

# CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS EQUITY REPORT

**Taking stock of proposed school boundary changes: Issues and opportunities to achieve equity**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is investigating how best to serve its Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in the Near South Side. One proposal under consideration is moving the attendance boundary for the South Loop Elementary School (South Loop) and converting National Teachers Academy (NTA) into a neighborhood high school serving the South Loop, North Bronzeville, Chinatown, Armour Square, and Bridgeport neighborhoods. In May 2017, CPS introduced a preliminary framework to gradually convert NTA into this neighborhood high school. The CPS Transition Plan (provided in Appendix A) proposes to move the Pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grades to the new South Loop Elementary school in fall 2019. For students in grades 4–8, it provides an option for them to either remain at NTA through the remainder of elementary school and high school, or to transition to South Loop. Under this plan, the first cohort of 9<sup>th</sup> graders would attend the NTA high school beginning in fall 2019, adding a grade level each subsequent year. It is important to note that all NTA students are guaranteed a seat in the new proposed high school, regardless of where they live. The proposed high school would have a traditional neighborhood school boundary with the addition of a preference boundary that will provide families living just outside the neighborhood boundary with first access to any available seats after students in the neighborhood boundary enroll. Students living in the current South Loop and NTA boundaries are guaranteed a seat at the new high school because they reside within the proposed neighborhood boundary. The other elementary schools that fall within the proposed neighborhood boundary are Drake, Haines, Healy, and Ward. The proposed preference boundary incorporates the following elementary school boundaries – Armour, Holden and Pershing.

In December 2017, CPS commissioned a study to understand the implications of this proposal. The goal was to describe the potential impacts, both positive and negative, that this proposal may have on various stakeholders in the Near South community and make a series of recommendations. This report summarizes the findings and is framed around seven critical areas for equity: (1) Family and Community Engagement, (2) School Climate, (3) Culturally Relevant Leadership Practices, (4) Student-Centered Learning, (5) Diverse Staff of Excellent Educators, (6) Equitable Student Access, and (7) Fiscal Equity.

Westat utilized a multi-method approach to this task, combining information from focus groups<sup>1</sup>, interviews, a document review (including the CPS Transition Plan), and an analysis of CPS enrollment data (see Appendix B for the full Methodology). Interviews were conducted with CPS leaders, elected officials and community stakeholders identified by CPS and community groups. Focus groups were conducted with parents and educators from both South Loop and NTA. Additional focus groups were conducted with parents of students of other elementary schools which are in the proposed boundary of the new high school. It should be noted that focus group participants are a convenience sample and have self-selected to participate. The views expressed by participants are therefore not necessarily representative of the wider community, but are nevertheless valuable in identifying important issues relevant to the CPS proposal.

Our analysis demonstrates that a myriad of concerns, opportunities and challenges have arisen from the CPS proposal. In many cases the issues are not new and are known to CPS. Some have been addressed in the Transition Plan. What we present are issues that remain to be addressed as CPS reviews its next steps in implementing the plan. High level findings with their requisite challenges are presented below by equity indicator, followed by a series of process recommendations.



### **What are the key findings, challenges, and opportunities in the area of family and community engagement?**

1. A high level of mistrust of CPS leadership and a significant level of acrimony between the two communities currently exist.
2. Only 3 percent of students attend their neighborhood high school with the remaining students dispersed throughout the city to 117 other schools. This

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<sup>1</sup> Westat conducted seven one-on-one interviews and eight focus groups of parents and educators representing affected schools and communities. Interviews were conducted with the following: Three CPS school and district leaders, one elected official, two community representatives, and one community organizer. Focus groups included:

- South Loop Parents (two focus groups with a total of 24 participants)
- National Teachers Academy Parents (two focus groups with a total of 32 participants)
- South Loop Educators (one focus group with 13 participants)
- National Teachers Academy Educators (one focus group with 15 participants)
- Outlying Boundary Parents (two focus groups representing Chinatown, Drake, Healy, Haines, and Bronzeville, with a total of 15 participants)

scattering of students throughout the city is a challenge for maintaining and improving family and community engagement with the schools.

3. There was a high level of agreement that having a neighborhood high school would be a significant benefit because parents would more easily be able to engage in school activities which contribute to a stronger sense of community.

