5:30 on
5 April 17th, 2013, at 125 South Clark. And
6 that, in fact, the hearing did commence a few
7 moments later due to the weather.

8 We have present a Spanish
9 language and sign interpreter to assist as
10 needed.

11 This hearing will conclude at
12 7:30 p.m. or when the last speaker who has
13 signed up to speak has completed their remarks,
14 whichever occurs first.

15 Be aware that the record will
16 remain open until 5:00 o'clock tomorrow for the
17 receipt of any written material that you might
18 wish to submit.

19 The Board attorney and another
20 official will be happy to provide you with a
21 fax number to send that material in or you can
22 certainly bring the material here as well.

23 All written material, documents
24 and public comment will be considered in the

1 preparation of a summary report issued to the
2 CEO no later than May 5th.

3 The CEO will include in this
4 report any recommendations that I submitted to
5 it.

6 It is my understanding that the
7 matter of the proposed closure will be
8 considered by the Board at its May meeting.

9 To ensure an stenographic record
10 of these proceedings, it's, of course, vital
11 that the room remain quiet except for the
12 individual designated to speak.

13 If you've signed up, when your
14 name is called, kindly approach the lectern,
15 state and spell your name, and if you'd also
16 kindly provide your affiliation.

17 Speakers are limited to two
18 minutes, but perhaps we can be a little more
19 generous with that time limitation this
20 evening.

21 At the two-minute mark you will
22 be reminded by the timekeeper of the two-minute
23 limitation and you will be asked to conclude
24 your remarks.

1 The CEO will be presenting first
2 this evening. Be aware when the CEO makes the
3 presentation, that this does not open up the
4 floor to question and answer session. No
5 questions will be taken from either attendees
6 or speakers.

7 When the speaker
8 concludes -- when the CEO concludes their
9 presentation, I will receive public comment
10 from those present who have signed up to speak.

11 Speakers will be called in the
12 order in which they have signed up.

13 I would like now to hear from the
14 assistant general counsel, Mr. Joseph Gergeni

15 MR. GERGENI: Good evening, your Honor.
16 My name is Joe Gergeni. I'm an attorney for
17 the Chicago Board of Education Law Department.

18 I'm appearing before you today in
19 connection with the proposal of the Chief
20 Executive Officer or CEO, Chicago Public
21 Schools, to close Francis Scott Key Elementary
22 School, or Key, and welcome returning students
23 at Edward K. Ellington Elementary School or
24 Ellington.

1 At this time I would like to
2 tender to you and ask you to admit into the
3 record the CEO's compiled Exhibit 1, a binder
4 of documents being submitted for your
5 consideration in support of the proposal.

6 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you,
7 Mr. Gergeni.

8 Compiled Exhibit 1 will be
9 received as part of the record at this
10 proceeding.

11 MR. GERGENI: A copy of this binder is
12 also available here in Board chambers on the
13 ledge beside me for public viewing.

14 The binder consists of
15 documentary evidence, written statements
16 demonstrating that CEO's proposal complies with
17 the requirements of the Illinois School Code
18 and the CEO's guidelines for school actions.
19 Specifically the written statements and
20 documents demonstrate the following: At tab A,
21 the binder includes notice letters to the
22 parents and guardians of the students, school
23 staff members, and local public school council
24 members at Key and Ellington accompanied by

1 draft transition plans.

2 The notice letter and draft
3 transition plan, one, describe the basis for
4 the proposal; two, explain how proposal meets
5 the criteria of the guidelines; three, identify
6 supports for student safety and security,
7 academics, social and emotional needs, and
8 specific supports for students with
9 disabilities, students in temporary living
10 situations and English language learner; and
11 four, identify the students' options to enroll
12 in a higher-performing school, provide
13 information on choice of schools and identify
14 transportation where practicable.

15 Tab A also includes the notice of
16 the schedule community meetings and hearing
17 published in the newspaper and affidavits
18 attesting to the delivery of notice to the Key
19 and Ellington parents or guardians, school
20 staff, Local School Council members and elected
21 officials.

22 Finally, tab A includes an
23 affidavit attesting to proper publication of,
24 one, the list of qualified independent hearing

1 officers and draft guidelines for school
2 actions for Board members; two, the finalized
3 guidelines for school actions following a
4 21-day public comment period; three, the
5 proposals for March 31st and at least 15
6 calendar days before the first community
7 meeting; and four, summaries of -- summaries
8 from community meetings within five days after
9 the meeting.

10 The summary from the April 10th
11 community meeting posted on or before -- the
12 summary from the April 10th community meeting
13 was posted on or before April 15th within five
14 days after the meeting.

15 Please note that the second
16 community meeting took place on Monday, April
17 15th, and the summary will be posted on or
18 about Saturday, April 20th.

19 I will supplement the record by
20 sending you a copy of this summary and an
21 updated affidavit attesting to proper
22 publication of the summary by 5:00 p.m. on
23 Monday, April 22nd.

24 At tab B, the binder includes the

1 Illinois School Code provisions designating the
2 powers of the Board and outlining the process
3 for school actions.

4 This tab also includes the
5 Board's policy on school performance,
6 remediation, probation for the 2011/2012 school
7 year, and a policy on review and establishment
8 of school attendance boundaries.

9 Also at tab B are Chicago Public
10 School's space utilization standards and CEO's
11 guidelines for school actions for the 2012/2013
12 school year.

13 Finally, tab B includes the CEO's
14 procedures for public hearings on proposed
15 school closings.

16 At tab C, the binder includes
17 written evidence in support of the CEO's
18 proposal.

19 Tab C contains transcripts of the
20 two community meetings to elicit public comment
21 held at a convenient -- held at a location
22 convenient to the Key and Ellington school
23 communities and a summary of the April 10
24 meeting.

1 Again, I will supplement the
2 record by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 22nd with
3 the summary from the second community meeting.

4 Tab C also includes the written
5 statement of Patrick Payne, accompanying
6 presentation demonstrating Key's
7 underutilization and space available at the
8 Ellington facility to welcome students without
9 exceeding its enrollment efficiency range.

10 And a map of the proposed
11 attendance area boundary change. Tab C also
12 includes the written statement of Chandra James
13 and accompanying documents which demonstrate
14 Ellington's status as a high-performing school
15 and outlining the supports that will be offered
16 to students as they transition.

17 At this time, I recommend that
18 the CEO's compiled -- I request that the CEO's
19 compiled Exhibit 1 be admitted into the record.

20 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: It will be
21 received in the record in this proceeding.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. GERGENI: Your Honor, I would now like
24 to introduce the CEO's representative Patrick

1 Payne who will make a statement in support of
2 the proposal. This statement is located in the
3 binder at tab 21.

4 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Good evening,
5 Mr. Payne.

6 MR. PAYNE: Good evening, your Honor.

7 MR. GERGENI: Let me correct. This is tab
8 20.

9 MR. PAYNE: My name is Patrick Payne, and
10 I am a portfolio planner for the Chicago Public
11 Schools. I've been in this position since
12 March of 2012.

13 As a portfolio planner I manage
14 strategic planning to improve the utilization
15 of the CPS facilities.

16 Prior to becoming a portfolio
17 planner, I worked as an analyst for Wells Fargo
18 and strategy consultant.

19 I have a bachelor of science from
20 Drake University and master's of business
21 administration from the University of Chicago,
22 Booth School of Business.

23 I've been asked to appear at this
24 hearing today to convey to you, the parents and

1 the community, as well as interested members of
2 the public in attendance, information regarding
3 the space utilization of the Key facility with
4 respect to the proposal to close Key.

5 According to the Chief Executive
6 Officer's guidelines for the 2012/2013 school
7 year, the CEO may propose to close the school
8 if it is underutilized based on the CPS' space
9 utilization standards and student enrollment
10 numbers required on the 20th attendance day for
11 the 2012/2013 school year.

12 The CEO may only propose a
13 closure if the impacted students have the
14 option to enroll in a higher-performing school,
15 and the resulting space utilization after the
16 closure will not exceed the facility's
17 enrollment efficiency range as defined by the
18 CPS space utilization standards.

19 I will discuss the details
20 regarding the space utilization of this
21 proposal, while my colleague Chandra James will
22 discuss the performance of the welcoming school
23 and highlight the supports being offered in the
24 draft transition plan.

1 Key is currently located at 517
2 North Parkside Avenue. Key is an elementary
3 school that as of the 20th attendance day for
4 the 2012/2013 school year serves 306 students
5 in kindergarten through eighth grade.

6 To understand the enrollment
7 efficiency range of the facility, Chicago
8 Public Schools utilizes its space utilization
9 standards which are located in your binder at
10 tab 14.

11 The enrollment efficiency range
12 is plus or minus 20 percent of the facility's
13 ideal enrollment. For an elementary school
14 facility, the ideal enrollment is defined as
15 the number of allotted homerooms multiplied by
16 30.

17 The number of allotted homerooms
18 is approximately 76 to 77 percent of the total
19 classrooms available.

20 As an elementary school's
21 enrollment increases above the efficiency
22 range, a school may be considered overcrowded
23 as programming options are reduced or
24 compromised.

1 As an elementary school,
2 enrollment decreases below the efficiency
3 range, the school may be considered
4 underutilized if classrooms are unused or
5 poorly programmed, making the use of limited
6 resources less effective.

7 A typical elementary school
8 building has a total of 39 classrooms;
9 therefore, the number of allotted homerooms,
10 approximately 76 to 77 percent of 39, is 30
11 classrooms.

12 Multiplying 30 classrooms by 30
13 equals the ideal enrollment number of 900.

14 Finally, the enrollment
15 efficiency range is plus or minus 20 percent of
16 900, which is 720 to 1,080.

17 If a school in this typical
18 elementary school building had an enrollment
19 below 720, it would be considered
20 underutilized.

21 Alternatively, if a school's
22 enrollment was above 1080, it would be
23 overcrowded.

24 There are 24 total classrooms

1 within the Key facility. Approximately 76 to
2 77 percent of this number is 18, the number of
3 allotted homerooms. 18 multiplied by 30 yields
4 the ideal enrollment of the facility which is
5 540.

6 As such, the enrollment
7 efficiency range of the Key facility is between
8 432 and 648 students.

9 As I stated, the enrollment of
10 Key as of the 20th attendance day for the
11 2012/2013 school year is 306.

12 306 is below the efficiency range
13 and thus the school's underutilized.

14 The CEO has proposed that the
15 students from Key be welcomed at Edward Kelly
16 Ellington School or Ellington.

17 If this proposal is approved by
18 the Board of Education for the Chicago, the
19 resulting space utilization will not exceed
20 Ellington's enrollment efficiency range as
21 defined by the CPS space utilization standards.

22 Ellington has 40 total
23 classrooms. Approximately 76 to 77 percent of
24 this number is 30, the number of allotted

1 homerooms. 30 multiplied by 30 yields the
2 ideal enrollment of the facility which is 900.
3 As such, the enrollment efficiency range of the
4 Ellington facility between 720 and 1080
5 students.

6 Ellington currently has 337
7 students enrolled. As a side note, your Honor,
8 I want to recognize that our initial classroom
9 count understated the number of total
10 classrooms at the Ellington facility.
11 And that actual ideal enrollment was verified
12 during our annual facility room count audit.

13 To fully explain enrollment trend
14 associated with these schools, I'd like to
15 direct your attention to the screen.

16 Projected is a slide that shows
17 the enrollment trend of Key and Ellington.
18 Green hashed lines show the enrollment
19 efficiency range of the Ellington facility and
20 the circle represents the combined projected
21 enrollment for the 2013/2014 school year.

22 Key's current enrollment of 306
23 students and Ellington's current enrollment of
24 337 students combines to a total of 643

1 students, within the enrollment efficiency
2 range of the Ellington facility.

3 Further, the projected enrollment
4 for Ellington for the 2013/2014 school year is
5 84 students, which is also within the
6 Ellington enrollment efficiency range. Thus
7 there's enough space within the Ellington
8 facility for students from Key and students
9 from Ellington.

10 I'd like to note that the
11 projected enrollment of Ellington includes the
12 additional number of students projected to be
13 assigned to Ellington as a result of the
14 proposed closure of Emmet Elementary School and
15 reassignment of Emmet students to Ellington and
16 Oscar DePriest Elementary School.

17 If Key is closed, the CEO is also
18 proposing that Key attendance area be
19 reassigned to Ellington at 243 North Parkside
20 Avenue at the end of the current school year.

21 A map showing proposed boundary
22 changes is located at tab 22. And copies of
23 this map were available tonight at the
24 registration desk.

1 In proposing this boundary
2 change, several factors were considered as
3 outlined in the review and establishment of
4 school attendance boundary policy, including
5 but not limited to the capacities of Ellington,
6 geographic barriers, travel time, distance
7 traveled and program considerations.

8 Notwithstanding this proposed
9 boundary change, I want to reiterate that all
10 students enrolled currently at Key will be
11 assigned to Ellington should the Board approve
12 this proposal.

13 You will next hear from my
14 colleague Chandra James who will discuss the
15 performance of Ellington and highlight the
16 proposed transition efforts.

17 Thank you, your Honor. This
18 concludes my statement.

19 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Mr.
20 Payne. Ms. James.

21 MR. GERGENI: Your Honor, I would now like
22 to introduce the CEO's next representative,
23 Chandra James, who will make a statement in
24 support of the proposal. This statement is

1 also indicated in the binder at tab 23.

2 MS. JAMES: Good evening, your Honor. My
3 name is Chandra James. I'm the chief of
4 schools for the Chicago Public Schools, Austin
5 North Line, Dell network.

6 Chicago Public Schools are
7 divided into networks.

8 Network offices are run by a
9 chief and provides support and oversight for
10 schools assigned to them on behalf of the CEO.

11 Ellington is within the Austin
12 North Line Dell elementary network, and I am
13 responsible for the support and oversight of
14 Ellington on behalf of the CEO.

15 I was the deputy chief at
16 Ellington beginning 2010, and I became the
17 chief in December of 2012.

18 By way of background, I have been
19 an educational professional for more than 25
20 years. I have been an elementary school
21 science lab teacher, and I've held a number of
22 leadership positions within the Chicago Public
23 School system, including elementary science
24 manager, and the director of the office of

1 mathematics and science.

2 I have served as administrator in
3 the Austin North Line Dell network where both
4 Key and Ellington are located, as a curriculum
5 coach, deputy chief of schools, and now the
6 chief of schools.

7 I hold a bachelor's degree in
8 speech pathology, audiology, and a master's of
9 education from Cambridge College in Cambridge,
10 Massachusetts.

11 As you have already heard, Key
12 fits the criteria of the Chief Executive
13 Officer's guidelines for the school's actions
14 because it is underutilized based on CPS
15 utilization standards and student enrollment
16 numbers recorded on the 20th attendance day for
17 2012/2013 school year.

18 Key students will be welcomed by
19 Ellington located at 243 North Parkside Avenue.

20 The facility at 243 North
21 Parkside Avenue has enough space to welcome Key
22 students, and the resulting combined enrollment
23 will not exceed the facility's enrollment
24 efficiency range.

1 When Key students are welcomed by
2 Ellington's administration, staff and students,
3 they will be attending a higher-performing
4 school based on the CEO's guidelines for
5 school's actions.

6 The CEO guidelines for school
7 actions define a higher-performing school as
8 school receiving a higher level on the
9 performance policy for the 2011-2012 school
10 year.

11 Under the CPS performance policy
12 located in your binder at tab 12, each school
13 receives an annual weighting based on its
14 performance on a variety of student outcome
15 measures, including standardized test scores
16 and student attendance.

17 District wide, schools designated
18 as a level one are the highest performing, and
19 schools designated as a level three are the
20 lowest performing.

21 Key received a level-two rating
22 for the 2011/2012 school year, while Ellington
23 received a level-one rating.

24 The notices of Key and

1 Ellington's performance policy status for
2 2011/2012 school year are included in the
3 binder of documents that you have received at
4 tab 24.

5 If this proposal is approved,
6 students will receive additional supports at
7 Key during the remainder of this school year
8 and at Ellington next year. And the network
9 will provide assistance to ease the transition
10 process as much as possible.

11 CPS has developed a plan
12 dedicated additional resources to address any
13 safety concerns and to fulfill students'
14 academic, social and emotional, and other
15 individual needs.

16 The draft transition plan
17 explaining these additional resources were sent
18 home to all families affected by this proposal,
19 and is located in your binder at tabs 1 and 2.

20 CPS will publish final transition
21 plan if the Board approves this proposal which
22 will incorporate feedback from the community
23 meetings, this hearing, and additional input
24 received.

1 The CPS Office of Safety and
2 Security, or OSS, has worked with the Chicago
3 Police Department, Department of Family and
4 Support Services, local community groups, faith
5 partners, elected officials and other sister
6 agencies to develop a plan for a safe
7 transition of students.

8 If this proposal is approved, OSS
9 will take the following steps: First, OSS will
10 review and update school safety audits,
11 security personnel allocations, and the
12 school's safety technology systems to make
13 enhancements as appropriate. Second, OSS will
14 be available to address any -- to address
15 specific safety concerns raised by students and
16 staff. Third, OSS will provide safe passage
17 support for students and staff traveling to and
18 from school. Safe passage workers wear
19 identifiable vests and stand on designated
20 street corners to monitor students' safety
21 during their travel to school in the morning
22 and home in the afternoon.

23 Prior to the start of the
24 2013/2014 school year, OSS will work with

1 Ellington administration and the community to
2 designate specific intersections for safe
3 passage supports.

4 Additionally, students will
5 receive academic supports as they transition,
6 including the following: First, a principal
7 transition coordinator, or PTC, will be
8 assigned to help the principal of Key maintain
9 academic rigor for the remainder of the school
10 year and ensure a smooth transition to
11 Ellington.

12 The PTCs are former principals or
13 administrators with significant experience who
14 will be a resource for the administration and
15 ensure continuity of support for faculty and
16 students.

17 Second, the Ellington
18 administration will receive comprehensive
19 student-specific data on all transitioning
20 students to allow staff to proactively identify
21 individual student needs and prepare to meet
22 those needs.

23 Third, the network team will be
24 available to assist with transition activities

1 and to welcome families and students affected
2 by this action.

3 Parents should feel free and are
4 encouraged to contact the network office at any
5 time for additional supports.

6 Fourth, the principal will
7 receive discretionary resources to provide
8 direct academic support to students.

9 For example, these funds may be
10 used for middle school teachers to attend the
11 Networks High School Readiness Conference or to
12 provide an instructional coach, teacher-leader,
13 or to obtain academic tutoring position or
14 program for students in reading and
15 mathematics.

16 I will support the principal as
17 they can consider how to use these resources
18 and approve their selections once decisions are
19 made.

20 Students will also receive social
21 and emotional supports to help them adjust to
22 the new school environment, including the
23 following: First, CPS will help school staff
24 members facilitate intervention groups or peace

1 circles aimed at helping students work through
2 concerns associated with the transition.

3 Second, CPS will help staff members implement
4 restorative practices such as peer circles and
5 peer juries to encourage peer-to-peer problem
6 solving and resolution. Third, groups of
7 students in need of more individualized
8 attention will be provided with access to
9 highly structured interventions.

10 Fourth, to foster an environment
11 that is both supportive and inclusive for all
12 students, CPS will provide resources to the
13 Ellington leadership to implement cultural
14 building activities, such as staff luncheons
15 and team and trust-building activities.

16 Resources will also be provided
17 to sponsor activities such as school visits for
18 families, coffee chats with the principal,
19 picnics, field trips or parent meetings to help
20 transitioning families get to know their new
21 school.

22 Additional transition supports
23 will be provided to ensure that Key students
24 who have unique needs or circumstances that are

1 adequately supported in this transition,
2 including students with diverse learning needs,
3 students in temporary living situations,
4 English language learners, and early childhood
5 participants.

6 In addition, these supports are
7 described in more detail in the draft
8 transition plan located in your binder at tabs
9 1 and 2.

10 Finally, beginning this fall, CPS
11 will offer students attending Ellington with an
12 opportunity to present, to participate in the
13 international baccalaureate program or IB. IB
14 is structured to develop inquiring,
15 knowledgeable, internationally minded and
16 caring young people who help build
17 intercultural understanding and respect
18 worldwide, and become active, compassionate and
19 lifelong learners.

20 In conclusion, Key is
21 underutilized and the combination and the
22 combined enrollment of Key and Ellington
23 students at the 243 North Parkside Avenue
24 facility will not exceed the facility's

1 enrollment efficiency range. And Ellington is
2 a higher-performing school.

3 The CEO believes that this
4 proposed school closure will help the district
5 better serve all students and is prepared to
6 assist students with additional supports as
7 they transition.

8 Thank you for your time, your
9 Honor. And your attention. This concludes my
10 statement.

11 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.
12 James.

13 MR. GERGENI: Your Honor, this concludes
14 the presentation in support of the CEO's
15 proposal.

16 If you have any additional
17 questions, we will be available to answer them.
18 Thank you for your time and attention.

19 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you,
20 Mr. Gergeni.

21 At this point, we will open up
22 the public comments portion of the hearing.
23 And I would ask honorable Deborah Graham.

24 MS. GRAHAM: Actually, I would like to go

1 last.

2 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: All right. We
3 call to the lectern Margo Giannoulis.

4 MS. GIANNOULIS: As a principal, I would
5 like to let the parents and teacher community
6 speak, if that's okay with you.

7 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Sure. Bonita
8 Robinson, please.

9 MS. ROBINSON: Good evening. My name is
10 Bonita Robinson. B-O-N-I-T-A.
11 R-O-B-I-N-S-O-N.

12 I'm a retired teacher. I taught
13 39 years in the Austin North Lawndale network
14 at Duke Ellington. And I love the children. I
15 love the families. I love what has evolved.
16 I'm very concerned about what has happened as
17 the evolution has gone on.

18 Today I would like to repeat my
19 call for no school closings anywhere in CPS,
20 and to restate, as I stated at the community
21 hearings, that these proposed school closings
22 at Key, Emmet, any school in Chicago have been
23 shown -- excuse me, these school closings are
24 racist and have been shown to be academically

1 and socially harmful, especially to African
2 American students.

3 I'm resubmitting to this hearing
4 the written testimony that I presented at the
5 community hearings. The CPS Internet summaries
6 of my testimony at the community hearings are
7 misleading. And I'm also submitting
8 corrections of the summaries with my testimony
9 today.

10 I would like to share with you at
11 this time the following ten recommendations
12 that I submitted to each Board member at the
13 December School Board meeting. I got no
14 feedback. But they are recommendations that I
15 thought about through study, through committee
16 work, and my experience in seeing wonderful
17 teaching situations versus what I see now,
18 which are terrible.

19 First recommendation. Impose a
20 immediate moratorium of school closings,
21 turnarounds, phase-outs, consolidations,
22 privatizations.

23 Number two. In preparation for
24 thoughtful decision-making, have a City-wide

1 reading of the flat world -- these three
2 books -- four books that I'm about to say I can
3 give the Board members each a copy, and I hope
4 they have read them and changed in some way.
5 The Flat World in Education. How America's
6 Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future
7 by Linda Darling-Hammond. The Education of the
8 Negro, by Carter G. Woodson. The Mis-Education
9 of the Negro, and The Truth about DIBELS, by
10 Kenneth Goodman.

11 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: You can have a
12 minute more.

13 MS. ROBINSON: Number three. With the
14 funding and space that urban reform ordinarily
15 directs to the closing of neighborhood schools
16 and to the opening of charter schools, directly
17 address the resources and smaller class sizes,
18 the issue of poverty that students in the
19 neighborhood schools deal with on a daily
20 basis. This is what was done on the war on
21 poverty and that is when the achievement got
22 narrowed.

23 Heritage also. The study of
24 heritage also must be a major focus.

63
1 Number four, impose immediate
2 moratorium on the massive testing and data
3 collection that have turned motivating
4 classrooms into testing data sweat shops.

5 I brought with me every flavor
6 bean from Harry Potter. My last year of
7 teaching I got to teach none of the novels that
8 my children wanted to -- well, they requested,
9 let alone some of the ones I wanted to teach,
10 because of days spent, which almost added up to
11 half of a marking period of testing. And I was
12 new that year so I didn't get to teach.

13 And I know what's going on around
14 the City, especially with the smaller ones.

15 Moratorium on the testing. And
16 truth and transparency regarding CPS data, such
17 as achievement, attendance, finances and
18 charter school information.

19 Number six. Rebuild the City's
20 corps of African American teachers. Due to
21 school closings, the percentage of
22 African-Americans have been decimated. No
23 other ratio or ethnic group has been targeted
24 for elimination.

1 Ironically, many of the veteran
2 teachers who were eliminated were the very same
3 teachers who were at the helm of classroom
4 during the War on Poverty, when the achievement
5 gap and college enrollment gap were narrowing,
6 according to The Flat World.

7 Those teachers should have been
8 lauded, not displaced.

9 Number seven. Address the
10 trauma, grief and fear that our children face
11 on a daily basis.

12 Number eight. Engage with the
13 citizens of Chicago at the highest level of
14 citizen participation. See Sherry Arnstein's
15 Ladder of Citizen Participation, which I did
16 submit. It gives categories and CPS constantly
17 engages the public at the lowest levels which
18 really means no engagement.

19 Number nine. Facilitate
20 communication between citizen groups such as
21 the CEFTF, Facilities Task Force, Utilization
22 Committee, the commission. The task force is
23 working on a ten-year plan but we're going
24 ahead with this. It makes no sense. No

1 coordination. And that is to the detriment of
2 our children.

3 The last, number ten. Chicago
4 reading achievement has been stagnant as
5 studies have shown from the University of
6 Chicago for 20 years.

7 We need to add reading
8 endorsement to the middle grades. The language
9 arts endorsement does not train teachers as
10 fully as the reading endorsement.

11 Also, we must ensure that schools
12 are providing adequate minimum daily minutes
13 for reading and literacy. I did not like that
14 change.

15 My last year I had 300 minutes a
16 week for reading. That was below the
17 recommendation. That is not enough. We need
18 to --

19 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: I have to ask
20 you to conclude.

21 MS. ROBINSON: A broad recreational
22 reading program is also viable.

23 And again study of heritage is
24 vital. And that is what we did during the War

1 on Poverty. Thank you for the extra time. I
2 appreciate it.

3 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.
4 Robinson. You tendered a copy of your written
5 submission.

6 (WHEREUPON, said
7 document was marked as
8 Public Exhibit No. 1 for
9 Identification.)

10 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Angela Graham,
11 please.

12 MS. GRAHAM: Good evening, your Honor,
13 members.

14 Your Honor, if it's okay if I can
15 present you with documentation.

16 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Yes,
17 certainly.

18 (WHEREUPON, said
19 document was marked as
20 Public Exhibit No. 2 for
21 Identification.)

22 MS. GRAHAM: On behalf of Francis Scott
23 Key School, again my name is Angela Graham, and
24 I am the local school chair president.

1 I'm here today because CPS has
2 stated our school is underutilized. I
3 understand that. So what we would like to do
4 is a proposal. To see if we can work together
5 to bring schools together.

6 There's a school across the street
7 from Francis Scott Key which is Douglas High
8 School. And if my data serves me correctly,
9 there are many schools that have combined
10 middle schools with high schools and brought
11 them together as one.

12 I'm bringing that proposal to the
13 table today to see if we can come together with
14 a plan to keep our kids in the neighborhood and
15 out of harm's way.

16 It will save money by combining
17 the schools together. It's not cost efficient
18 to move across the street. To move our kids
19 down to Duke Ellington, combined them with
20 Emmet will be in harm's way

21 I've also found data, research,
22 it's shown in the folder there, where safe
23 passage is not safe for our children.

24 There's many occasions where safe

1 passage has not been on their watch. I have
2 come across many blocks where safe passage is
3 texting, they're talking on their cell phones.
4 And I even seen several of safe passage members
5 also at other meetings. How they protecting
6 our children? They're not.

7 Located at 321 South Central
8 there's a halfway house there that has mentally
9 ill patients and they also have sex offenders
10 there.

11 On the opposite side of the
12 street at 312 on Central it's an apartment
13 complex, drug dealers hang out there. Drug
14 users hang out there.

15 I don't want my -- I'm single
16 parent. My child doesn't have a sibling in a
17 grammar school. He has to walk alone.

18 And at this particular moment,
19 let me ask you, CPS, are you willing to give me
20 a voucher to put him in a private school?
21 They're not.

22 So, your Honor, I ask you to
23 please consider this proposal and allowing us
24 to move across the street in Douglas High

1 School.

2 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

3 And your written remarks are part of the record
4 as number two, so they will be received and
5 will move on to the Board.

6 MS. GRAHAM: Thanks.

7 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Yvonne Harris,
8 please.

9 MS. HARRIS: Hello, your Honor and CPS.
10 My name is Yvonne Harris. I have been
11 community leader in the Austin area. I have
12 two generations of school children having been
13 to Key School and graduated from Key School. I
14 have another generation coming up to Key School
15 now.

16 I would like for and if at all
17 possible that our children can go across the
18 street to Douglas School to interact and to
19 combine -- be combined there, because at the
20 rate that the drug dealers, the gang-bangers
21 that are standing on the corners, we have to
22 walk our children to school. We do not want
23 our children as a grandparent to walk through
24 those dangerous corners.

1 See, we have a, as she stated
2 before, a mental facility there. And those
3 people are out wandering. We have sex
4 offenders there. They are out wandering. The
5 gang-bangers are calling our children.

6 But we as family members that's
7 in the neighborhood, we all combined ourself
8 together and we walk our children to school. I
9 spend time at our school. My granddaughter is
10 an A student. And it's because the teachers
11 there are teaching the children. They spend
12 time with them. I spend a great deal of time
13 there. And if so, I would like that. Thank
14 you.

15 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.
16 Angela Kastanes, please.

17 MS. KASTANES: Your Honor, fellow
18 teachers, parents, friends and family. Thank
19 you for allowing me to speak on behalf of us.

20 I want you to invest in our
21 students. As a special education teacher, I
22 provide my students with a safe resource room
23 and I cry really easily. So I apologize. I
24 along with my colleagues am a mother, a friend,

1 a social worker, a nurse. We are not
2 underutilized. I can't see the rest of my
3 notes.

4 Our test scores at Francis Scott
5 Key have been steadily increasing. This
6 includes DIBELS, NWEA, MCLASS, ISAT, and as my
7 fellow colleague said, we do this because we
8 have to and we do this and we show that we are
9 scholars. We are stars.

10 Our enrollment as of this day I
11 got a new student in my classroom, our
12 popularity is growing and the data is in our
13 favor. We are a family. We need to stay
14 together. We deserve your investments.

15 We are worth the time, the money
16 and we will grow to become a level one school.
17 When we're given a chance. Thank you.

18 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.
19 Kastanes.

20 Mr. Alan Van Note, please.

21 MR. VAN NOTE: Good evening, your Honor.
22 Fellow Austinites. I'm Alan Van Note. I'm a
23 community representative of the France Scott
24 Key, LSC, and I am -- served for two years on

1 the Austin community action council chaired by
2 Alderman Deborah Graham.

3 What strikes me, I have been an
4 Austinite for 16 years and knowing the
5 community as I do, as I thought about this
6 process, I find that it makes no sense to me
7 knowing the community.

8 As previous testimony has
9 indicated, the former hotels along Central
10 Avenue are generally housing people who are in
11 one way or another personally unstable, former
12 offenders, people with mental health issues,
13 and additionally, dividing the Francis Scott
14 Key and Duke Ellington is a physical barrier.
15 There is the elevated tracks of the Metra and
16 CTA creating a physical wall between two halves
17 of our community under which the kids are going
18 to have to pass. That is a congested and
19 dangerous area. I would not let my child cross
20 that to get from one school to the other.

21 I have a lot of respect for IB.
22 I think it is outstanding -- what I have come
23 to understanding it is an outstanding academic
24 program.

1 I have a question, which is why
2 are they trying to destabilize the community
3 before opening an outstanding academic program?

4 Why are we not creating an
5 outstanding academic program in our community
6 and then attracting children to it?

7 This makes no sense to me. I
8 think this is the wrong way to do this and I am
9 deeply distressed. Thank you.

10 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you,
11 Mr. Van Note.

12 Ms. Emlyn Ricketts, please.

13 MS. RICKETTS: Good evening. My name is
14 Emlyn Ricketts and I am an attorney and friend
15 of Key.

16 I've had the privilege of
17 spending time at Key when I helped a group of
18 law students facilitate lessons for the fifth
19 through eighth grades students. I observed a
20 vibrant center of learning. The teachers are
21 dedicated and kind. The students are
22 inquisitive, smart and well behaved. The
23 administrators are effective and supportive
24 leaders.

1 Key also has a wonderful sense of
2 community, which is of particularly vital
3 importance in a school where almost 93 percent
4 of the students come from low-income families.

5 Key by your own standards is not
6 on academic probation. It is good standing.
7 To any observer, Key is a good school. Key is
8 also in no way underutilized.

9 Many classrooms are bursting at
10 the seams with upwards of 35 students and one
11 teacher. There's much research proving the
12 importance of small class sizes.

13 Despite this, Key has shown
14 remarkable improvements in test scores over the
15 past few years.

16 Key also has an entirely new
17 administration this year and they are doing a
18 great job.

19 Rather than close the school, why
20 not give them a chance and give them more
21 resources so they can make good school even
22 better.

23 Furthermore, your plan calls for
24 the students from Key and half of the students

1 from Emmet to be transferred to Ellington,
2 which would create a school of more than 800
3 students in a building that you say has ideal
4 capacity of 720.

5 This makes no sense and it is not
6 the right plan for our children.

7 However, Douglas currently has 12
8 empty classrooms on the first floor and three
9 empty classrooms on the second floor. The two
10 schools together would see a smooth transition
11 from grade school to high school.

12 In my daily work, I help protect
13 the rights of the young people of Chicago. I
14 work with some of Chicago most vulnerable
15 citizens, our children growing up in
16 communities without enough resources. For many
17 of these children, their school is the only
18 safe place in the entire world.

19 Closing Key and the other schools
20 on this list is going to lead to increases in
21 violence, increase in juvenile arrests and
22 decrease in graduation rates.

23 Studies have shown that closing
24 schools has negative academic impacts on

1 students displaced.

2 Students have also shown that you
3 have difficulty keeping track with students
4 from closing schools have ended up.

5 If this meeting has any bearing
6 on the final decision to close Key or to keep
7 it open, you must consider the facts that I
8 have just shared with you.

9 If you do consider the facts, you
10 will decide to keep Key open. Thank you.

11 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.
12 Ricketts.

13 Mr. Dwayne Truss, please.

14 MR. TRUSS: Nice to see you again, your
15 Honor. From the ACT, KIP hearing. One
16 question and it's not trying to cross-examine
17 you. That's D-W-A-Y-N-E. T-R-U-S-S.
18 Vice-chair. Also Community Action Council.

19 In terms of your -- the ruling of
20 making a decision on what's the parameters,
21 scope of -- it's like thumbs up or thumbs down
22 or you want to hear some -- because it takes
23 more than two minutes to explain the context of
24 community in the neighborhood and some of the

1 things we've been doing as Austin Community
2 Action Council and some of the discussions
3 we've been having with CPS. It would seem to
4 be fair to give you some of that context. I
5 can go two minutes and come back later if your
6 scope allows you to give me that latitude.

7 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Mr. Truss, did
8 you also address the community -- attend and
9 address the community meetings?

10 MR. TRUSS: No, sir, because we've
11 attended two community meetings prior to those
12 community meetings, and we felt there was a lot
13 of redundancy to also participate in those
14 community meetings.

15 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Will you have
16 a written submission?

17 MR. TRUSS: I have a written submission,
18 but it's just that there's some things, I'm
19 just wondering if I can narrow it to the time
20 frame that you establish. I want to make
21 sure --

22 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: We'll give you
23 a couple extra minutes.

24 MR. TRUSS: That's why I was asking in

1 advance before I -- get right to it.

2 As previous speakers have spoken
3 about, the fact Key is a level two school.
4 It's not on probation. It's academically doing
5 what it's supposed to do.

6 When CPS is talking about what's
7 the mission of the Chicago Public Schools, the
8 mission seems to be, and I hope that you agree,
9 that it's to educate children, provide them
10 with quality education. That's what Francis
11 Scott Key is doing.

12 They talked about the safety
13 patrol that you got volunteer parents,
14 community residents carved out a safety zone on
15 their own. This is without CPS that Key has
16 done. They have that kind of nurturing
17 environment.

18 Actually, when you looked at the
19 data they posted, the fact they left out of Key
20 enrollment has increased.

21 When you go to CPS Web site, they
22 have contradictory information. Key enrollment
23 has increased.

24 Let's talk about the formula in

1 terms -- one of the issues of hearing about
2 CPS, they talking with about the formula. And
3 included in here. Their formula is of their
4 own making for their predetermined outcome to
5 close schools because the formula using 30
6 children a classroom is basically based on
7 maximum children in the classroom on the
8 teachers' union contract, not as an established
9 starting point what's an ideal enrollment. If
10 we want to use CPC' data, the average classroom
11 of CPS is 24 students.

12 They say we're going to use 30
13 students which is the max based on teachers'
14 contract, which I got here, there's no academic
15 and no moral foundation for it when you talk
16 about educating children.

17 Second of all, if you use CPS
18 average, you will find Key is like 70, 75
19 percent utilized.

20 If you go further than that, the
21 state average in Illinois is 19 per students
22 per classroom.

23 For CPS to pull a number out of
24 the air, they never presented anything in any

1 hearing to state there's any academic or
2 technical merit to use 30 per classroom. Only
3 it's based upon the CTU contract.

4 They have this efficiency range
5 of saying that, oh, okay, 20 percent below 30
6 or 20 percent above 30. So now we're talking
7 36 students in classroom. They say that's
8 efficient before you get to be overcrowding.

9 If you think about from a parent
10 point of view, ask some of the parents,
11 thinking about it, does it make sense to use 36
12 kids in a classroom and saying that's
13 sufficient, or that's something that should be
14 a standard in Chicago Public Schools.

15 And we hope that you decide no.

16 And CPS, they have misplaced
17 priorities when they talking about initially we
18 need to do this in order to save money. You
19 know, CPS is going to float a bond issue of
20 \$330 million, that's going to add \$25 million
21 of debt service to already debt they already
22 have.

23 And when we talk about the safe
24 passage program, Key is doing stuff that's

1 free.

2 Now CPS with the safe passage,
3 they talking about spending \$77 million in just
4 the first year with no commitment beyond the
5 first year at all. And that's wrong. Whereas
6 the parents are saying, CPS, if you want to
7 save some money, here's a proposal we are
8 giving you to say if you locate us in a school
9 like Douglas, which is 32 percent utilized.
10 Yet CPS proposed to spend \$8 million at a 32
11 percent utilized school but they are not going
12 to spend the money on utilized buildings. And
13 the fact that Douglas -- they are level three
14 high school.

15 So when you talk about the CPS
16 rationale for making decision, that's why we
17 want to give that you context.

18 Last thing, because, like I said
19 pretty, much written documentation. Is that
20 we've had a conversation with Chicago Public
21 Schools about establishing a magnet school in
22 the Austin community which never had a magnet
23 school.

24 I think we had this discussion

1 last year's hearing.

2 And it's a shame when you look at
3 Ravenswood and Northside, they have 15 gifted
4 and magnet school programs, whereas we have
5 none.

6 One of the schools we talked
7 about and what Mr. Van Note is talking about is
8 CEO creating schools that make people want to
9 come to it. And that's the whole role of us
10 looking at DePriest as well Ellington for that
11 type of school. We felt as though a back-hand
12 slap from CPS saying we'll give you a program,
13 but not a school, but it's okay for Ravenswood
14 to have it, okay for University Village to have
15 it, but not us.

16 CPS spends anywhere from \$125 to
17 254,000 extra in addition to the discretionary
18 funds on the magnet school programming. In
19 their budget, in their proposal, there is no
20 operating funds that's going to be designated
21 to Ellington or any other schools in Austin
22 about this IB support.

23 If you are going to do IB, do IB.
24 Don't discriminate against us and give it to

1 the students.

2 And if you want to approve
3 education opportunity for our children, give us
4 what you give other folks in different
5 neighborhoods in terms of middle class family.

6 The fact that CPS and the -- they
7 do not account for state chapter one
8 discretionary funds when it comes to
9 utilization.

10 I mean this is something you
11 should discuss with CPS. We have had this
12 discussion before. But technically, CPS says
13 okay, 30 students in a classroom is efficient.
14 But the principal has that discretion to go
15 ahead and use that money to decrease class
16 size, and it is wrong and morally repugnant for
17 CPS -- I'm trying to stay on your side, is
18 morally repugnant to say 30 children in the
19 classroom is the standard, and yet there's this
20 thing out here discretionary funds that
21 principals can use and LSCs can vote on to go
22 ahead and lower class size.

23 I appreciate your indulgence. I
24 will submit this for the record. And I thank

1 you again, Mr. Honor.

2 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: This will be
3 Exhibit 3.

4 (WHEREUPON, said
5 document was marked as
6 Public Exhibit No. 3 for
7 Identification.)

8 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Mr. Brandon
9 Johnson, please.

10 MS. JOHNSON: Good afternoon, your Honor.
11 My name is Brandon Johnson. I'm a community
12 resident of the neighborhood school that my
13 sons go to, Key Elementary School. Also a
14 teacher and organizer of Chicago Teachers
15 Union.

16 Community residents have already
17 laid out all the smart stuff so there's no need
18 for me to go there.

19 I just want to make sure that we
20 have full context of what's happening in
21 Chicago over the last 13 years.

22 They've been closing schools,
23 your Honor, for over 13 years and the system's
24 gotten worse. This is a failed policy.

1 What we've also seen as a result
2 that Bonita laid out we have literally lost
3 half of our black teachers as a consequence of
4 these poor failed policies.

5 The status quo that CPS is
6 looking to move on is not only a failure for
7 the adults that service these students, but
8 it's last failure for our students.

9 There's a recent report, a Tale
10 of Two Schools, where they looked at Guggenheim
11 and how CPS intentionally disinvested in those
12 schools, set them up for failure, closed those
13 schools. And recently only 37 percent of the
14 students at Guggenheim actually attended the
15 school that was considered the welcoming
16 school.

17 CPS loses students constantly in
18 this process. With 17,000 homeless students in
19 this City, particularly in Austin where we even
20 have several undocumented homeless students, it
21 is of grave concern to folks who live in this
22 attendance boundary that our students will be
23 disrupted as such.

24 We're talking about on the

1 furthest corner of new attendance boundary
2 being proposed where students would have to
3 walk up to 13 blocks, 4:30 in the evening, two
4 days before Halloween. This is not what I want
5 my son to have to endure. My sons.

6 The final point is that, you
7 know, as President Obama talks about the need
8 to increase social workers and counselors in
9 preparation for the next tragedy. With 54
10 schools being set to close, another 37 schools
11 that would receive these students. We are
12 positioning ourselves right now based on CPS
13 proposal to lose a third of our counselors. We
14 already only have 400 for 400,000 students,
15 your Honor.

16 This is criminal. This is not an
17 education plan that has paid dividends for our
18 students.

19 So I stand with the community, as
20 the LSC chair indicated, there are viable
21 options for our students in the middle class
22 black families and low income black families
23 can actually attend a school that actually
24 services all of our children. That's what we

1 should be pushing for. Not these failed
2 policies that continue to destabilize our
3 communities. Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.
5 Honorable Deborah Graham, please.

6 MS. GRAHAM: I guess, your Honor, you will
7 call me the closer.

8 I stand unified with teachers and
9 the community. First, I'd like to say that CPS
10 has already broken its promise.

11 One of the statements that
12 Barbara Byrd-Bennett made initially saying that
13 she would not close schools that were making
14 progress, well Key is making progress. It's
15 moved from a level three to a level two school.
16 And this feels like a punishment to the
17 families and the children who attend that
18 school.

19 If CPS is opposed to moving Key
20 into Douglas School, I support them moving into
21 Douglas School. Leave them where they're at.

22 Invest the money that is needed
23 to turn the physical structure of that building
24 around. And if the school needs to move into

1 Douglas temporarily until the school is brought
2 up to par, then maybe that's something we need
3 to consider, too.

4 There is a safe passage issue
5 that exists there. Should the children pass
6 down Central, you've already heard from parents
7 that they have to pass by the facility that's
8 on Central, and I'm very cautious about
9 labeling it a mental institution, because folks
10 who have those issues deserve the help that
11 they need to make them productive members of
12 society, so I don't want to give them a
13 backhanded slap in this dialogue. But there
14 are some concerns there. So if they would pass
15 down Central, that would be a concern.

16 But if they pass down Parkside or
17 Waller, they would have to pass under two
18 viaducts.

19 There was also a rape that had
20 taken place near the intersection or near the
21 intersection of Parkside and Lake.

22 And there is great question
23 whether safe passage would be a great -- would
24 it really secure our children. And how long

1 would safe passage be available.

2 We have not seen a plan for safe
3 passage, anything laid out as to what safe
4 passage is really going to look like. And will
5 our children really be safe. When you're
6 talking about smaller children walking. Back
7 in the day, when I lived on Washington and
8 Laverne where I grew up and attended Spencer
9 School, it was feasible for us to walk to
10 school as smaller children and we walked
11 several blocks. Today the environment doesn't
12 give us the same comfort and safety that we
13 felt sometime ago. And even then it was a
14 little risky.

15 He did tell me he would a little
16 more generous with my time.

17 So I'm concerned along with the
18 community that you guys really consider if you
19 really don't want us to feel like we've been
20 punished, again CPS has broken its first
21 promise that it would not close schools that
22 have been making progress. Key has moved from
23 a level three to a level two school. Making
24 very good progress. And a lot of grants and

1 fundings that have now been put on hold. The
2 principal has been very resourceful to try to
3 get several fundings available to go into the
4 school, but those funders do not weren't to
5 help until they figure out what is the fate of
6 Key School.

7 So I do support Key going into
8 Douglas School. And if you're not supportive
9 of them going into Douglas, leave them where
10 they are and fix the school so that it would be
11 a beautiful school so our community children
12 can have a nice place, safe place to be
13 educated in, that they're comfortable with.

14 The last statement I want to make
15 is that I heard the presentation of how many
16 schools that will be combining it to Ellington.
17 I have no qualms with Ellington. I think the
18 principal has done a great job there. But I do
19 have a problem with the various cultures of the
20 various buildings being combined into that
21 school.

22 So we are combining kids who come
23 from a different structure who are going to be
24 piled on to the principal who has done a great

1 job this far.

2 And CPS again has broken one of
3 its promises as to not closing schools.

4 I think the community is not
5 feeling the support of CPS, and whether CPS
6 will keep its word in providing all of the
7 funding that it has enunciated with what's
8 going to be happening with those schools.

9 I think I said that was the last
10 thing. But one more thing. Our parents don't
11 feel like anyone is listening. And so if
12 you're listening, please consider either
13 combining them into Douglas or leaving them
14 where they are. Infusing them with the
15 services that they'll need to become a
16 successful school, a growing and developing
17 school. They've already begun progress in
18 moving from level three to a level two school.

19 I think that it would be very
20 stimulating to the parents and the children who
21 have -- who are attending the school and
22 therefore restore some of trust that has been
23 lost with CPS. Thank you.