**Key Recommendations:** One of the priorities of successful schooling is to engage and partner with the families and community stakeholders through genuine, purposeful, deliberate, and sustaining ways. The mistrust of CPS leadership and the acrimony between neighborhoods must be addressed for the proposed plan to be implemented successfully. Participants agreed that the strongest recommendation was for CPS to authentically listen to all constituent voices, be transparent in the decision-making process, and “over-communicate” with parents. The Transition Plan outlines a process to create a joint Culture and Climate Team from both elementary schools to engage parents and school staff in creating a shared vision for the future. We suggest using interactive and structured protocols like, but not limited to, Open Space Technology, Problems of Practice, learning circles, customized gallery walks with highly skilled and trained facilitators to ensure all voices are heard and valued. In addition, we suggest that the Principal Transition Coordinator (PTC), collaborate with the school principals to identify a number of ways in which parents and community stakeholders can actively participate in creating this shared vision.



**What are the key findings, challenges, and opportunities in the area of school climate?**

1. The concept of ‘integration’ was met with intense resistance, where some parents felt that having one “welcoming school” and one “closing school” will result in one school losing its identity. The challenge will be to merge two schools that have distinct educational philosophies and strong relationships with their respective communities.
2. CPS views the merging of the schools as an opportunity to “strengthen educational options,” with the added benefit of providing schools with the opportunity to learn from each other. The challenge is assuring parents that their

children would not lose the very educational philosophies that made their individual schools successful.

3. NTA and South Loop may be addressing disciplinary incidents in different ways. While NTA had more students involved in more disciplinary incidents than South Loop, those incidents that occurred at South Loop were of greater severity. The challenge will be to integrate these potentially differing philosophies to serve the best interests of all students.

4. Despite the outreach efforts of CPS (including more than 25 small group meetings and emails to parents and community members), the details of the Transition Plan are not well understood by community members. The challenge will be finding ways to effectively communicate detailed information with the community.

**Key Recommendations:** In order to facilitate a positive school climate in which both the adults and students take ownership in creating and maintaining a harmonious, welcoming, and inclusive school community, both school identities would need to be transformed into a new identity that develops and nurtures all students. Early in the transition process, staff and student representatives of the new school need to collaboratively discuss their new vision for a school climate and culture that continues to honor creating and maintaining a safe space for all students that is harmonious, welcoming, and inclusive. A critical part of this effort will be ensuring that NTA students continue to receive the equitable services, culturally responsive teaching, and social-emotional support that they currently enjoy. The Transition Plan acknowledges many of these challenges and takes some initial proactive steps to address them through allocation of funding, resources and support. Working in partnership with community members, the existing plan will need to evolve into a detailed action plan with metrics of success, benchmarks, and timelines, but will also have to be purposefully and repeatedly disseminated.



**What are the key findings, challenges, and opportunities in the area of culturally relevant leadership practices?**



1. The CPS Transition Plan provides funding to support school leadership during the transition period. It provides for a transition coordinator who would work with principals to provide the supports identified by the Culture and Climate Team.
2. Both NTA and South Loop participants were concerned about the loss of familiar leaders if the transition takes place. The challenge is one of assuring parents that their children would not lose the leaders and leadership philosophies that made their individual schools successful.

**Key Recommendations:** We also recommend that CPS employ a suite of culturally relevant leadership practices, including the provision of purposeful, ongoing, job-embedded, and sustained professional learning that supports the shared vision for cultural responsive and culturally relevant pedagogy. In addition, provide readily available resources, tools, professional learning communities, learning modules, and engaging and interactive activities that support the ways in which the entire faculty and staff will practice culturally relevant leadership to ensure all students are valued, honored, and celebrated.