24 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you,

1 Alderman Graham.

2 At this point we have -- all the
3 speakers who have signed up have had an
4 opportunity to make comment.

5 We'll recess and see if there are
6 any additional people that might have come late
7 and reconvene if there are any additional
8 speakers that wish to address this proceeding.
9 Thank you.

10 (Brief pause.)

11 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Yes.

12 MS. GRAHAM: Francis Scott Key is a
13 national landmark. So I think you need to
14 check your history on the school. It's a
15 national landmark. So that's something to
16 really take under consideration. It is a
17 national landmark. So are we going to close a
18 landmark? What are we going to do with that
19 building?

20 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you,
21 Alderman Graham.

22 MS. GRAHAM: Your Honor, can I say
23 something else?

24 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Identify

1 yourself for the record, please.

2 MS. ROBINSON: Again, my name is Angela
3 Graham. G-R-A-H-A-M. And, your Honor, I just
4 want to say something about in the wintertime,
5 we're talking about the snow and ice and you're
6 asking our kids to walk nine, eight blocks.
7 They don't shovel their sidewalks. And that's
8 going to be an impact on CPS schools because
9 now our kids are not going to show up for
10 school. I know mines is not. So that's a real
11 impact.

12 And then again we're going to
13 talk about the danger zones. There was a
14 shooting at Duke Ellington, I believe it was
15 back in 2012, where a kid brought a gun inside
16 the school and shot a third grader. So again I
17 need to talk with about safety. We need to
18 really put our kid's safety at first. We
19 really do.

20 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.
21 Graham.

22 MS. GRAHAM: Thank you, your Honor.

23 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: This hearing
24 stands adjourned.

1 Okay. You need not give your
2 name for the record. If you don't mind, we
3 will call you student A. It's good number.

4 STUDENT A: My name is Alicia. I feel
5 safe being at Francis Scott Key. Like schools
6 and everything has went up since -- since --

7 MS. HARRISS: She wanted to say she is an
8 A student and because her teachers support her
9 so much and spend so much time with her and she
10 feels safe in the neighborhood and going there.

11 MS. KASTANES: Tell them one of your
12 favorite classes that you take, which one is
13 that?

14 STUDENT A: Social studies.

15 MS. KASTANES: And you want to go to high
16 school?

17 STUDENT A: Yes.

18 MS. KASTANES: Who is your teacher
19 supporting you back there?

20 STUDENT A: Mr. Nelson.

21 I will be sad if I left Key
22 School. Other students they haven't even yet
23 graduated from Key School and they want to stay
24 there, because it's not -- when they leave and

1 go to a different school, they don't feel the
2 same. They feel like they going to get harmed.
3 Or anything else. Thank you very much.


4 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.
5 We're adjourned.

6 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings
7 were adjourned at 7:05 p.m.
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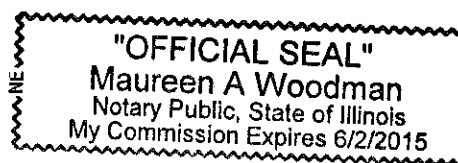
1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)
4

5 MAUREEN A. WOODMAN, C.S.R., being first
6 duly sworn, says that she is a court reporter
7 doing business in the City of Chicago; that she
8 reported in shorthand the proceedings had at
9 the hearing of said cause; that the foregoing
10 is a true and correct transcript of her
11 shorthand notes, so taken as aforesaid, and
12 contains all the proceedings of said hearing.

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MAUREEN A. WOODMAN



To: Members of the Chicago Board of Education

From: Bonita Robinson

Proposed School-Closing Public Hearing for Key Sch

April 17, 2013 - 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. - Central

2x 1

Submission For:

4-17-13 Public Hearing - Central Office

Enclosed: 4-17-13 Testimony of
Bonita Robinson

Key School, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

To: Members of the Chicago Board of Education

From: Bonita Robinson

**Proposed School-Closing Public Hearing Meeting – April 17, 2013 – Central Office
Key School Hearing**

Today I would like to repeat my call for **no school closings anywhere** in CPS and to restate, as I stated at the community hearings, that these proposed school closings are racist and have been shown to be academically and socially harmful, especially to African^{American} students.

I am resubmitting, to this hearing, the written testimony (enclosed) that I presented at the community hearings. The cps.edu (internet) summaries of my testimony at the community hearings are misleading and I am submitting corrections of the summaries with my testimony today.

I would like to share with you, at this time, the following ten recommendations (enclosed) that I submitted to each Board member at the December, 2012 school board meeting.

Bonita Robinson, a recently retired reading specialist was awarded the **Illinois Governor's Master Teacher Award** while teaching at the Austin community's Duke Ellington School during the era of the narrowing of the achievement gap.

To: Members of the Chicago Board of Education

December 19, 2012

From: Bonita Robinson

Recommendations: Resubmitted at Proposed School-Closing Public Hearing, 4-17-13, Central Office

1. Impose an immediate moratorium on school closings, turn-arounds, phase-outs, consolidations, privatizations, etc. There should be *separation of private businesses and state/(schools)* --- for the same reason this nation holds dear the *separation of church and state*. --- *Private corporations are beginning to control public education. This is a form of taxation without representation. This is also a failed experiment that needs to end before any more harm is done to the children of CPS. (See article in the packet presented to you today: "U of C Report Says CPS Reforms Have Failed Many Students.")*
2. In preparation for thoughtful decision-making, read: **The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future*, by Linda Darling-Hammond; *The Education of the Negro*, by Carter G. Woodson; **The Mis-Education of the Negro*, by Carter G. Woodson; and, **The Truth about DIBELS*, edited by Kenneth Goodman. (*Three of these books are in the packet.)
3. With the funding and space that urban "reform" ordinarily directs to the closing of neighborhood schools and to the opening of charter schools, **directly address, with resources and smaller class sizes, the issues of poverty that the students in the neighborhood schools deal with on a daily basis.** This is what was done during the "War on Poverty," resulting in the dramatic narrowing of the Black/White achievement gap and the Black/Hispanic/White college enrollment gap. Those gaps have widened since the advent of "War on the Poor" school "reform." (See "Opportunity to Learn" info and *The Flat World...*, by Darling-Hammond, in the packet, for details.) *Heritage*, also, must be a major focus.
4. Impose an immediate moratorium on the massive testing and data collection that have turned motivating classrooms into testing/data sweatshops. These mindless tasks usurp valuable instructional time and drain funds that should be spent on much-needed instructional resources. Many of the tests are also poorly developed and full of typos as well as serious errors in content and context. (Examples in packet.) ***DO NOT ALLOW ONE MORE DAY OF THE "OPTIONAL," MINDLESS DIBELS TEST!***
5. Employ truth and transparency regarding CPS data, - e.g., achievement, attendance, finances, charter school information, etc.
6. Rebuild the city's corps of African American teachers. Due to school closings, the percentage of African American teachers has been decimated --- from 40.6% in 2000 to 19.5% in 2011. No other racial or ethnic group has been targeted for elimination in this way. Ironically, many of the veteran teachers who were eliminated were the very same teachers who were at the helm of classrooms during the "War on Poverty," when the achievement gap and college enrollment gap were narrowing. Those teachers should have been lauded, not displaced. Their "reform" saboteurs/resource thieves deserved dismissal.
7. **Address the trauma, grief and fear that Chicago's children face on a daily basis.**
8. Engage with the citizens of Chicago at the **highest level** of citizen participation. See Sherry Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" (included in this packet) for the categories of engagement that occur within the ascending levels of: *Nonparticipation*, *Tokenism* and *Citizen Power*. (Notice that the newly formed Commission on School Utilization falls within the *Tokenism* level. -- This is not acceptable if authentic progress is the goal.)
9. Facilitate communication between citizen groups, such as CEFTE and the Utilization Commission.
10. **CHICAGO READING ACHIEVEMENT HAS BEEN STAGNANT FOR TWENTY YEARS!** (See study info in packet.) Add the **Reading Endorsement** to the *Middle Grades Specialization Policy*-Sect. 602.1 (in packet). The Language Arts (LA) endorsement preparation provides breadth, but not the depth necessary to prepare teachers to address many serious **Reading** difficulties. Traditionally, the LA endorsement prepares teachers to teach *English*. In fact, the ISBE LA study guide refers to the *English teacher* in its practice test, and the Reading study guide refers to the *Reading teacher* in its practice test. Also, CPS must ensure that schools are providing adequate minimum suggested daily/weekly minutes for Reading/Literacy/Language Arts. A broad recreational reading program is also vital.



Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Francis Scott Key Elementary School

April 10, 2013; 5:00-7:00p.m.

Location: Austin High School, 231 N. Pine Avenue

CPS Facilitators:

Adam Anderson, Strategy and Planning Officer

Also in Attendance:

Chandra James, Chief, Austin-North Lawndale Network

Phil Hampton, Chief Officer of Family and Community Engagement

Barbara West, Commander - Chicago Police Department

CPS Presentation

Mr. Anderson introduced himself, Ms. James, and acknowledged Commander West. He announced the purpose of the meeting was to listen to the community and acknowledged the note taker who would be sending notes directly to the CEO. He announced the presence of the Spanish language translator. He walked through the information contained on the handouts distributed to the audience. He announced the time and location of the next meetings regarding the closing of Key. He described the protocol for the meeting for speaking and registering to speak. He then began the public comment portion of the agenda.

Brief Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Francis Scott Key Elementary School and welcome students at Edward K. Ellington Elementary School, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were only three speakers. The speaker comments are summarized below:

- * There was concern about school closings destabilizing neighborhoods.
 - * There was a statement made that Key "was a family."
 - * There was a request to close only 7-8th schools and not K-8th schools.
- Incorrect

Correction: 4-17-13

From: Bonita Robinson

* The theme of my comment was that
CPS school closings are racist.
(Written testimony is enclosed.)

Submission For:

4-17-13 Public Hearing - Central Office

Enclosed:

(Bonita Robinson's Testimony

at 4-10-13 Community

Hearing for Key School, 5:00-7:00 _{p.m.}

To: Members of the Chicago Board of Education
From: Bonita Robinson
Proposed School-Closing Community Meeting - April 10, 2013 - Austin High School
Resubmitted at Public Hearing Meeting – April 17, 2013 – Central Office

Enclosure: Highlighted Page from CCSR Study Indicating That the Black/White Achievement Gap Has Widened Under CPS "Reform"

I, too, like Chicago Public Schools' CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett, am a woman of color. However, unlike CEO Byrd-Bennett, whose current stint in Chicago marks her third major city of school-closing proclamations, I began a life-long association with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) upon entering kindergarten in 1956. I find her denial of the racist nature of Chicago's proposed school closings to be disingenuous and dangerous to the well-being of African American students who deserve excellence and equity from the education that CPS delivers.

With more than a half-century of a direct connection with CPS as a student and educator, I find this current time of "reform" to be the most brutal, deceptive and racist era of all. Even my experiences attending classes in racist "Willis" wagons and in four-hour shifts in overcrowded schools in the 1960s pale in comparison to experiences that African American students today must confront, such as: the diversion of resources followed by the luring of student populations from neighborhood schools to charter schools; the denial of instructional time due to excessive testing practices; the widening of the achievement-gap during the past two decades of failed CPS "reforms;" and the life-threatening destabilization of communities due to school closures.

To continue closing schools while cognizant of the havoc that such "reforms" have already wreaked on African American children, in terms of achievement and violence, is not only racist, but is the embodiment of the most insidious type of racism that Carter G. Woodson warned about in his classic, *The Mis-education of the Negro*. In the words of Dr. Woodson, Ms. Byrd-Bennett must cease trying to "justify the oppression of the race."

Dr. Woodson expressed profound disappointment in African American professionals who allowed themselves to be used in the execution of oppressive acts against disenfranchised African Americans; and as one whose thirty-nine year career was dedicated to truly serving the children of Chicago for the long haul, I must say that I am outraged whenever I detect this deplorable ritual being practiced in CPS, by anyone, but especially by those who are "just passing through." It is time to end this failed experiment that has been imposed by mayoral control and CPS policies. **No school closings.**

Bonita Robinson, a recently retired reading specialist was awarded the *Illinois Governor's Master Teacher Award* while teaching at the Austin community's Duke Ellington School during the era of the narrowing of the achievement gap.

Other research at CCSR has documented the unevenness in school improvement under decentralization; during decentralization the schools serving students from the most economically disadvantaged communities were least likely to improve, while the schools serving more advantaged communities were most likely to improve.⁵ These outcomes can be explained by differences in the social resources available in school communities. Because decentralization placed power in the hands of elected Local School Councils, it is not surprising that communities where residents were active in local organizations and where schools faced fewer social problems were more likely to show improvements.

Era 2 was an era of strict test-based accountability measures and bold initiatives that were enacted to transform high schools (e.g., changing graduation requirements so that all students took a college preparatory curriculum). There were large investments in infrastructure and stability in district leadership. Test scores in the elementary/middle grades rose during this period, and they improved in schools serving students of all types of backgrounds. This was the only era to show large improvements in the lowest-achieving schools. Prior CCSR studies have found that the test-based accountability policies, which held schools accountable for improvements in test scores and required students to pass tests to be promoted from certain grades, had mixed results for students.⁶ They encouraged teachers and parents to provide more support to the lowest-achieving students, and they encouraged better alignment of instruction to grade-level standards. At the same time, they resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum to focus on tested subjects (reading and math), more instructional time spent on test-taking practice, and a large increase in grade retention in the elementary schools. Test-based promotion policies resulted in more students entering high school who were old for their grade level; this had a depressing effect on graduation rates.⁷ In fact, the improvements in graduation rates that had been occurring in Era 1 were set back in Era 2. This dip occurred, in part, because of the increase in grade retention and also because of the change in graduation requirements that ended remedial coursework and required all high school students to take a college preparatory curriculum.⁸

In Era 3, there were large improvements in outcomes in the high schools and very little improvement in the elementary schools. Improvements that had been occurring in graduation rates accelerated, and were seen in all types of schools, among boys and girls and all racial/ethnic groups. At the same time, scores on the ACT rose, even though students were not entering high school better prepared. Students were learning more while in high school. In the elementary grades, test scores dropped—especially in the lowest-performing schools. Equity declined, so that schools serving African American students, and those that started out the era with the lowest levels of performance, were less likely than more advantaged schools to have improving test scores.

While the effects of the dominant policies of Eras 1 and 2 are largely understood, much research remains to be done to understand both the positive and problematic effects of the policies in Era 3. The decline in equity, with African American students falling further behind students from other racial/ethnic groups, is particularly disturbing and has raised questions about policies that disproportionately affected African American students (e.g., the decision to close chronically low-performing schools and send students to other schools). One CCSR study showed no improvements in test scores for students who were displaced by school closings,⁹ but there is yet to be an analysis of the overall effect of the policies on all students and schools. Another area requiring more study is the rise in student performance in the high schools. Era 3 brought a much greater use of data in the high schools to track students and provide targeted support for passing classes and college readiness. Further research should investigate whether this use of data led to the improved outcomes and, if so, exactly how it happened.

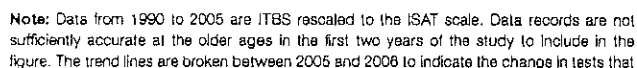
The findings in this report contradict common perceptions about district performance over the last two decades. It has been widely believed that elementary schools have improved considerably, while high schools have stagnated. In fact, the opposite is true. These misperceptions arise because of problems with the metrics that are used to judge school performance, and differences in the standards by which high schools and elementary schools are held accountable. High schools are increasingly being

In addition, while elementary/middle math and reading scores improved on average, some groups of students improved much less than others. In every era, the performance gap between African American students and students of other races/ethnicities widened.

likely a result of scoring issues with the statewide test. Reading scores in Chicago were also flat on the national exam, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), during the period that students in Chicago took the ISAT.

The gains in Era 2, coupled with modest improvement in Era 3, might seem to constitute major progress. However, as shown in Figure 6, the end result is that the average student moved from just below meeting state standards to a level that is still in the bottom half of the

Average Reading Test Scores for Nine to 14-Year-Olds across the Three Eras



were given to students. Students took the ITBS prior to 2006 and the ISAT beginning in 2006. Scores are adjusted for changes in race, gender, and socio-economic level; and for changes in test type, form, and level.

Submission For:
4-17-13 Public Hearing - Central Office

Enclosed:

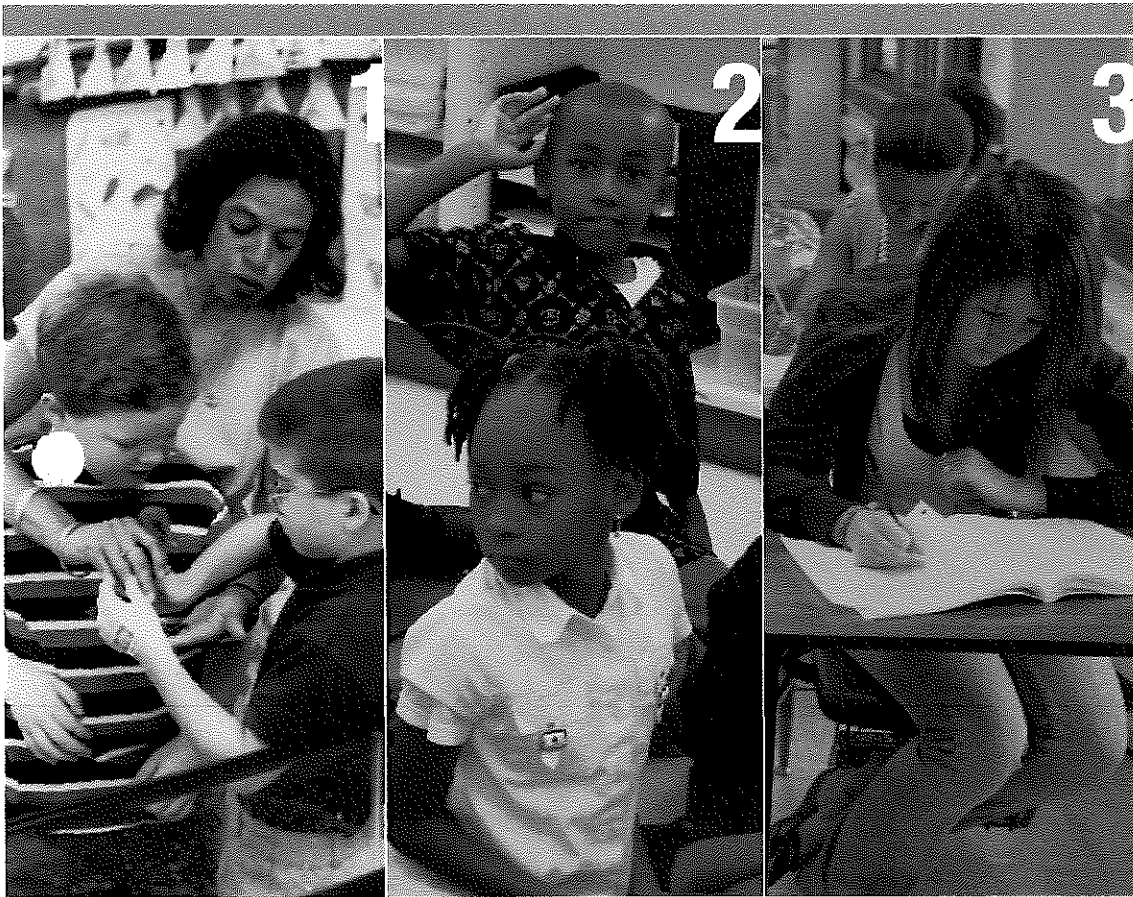
(Bonita Robinson's Testimony
at 4-15-13 Community Hearing
for Key School, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.)



CONSORTIUM ON
CHICAGO SCHOOL RESEARCH
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
URBAN EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Trends in Chicago's Schools across Three Eras of Reform: Summary of Key Findings

Stuart Luppescu, Elaine M. Allensworth, Paul Moore, Marisa de la Torre, James Murphy
with Sanja Jagesic



To: Members of the Chicago Board of Education
From: Bonita Robinson
Proposed School-Closing Community Meeting - April 15, 2013 - Austin High School
Resubmitted at Public Hearing Meeting – April 17, 2013 – Central Office

Enclosed are reports of two studies which indicate how Chicago “reform” has harmed CPS students, particularly children of poverty and children of color. As a teacher during this type of harmful “reform,” I continue to state...**No school closings.**

Bonita Robinson, a recently retired reading specialist was awarded the *Illinois Governor’s Master Teacher Award* while teaching at the Austin community’s Duke Ellington School during the era of the narrowing of the achievement gap.

the ACT. These findings, which use statistics that can be compared fairly over time, show trends that are very different from the trends in the publicly reported statistics (such as those shown in Figure 1, on page 7).

In addition, while elementary/middle math and reading scores improved on average, some groups of students improved much less than others. In every era, the performance gap between African American students and students of other races/ethnicities widened.

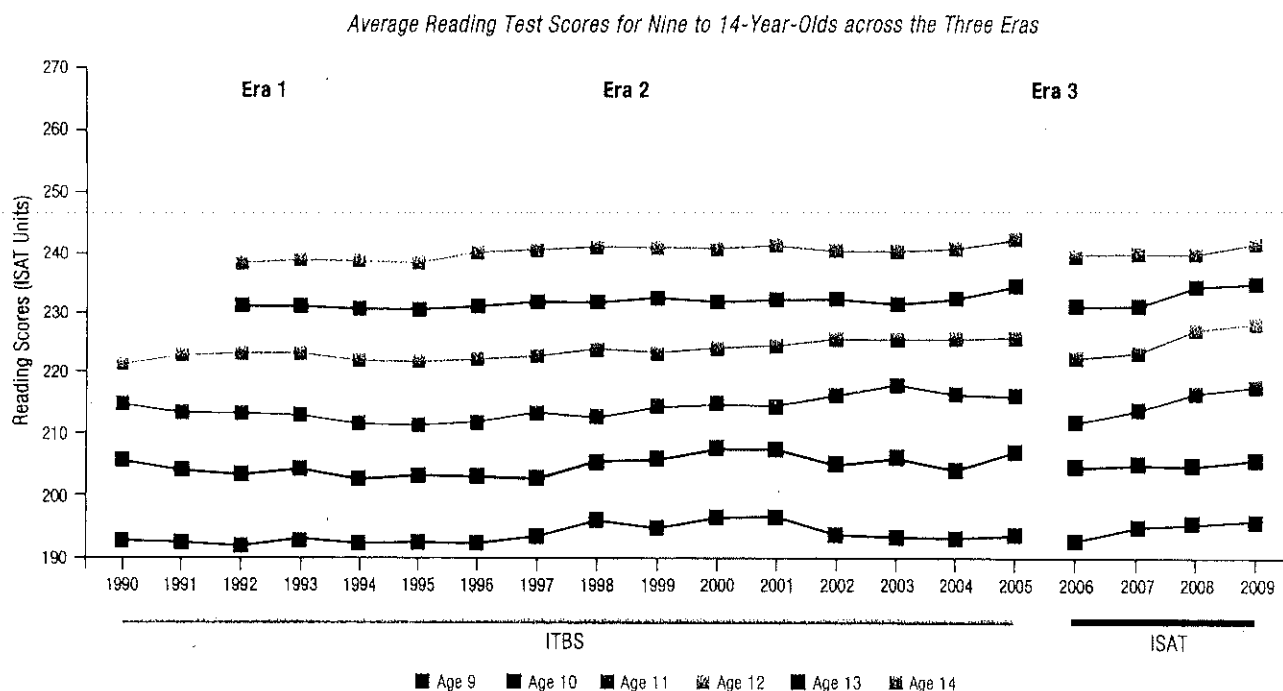
READING test scores rose during Era 2 in the lower grades, but they were flat during the other eras (see Figure 4). While it looks as if reading scores rose at the end of Era 3, our analysis of the 2008 and 2009 tests suggest that this trend resulted from inconsistencies in the way that the statewide test for elementary school students was scored during those years rather than actual improvements in reading skills among CPS students. Indeed, the statewide average and the Chicago average improved at the same rate in 2008 and 2009, providing further evidence that the improvement was

likely a result of scoring issues with the statewide test. Reading scores in Chicago were also flat on the national exam, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), during the period that students in Chicago took the ISAT.

MATH scores rose in the middle of Era 1, but they fell at the end of the era (see Figure 5). In Era 2 they rose so much that students at some ages had the same average scores as students one year older at the beginning of Era 1. Math scores were flat at the beginning of Era 3, but they showed improvements at the end of the era. In contrast to reading scores, math scores in Chicago improved slightly more than math scores statewide at the end of Era 3, suggesting that part of these gains resulted from real skill improvements among CPS students.

The gains in Era 2, coupled with modest improvement in Era 3, might seem to constitute major progress. However, as shown in Figure 6, the end result is that the average student moved from just below meeting state standards to a level that is still in the bottom half of the

FIGURE 4
Reading scores increased during Era 2, but not in other eras



Note: Data from 1990 to 2005 are ITBS rescaled to the ISAT scale. Data records are not sufficiently accurate at the older ages in the first two years of the study to include in the figure. The trend lines are broken between 2005 and 2006 to indicate the change in tests that

were given to students. Students took the ITBS prior to 2006 and the ISAT beginning in 2006. Scores are adjusted for changes in race, gender, and socio-economic level; and for changes in test type, form, and level.

Other research at CCSR has documented the unevenness in school improvement under decentralization; during decentralization the schools serving students from the most economically disadvantaged communities were least likely to improve, while the schools serving more advantaged communities were most likely to improve.⁵ These outcomes can be explained by differences in the social resources available in school communities. Because decentralization placed power in the hands of elected Local School Councils, it is not surprising that communities where residents were active in local organizations and where schools faced fewer social problems were more likely to show improvements.

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In Era 3, there were large improvements in outcomes in the high schools and very little improvement in the elementary schools. Improvements that had been occurring in graduation rates accelerated, and were seen in all types of schools, among boys and girls and all racial/ethnic groups. At the same time, scores on the ACT rose, even though students were not entering high school better prepared. Students were learning more while in high school. In the elementary grades, test scores dropped—especially in the lowest-performing schools. Equity declined, so that schools serving African American students, and those that started out the era with the lowest levels of performance, were less likely than more advantaged schools to have improving test scores.

While the effects of the dominant policies of Eras 1 and 2 are largely understood, much research remains to be done to understand both the positive and problematic effects of the policies in Era 3. The decline in equity, with African American students falling further behind students from other racial/ethnic groups, is particularly disturbing and has raised questions about policies that disproportionately affected African American students (e.g., the decision to close chronically low-performing schools and send students to other schools). One CCSR study showed no improvements in test scores for students who were displaced by school closings,⁹ but there is yet to be an analysis of the overall effect of the policies on all students and schools. Another area requiring more study is the rise in student performance in the high schools. Era 3 brought a much greater use of data in the high schools to track students and provide targeted support for passing classes and college readiness. Further research should investigate whether this use of data led to the improved outcomes and, if so, exactly how it happened.

The findings in this report contradict common perceptions about district performance over the last two decades. It has been widely believed that elementary schools have improved considerably, while high schools have stagnated. In fact, the opposite is true. These misperceptions arise because of problems with the metrics that are used to judge school performance, and differences in the standards by which high schools and elementary schools are held accountable. High schools are increasingly being

Acknowledgements

This report was the result of a group effort by many people, and we greatly appreciate the support and feedback we received from our colleagues at the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) and the CCSR Steering Committee. Special thanks to Holly Hart for researching and constructing the Reform Timeline and working on the early stages of this study. Several CCSR directors provided feedback on early drafts of this report, including Penny Sebring, Paul Goren, David Stevens, Jenny Nagaoka, Melissa Roderick, and Sue Spote. We appreciate their efforts greatly. We are also very grateful for the considerable help of CCSR Associate Director for Communications, Emily Krone, who provided tireless editing and substantive feedback. We are also very grateful for the support of our Steering Committee and the members who took the time to read drafts of this report and provide us with valuable feedback. We particularly thank Kim Zalent, Arie van der Ploeg, Kathleen St. Louis, Steve Zemelman, Matt Stagner, Josie Yanguas, and Greg Michie.

We would like to thank the Illinois State Board of Education for providing test data and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) for their continued cooperation and support in providing us with data that allow us to do this work.

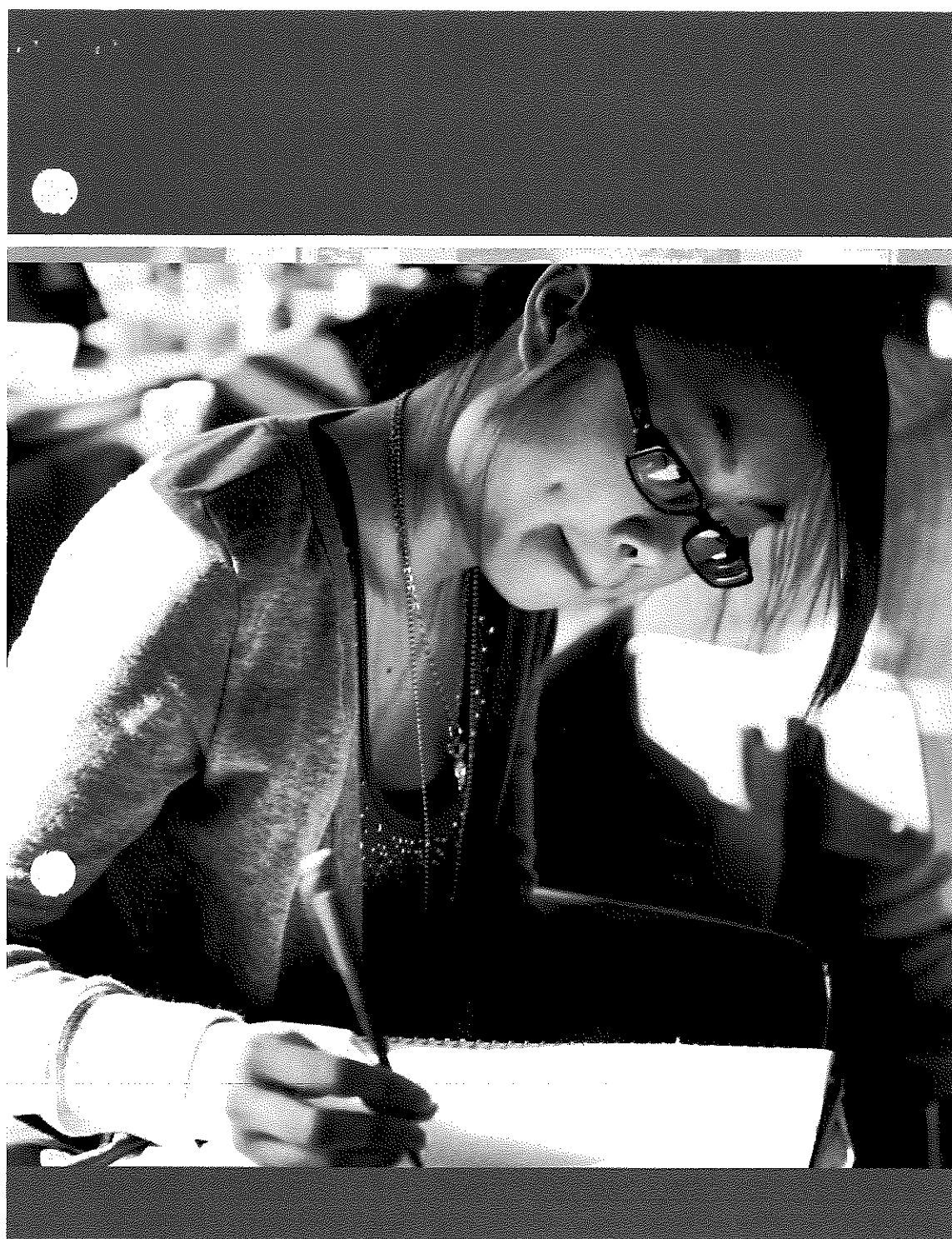
Most importantly, we want to acknowledge the Chicago Community Trust for taking the initiative to commission this study and providing the funding to carry it out.



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This is a summary of key findings from a more comprehensive study. The full report is available at ccsr.uchicago.edu.





Executive Summary

In 1988, U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett proclaimed Chicago's public schools to be the worst in the nation. Since that time, Chicago has been at the forefront of urban school reform. Beginning with a dramatic move in 1990 to shift power away from the central office, through CEO Paul Vallas's use of standardized testing to hold schools and students accountable for teaching and learning, and into CEO Arne Duncan's bold plan to create 100 new schools in 10 years, Chicago has attempted to boost academic achievement through a succession of innovative policies. Each wave of reform has brought new practices, programs, and policies that have interacted with the initiatives of the preceding wave. And with each successive wave of reform this fundamental question has been raised: Has progress been made at Chicago Public Schools (CPS)?

This study addresses the question by analyzing trends in elementary and high school test scores and graduation rates over the past 20 years. Key findings described briefly in this summary report include:

- Graduation rates have improved dramatically, and high school test scores have risen; more students are graduating without a decline in average academic performance.
- Math scores have improved incrementally in the elementary/middle grades, while elementary/middle grade reading scores have remained fairly flat for two decades.
- Racial gaps in achievement have steadily increased, with White students making more progress than Latino students, and African American students falling behind all other groups.
- Despite progress, the vast majority of CPS students are at academic achievement levels that are far below what they need to graduate ready for college.

Many of the findings in this report contradict trends that appear in publicly reported data. For instance, publicly reported statistics indicate that CPS has made tremendous progress in elementary math and reading tests, while this analysis demonstrates only incremental gains in math and almost no growth in reading. The discrepancies are due to myriad issues with publicly reported data—including changes in test content and scoring—that make year-over-year comparisons nearly impossible without complex statistical analyses, such as those undertaken for this report. This leads to another key message in this report:

- The publicly reported statistics used to hold schools and districts accountable for making academic progress are not accurate measures of progress.

For this study, we addressed the problems in the public statistics by carefully constructing measures and methods to make valid year-over-year comparisons. This allowed us to create an accurate account of the progress made by CPS since the early 1990s. The Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) at the University of Chicago has a long history of tracking trends in Chicago's schools. Through 20 years of studying the district, we have developed methods for using student data to create indicators that are comparable over time, adjusting for changes in tests, policies, and conditions that make the publicly reported statistics unsuitable for gauging trends in student performance.

We divide the last 20 years into three eras of reform, defined by district leadership and the central reform policies that those leaders pursued. Era 1 is the time of decentralized control of schools, when decisions over budget and staffing were transferred from the central office to locally elected school boards. Era 2 is defined by the beginning of mayoral control over the schools, the tenure of Paul Vallas as CEO, and the beginning of strong accountability measures for students and schools. Era 3 is defined by Arne Duncan's tenure as CEO, the emphasis on diversification through the creation of new schools, and a greater use of data in practice. While these three eras are defined by very different key policies, each era of reform builds on the reforms of the previous era.

This report shows areas of substantial progress, as well as areas of concern, and counters a number of misconceptions that exist about the state of the schools. What it does not do is draw conclusions about the effects of particular school policies on the progress of students. Changes in student achievement over the last 20 years are a result of the totality of policies, programs, and demographic changes that have occurred in and around the schools. The policies of each new school administration have interacted with the policies of the preceding administration. In some cases over the past 20 years, individual policies have been studied; where evidence exists that a policy had a specific effect on student outcomes, we report it. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to definitively analyze the combined effects of myriad policies.

Graduation Rates Have Improved Dramatically, Without a Decline in High School Performance

Chicago schools have shown remarkable progress over the last 20 years in high school graduation rates. In the early 1990s, students who entered Chicago high schools were equally likely to drop out as to graduate. Now they are more than twice as likely to graduate as to drop out. Graduation rates have improved among students of all racial/ethnic groups and among both boys and girls. Improvements in graduation rates began to occur in Era 1, slowed down in Era 2, and then accelerated considerably in Era 3.

At the same time, high school students have improved their performance on the tests administered to all high school juniors in Illinois, with ACT scores rising by about a point over the last decade. All students who graduate now do so with courses required for admission to college, while many students used to take just one science credit and remedial math and English courses.

Math Scores Have Improved Incrementally in the Elementary/Middle Grades, but Reading Scores Have Remained Fairly Flat

Math scores have risen in the elementary/middle grades; students are now scoring at a level similar to students who were one year older in the early 1990s, at least in some grade levels. This could be viewed as a remarkable improvement; at the same time, the typical student has moved from just meeting state standards

to a level that is still at the low end of the range of scores that meet state standards. Students at this level are extremely unlikely to reach ACT college-readiness benchmarks by the time they are juniors in high school. Due to a disconnect between the elementary school ISAT standards and the high school college-readiness standards as defined by ACT, elementary students must actually exceed standards rather than simply meet standards on the Illinois test in order to have a reasonable chance of meeting ACT college benchmarks in high school.

Reading scores in the elementary/middle grades have not shown much improvement over the three eras of school reform. There were some improvements in the lower grades during Era 2, and scores improved modestly among White and Asian students across all three eras. However, scores have not improved at all among African American students, which is the largest racial group in CPS. Reading skills in general remain at a low level.

While students' test performance is low in Chicago, it is not lower than the test performance at other schools in Illinois that serve similar populations of students. In fact, Chicago students score better than residents of other parts of Illinois who attend schools that serve students with similar backgrounds. However, because Chicago schools serve a very economically disadvantaged student population compared to most of the rest of Illinois, their performance is much lower than the average school in Illinois.

The Average Student Is Far Below College-Ready Standards

Most CPS students meet state learning standards on the state tests in the elementary/middle grades. However, the eighth grade state standards are well below the ninth grade benchmarks for college readiness. Few CPS students meet these benchmarks when they enter high school, which means they have little chance of making enough progress to attain ACT scores that are expected for admission to four-year colleges. Previous CCSR research has shown that the elementary state standards are far easier to meet than the high school standards, making it appear that students are better prepared for high school than they actually are.

Racial Gaps Increased in All Eras, Especially the Gap Between African American Students and Students of Other Races/Ethnicities

College readiness among African American and Latino students is an area of particular concern. By 2009, White and Asian CPS students had average ACT scores that were close to ACT college-readiness benchmarks. They were also likely to have taken the high school courses that would be expected of applicants to selective four-year colleges. However, the elementary and high school test scores of African American and Latino students were much further behind. Furthermore, African American students' scores improved the least over the three eras. Especially in the elementary/middle schools, test scores for African American students improved at a much slower rate than those of other students. Average scores for African American students improved slightly in math, while improving moderately among other students. There were virtually no improvements in reading scores among African American students, while White and Asian students showed some modest improvements and Latino students showed some slight improvements. Thus, African American students increasingly fell behind other students over the last 20 years, especially in Era 3.

Even in an Age of Accountability, Publicly Reported Statistics Are Not Useful for Gauging District Progress

Chicago not only has been at the forefront of school reform policies but has also been ahead of most of the rest of the country in collecting data and tracking student and school performance. Yet, even with a heavy emphasis on data use and accountability indicators, the publicly reported statistics that are used by CPS and other school districts to gauge progress are simply not useful for measuring trends over time. The indicators have changed frequently due to policies at the local, state, and federal levels; changes made by test makers; and changes in the types and numbers of students included in the statistics. As there is a greater push at both the state and federal levels to use data to judge student and school progress, we must ensure that the statistics that are used are comparable over time. Otherwise, future decisions about school reform will be based on flawed statistics and a poor understanding of where progress has been made.





Summary of Key Findings

Chicago school reform from 1990 to 2009 can be divided into three eras, based on district leadership and key policies. Most of the reforms from one era continued into subsequent eras, making it difficult to attribute the effects of any policy to a particular CPS administration. Era 1 begins with the passage of the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988. This act established Local School Councils, which were composed of the school principal, representatives of the faculty, parents, and community members. This act devolved authority to the local schools that had previously been held by the central office. The Local School Councils had the power to hire the principal, as well as to allocate financial resources and to make decisions about curriculum and other academic matters. We refer to this era as Decentralization.

In 1995, the state gave the mayor of Chicago authority over the city schools. Mayor Richard M. Daley installed his former budget director, Paul Vallas, in a newly created position: CEO. The Vallas administration brought stability in district leadership and union negotiations, as well as infrastructure improvement to the city's schools. The new administration also enacted tough policies that were designed to improve student achievement. New graduation requirements required all students to take a college preparatory curriculum. Performance standards were enacted for both students and schools based on standardized test scores, with severe consequences for not meeting the expectations. Beginning in 1996, students in eighth grade were required to earn a minimum score on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) to enroll in high school. In the next year, students in grades three and six had similar promotional requirements. This resulted in 7,000 to 10,000 students retained in grade per year. In addition, schools with large proportions of low-scoring students were put on probation, subjected to intervention, and, in extreme cases, reconstituted. Because of the emphasis on testing and test performance,

In this document, we highlight findings from a larger report that is available at ccsr.uchicago.edu. Here we provide a quick overview of some key trends across the system, which are discussed in more detail in the larger report. The larger report includes additional ways of looking at trends in student performance, as well as information on statistical methodology. It also provides information on some key aspects of school climate and organization that are not included here, particularly changes in the quality of school safety, instruction, professional capacity, and leadership over time.

we refer to this era as Accountability. When Paul Vallas resigned in 2001 he was replaced by his deputy chief-of-staff, Arne Duncan.

The Duncan administration was characterized by opening many new charter and contract schools, focusing on transforming high schools, closing poorly performing schools, instituting new instructional programs, and working to improve professional development. One of the hallmark policies of the Duncan administration was Renaissance 2010, the plan to open 100 new schools in 10 years. From 2001 to 2009, Chicago saw 155 new schools open and 82 schools close.

The Duncan administration initiated major efforts to improve the use of data at schools, developing mechanisms to provide high schools with timely data reports on students' progress in ninth grade and college outcomes. The Duncan administration pursued various strategies to increase coherency in curriculum, intensify professional development efforts, and raise awareness about the importance of literacy and math through various initiatives. The era was marked by the creation and reorganization of central offices around curricular areas and the provision of math and literacy coaches to support their efforts.

During the Duncan administration, the federal government initiated school-level accountability at the national level through the No Child Left Behind Act. Because this period featured so many different approaches to educational reform, including a large expansion of the number and types of schools in the system, we call the period of the Duncan administration Diversification. In 2009, Arne Duncan left CPS to become the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Problems with Publicly Reported Statistics

There is an abundance of student- and school-level data designed to provide the public with an account of what is taking place in CPS and in other school districts across the nation. While these data are useful for answering some questions, the publicly reported statistics are not always appropriate for measuring trends over time. This is a critical issue to address because there are increasing calls to use data to make

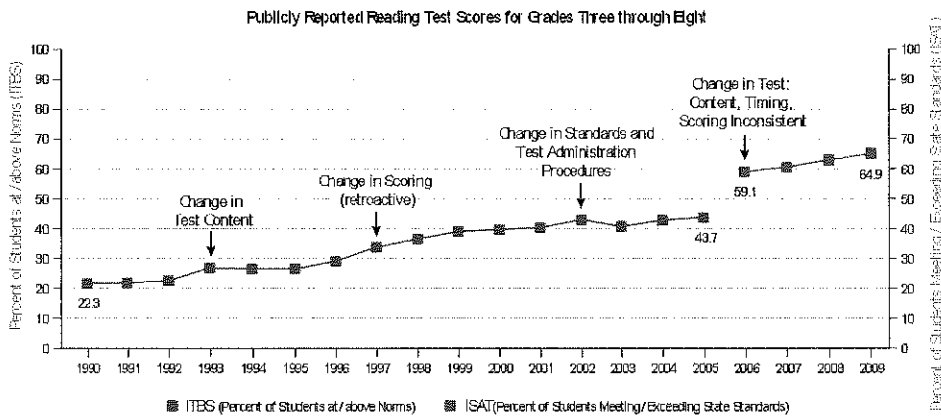
decisions about schools and because substantial resources are being used to develop new data systems. The data presented in this report have been adjusted to address these issues, so that comparisons over time can be made fairly. To learn more about how we accounted for issues with the comparability of the statistics, see Chapter 2 in the full report.

The following is a sampling of the problems that had to be resolved in order to compare indicators over time:

- Changes in tests, standards, scoring methods, and test administration make publicly reported test scores non-comparable. A number of changes in tests and testing procedures have occurred since 1990 (see Figure 1), making it difficult to know if changes in test scores are due to changes in real learning or a result of changes in the tests.
- CPS reports the percentage of students who scored at a certain benchmark in a given year; for example, the percentage of students who met state standards in reading or math. Benchmark scores are imprecise metrics that are not useful for measuring change over time. This is because change in the statistic depends more on how many students have scores that are close to the cut-off point than on how much growth in learning actually occurs. If many students have scores close to the cut-off, even small changes in test scores can show large swings in the percentage of students meeting the benchmarks. Similarly, if few students are close to the cut-off point, large changes in test scores may barely affect the percentage of students meeting the benchmarks. The use of benchmark scores, rather than average scores, has led to incorrect assessments of the progress made in CPS over the last 15 years.
- The introduction of grade promotion standards in 1996 affected the movement of students through the elementary/middle grades. Therefore, the composition of students in particular grades changed dramatically. The policy caused many more low-scoring students to spend extra time in grades three, six, and eight, while reducing the number of low-scoring students in grades four and seven in some years. It also led to the lowest-scoring students spending

FIGURE 1

Changes in the tests make the statistics available to the public non-comparable over time and not useful for gauging academic progress



more time in elementary/middle school so they were counted in CPS statistics on test performance for extra years. For example, the lowest-scoring third-graders in 1997 would be counted in third grade averages in both 1997 and 1998 because they did not move on to fourth grade. They would also be included in CPS statistics for seven years instead of six years, which would lower district performance levels.

Not all students' test scores are counted in district averages in each year. Because of changes in local and federal policies, there were declines and then increases in the proportion of CPS students with reported test scores (see Figure 2). Prior to 2008, students' test scores could be excluded from public reporting depending on their bilingual or special education status. Students who transfer schools mid-year also may not be included in the reported statistics. At the lowest point, only 74 percent of students had their scores reported in school or district averages. Variations in test score reporting rates affect the test score trends because students excluded from reporting tend to have lower scores, on average, than other students.

The population of students served by CPS changed over time, gradually becoming more Latino (see Figure 3). Changes in the types of students attending CPS could affect test score trends, even if Chicago schools do no better or worse at educating students, because historically there are differences in student achievement by race/ethnicity.

More information about the issues encountered in publicly reported statistics and the methods we used for addressing these problems are available in the full report. The full report also provides further information about inconsistencies in ISAT scoring.