### **What are the key findings, challenges, and opportunities in the area of student-centered learning?**

1. Students are currently academically successful in both NTA and South Loop school settings.
  - While NTA serves a significantly larger disadvantaged population, both schools are rated as 1+ by CPS, and both are categorized by CPS as having “above average”<sup>2</sup> year to year growth in test scores.
  - After controlling for poverty, demographics, and other factors,<sup>3</sup> South Loop students scored significantly higher on spring 2017 MAP reading and math

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<sup>2</sup> Student Growth measures the change in standardized test scores between two points in time, in this case between spring 2016 and spring 2017. This growth is compared to the average national growth for schools that had similar scores in 2016. A 50th percentile score means the school grew at the same rate as the national average. [http://cps.edu/Schools/Find\\_a\\_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx](http://cps.edu/Schools/Find_a_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> The multiple regression equation controlled for gender, race, ethnicity, RGC status, Special Education status, Disability status, Free and Reduced Lunch status, and attendance.

assessments than their NTA counterparts. There was no significant difference when looking at year to year growth.

- Neighborhood, economically disadvantaged, and African American South Loop students scored significantly higher in math and reading than their NTA peers in Spring 2017. However, there are no significant differences when year to year growth scores are examined.

2. NTA parents firmly believed that a holistic, whole child approach benefits their children’s overall well-being as well as their academics. The challenge is ensuring the benefit of a holistic approach and acknowledging the perception of the potential loss of this approach as a grave concern for some parents.

**Key Recommendations:** Tailoring instructional academic programming with the student at the center of the planning, development, delivery, assessment, reflection, and evaluation phases is an ongoing, cyclical practice of successful schooling. In addition to the student supports outlined in the Transition Plan, we also recommend that CPS provide support and technical assistance to school leaders and teachers on the differentiated ways instruction can be tailored to meet students’ individual learning needs based on in-depth data analyses. In addition, CPS should ensure that teachers have flexibility in the multiple approaches that have been successfully employed at both schools to support student-centered learning for continued student academic success.



**What are the key findings, challenges, and opportunities in the area of diverse staff of excellent educators?**

1. Both NTA and South Loop have the same level of diversity in their teaching staff. There are no statistically significant differences in the racial and ethnic makeup of each school’s teacher cadre. There is a great opportunity to staff the new elementary school with exemplary and diverse educators from both NTA and South Loop, if the proposal is approved by the board.
2. NTA parents directly tied the dedication of the faculty and staff to the academic, social, and emotional well-being of their children.

3. There was great uncertainty regarding the process of selecting faculty, staff, and administrators for the proposed new school.
4. The Transition Plan acknowledges the need for purposeful staffing of the new school with high-quality administrators and teachers trained in equity issues, holistic instructional methodologies, and transition/change dynamics. Nevertheless, NTA parents and educators worry that the teachers and staff at the new school would not be equipped to effectively handle the needs of the NTA population of students.

**Key Recommendations:** We strongly recommend that CPS communicates a clear and equitable plan for staffing the new elementary school with administrators and teachers from both existing schools. Though the PTC supports an exemplary leadership model, we encourage CPS to further explore multiple leadership models. For example, lead principals for the new elementary school can collaboratively implement a shared leadership approach to support the entire multi-school campus. These lead principals will also work collaboratively with the PTC and new high school principal for successful transition and continuous support through a shared leadership model.



**What are the key findings, challenges, and opportunities in the area of equitable student access?**

Consistently, participants expressed reservation regarding the proposed NTA conversion. The widespread impression among focus group participants was that a successful (i.e., 1+ rating) school was being sacrificed for the promise of a high school. CPS leadership acknowledges these concerns and stresses that it is a *merging* of two 1+ schools and that equitable opportunities for access will not diminish.

1. All interviewees and focus groups agreed that having a neighborhood high school is extremely valuable and agreed that being able to spare their children from the stressful high school selection process was a significant benefit. That said, focus group participants consistently expressed concern that existing high schools were being neglected in favor of establishing a new high school for a wealthier neighborhood. The Transition Plan acknowledges that it also seeks to rectify a

historical wrong though this proposal. There is also an opportunity for the district to communicate the support services it provides to the existing high schools.

2. While students are currently zoned to Phillips or Tilden (both level 2 schools) only 55 out of 2,032 attended them in 2017-18. The remaining students attended 117 other high schools, travelling an average of 3.8 miles to school each way (ranging from 0.1 to 13.5 miles). If NTA is converted into a high school, this creates an opportunity to reduce travel distance by nearly two-thirds: to 1.3 miles.