Reading and Math Test Scores in Grades Three through Eight

Across the three eras, elementary/middle school math scores in CPS increased on the standardized tests taken by all third- through eighth-graders in Illinois, while reading scores inched up slightly. However,

despite real improvements in math scores and slight improvements in reading scores, the vast majority of CPS students remain so far behind when they enter high school that it is nearly impossible for them to meet standards on the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE), the statewide test for juniors that includes

FIGURE 2

Prior to the federal No Child Left Behind Act, many students' test scores were not included in publicly reported statistics, making statistics reported to the public non-comparable over time

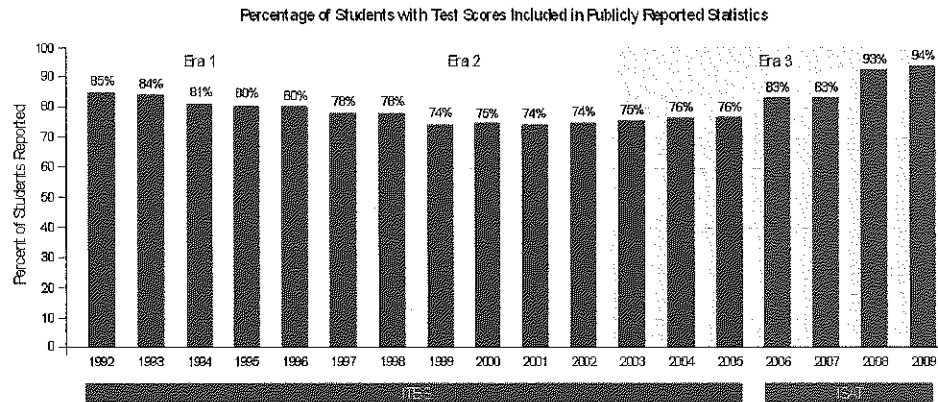
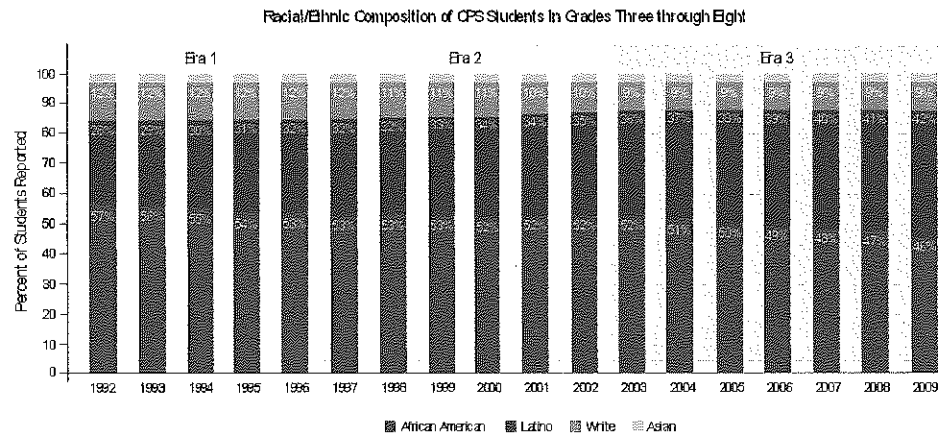


FIGURE 3

The percentage of Latino students has increased across the three eras, while the percentage of African American students decreased



the ACT. These findings, which use statistics that can be compared fairly over time, show trends that are very different from the trends in the publicly reported statistics (such as those shown in Figure 1, on page 7).

In addition, while elementary/middle math and reading scores improved on average, some groups of students improved much less than others. In every era, the performance gap between African American students and students of other races/ethnicities widened.

READING test scores rose during Era 2 in the lower grades, but they were flat during the other eras (see Figure 4). While it looks as if reading scores rose at the end of Era 3, our analysis of the 2008 and 2009 tests suggest that this trend resulted from inconsistencies in the way that the statewide test for elementary school students was scored during those years rather than actual improvements in reading skills among CPS students. Indeed, the statewide average and the Chicago average improved at the same rate in 2008 and 2009, providing further evidence that the improvement was

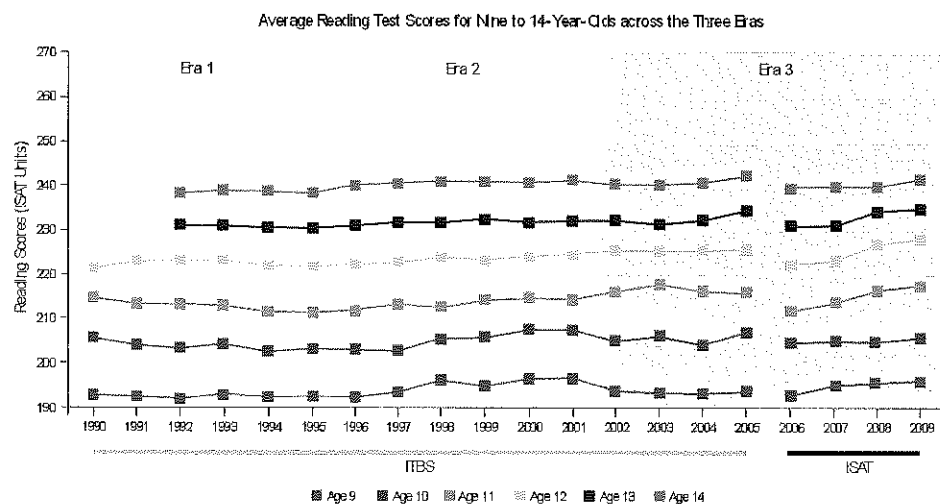
likely a result of scoring issues with the statewide test. Reading scores in Chicago were also flat on the national exam, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), during the period that students in Chicago took the ISAT.

MATH scores rose in the middle of Era 1, but they fell at the end of the era (see Figure 5). In Era 2 they rose so much that students at some ages had the same average scores as students one year older at the beginning of Era 1. Math scores were flat at the beginning of Era 3, but they showed improvements at the end of the era. In contrast to reading scores, math scores in Chicago improved slightly more than math scores statewide at the end of Era 3, suggesting that part of these gains resulted from real skill improvements among CPS students.

The gains in Era 2, coupled with modest improvement in Era 3, might seem to constitute major progress. However, as shown in Figure 6, the end result is that the average student moved from just below meeting state standards to a level that is still in the bottom half of the

FIGURE 4

Reading scores increased during Era 2, but not in other eras

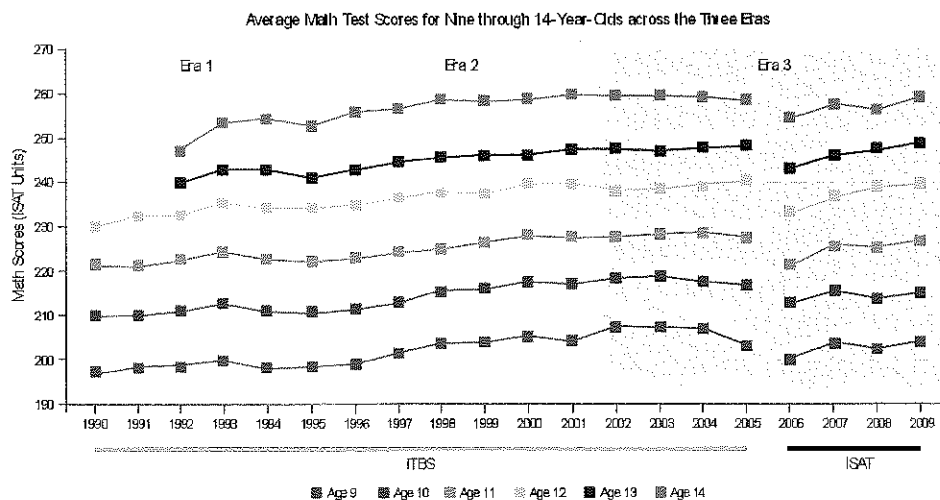


Note: Data from 1990 to 2005 are ITBS rescaled to the ISAT scale. Data records are not sufficiently accurate at the older ages in the first two years of the study to include in the figure. The trend lines are broken between 2005 and 2006 to indicate the change in tests that

were given to students. Students took the ITBS prior to 2006 and the ISAT beginning in 2006. Scores are adjusted for changes in race, gender, and socio-economic level, and for changes in test type, form, and level.

FIGURE 5

Math scores were up in all eras, especially in Era 2

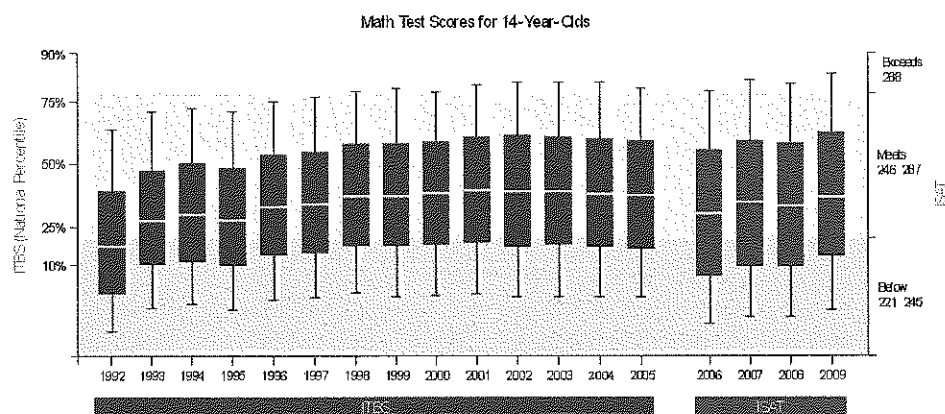


Note: Data from 1990 to 2005 are ITBS rescaled to the ISAT scale. Data records are not sufficiently accurate at the older ages in the first two years of the study to include in the figure. The trend lines are broken between 2005 and 2006 to indicate the change in tests that

were given to students. Students took the ITBS prior to 2006 and the ISAT beginning in 2006. Scores are adjusted for changes in race, gender, and socio-economic level; and for changes in test type, form, and level.

FIGURE 6

Math test scores improved all along the range of scores, not just at the top or bottom



Note: This figure shows the overall distribution of math scores for students in one age group: 14-year-olds. ITBS national percentile ranks and ISAT performance levels are indicated on the vertical axis. The dashed white lines indicate the ITBS national percentile ranks; the ISAT performance levels are shown by the background shading. The boxes show the distribution of math scores by 14-year-olds. The horizontal bar in the middle of the box indicates the

median (50th percentile point); the top and bottom of each box are the 75th percentile and 25th percentile, respectively. The top and bottom of the whiskers extending from each box indicate the 90th and 10th percentile, respectively. Note that the percentiles given by the boxes pertain to 14-year-olds in CPS, not to national percentiles.

meets standards" category. This is a problem because the state sets a very low bar for meeting standards in elementary/middle school. In fact, eighth grade students at the very top of the "meets" category have only about a 60 percent chance of getting a 20 or above on the ACT three years subsequent.¹ Meanwhile, only about one-quarter to one-third of students in the low/middle region of the "meets" category reach the 20 point mark on the ACT three years later. Thus, the typical CPS eighth-grader will need to show extraordinary learning gains in high school to have test scores expected for college by the time he or she graduates.

19 Reading and math scores grew more for Asian, White, and Latino students than for African American students.

20 Reading scores improved slightly among all racial/ethnic groups, except African American students (see Figure 7). The average reading score for African Americans in 2009 was very close to the average score in 1990.

21 Math scores rose considerably among Asian, White, and Latino students but modestly among African American students (see Figure 8).

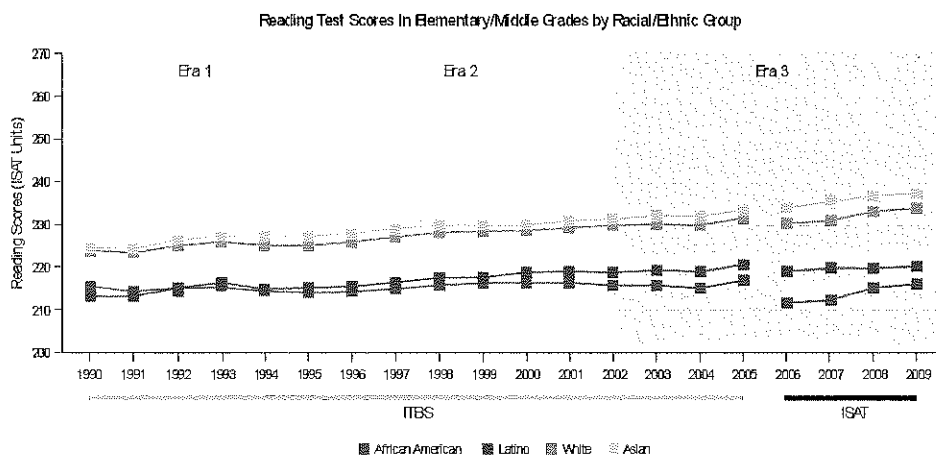
22 While Latino and African American students had the same average math and reading scores in 1990, Latino students' scores were significantly higher than African American students' scores by 2009.

23 The widening of the gap in reading and math scores between White and African American elementary grade students in Chicago was larger than seen in national trends. On the national NAEP exam, fourth grade racial gaps closed substantially over the course of the three eras in both reading and math, while eighth grade gaps were not consistently up or down.²

24 Math and reading scores also increased more among White and Asian students than among Latino students.

FIGURE 7

Reading test scores did not improve among African American students; they improved slightly for other groups

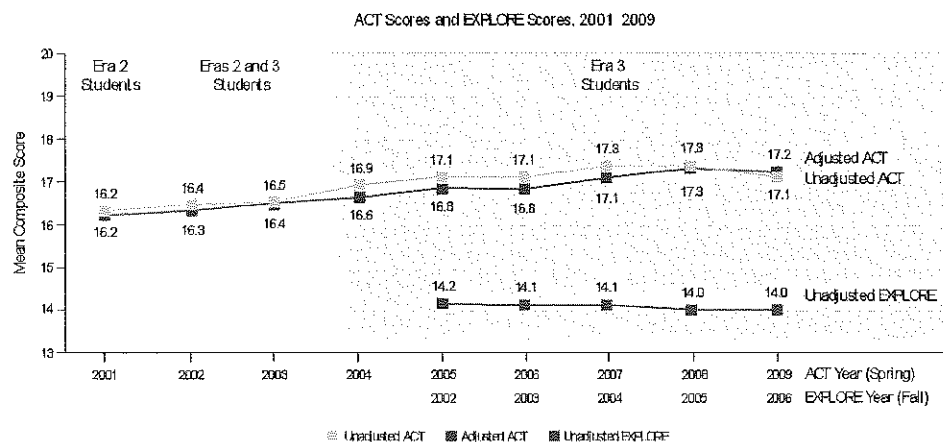


Note: The decline in scores in 2006 is a result of the change in tests and the lack of familiarity with the new test format, as described in the full report. Trends from 2006 through 2009 could

not be adjusted for changes in ISAT scoring and do not seem to reflect real changes in skills. See the full report for more details.

FIGURE 9

Eleventh grade ACT scores have been rising, even though entering ninth grade EXPLORE scores have been flat

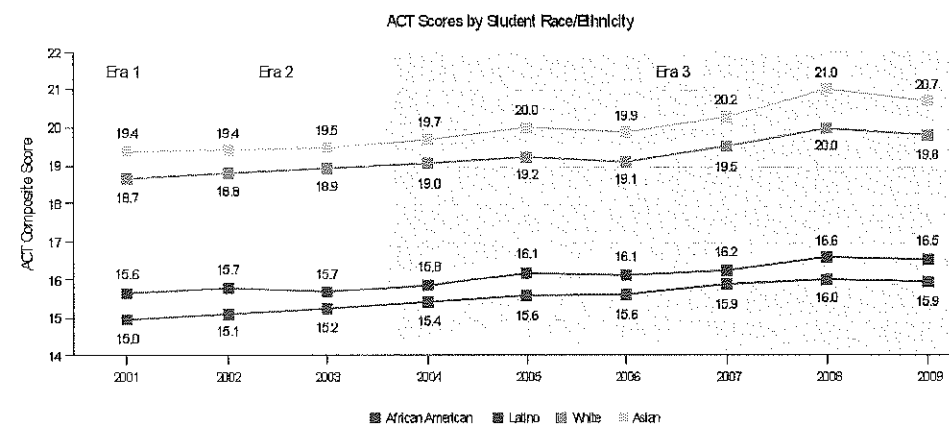


Note: Adjusted ACT scores control for changes in student body composition, compared to 2001, in terms of students' race, gender, and socio-economic level. EXPLORE is taken in October of the ninth grade year and can be used as a measure of students' academic skills as they begin high school. The average EXPLORE score for the ninth grade cohort that is displayed corresponds with on-time test-taking for the ACT year. For example, if a student

was taking the ACT on time (i.e., in their third year) in 2005, they would have taken EXPLORE in fall 2002. The EXPLORE value then is the average ninth grade EXPLORE score for all the students who were first-time freshmen in 2002. Similar trends are observed if we only include the EXPLORE scores for students who made it to the end of the eleventh grade to take the ACT, although the averages are somewhat higher.

FIGURE 10

ACT scores improved among students of all races/ethnicities



Note: ACT scores by race/ethnicity are adjusted for entering achievement, gender, and neighborhood poverty and social status.

- While scores grew for students of all races/ethnicities, the scores of White and Asian students increased more than those of African American or Latino students (see Figure 10).
- Scores grew in all types of schools during Era 3, but the largest improvements occurred in selective enrollment high schools, and racially integrated schools (those where at least 30 percent of students are White or Asian).

Graduation and Dropout Rates

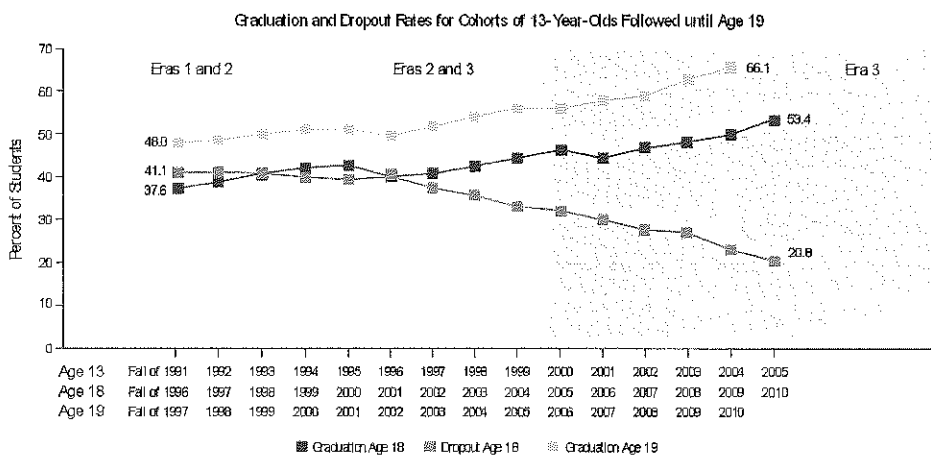
A sustained improvement in graduation rates and a concurrent decline in dropout rates constitute the most striking and positive findings of this report. Chicago's graduation rates increased substantially over the course of the three eras. CPS students who were 13 years old in the fall of 1991 were about as likely to drop out by age 18 as they were to graduate. In many high schools, dropout rates were higher than

graduation rates. Fourteen years later, CPS students who were 13 years old in 2005 were more than twice as likely to graduate by age 18 than to drop out. Two-thirds of CPS students now obtain regular CPS diplomas by age 19, compared with less than half of students at the beginning of Era 1.⁴

Graduation rates are usually reported for groups of students based on the year they enter high school, and such rates are available in the larger report. However, these rates are problematic for examining trends over time, as they can fluctuate with changes in grade promotion policies (e.g., delaying when students enter ninth grade), creation of new schools with irregular grade structures (e.g., middle schools with grade nine), and changes in the percentage of students who drop out prior to ninth grade. For these reasons, we present graduation rates by age group following students from age 13 until age 19. These rates are more inclusive and are not affected by irregular grade progression among students or grade structure among schools.

FIGURE 11

Graduation rates improved dramatically, especially during Era 3



Note: This figure tracks graduation and dropout rates for cohorts of students from age 13 until ages 18 and 19. Points from different lines at the same point on the horizontal axis show outcomes for students from the same cohort, but at different ages. Graduation rates are computed by tracking students over multiple years; therefore, they may have been 13 years old in one era and 19 years old in another era. These statistics include students who transferred into CPS after age 13 and incorporate them into the corresponding age cohort. Students who left CPS through a school transfer, institutionalization, or death are not included in the calculation of the statistics.

- Students who were 13 years old in 1991 were more likely to drop out than to graduate by age 18, as shown in Figure 11 (41 percent versus 38 percent). By comparison, among students who were 13 in 2005, the last group of students with data through age 18, 20.8 percent had dropped out by age 18 and 53.4 percent had graduated by the age of 18.
- Less than half of the 1991 cohort had graduated by the time they were 19 in 1997. In contrast, 66 percent of the 2004 cohort of 13 year olds graduated by the time they were 19 in 2010.
- Graduation rates for girls were substantially higher than for boys, among students of all races/ethnicities (see Figures 12 and 13). However, both boys and girls showed substantial improvements in graduation rates over the three eras.
- Graduation rates for African American students are the lowest and grew the least of all racial/ethnic groups. However, graduation rates still improved considerably. Among students who were 19 years old in 2010, half of African American boys and nearly 70 percent of African American girls graduated. In 1997, by comparison, 35 percent of African American boys and 53 percent of African American girls graduated by age 19.

FIGURE 12

Graduation rates have improved dramatically, but remain low for boys

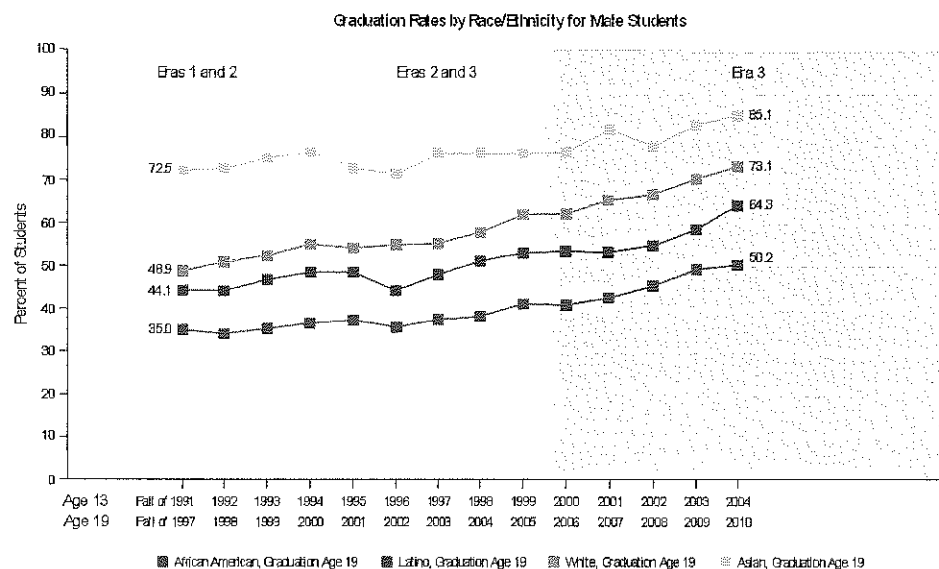
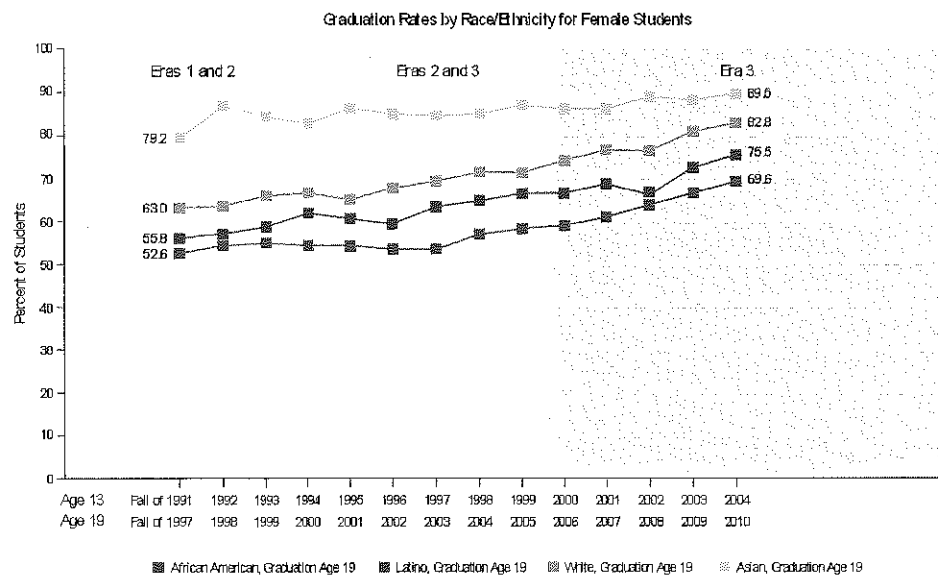


FIGURE 13

Girls graduated at much higher rates than boys in all racial/ethnic groups





Conclusion

Interpretive Summary and Areas for Further Study

Chicago schools are not what they were in 1990. Graduation rates have improved tremendously, and students are more academically prepared than they were two decades ago. ACT scores have risen in recent years, and elementary math scores are almost a grade level above where they were in the early 1990s. However, average elementary school test scores remain well below levels necessary for doing college preparatory work in high school. High schools have little chance of preparing students for college when they enter ninth grade with extremely low skill levels. In fact, despite some improvements in test gains in the high schools, average high school test scores remain well below levels that indicate students are likely to succeed in college. This is not a problem that is unique to Chicago. Nationwide, the typical high school graduate also fails to perform at college-ready levels. Students with similar economic and ethnic backgrounds at other schools in Illinois actually tend to perform worse than Chicago students. However, the district has a long way to go before the average student graduates ready to succeed in college.

Era 1, the era of decentralization when schools were given the latitude to formulate and execute their own improvement strategies, was a baseline period for this study. Our data sources begin to provide good information in the middle of the era; thus, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which students' achievement improved under decentralization. However, there were at least modest improvements in both elementary and high schools during Era 1. Graduation rates were very low, but improving. And math scores rose in the elementary grades, although they flattened in the end of the era.

Other research at CCSR has documented the unevenness in school improvement under decentralization; during decentralization the schools serving students from the most economically disadvantaged communities were least likely to improve, while the schools serving more advantaged communities were most likely to improve.⁵ These outcomes can be explained by differences in the social resources available in school communities. Because decentralization placed power in the hands of elected Local School Councils, it is not surprising that communities where residents were active in local organizations and where schools faced fewer social problems were more likely to show improvements.

Era 2 was an era of strict test-based accountability measures and bold initiatives that were enacted to transform high schools (e.g., changing graduation requirements so that all students took a college preparatory curriculum). There were large investments in infrastructure and stability in district leadership. Test scores in the elementary/middle grades rose during this period, and they improved in schools serving students of all types of backgrounds. This was the only era to show large improvements in the lowest-achieving schools. Prior CCSR studies have found that the test-based accountability policies, which held schools accountable for improvements in test scores and required students to pass tests to be promoted from certain grades, had mixed results for students.⁶ They encouraged teachers and parents to provide more support to the lowest-achieving students, and they encouraged better alignment of instruction to grade-level standards. At the same time, they resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum to focus on tested subjects (reading and math), more instructional time spent on test-taking practice, and a large increase in grade retention in the elementary schools. Test-based promotion policies resulted in more students entering high school who were old for their grade level; this had a depressing effect on graduation rates.⁷ In fact, the improvements in graduation rates that had been occurring in Era 1 were set back in Era 2. This dip occurred, in part, because of the increase in grade retention and also because of the change in graduation requirements that ended remedial coursework and required all high school students to take a college preparatory curriculum.⁸

In Era 3, there were large improvements in outcomes in the high schools and very little improvement in the elementary schools. Improvements that had been occurring in graduation rates accelerated, and were seen in all types of schools, among boys and girls and all racial/ethnic groups. At the same time, scores on the ACT rose, even though students were not entering high school better prepared. Students were learning more while in high school. In the elementary grades, test scores dropped—especially in the lowest-performing schools. Equity declined, so that schools serving African American students, and those that started out the era with the lowest levels of performance, were less likely than more advantaged schools to have improving test scores.

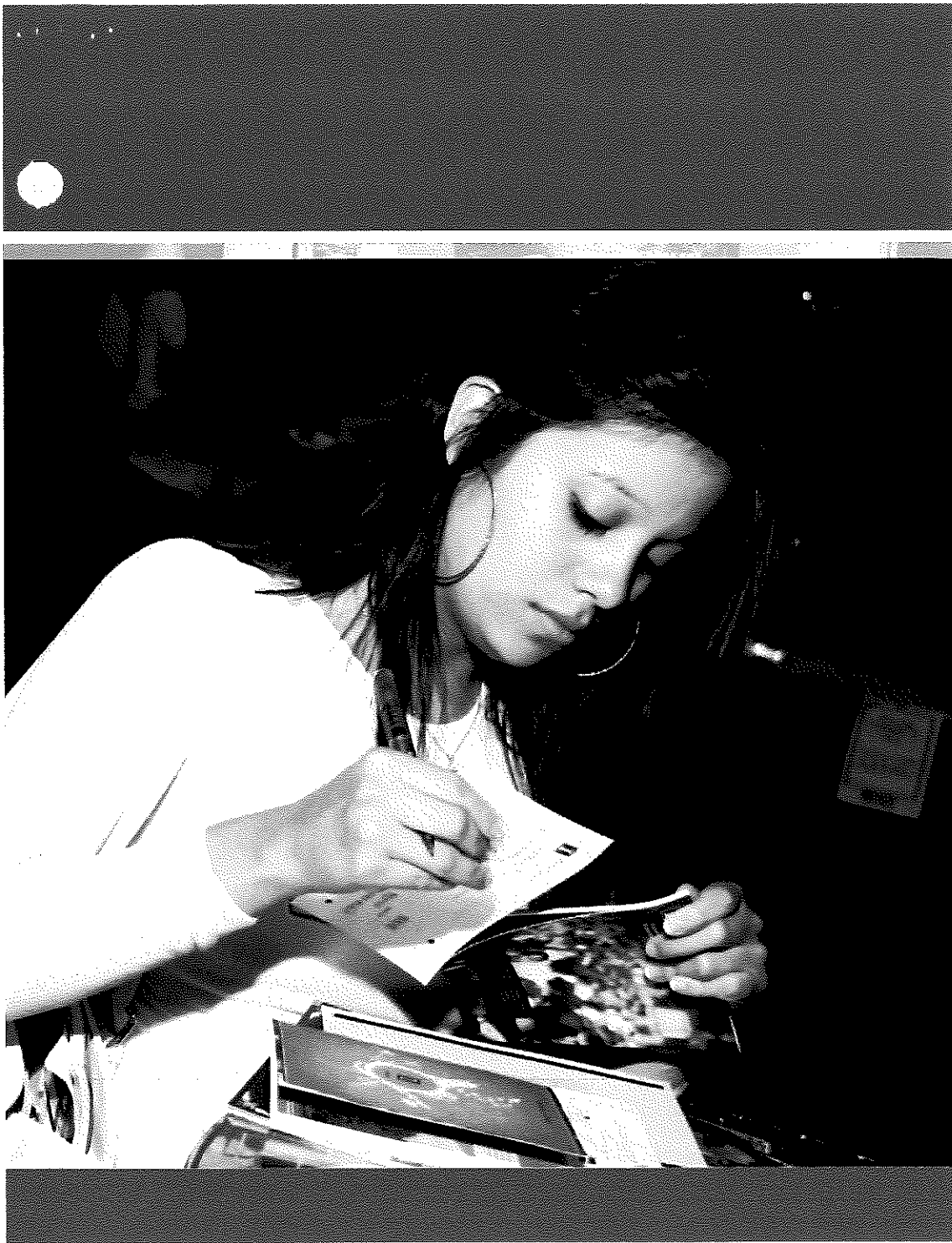
While the effects of the dominant policies of Eras 1 and 2 are largely understood, much research remains to be done to understand both the positive and problematic effects of the policies in Era 3. The decline in equity, with African American students falling further behind students from other racial/ethnic groups, is particularly disturbing and has raised questions about policies that disproportionately affected African American students (e.g., the decision to close chronically low-performing schools and send students to other schools). One CCSR study showed no improvements in test scores for students who were displaced by school closings,⁹ but there is yet to be an analysis of the overall effect of the policies on all students and schools. Another area requiring more study is the rise in student performance in the high schools. Era 3 brought a much greater use of data in the high schools to track students and provide targeted support for passing classes and college readiness. Further research should investigate whether this use of data led to the improved outcomes and, if so, exactly how it happened.

The findings in this report contradict common perceptions about district performance over the last two decades. It has been widely believed that elementary schools have improved considerably, while high schools have stagnated. In fact, the opposite is true. These misperceptions arise because of problems with the metrics that are used to judge school performance, and differences in the standards by which high schools and elementary schools are held accountable. High schools are increasingly being

judged by college-ready standards, particularly by college-ready benchmark scores on the ACT. The benchmark score on the ACT-aligned EXPLORE exam that students take at the beginning of high school corresponds to much higher skill levels than the meets standards benchmark on the spring eighth grade ISAT exam. Thus, it appears that high schools are less successful when, in fact, they are simply held to a much higher standard. This problem is accentuated by focusing on benchmark scores rather than averages—few students are close to meeting the high school benchmarks on the ACT, so it looks like there has been little movement when there has been growth. A further reason for misperceptions about elementary school performance comes from non-equivalent tests, scoring, and test administration procedures over time. These changes have often led scores to look like they are improving when, in fact, skill levels have remained the same.

This report raises important questions about how much improvement we can reasonably expect in a large system over the span of two decades. A number of

dramatic system-wide initiatives were enacted over the course of the three eras of school reform. But instead of catalyzing dramatic changes in student achievement, district-wide changes were incremental when they occurred at all. Meanwhile, throughout the three eras, individual schools did manage to make substantial improvements. Past research at CCSR suggests that the process of school improvement involves careful attention to building the core organizational supports of schools—leadership, professional capacity, parent/community involvement, school learning climate, and instruction.¹⁰ In fact, schools that are strong in at least three of these five areas are 10 times more likely to improve than schools that are weak. Building the organizational capacity of schools takes time and is not easily mandated at the district level. Nevertheless, the extent to which the next era of school reform drives system-wide improvement will likely depend on the extent to which the next generation of reforms attends to local context and the capacity of individual schools throughout the district.





Summary of Key Findings

1. Easton, J.Q., S. Ponisciak, and S. Luppescu (2008). *From high school to the future: The pathway to 20*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
2. Analysis based on publicly available NAEP data. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (11/05/2002). National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Data Files. (<http://hdl.handle.net/1902.5/609759>) National Archives and Records Administration.
3. Also see: Roderick, M., J. Nagaoka, and E.M. Allensworth (2006). *From high school to the future: A first look at Chicago Public School graduates' college enrollment, college preparation, and graduation from four-year colleges*. Allensworth, E.M., M. Correa, and S. Ponisciak (2008). *From high school to the future: ACT preparation too much, too late*.
4. Our calculations only include students who enter CPS through regular (non-alternative) schools. Students who leave a regular school and enter an alternative school are counted as dropouts. Students who never enrolled in a regular CPS school are not included in the calculations.

Conclusion

5. Bryk, A.S., P. Bender Sebring, E.M. Allensworth, S. Luppescu, and J.Q. Easton (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
6. Roderick, M., and J. Nagaoka (2005). Retention under Chicago's high-stakes testing program: Helpful, harmful, or harmless? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(4), 309-40; Allensworth, E.M., and J. Nagaoka (2010). The effects of retaining students in grade with high stakes promotion tests. Chapter 20 in J. Meese (ed.), *Handbook on Schools, Schooling, and Human Development*, Taylor and Francis.
7. Allensworth, E.M. (2005). Drop-out rates after high-stakes testing in elementary school: A study of the contradictory effects of Chicago's efforts to end social promotion. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 27(4).
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This report reflects the interpretation of the authors. Although CCSR's Steering Committee provided technical advice and reviewed earlier versions, no formal endorsement by these individuals, organizations, or the full Consortium should be assumed.

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Our Mission

The Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) at the University of Chicago conducts research of high technical quality that can inform and assess policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools. We seek to expand communication among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners as we support the search for solutions to the problems of school reform. CCSR encourages the use of research in policy action and improvement of practice, but does not argue for particular policies or programs. Rather, we help to build capacity for school reform by identifying what matters for student success and school improvement, creating critical indicators to chart progress, and conducting theory-driven evaluation to identify how programs and policies are working.



URBAN
EDUCATION
INSTITUTE

Study: School reform in 3 major cities brings few benefits, some harm

By Valerie Strauss, Updated: April 13, 2013

Many people paying attention to corporate-based school reform in recent years will not be surprised by this, but a new study on the effects of this movement in Washington, D.C., New York City and Chicago concludes that little has been accomplished and some harm has been done to students, especially the underprivileged.

The report looks at the impact of reforms that have been championed by Education Secretary Arne Duncan and other well-known reformers, including Michelle Rhee, the former chancellor of D.C. Public Schools, and, in New York City, Joel Klein, the former chancellor of New York City Public Schools and Mayor Michael Bloomberg. It says:

The reforms deliver few benefits and in some cases harm the students they purport to help, while drawing attention and resources away from policies with real promise to address poverty-related barriers to school success...

The full study, titled "Market-oriented education reforms? rhetoric trumps reality," was conducted by Elaine Weiss and Don Long of the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education initiative, which was convened in 2008 by Economic Policy Institute President Larry Mishel in an effort to champion a well-rounded approach to education that goes beyond test-based accountability. It will be available here next week. The executive summary [can be seen here now](#).

Market-oriented education reform refers to a series of initiatives that include educator evaluations based in large part on student standardized test scores, the closure of schools that are considered failing or underenrolled, and an increase in the number of charter schools, many of which are operated by for-profit companies. Many people in the education world have long argued that the public education system is a civic enterprise that shouldn't be operated like a business, but modern reformers have imposed market-oriented initiatives anyway.

The three cities studied were chosen because their school systems have all operated for years under mayoral control, participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress and have been led by well-known proponents of market-based reform. Furthermore, the reforms they have used have become the basis for much of federal education policy.

The executive summary of the report says that impacts of reform include:

- * Test scores increased less, and achievement gaps grew more, in "reform" cities than in other urban districts.
- * Reported successes for targeted students evaporated upon closer examination.
- * Test-based accountability prompted churn that thinned the ranks of experienced teachers, but not necessarily bad teachers.
- * School closures did not send students to better schools or save school districts money.
- * Charter schools further disrupted the districts while providing mixed benefits, particularly for the highest-needs students.
- * Emphasis on the widely touted market-oriented reforms drew attention and resources from initiatives with greater promise.
- * The reforms missed a critical factor driving achievement gaps: the influence of poverty on academic performance. Real, sustained change requires strategies that are more realistic, patient, and multipronged.

The report says that benefits of corporate-based reform have been exaggerated in each of these cities. For example, it says Bloomberg "claimed to have cut the race-based achievement gap by 50 percent from 2003 to 2011" but "in reality, the gap closed by 1 percent."

In Chicago Public Schools (CPS), it says:

President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan (when he was CPS CEO) have both cited large increases in elementary school reading "proficiency" of 29 percentage points—from 38 percent of students in 2001 to 67 percent in 2008. CPS used these figures in January 2009 brochures. When scores were adjusted for changes in tests and procedures, however, the percentage of elementary and middle-school students deemed proficient ("at or above grade level") had grown by about 8 percentage points, while the percentage of proficient high school students had grown only a point and a half.

Furthermore, though Arne Duncan, who ran Chicago Public Schools before becoming Obama's education secretary, said that students in closed schools would move to better-resourced schools, only 6 percent of those who did had better outcomes.

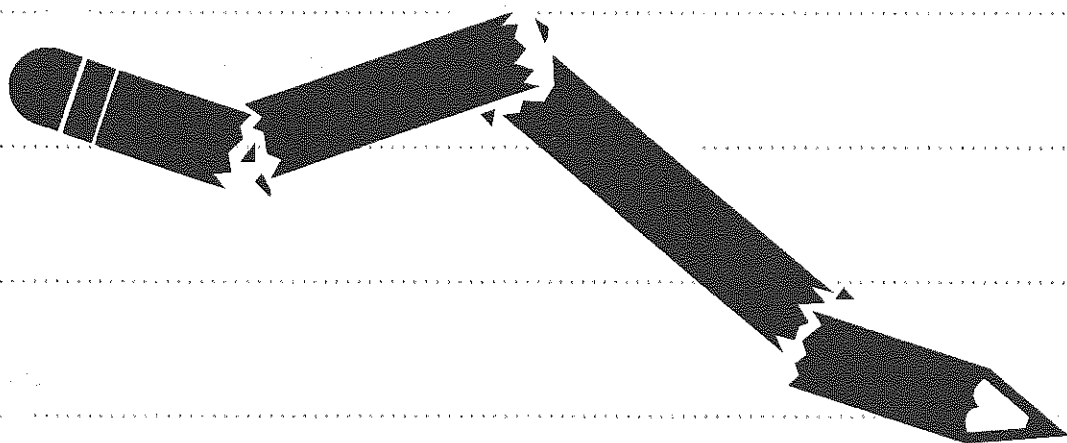
The summary points to incredible turnover in D.C. Public Schools as a result of Rhee's reforms; after four years, 52 percent of teachers had left. And though Rhee and other D.C. officials have repeatedly touted a rise in standardized test scores, the executive summary points out that while black eighth-graders in D.C. schools dropped two points in reading between 2005 and 2011, their counterparts in other large urban districts overall gained five points.

It further notes that leaders in all three of the studied cities gave short shrift to more holistic approaches to education that have shown to have promise.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Market-oriented education reforms' rhetoric trumps reality

The impacts of test-based teacher evaluations, school closures, and increased charter-school access on student outcomes in Chicago, New York City, and Washington, D.C.



By Elaine Weiss and Don Long

Broader,
BOLDER
Approach
to Education

ABOUT BBA

The Broader Bolder Approach to Education is a national campaign that acknowledges the impact of social and economic disadvantage on schools and students and proposes evidence-based policies to improve schools and remedy conditions that limit many children's readiness to learn. BBA was launched in 2008 by the Economic Policy Institute, but is guided by outside co-chairs and an independent Advisory Council that shape policies distinct from those of EPI.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Elaine Weiss has been national coordinator of the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education (BBA) since 2011. Her public policy background has focused on early childhood education, specifically on policy mechanisms to help low-income families and children escape poverty. In her role with BBA, Weiss has coordinated and led events at the Economic Policy Institute and on Capitol Hill, developed research and advocacy materials, launched a social media presence for BBA, and worked with numerous allied organizations to increase the visibility of comprehensive strategies in education policy. Elaine has a J.D. from Harvard Law School and a Ph.D. in public policy from the George Washington University Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Administration.

Don Long has been a consultant for BBA since November 2011. In that capacity, he has conducted research, drafted and edited documents, and identified much of the evidence for this report. Prior to working as an independent education consultant in Virginia, Long was director of the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) and program manager at Pearson Educational Measurement in Austin, Texas. Long has a Master of Public Affairs degree from the LBJ School of Public Policy at the University of Texas, Austin.

Pressure from federal education policies such as Race to the Top and No Child Left Behind, bolstered by organized advocacy efforts, is making a popular set of market-oriented education “reforms” look more like the new status quo than real reform. Reformers assert that test-based teacher evaluation, increased school “choice” through expanded access to charter schools, and the closure of “failing” and underenrolled schools will boost falling student achievement and narrow longstanding race- and income-based achievement gaps. This report examines these assertions by assessing the impacts of these reforms in three large urban school districts: Washington, D.C., New York City, and Chicago. These districts were studied because all enjoy the benefit of mayoral control, produce reliable district-level test score data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and were led by vocal reformers who implemented versions of this agenda.

For the full report, please visit
boldapproach.org/rhetoric-trumps-reality

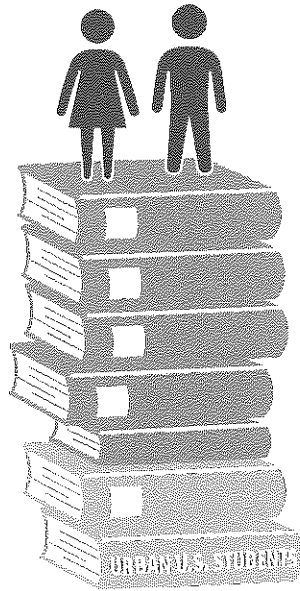
KEY FINDINGS

The reforms deliver few benefits and in some cases harm the students they purport to help, while drawing attention and resources away from policies with real promise to address poverty-related barriers to school success:

- ✓ Test scores increased less, and achievement gaps grew more, in “reform” cities than in other urban districts.
- ✓ Reported successes for targeted students evaporated upon closer examination.
- ✓ Test-based accountability prompted churn that thinned the ranks of experienced teachers, but not necessarily bad teachers.
- ✓ School closures did not send students to better schools or save school districts money.
- ✓ Charter schools further disrupted the districts while providing mixed benefits, particularly for the highest-needs students.
- ✓ Emphasis on the widely touted market-oriented reforms drew attention and resources from initiatives with greater promise.
- ✓ The reforms missed a critical factor driving achievement gaps: the influence of poverty on academic performance. Real, sustained change requires strategies that are more realistic, patient, and multipronged.

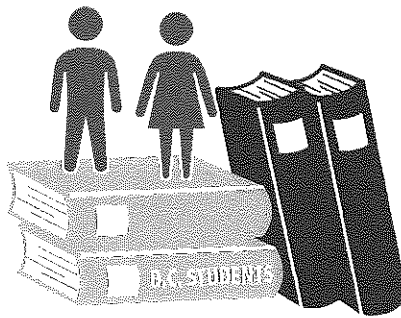
REFORMS LED TO LOST GROUND, BIGGER GAPS FOR THE STUDENTS THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO SUPPORT

In most large urban districts studied, test score gains among minority students narrowed race-based achievement gaps, and low-income students had gains comparable to their affluent peers. This contrasts with reform cities, where achievement gaps grew as poor and minority students' scores fell further behind those of their peers.



BLACK 8TH-GRADERS IN LARGE URBAN DISTRICTS GAINED 5 POINTS IN READING, 2005–2011

THEIR DCPS COUNTERPARTS LOST 2 POINTS



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *Third Urban District Reading Assessment, 2005 and 2011*; National Assessment of Educational Progress scores for District of Columbia Public Schools provided by D.C. budget consultant Mary Levy in 2012.

Test scores increased less, and achievement gaps grew more, in “reform” cities than in other urban districts. Leaders promised that the reforms would raise test scores, especially those of minority and low-income students, and close race- and income-based achievement gaps. Analysis of the most reliable, comparable data—National Assessment of Educational Progress scores—shows that the rhetoric did not match the reality. While test scores increased and achievement gaps shrank in most large urban districts over the past decade, scores stagnated for low-income and minority students and/or achievement gaps widened in the reform cities.

✓ Between 2005 and 2011, in large, urban districts, Hispanic eighth-graders gained six points in reading (from 243 to 249), black eighth-graders gained 5 points (from 240 to 245), and white eighth-graders gained 3 points (from 270 to 273).¹ In District of Columbia Public Schools, however, Hispanic eighth-graders’ scores fell 15 points (from 247 to 232), black eighth-graders’ scores fell 2 points (from 233 to 231), and white eighth-graders’ scores fell 13 points (from 303 to 290).²

✓ New York City ranked second to last among 10 large, urban districts in NAEP test score gains from 2003 to 2011 (averaged across fourth and eighth grade reading and math).³ New York City students gained 4.3 points, half the urban district average gain of 8.8 points.⁴ Only Cleveland students had a smaller average gain (1 point).