3. Participating parents from outlying boundaries were excited about the prospect of having a state-of-the-art high school nearby. However, they were concerned that there would not be enough space and no priority status for them. Our analysis of CPS data indicates the maximum capacity of the proposed high school would be 88 percent, leaving 220 available slots for the rest of the city, a positive benefit/opportunity.

**Key recommendations:** Though the Plan and January 8<sup>th</sup> press release clearly describes that the new high school will serve students in the Near South Area, we encourage CPS to further reassure parents that this includes students from Chinatown, Bridgeport, North Bronzeville, and South Loop.



**What are the key findings, challenges, and opportunities in the area of fiscal equity?**

1. NTA parents and educators were distressed because they perceived that all the resources which had been put into making NTA a 1+ rated school would be lost.
2. Participants in all focus groups questioned how resources would be provided to a new school when parents feel that resources have not been available to improve existing high schools.
3. The CPS Transition Plan allocates \$3.5 million to fund transition and support mechanisms for students through graduation. Upon reading a summary of the Transition Plan, participants were confused about the allocation of the funding, many thinking that the funding would also be used for establishing the new high school.

**Key Recommendations:** Equitable school funding is a critical component to achieving equity, and the opportunity to more clearly illustrate the district’s commitment to fiscal equity (beyond what is outline in the Transition Plan) will benefit the entire the school community. Therefore, we recommend that CPS further clarify and communicate the financial implications of the Transition Plan. Specifically, CPS would need to provide details of how the \$3.5 million will be allocated, and to communicate this information using multiple methods.

Our analysis identifies continuing potential challenges, issues and opportunities confronting CPS as they construct their transition plan. As we are more than a year away from actual implementation, many of the concerns raised can be addressed through inclusive planning, utilization of multiple and diverse communication channels, and a collectively agreed upon sense of what short term and long term success for all students can be. The equity concerns will always be present, should be identified and monitored, and action taken to address inequities when they exist. The request for this analysis is a responsible step in this process.

## INTRODUCTION

As the population of the Near South neighborhoods continues to grow, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is investigating how best to serve its Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. One proposal under consideration is moving the attendance boundary for the South Loop Elementary School (South Loop) and converting National Teachers Academy (NTA) into a neighborhood high school serving South Loop, North Bronzeville, Chinatown, Armour Square, and Bridgeport neighborhoods. In May 2017, CPS introduced a preliminary framework to gradually convert NTA into this neighborhood high school starting in the fall of 2019. NTA is a top-rated Pre-K–8 elementary school located at 55 W Cermak Road that currently serves 723 students (in SY 2017-18). It also has a Regional Gifted Center (RGC) program for students in grades K–5. South Loop is also a top-rated K<sup>4</sup>-8 elementary school located at 1212 South Plymouth Ct. that currently serves 780 students. South Loop also has an RGC program currently serving students in grades 6-8.

The full Transition Plan is provided in Appendix A. It provides the option for NTA students in grades 4 and above (in fall 2019) to either remain at NTA through the remainder of elementary school and high school or to transition to South Loop. Students in grades K-3 as of the 2019-20 school year do not have the option to remain at NTA and will be assigned to South Loop. Under this plan, the first cohort of 9<sup>th</sup> graders would attend the NTA high school beginning in 2019-20. This transition is displayed graphically in Figure 1.

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<sup>4</sup> South Loop previously had a pre-K program located at its Early Childhood Center, located at 1915 S Federal St. However, due to overcrowding, South Loop had to cut its pre-K program and use the space for additional kindergarten classrooms.