✓ In Chicago Public Schools (CPS), white and Asian students made modest gains in reading between 2003 and 2009, but Hispanic students gained little and black students gained nothing, so achievement gaps between white and minority students grew at both the fourth and eighth grade levels, as measured by NAEP scores. Nationally, race-based achievement gaps in reading narrowed considerably among fourth-graders and remained about the same among eighth-graders.⁵

“While test scores increased and achievement gaps shrank in most large urban districts over the past decade, scores stagnated for low-income and minority students and/or achievement gaps widened in the reform cities.”

REFORMERS CLAIMED MASSIVE TEST-SCORE GAINS THAT DATA PROVED FALSE

Reformers in DC, NYC, and Chicago reported "success" in large test score gains and shrinking achievement gaps. When the data were recalibrated, broken down by subgroup, and compared with reliable numbers, however, the gains vanished and gaps grew.



NYC MAYOR BLOOMBERG CLAIMED TO HAVE CUT THE RACE-BASED
ACHIEVEMENT GAP **BY 50%** FROM 2003 TO 2011



IN REALITY, THE GAP CLOSED **BY 1%**

Source: Aaron Pallas, "The Emperor's New Close," *Gotham Schools*, March 7, 2012.

Reported successes for targeted students evaporated upon closer examination. Reformers in all three cities claimed that they had boosted student achievement and closed achievement gaps. But when state test scores were recalibrated to make standards consistent, compared with NAEP scores, and disaggregated by race and income, gains vanished or turned out to have accrued only to white and high-income students.

- ✓ As Washington, D.C., schools chancellor, Michelle Rhee announced that all subgroups of students had improved their reading and math scores between 2007 and 2010, with low-income and minority high school students posting double-digit gains in “proficiency.”⁶ But those gains, based on an arbitrary DC Comprehensive Assessment System “proficiency” level, were illusory. NAEP scores showed minimal-to-no improvement for low-income and minority students, and some losses. Moreover, higher scores were due in most cases not to actual improvements for any group, but to an influx of wealthier students. For example, average fourth-grade NAEP reading scores rose from 198 to 201, or by 1.5 percent, from 2007 to 2011. But during that period, scores for white and Hispanic students fell by 3 points, and black students’ scores stagnated, so only new students who brought higher scores to the pool could account for the small overall gain.⁷

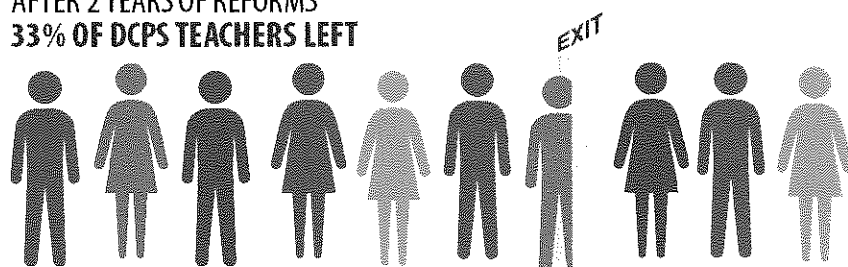
- ✓ New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg claimed to halve the white/Asian to black/Latino achievement gap in city schools from 2003 to 2011, but scores on state-administered tests, averaged across fourth and eighth grades in reading and math, show that the achievement gap had stagnated; it was 26.2 percentage points in 2003, versus 25.8 percentage points in 2011 (a 0.01 standard deviation change). Columbia University professor Aaron Pallas, who calculated the 1 percent reduction, noted, “The mayor has thus overstated the cut in the achievement gap by a factor of 50.”⁸

- ✓ President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan (when he was CPS CEO) have both cited large increases in elementary school reading “proficiency” of 29 percentage points—from 38 percent of students in 2001 to 67 percent in 2008. CPS used these figures in January 2009 brochures. When scores were adjusted for changes in tests and procedures, however, the percentage of elementary and middle-school students deemed proficient (“at or above grade level”) had grown by about 8 percentage points, while the percentage of proficient high school students had grown only a point and a half.⁹

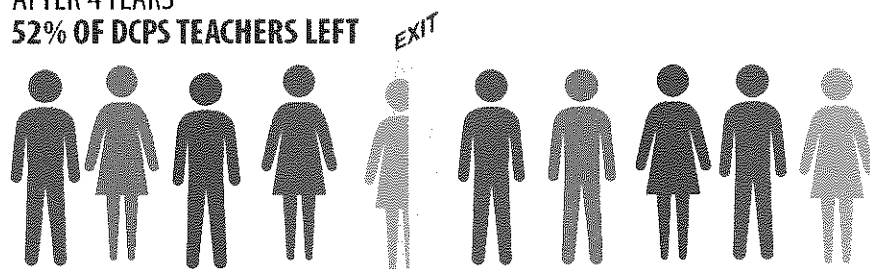
USING TEST SCORES TO EVALUATE EDUCATORS AND SCHOOLS LED TO TEACHER CHURN AND INEXPERIENCE

Reforms in DC, NYC, and Chicago that used student test scores to evaluate, reward, and fire teachers and to target schools for closure delivered increased turnover and fewer experienced, qualified teachers, but no improvement in student achievement.

AFTER 2 YEARS OF REFORMS
33% OF DCPS TEACHERS LEFT



AFTER 4 YEARS
52% OF DCPS TEACHERS LEFT



Source: DCPS teacher retention data provided by DC budget consultant Mary Levy in 2012. Levy compared turnover in 2001–2007, before DCPS's IMPACT evaluation program began (in 2009) with turnover in 2008–2012.

Test-based accountability prompted churn that thinned the ranks of experienced teachers, but not necessarily bad teachers. Reformers said that using student test scores to evaluate teachers, and to reward and fire them based on those scores, would improve the quality of teachers in low-income schools. The report finds, rather, that narrow, unreliable metrics turned off great teachers, increased churn, and drained experience from teacher pools, with no boost to student achievement.

- ✓ District of Columbia Public Schools' IMPACT system, which bases teacher evaluations (and dismissals) heavily on test scores, is associated with higher teacher turnover. The share of DCPS teachers leaving after one year increased from 15.3 percent in 2001–2007 (before IMPACT began in 2009) to 19.3 percent in 2008–2012; the share leaving after two years increased from 27.8 percent to 33.2 percent; the share leaving after three years increased from 37.5 percent to 42.7 percent; and after four years fully half (52.1 percent) of teachers left the system, up from 45.3 percent.¹⁰ Few teachers reach “experienced” status, generally considered at least five years and, by some experts, seven years or more.

- ✓ New York City spent \$50 million from 2007 to 2010 on awards to teachers who substantially raised test scores in high-needs schools. In 2011, it ended the program after a RAND study confirmed “mounting evidence that all those bonuses weren’t having much of an effect.”¹¹ The Schoolwide Performance Bonus Program, intended to “motivate educators to change their practices to ones better able to improve student achievement” failed to improve student achievement at any grade level, school progress report scores, or teachers’ reported attitudes and behaviors.¹²

- ✓ CPS used test scores to close “failing” schools, forcing out many experienced teachers. CPS also laid off 1,300 teachers from 2001 to 2008, citing budget shortages. The district never provided teachers due process hearings, and in 2010, a group of teachers, including 749 who had tenure, won a discrimination suit. They had alleged that they had been replaced with less experienced, younger, whiter teachers. The judge held that CPS had violated their rights and ordered the district to work with the union to recall them, noting that most had not received unsatisfactory reviews.¹³

“New York City spent \$50 million from 2007 to 2010 on awards to teachers who substantially raised test scores in high-needs schools. In 2011, it ended the program after a RAND study confirmed ‘mounting evidence that all those bonuses weren’t having much of an effect.’”

SENDING STUDENTS FROM ONE 'LOW-PERFORMING' SCHOOL TO ANOTHER DID NOT IMPROVE ACHIEVEMENT

Reforms closed "failing" schools in DC, NYC, and Chicago, promising better student outcomes. But students stagnated or lost ground, as new schools were no better, and moves also meant instability and longer (and sometimes more dangerous) commutes.



Source: Marisa de la Torre and Julia Gwynne, *When Schools Close: Effects on Displaced Students in Chicago Public Schools*, Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2009.

School closures did not send students to better schools or save school districts money. Reformers closed schools deemed “failing” so students could transfer to “better-performing” schools. But most students whose schools were closed went to schools that were no better, and the disruption (some students moved multiple times) was exacerbated by longer commutes and spikes in gang violence as established lines were crossed.

✓ DCPS's initial reported cost of \$9.7 million to close 23 underenrolled schools in 2008 grew to \$39.5 million, with added moving expenses, demolitions, patrols, new transport costs, and others quadrupling the pricetag.¹⁴

✓ Michelle Rhee had also noted that students in the schools slated for closure were struggling, but the students went, on average, to schools with lower test scores and lower odds of making “adequate yearly progress” (AYP).¹⁵

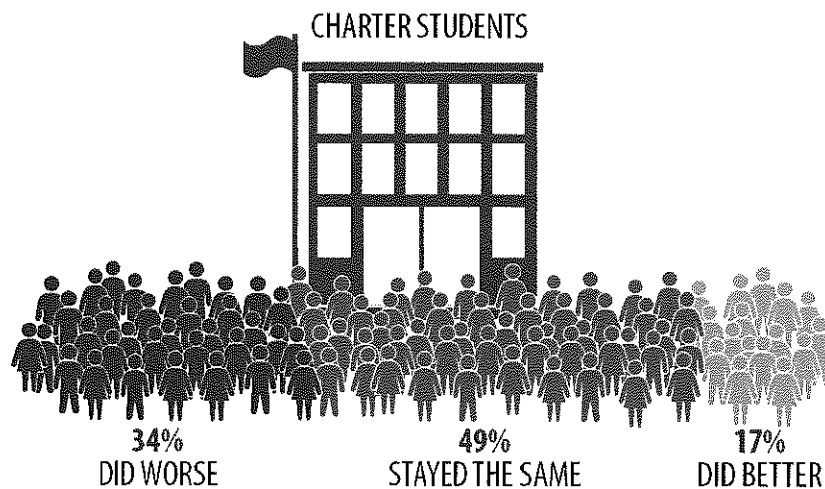
✓ Between 2002 and early 2012, the NYC Department of Education closed 140 schools, all of which served the students with the highest needs.¹⁶ About 15 percent of those were large, comprehensive public high schools that were broken up into smaller, themed schools. Most of the students who would have attended the closed high schools were not admitted to the smaller schools but went to other large comprehensive high schools, “which consequently became academically overwhelmed, making them additional targets for closure.”¹⁷ Of 34 large Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Bronx high schools, 26 significantly increased enrollments—by 150 to more than 1,100 students—as other high schools were closed from 2002 to 2007. In 19 of these 26 schools, attendance declined; in 15, graduation rates declined, and in 14, both attendance and graduation rates declined.¹⁸

✓ Although Arne Duncan closed Chicago public schools deemed “underperforming” in order to move students to better schools, the closings had almost no effect on student achievement because almost all displaced elementary school students transferred from one low-performing school to another, according to a study of 18 schools closed between 2001 and 2006. Only the 6 percent who moved to better schools with greater resources had improved outcomes.¹⁹

“Most of the students who would have attended the closed [NYC] high schools were not admitted to the smaller schools but went to other large comprehensive high schools, which consequently became academically overwhelmed, making them additional targets for closure.”

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFER MIXED RESULTS, NOT UNIVERSAL SUCCESS, FOR TARGETED STUDENTS

Reformers in DC, NYC, and Chicago depicted charters schools as solutions to “failing” schools and “dropout factories.” City-level outcomes painting a much more complex picture—with some of the neediest students left out altogether—are mirrored by a national study of charter students’ performance relative to their regular school equivalents.



Source: Center for Research on Education Outcomes, *Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in Sixteen States, 2009*. The study compared charter school students with their “virtual” counterparts in comparable regular public schools.

Charter schools further disrupted the districts while providing mixed benefits, particularly for the highest-needs students. Reformers say charters offer better options and outcomes for students in “failing” public schools. But charter outcomes in these cities and across the country are uneven.²⁰ Charters serve fewer of the highest-need students and can disrupt districts logistically and financially. High-performing charters may also spend more per student.

- ✓ Rhee transferred operations of two DCPS high schools and one elementary school to outside charter organizers. None of the three schools improved their performance under new charter management, and both high schools have since been reconstituted again for very poor performance.²¹ Overall, charters in Washington, D.C., seem to slightly outperform regular neighborhood schools, but they serve fewer high-needs students.

- ✓ Two widely cited reports found most students benefited significantly by attending NYC charter schools rather than regular district schools, but two other reports questioned those reports’ methodologies and findings. It is clear, however, that New York City charters benefit from more funding per student and better facilities in co-located spaces. While they serve more minority and low-income students, they serve fewer students who are special needs, very poor, or English language learners (ELL), and these high-needs students are costlier to serve. Comparing charters with nearby public schools illustrates stark differences. At Samuel Stern public school, where 86 percent of students qualify for free lunch and 19 percent are ELL, per-pupil spending is \$12,476. At nearby Harlem Day charter school, 62 percent of students qualify for free lunch, and there are no ELL students, but per-pupil spending is \$19,632.²²

- ✓ The Chicago Public School system uses its own “value-added” metric to measure school performance, with schools scoring lower on the distribution identified for closure. By this measure, if students in the types of schools most likely to be closed moved to charters, they would move to lower-performing schools. Specifically, students who moved from high-poverty regular public schools at the 47th percentile in performance would go to charter schools at the 40th percentile, and those moving from intensely segregated schools at the 43rd percentile would end up in charters at the 33rd percentile. Random-lottery enrollment schools, which, unlike charter schools, do not “select out” students via a challenging application process, outperform their demographically comparable charter counterparts: Students who moved to charters would drop from the 52nd percentile to the 40th percentile.²³

“If students in the types of schools most likely to be closed moved to charters, they would move to lower-performing schools.”

BROADER STRATEGIES OFFER MORE PROMISE THAN MARKET-BASED REFORMS

While reformers continue to advance market-oriented policies with few benefits, more holistic strategies with real promise in the three cities have failed to receive the attention or funding needed to have a real impact.



100 new small NYC schools created in 2003–2005 focused on ensuring strong, consistent student-teacher relationships; leveraging community partners for extra staff, coaching, and resources; and providing hands-on learning experiences, such as internships at law firms and seeding oyster beds. These schools reportedly increased the share of ninth-grade students on track to graduate and high school students' college readiness.



To attract more high-quality teachers to Chicago Public Schools, then-CEO Arne Duncan identified the strongest teacher-preparation programs and encouraged CPS to hire from them, moved recruitment dates up, established job fairs to boost recruiting ability, and offered new teachers higher starting salaries. This improved teacher quality and reduced inequities across districts.



Duncan worked to improve low-income and minority students' college readiness by increasing their access to AP courses, putting college counselors in low-income high schools to help students choose courses and schools and match their goals with skills, and holding principals accountable for ensuring that students applied for financial aid, which nearly doubled in one year. Budget cuts have since removed counselors from almost all schools.



Michelle Rhee expanded DCPS's full-day voluntary prekindergarten program to serve 3- and 4-year-olds at all income levels, and the district adopted a holistic curriculum designed to nurture all domains of children's development. Though third-graders who had participated had higher test scores than their nonparticipating peers, pre-K is not even a component of the agenda on which Rhee's advocacy group, StudentsFirst, grades every state's education system.

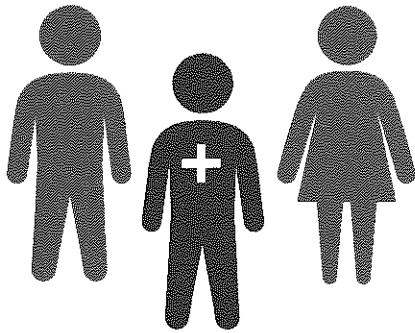
Emphasis on the widely touted market-oriented reforms drew attention and resources from initiatives with greater promise. Less-publicized strategies for boosting student achievement were piloted in these cities but not widely replicated or expanded to scale because leaders and funders focused on the market-oriented reforms. These promising but overlooked reforms are more multifaceted and holistic than reforms that seek quick fixes and rely on narrow, unreliable metrics.

Real, sustained change requires strategies that are more realistic, patient, and multipronged. In each city, the initiatives showing more promise than the touted reforms demonstrate that achievement gaps can only be closed when the opportunity gaps driving them are addressed. The hands-on experiences and consistent, intensive teacher-student relationships of New York City's small schools²⁴ must replace reform's test preparation, novice teachers, and churn. Heavy reliance on college- and career-readiness test metrics should give way to CPS-style college- and career-readiness supports: helping students choose courses and schools, access AP courses, and match their skills with career goals; and holding schools accountable for scholarship applications.²⁵ DCPS's high-quality prekindergarten program²⁶, which is designed to nurture all aspects of children's development, should serve as a model for all cities and students, not be sidelined in "reform" agendas.

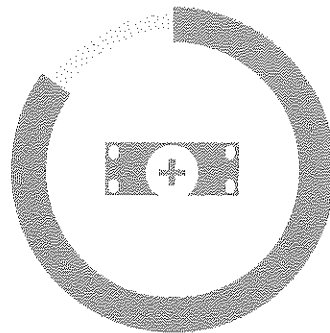
"These promising but overlooked reforms are more multifaceted and holistic than those that seek quick fixes and rely on narrow, unreliable metrics."

REFORMS FAIL WHEN THEY IGNORE THE POVERTY-RELATED CAUSES OF ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Lack of consistent physical and mental health care is a major driver of the opportunity gaps associated with growing up in poverty. Low-income children miss many more days of school due to preventable illnesses, relative to their wealthier peers—a reality largely dismissed in reform agendas.



**1 IN 3 CHILDREN
LIVING IN POVERTY VISIT THE
EMERGENCY ROOM EVERY
YEAR FOR PREVENTABLE
MEDICAL CONDITIONS**



**85%
DECREASE IN HOSPITALIZATION
COSTS FOR CHILDREN IN
CINCINNATI WITH
SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CLINICS**

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, *Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Children: National Health Interview Survey, 2010*, Table 10; National Assembly on School-Based Health Care, *Cost Savings of School-Based Health Centers*, 2010.

The reforms missed a critical factor in achievement gaps: the influence of poverty on academic performance. In all three cities, a narrow focus on market-oriented policies diverted attention from the need to address socioeconomic factors that impede learning. In 2010, student eligibility rates for free- and reduced-price meals were 67 percent in Washington, D.C., 72 percent in New York City, and 77 percent in Chicago.²⁷ Failing to provide supports that alleviate impediments to learning posed by poverty ensures continued low student test scores and graduation rates, and large gaps between average scores of white and affluent students and scores of minority and low-income students.

Districts that recognize the impact of poverty and address it head-on find the greatest success. Though it is higher-income, Montgomery County, Md., serves a student body that is as ethnically diverse as any of these urban districts, and has a large and growing share of low-income students. In contrast to the reformers, however, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Superintendent Joshua Starr staunchly opposes using test scores to evaluate teachers, employing a peer-assisted review system that focuses on teacher support, development, and collaboration.²⁸ MCPS has no charter schools. Rather, it channels extra resources, including targeted professional development for qualified teachers, smaller classrooms, and intensive literacy, to the neediest schools. It has developed a holistic, creative curriculum to nurture in-depth, critical thinking. This includes art, music, and physical education teachers in every school. MCPS also leverages the county's mixed-use housing policies to integrate schools.²⁹ Finally, it employs high-quality prekindergarten, health clinics, and afterschool enrichment to further close income-based opportunity gaps. As Starr highlights, all of this has produced some of the highest test scores among minority and low-income students of any district, smaller and shrinking achievement gaps, and high school graduation and college attendance rates that are the envy of the country.³⁰

Every school district has unique needs and resources. But providing *all* students with the enriching experiences that already help *high-income* students thrive would represent a big step forward, and away from narrow reforms that miss the mark.

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Broader, **BOLDER** Approach to Education



For the full report, scan this QR code or visit
boldapproach.org/rhetoric-trumps-reality

URBAN SCHOOL REFORM (LAST 20 YEARS) “WAR ON THE POOR”



It is unthinkable that a well-meaning citizenry would allow the unsubstantiated spin of the “reformers” to continue to sabotage the education of highly capable students whose trajectory toward success was undeniable before the onslaught of the urban “reform” movement.

Bonita Robinson

PRE-URBAN SCHOOL REFORM (20 YEARS PRIOR TO "REFORM")

"WAR ON POVERTY"



**Achievement
Gap Narrowing**

I shudder to think how evolved our students' academic status and our educational system's effectiveness might be today had we nixed the corporate "reformers" privatizing schemes and, instead, had continued on the gap-closing path twenty years ago.

Bonita Robinson

Ed.D. Program Recognition Event School Success Profile - 2012

Leading
the Way!

Francis Scott Key Elementary School www.fskes.org

517 N Parkside Ave.

Principal Mrs. Giannoulis-King

AP: Mr. Pete Retzios

•NWEA Growth Summary Report
over 5 points average for grades 3
to 8 students from Fall 2012 to
Winter 2013 in reading and math.

•NWEA Overall meet/exceeds in
Reading over 166%, math over 82.3%
Fall 2012 to Winter 2013

Key Elementary School has made

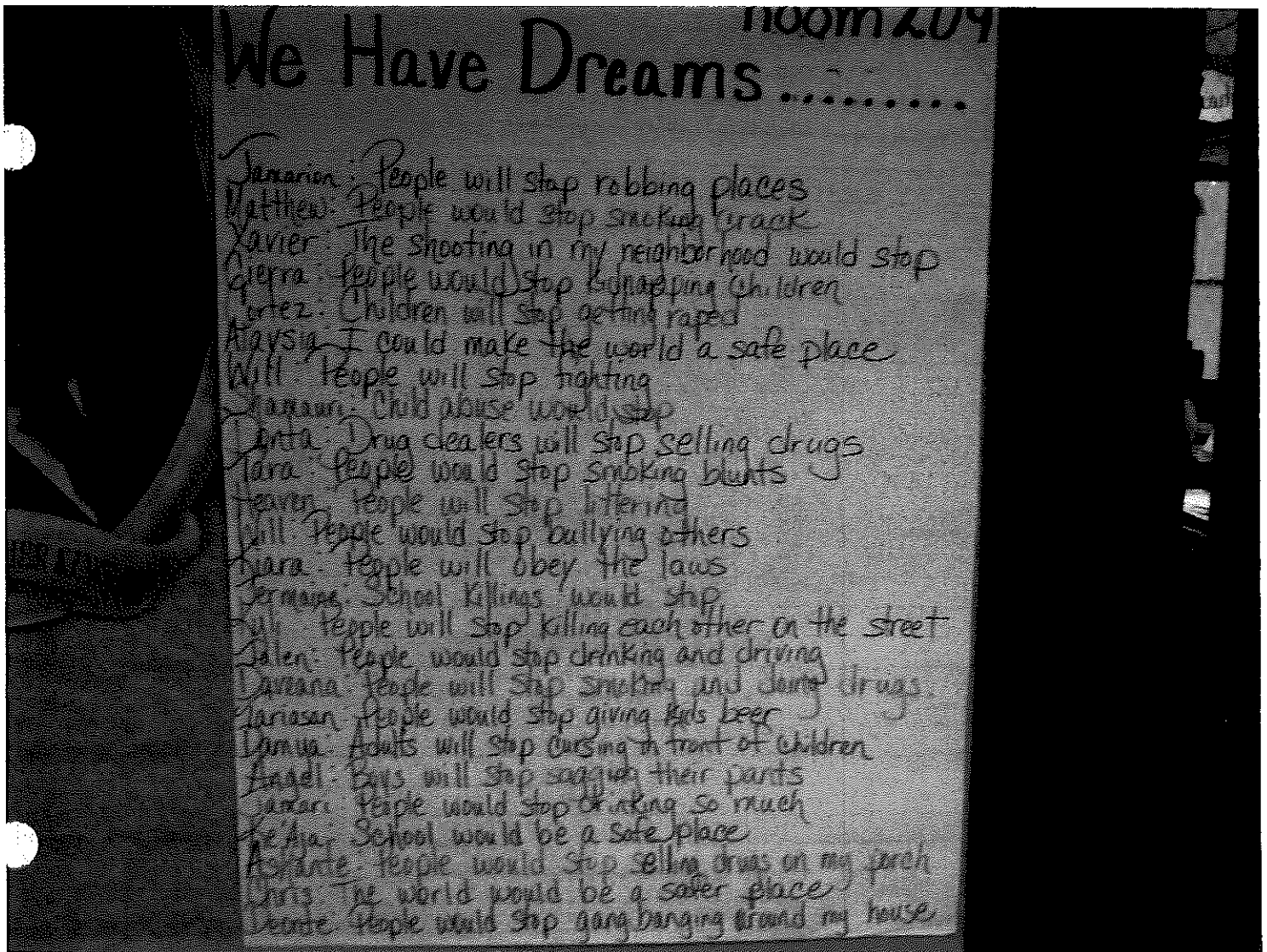
great progress this year:

- Level 2, not on probation
- 25 point gain in lexile points school-wide (Achieve 3000)
- **After School tutoring & new Saturday tutoring programs**
- 96.82% weekly attendance
- 33% new teachers/ 97% teacher attendance
- Promote male role models: All male teachers wear shirt and ties.
- 100% 8th grade class applications complete for h.s. w/ 10 taking h.s. placement tests at level one schools.

Important changes at Key Elementary School:

- Change in **culture & climate.** Over 96% students/100% teachers report feeling safe with the **new anti-bullying programs** implemented.
- 5 New Community & University Partnerships
- **New Glee Music program** plus **10 new clubs** such as Spelling Bee, Chess Club, Journalism, Brotherhood.
- **Gear Up, 21st Century grants, Loyola Law School mentorship**





Francis Scott Key
Elementary

Francis Scott Key Elementary Local School Council

517 N. Parkside Ave., Chicago, IL

LSC President, Ms. Angela Graham, 773-383-4022

Attn: CEO Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett
125 S. Clark St., 5th FL
Chicago, IL

Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett:

We the parents of Francis Scott Key Elementary School request to co-locate with Frederick Douglass High School. Here are the benefits for the students, parents and community:

- Double utilization of Frederick Douglass High School
- Per the Austin Community Action Plan (CAC) both schools can vertically align their curriculum to foster a Pre-K thru 12 curriculum. The high school and middle school staff can seamlessly collaborate together to ongoing professional development.
- The added benefit is that both schools would share the cost of utilities, upkeep and maintenance.
- CPS will save additional costs of transferring students to other schools.
- Under the current proposal, Duke Ellington Elementary School would end up with a population of 900 students in a building with a capacity for 720 students. The current proposal could lead to overcrowded schools and classrooms.
- Frederick Douglass High School currently has 12 empty classrooms on the first floor and three empty classrooms on the second floor. There are two empty science labs and one empty music room.
- The two schools together would see a smooth transition from grade school to high school.
- Currently there are schools such as Wells Prep K-8 which coexist inside Wendell Phillips High School; there is a proposal to co-exist Kipp K-8 inside of Hope High School; Spry Community School is K-12.

- Currently, Francis Scott Key Elementary is a Level Two School, not on probation. NWEA GROWTH SUMMARY REPORT over 5 points average for 3rd to 8th grade students from Fall 2012 to Winter 2013 in Reading and Math. NWEA OVERALL meet and exceeds in Reading over 166% and Math over 82.3% for 3rd to 8th grade students from Fall 2012 to Winter 2013.

Sincerely,

Ms. Angela Graham

www.fskes.org

Facts about the safety of the Children at Francis Scott Key

Upon investigation it has been discovered that a lot of safety issues has arise.

A Student from Duke Ellington brought a gun to school shot a 3rd grader while he sitting at his desk.

Inappropriate touching and unprofessional behavior from the principals at Emmet has yet to be cleared up. Given these facts how do I know that our children will be safe with combining Emmett, Ellington along the Key?

- Safe passage was not on duty Wednesday April 10,2013 evening at Parkside and Race to watch the children going back and forth from the after school program.
- Safe passage was in a meeting the morning a young lady was raped at Parkside and Race. How many more meetings will this organization schedule during school hours?
- Safe passage workers are always texting are talking on their cell phones
- Catherine Jones a worker for Safe passage always attend Austin –Lawndale Collabative monthly meeting at Spencer school when she should be at her post for safe passage

A man tried to abduct a little girl one morning at the corner of Parkside and Lake who ran to the Parent Patrol from Key School for help.

A Student at Central and Fulton almost got hit by a car when a driver ran a red light

A child was given drugs at Central and Lake and parent's had to rush the child to the hospital

Parents concerns about their children IEP Programs

- Building located at 321 N. Central house people with mental issues and child molesters
- Austin Station apartment building located at 312 N. Central has prostitutes; drug dealers and user just hang out on the street of Central
- Most of our children have to be taken to school by an elderly grandparent which cannot walk a great distance to take that child to school.
- Snow and Ice days now missing a great deal of school because there is no one that can walk with them to their new proposal school to Ellington. CPS is now marking our children absent because they decided to close down their neighbor school.

On top of the Killings/Sexual assault and Predator files I have a list that shows our children will be fighting a battle to protect themselves daily passing thru their new school route to get to class.

(See attached)

- In the 400 block of n Parkside Shawn Stubblefield sexual assault a kid here
- In the block of 447 n. Central a young man was gunned down and killed for selling drugs
- Levi Stubblefield 300 N. Pine Gunshots
- Charles Williams & Alonzo Powell 100 N Pine both Gunshot
- Tenisha Lowe 300 N Central Abuses
- Antorryean Maybeyy 200 n Parkside Gunshots
- Carnice Morgan 100 N. Central Gunshot
- Sexual Predator at 567 N Pines by the name of Barnes
- Sexual Predator 158 n Central by the name of Fountain
- Sexual Predator 114 N Parkside by the name of Parker
- Richardson, Victor 321 N Central Sexual Predator

Also data has shown that with this year's graduate

Duke Ellington – has 30 students out of 330 that occupied the building

Emmet- has 35 students out of 429 that occupied the building

Francis Key- has 48 students out of 325 that occupied this building

Upon all the inquiries about Francis Scott Key I found no negative reports nor did I find students bringing weapons into the school. I have seen a big change within our students that shows how much they want to learn in a small environment of their own.

April 17, 2013

To the Honorable Hearing Officer:

Please accept this document as my written testimony against the closing of Francis Scott Key Elementary School located at 517 North Parkside Avenue.

Key School is a **Level 2** performing school. Key School is off probation because it has performed at Level 2 for the past 2 years. Key School parent contact percentage is **100%** compared to CPS average of **80%**. Parents are heavily involved at Key School.

Key School has an active volunteer parent/community safety patrol before and after school. The safety patrol has created a safe and nurturing environment in and around Key School.

CPS claims that it needs to close Key because it is underutilized. However CPS uses a utilization formula based on the contract between CPS and the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) which caps class size for kindergarten through 3rd grade at 28 students and 31 for grades 4th through 8th for an average of 30 students per classroom.

CPS formula of using the maximum of 30 students per classroom as an idea class size has no academic merit, no foundation, and is based on no known research. Per the **2012 Illinois School Report Card**, the **average CPS class size is 24** students per classroom and the Illinois statewide average is 19 per classroom. If CPS were to use its' own average of 24 students per classroom, Key is **71%** utilized.

The utilization formula is also flawed because it does not take into account discretionary funds which may be used to lower class sizes, nor does the utilization formula take into account Special Education class sizes based on the category of students being served.

CPS is contradictory in its proposal to close Key School in order to save money. CPS has and is currently proposing to spend millions on low performing and underutilized schools. **CPS has proposed a supplemental 30 year bond issue of \$330 million which will add an additional annual debt service of \$25 million to taxpayers. The additional operating costs of a "Safe Passage" program is estimated to be \$77 million.**

KIPP Charter School which has been performing at **Level 3** until 2012 and is currently housed at Lathrop, Penn, and the Nash Annex is a combined 50% utilized at all three locations, yet CPS has spent **\$6 million** for KIPP at the Nash Annex, **\$3.4 million** at Lathrop, and CPS is proposing to spend **\$6.35 million** for a co-location at Hope High School.

CPS is budgeted to spend **\$75 million** at CVS High School (34% utilized) and **\$22 million** at Al Raby High School (50% utilized). Both are Level 3 performing high schools.

Key School parents and Local School Council (LSC) have proposed to co-locate at Douglass High School. Co-location is a component of CPS School Actions Guidelines. Douglass High School is directly across the street from Key School. Douglass High School is **32%** utilized and is budgeted for **\$8 million** in capital improvements per CPS 2016 capital budget.

EX-3

Moving Key into Douglass High School will increase the utilization of the building, continue Key successes, develop an environment of collaboration between the high school and middle school teachers, and save CPS the operating costs of the two Key School buildings.

Attachments are included with this written testimony.

Sincerely Submitted,

Dwayne Truss, Vice-Chair
Austin Community Action Council

ARTICLE 28
CLASS SIZE

28-1. BOARD Policy. Section 301.2 of the *Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual* (Class Size) (Board Report: 10-0615-PO1) (Date Adopted: June 15, 2010) shall provide as follows:

**I. ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE CENTERS
(IF ANY)**

A. Staffing

28 at the kindergarten level
28 at the primary level
31 at the intermediate level and upper grade level
20 in the education and vocational guidance centers (if any)

1. The number of classroom teaching positions provided to each elementary school will generally be determined as follows:
 - a. The total number of intermediate and upper grade students will be divided by 31 on a whole number basis (i.e., the division will not be extended to a decimal place). If the division is uneven, then the remaining students will be included in the primary membership;
 - b. The total number of primary students will be divided by 28 extended to one decimal place, and rounded up to the nearest whole number;
 - c. The total number of kindergarten students will be divided by two, extended to one decimal place, and rounded up to the nearest whole number; this number will then be divided by 28, extended to one decimal place, and rounded up to the nearest half (0.5) number;
 - d. The sum of (a), (b) and (c) represents the total number of teaching positions that will be provided to each elementary school;
 - e. Teachers assigned to the Intensive Reading Improvement Program or to bilingual programs will not be counted as part of the number provided to implement the maximum class size program in each school.

2. The total number of education and vocational guidance center students (if any) will be divided by 20, extended to one decimal place, and rounded up to the nearest whole number.

B. Organization

1. Elementary Schools With Space Available

In those elementary schools in which space is available, the maximum number of students in classes will generally be as follows:

27-29 in kindergarten classes
27-29 in primary grade classes
30-32 in intermediate classes and upper grade classes

Implementation of these class sizes in specific schools may result in problems relating to class reorganization, single section classes, split grades, and installation of experimental programs. Local school deviations from the class sizes indicated above may be made by the principal, after consulting the Professional Problems Committee and the teachers involved, when necessary to implement special programs for instructional improvement or to meet special needs of the particular school.

2. Elementary Schools Without Space Available

In those elementary schools in which space is unavailable to organize classes as indicated above, the additional teachers provided under the staffing in (A) will share the curriculum planning, instructional responsibilities, and all other related duties of teachers. Said additional teachers will be programmed in such a way as to provide for maximum teacher-student contacts on a regularly scheduled basis to share the instructional load of the classroom teachers. Said additional teachers should not be used primarily for:

administrative assistance
building security purposes
clerical or office-type tasks

Key Elem School
City of Chicago SD 299
Chicago, ILLINOIS



ILLINOIS
SCHOOL
REPORT
CARD

GRADES : K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

State and federal laws require public school districts to release report cards to the public each year.

Starting in 2009, charter school information is included in district statistics.

STUDENTS

| RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND AND OTHER INFORMATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|--|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | White | Black | Hispanic | Asian | Native Hawaiian /Pacific Islander | American Indian | Two or More Races | Percent Low- Income | Percent Limited- English- Proficient | Percent IEP | High Sch. Dropout Rate | Chronic Truancy Rate | Mobility Rate | Attendance Rate | Total Enrollment |
| School | 0.7 | 95.4 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 97.4 | 0.0 | 19.2 | | 1.4 | 27.8 | 93.4 | 302 |
| Subregion | 0.8 | 89.9 | 8.4 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 97.2 | 3.3 | 15.3 | | 22.6 | 27.9 | 94.1 | 12,593 |
| District | 8.8 | 41.7 | 44.3 | 3.3 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 1.4 | 86.6 | 16.6 | 13.2 | | 29.5 | 18.4 | 92.5 | 400,931 |
| State | 51.0 | 18.0 | 23.6 | 4.2 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 2.8 | 49.0 | 9.4 | 13.6 | | 8.6 | 13.1 | 94.4 | 2,066,692 |

L Some students come from families receiving public aid; live in institutions for neglected or delinquent children; are supported in foster homes with public funds; or are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches. IEP students are those students eligible to receive special education services.

Limited-English-proficient students are those students eligible for transitional bilingual programs.

Mobility rate is based on the number of times students enroll in or leave a school during the school year.

Chronic truants are students who are absent from school without valid cause for 9 or more of the last 180 school days.

Total Enrollment is based on Home School.

INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING

| PARENTAL CONTACT* | | STUDENT-TO-STAFF RATIOS | | | |
|-------------------|---------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Percent | Pupil- Teacher Elementary | Pupil- Teacher Secondary | Pupil- Certified Staff | Pupil- Administrator |
| School | 100.0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Subregion | 77.6 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| District | 80.3 | 23.3 | 19.2 | 15.4 | 211.1 |
| State | 95.3 | 18.9 | 18.8 | 13.7 | 205.0 |

* Parental contact includes parent-teacher conferences, parental visits to school, school visits to home, telephone conversations, and written correspondence.

| AVERAGE CLASS SIZE (as of the first school day in May) | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Grades | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 - 12 |
| School | 31.0 | 15.0 | 19.0 | 27.0 | 18.0 | 30.0 | 38.0 | 33.0 | 34.0 | |
| Subregion | 23.0 | 22.2 | 22.9 | 21.3 | 24.1 | 21.4 | 22.6 | 22.9 | 23.4 | |
| District | 24.6 | 23.9 | 23.8 | 24.2 | 24.5 | 24.3 | 25.1 | 24.0 | 23.9 | |
| State | 20.9 | 21.2 | 21.5 | 22.0 | 22.4 | 22.8 | 22.4 | 21.3 | 21.5 | |

The Cost of Turnaround Schools

The low achievement and high teacher turnover of Elementary Turnaround Schools occurs despite a major investment of extra dollars in these schools by the school system. The researchers sought to identify increased costs to the Chicago Board related to the Elementary School Turnaround program, not funds that a contractor might have raised from some other source.

The researchers have been very conservative in estimating these costs, counting only expenditures that can be documented through Board Actions, Board budgets, and other Board financial reports. Ultimately, we decided to focus on analyzing the costs of the ten AUSL schools, because, as an external provider, some AUSL costs are documented in records of "Board Actions" and in other reports that must be filed with the state about the Board's contractors.

We have projected the costs of completing the current five-year contracts and carrying out related actions, such as overseeing and assisting all AUSL Elementary Turnaround Schools and operating the preparation program for future Turnaround Teachers), making conservative assumptions about factors that might raise projected costs for the schools in their remaining contract period (such as future school enrollment).

Based on the analysis of costs of extra costs related to AUSL Turnaround Schools detailed below, we have thus far been able to document an average additional cost of Elementary Turnaround Schools, considering AUSL's services to schools and related activities to be \$7,039,658 per school related to a five-year contract period, paid by the Chicago Public Schools, for each of the ten schools (see Attachment B).

Further, we know that some extra costs are essential, but we cannot yet document their amount, and we have not included estimates. For example, the costs of replacing teachers in schools with high teacher turnover, and costs that are actually extra costs for the Turnaround School, but are considered part of or charged to another activity.

The major sources of extra costs to the Chicago Board calculated in Attachment B, are:

- The One -Time Fee paid to AUSL, which was characteristically \$300,000.
- The annual per-pupil fee paid to AUSL of \$420 per student in elementary schools.
- The costs of Facilities Renovation from 2006 to 2011.
- An additional Assistant Principal in Year 1.
- Costs of the pre-service preparation program that were incurred by the Chicago Board.

The researchers are, of course, aware that some of the funds given to AUSL were used by them to pay for school staff activities. Nevertheless, they are extra costs incurred by the Chicago Board to support the Turnaround School.

Strengthening Our Neighborhood Schools

The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) just announced the following school actions effective for the 2013-14 school year:

Horatio May (Pre-K thru 8) and Louis Armstrong Schools (3-6) to be closed. George Leland (Pre-K thru 3) is proposed to be relocated to May's building and the building will be renamed Leland. The entire staffs of May and Armstrong will be fired and will have to be interviewed for teaching and support positions by the principal of Leland. Armstrong tenured teachers rated excellent or superior may follow their students to the proposed new Leland. Because of the relocation of Leland to May, it is unclear if tenured teachers at May rated excellent or superior will be allowed to stay.

Robert Emmet (Pre-K thru 8) and Francis Scott Key (Pre-K thru 8) Schools to be closed. Emmet students (454) will be equally split between Oscar De Priest and Duke Ellington Schools. All Key students (307) will be reassigned to Ellington. The administration and support staff of Emmet and Key will be fired. Tenured teachers with ratings of excellent or superior will have the opportunity to follow their students to Ellington.

Leslie Lewis is to be turned around by the Academy of Urban School Leadership (AUSL). The entire staff of Lewis will be fired. They can interview for positions at AUSL. Typically only **15 to 20 % of the staff is rehired.**

The basis for the above CPS proposed consolidations and turnaround is that CPS is facing a deficit of \$1 billion for the next school year, and that the CPS is facing a utilization crisis.

But both the budget and utilization crises have been debunked by the fact that CPS had a budget surplus of **\$322 million** dollars at the end of the 2012 school year, and that CPS only lost **28,289** (WBEZ) students from 2000 to 2013 while adding 120 charter/contract schools during the same period.

Continuing the Success

Of the schools in Austin, **10 of the 17 are not on probation.** Since 2009 6 schools have move off probation. Of the 7 schools on probation, Armstrong is a level 2 school. Emmet (2012 Composite ISAT **70.4** meets/exceeds, 66% utilized) has posted ISAT scores as competitive as the three charter schools in Austin. Somehow Catalyst Circle Rock Charter School (2012 Composite ISAT **70.3%** meets/exceeds) is not on probation.

Austin schools have continuously collectively outperformed the three charter schools. Austin neighborhood schools collectively achieved the largest increase of ISAT scores of any school community from 2009 to 2012.

A Vision Forward

An alternative to the proposed school actions will continue to provide stable schools for the Austin Community.

- This plan proposes a co-location at May. May stays opens with the present staff intact. May primary grades are moved to the main building. Leland moves into the May Annex Building and maintains its' current attendance boundary. This will increase the utilization of May. CPS can save on the cost of operating Leland by closing the building and demolish Leland.
- Armstrong remains open and expands to Pre-K. It is proposed that the Armstrong Annex to house a small alternative middle school for at-risk students.

Nearly 32,000, or approximately 1 in 8 (12%) Chicago public school students in kindergarten through eighth grade missed 4 or more weeks of class in 2011. Approximately 19% of kindergarten students had 9 or more unexcused absences. Austin is among the top 5 with respect to truancy. The Illinois State Board of Education has cut funding for the Truants Alternative and Option Education Program from \$20 million (statewide) in 2009 to \$12 million in 2012. (Chicago Tribune) If left unchecked, truancy leads to poor academic performance, dropout and juvenile delinquency. Chicago Public Schools no longer have truant officers, and local schools have very limited resources to address the issue.

- Move Key into the same building with Douglass High School. This would increase the utilization of Douglass. CPS is scheduled to spend **\$8 million** dollars to upgrade both Douglass electrical and mechanical systems. Per the Austin Community Action Plan (CAC) both schools can vertically align their curriculum to foster a Pre-K thru 12 continuum. The high school and middle school staff can seamlessly collaborate together in ongoing professional development.

CPS can save on the operation costs of the two buildings Key is presently housed in. The savings can be invested into the already planned capital upgrades of Douglass. CPS is already proposing to co-locate a KIPP elementary school inside of Hope High School. Spry High School is an excellent example of a Pre-K thru 12 school which provides wrap around services. CPS can support the same for Key.

- Phase Oscar De Priest into a full STEM Magnet school in which admission is based on completing an application and participating in a lottery. Emmet remains a neighborhood school and loses its' World Language Magnet Cluster programming to support the magnet programming at De Priest. Emmet can be supported with external resources and grants to support its conversion into a community school. It can house a cluster of community services in which service providers like not-for-profit health centers and social services can be housed. The social services can be accessed the entire community. Intervention services and GED programs can be housed at Emmet in order to provide ongoing training to adults.

CPS just recently renovated the chimney and the parking lot at Emmet.

- Ellington continues its success. Implement the proposed IB Magnet program. It is recommended that Ellington and other Austin based schools be given an advertising budget to market their schools.

Because Ellington is a **level 1** performing school, the Network Chief should continue to share Ellington's best practices with other schools. CPS should reach out to the families at Catalyst-Circle Rock School to inform them that Ellington is a much quality option for their children. Ellington is currently providing summer school to Catalyst students.

If Emmet and Key are consolidated with Ellington, parents are concerned about the distance, safety, overcrowded classrooms and school. The listed capacity is 780 based on CPS flawed 30 student per classroom. At least 4 classrooms were designed for a maximum of 15 special needs students. 30 students cannot fit into the 4 classrooms. Ellington revised capacity is **720**. The projected total population proposed for Ellington is **895** students.

- An alternative and cost effective turnaround for Lewis would be an internal turnaround managed by the Austin/North Lawndale Network Chief. This turnaround would be similar to the hybrid turnaround that occurred at Woodson in 2012.
- **Strategic Learning Initiative costs less than an AUSL turnaround. An AUSL turnaround is estimated to cost CPS an additional \$600,000 per year. AUSL is given \$420 per pupil, an additional Assistant Principal, and paid an annual administrative fee of \$300,000.**

Conclusion

CPS spends an additional **\$134,000 to \$254,000** annually for ongoing support for magnet schools. White students make up 8.8% of CPS total pupil population, yet white students utilizes 40% of the seats in Magnet and Selective Enrollment Schools.

There is no "wall to wall" magnet school in the Austin Community. CPS established 2 Level 3 performing charter schools in Austin while the Ravenswood/Ridge Network has 15 gifted/selective enrollment/magnet schools.

To close neighborhood schools is unjust and discriminatory while poor performing and mediocre charter schools are allowed to operate. The decision makers are white males who know nothing of the challenges of the Austin Community.

Our choices are simple. If charter schools (which are operated by white males) are so great, why are charter schools not in demand in places like Oak Park or Winnetka? None of the leadership at CPS have any of their children or grandchildren enrolled in a charter school.

Additional Observations

Please note that while CPS claims that its "resources are spread too thin," CPS approved 14 new charter and contract schools with more schools to open in the near future. Why make this claim?

The consolidation of the Austin Campus is an option that should be explored. There are 3 administrations (principals) and less than 1,000 students. The proposed Emmet/Ellington/Key consolidation will result in 895 students in a building with an idea capacity of 720 once you subtract 60 seats for rooms built for special needs students. Why over a K-8 school and allow three principals for a building with less than 1,000 students.

CPS has not released a detailed accounting of the savings for each school. Nor has CPS proposed a budget for each school impacted. CPS is spending \$233 million to implement the closings, yet, CPS is still claiming a \$1billion deficit.

CPS allowed magnet schools like LaSalle II, STEM and Disney II to grow. Why not let De Priest and Ellington grow into full magnet schools.

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