**Figure 1. Proposed transition plan for current NTA students by grade**

	GRADE									
2017-18	PK (NTA)	K (NTA)	1 (NTA)	2 (NTA)	3 (NTA)	4 (NTA)	5 (NTA)	6 (NTA)	7 (NTA)	8 (NTA)
2018-19	K (NTA)	1 (NTA)	2 (NTA)	3 (NTA)	4 (NTA)	5 (NTA)	6 (NTA)	7 (NTA)	8 (NTA)	9 (HS)
2019-20	1 (SL)	2 (SL)	3 (SL)	4 (NTA/SL)	5 (NTA/SL)	6 (NTA/SL)	7 (NTA/SL)	8 (NTA/SL)	9 (NTA HS)	10 (HS)
2020-21	2 (SL)	3 (SL)	4 (SL)	5 (NTA/SL)	6 (NTA/SL)	7 (NTA/SL)	8 (NTA/SL)	9 (NTA HS)	10 (NTA HS)	11 (HS)
2021-22	3 (SL)	4 (SL)	5 (SL)	6 (NTA/SL)	7 (NTA/SL)	8 (NTA/SL)	9 (NTA HS)	10 (NTA HS)	11 (NTA HS)	12 (HS)
2022-23	4 (SL)	5 (SL)	6 (SL)	7 (NTA/SL)	8 (NTA/SL)	9 (NTA HS)	10 (NTA HS)	11 (NTA HS)	12 (NTA HS)	
2023-24	5 (SL)	6 (SL)	7 (SL)	8 (NTA/SL)	9 (NTA HS)	10 (NTA HS)	11 (NTA HS)	12 (NTA HS)		
2024-25	6 (SL)	7 (SL)	8 (SL)	9 (NTA HS)	10 (NTA HS)	11 (NTA HS)	12 (NTA HS)			
2025-26	7 (SL)	8 (SL)	9 (NTA HS)	10 (NTA HS)	11 (NTA HS)	12 (NTA HS)				
2026-27	8 (SL)	9 (NTA HS)	10 (NTA HS)	11 (NTA HS)	12 (NTA HS)					
2027-28	9 (NTA HS)	10 (NTA HS)	11 (NTA HS)	12 (NTA HS)						
2028-29	10 (NTA HS)	11 (NTA HS)	12 (NTA HS)							
2029-30	11 (NTA HS)	12 (NTA HS)								
2030-31	12 (NTA HS)									

(NTA) = Students attend NTA, transition has not yet begun

(SL) = Students transition to South Loop

(NTA/SL) Students may remain at NTA or transition to South Loop

(NTA HS) = Students have guaranteed spot in the proposed NTA high school

(HS) = Students attend high school as normal

In addition to the gradual transition of students shown above, the Plan also contains a guarantee that every current NTA student, regardless of where they live, will have a guaranteed spot in the new high school. CPS has also set aside \$3.5 million to support the transition of NTA students through graduation and including the creation of a joint Culture and Climate Team comprised of staff, parents, and student representatives from NTA and South Loop. In addition, part of this funding is earmarked for the implementation of restorative practices and professional development for South Loop and NTA staff.

The focus of this report is to describe the potential impacts, both positive and negative, that this proposal may have on various stakeholders in the Near South community. This work will allow CPS to fully understand the concerns and expectations of stakeholders, likely challenges, and potential solutions. After a request for proposal and vendor selection process, CPS contracted with Westat to conduct this study. The revised Transition Plan was released on December 1, 2017, and Westat was contracted to begin work soon after, on December 11<sup>th</sup>, concluding February 23, 2018. Westat utilized a multi-method approach to this task, combining information from focus groups, interviews, a

document review (including the CPS Transition Plan), and an analysis of CPS enrollment data<sup>5</sup> (see Appendix B for the full Methodology). Interviews were conducted with CPS leaders, elected officials and community stakeholders identified by CPS and community groups. Focus groups were conducted with parents and educators from both South Loop and NTA. Additional focus groups were conducted with parents of students of other elementary schools which are in the proposed boundary of the new high school. For the purpose of this report, all those interviewed or participating in a focus group will be referred to as “participants,” with the understanding that their input may not necessarily reflect the community at-large. Any references to input from parents and educators within this report reflect focus group participation.

The report continues with the Findings chapter that contains information on the historical background and context for the proposal, followed by the results organized around the following equity indicators: (1) Family and Community Engagement, (2) School Climate, (3) Culturally Relevant Leadership Practices, (4) Student-Centered Learning, (5) Diverse Staff of Excellent Educators, (6) Equitable Student Access, and (7) Fiscal Equity. Next is the Conclusion, which includes detailed recommendations. The appendices follow: Appendix A contains the full Transition Plan from CPS, Appendix B is the methodology, while Appendix C contains information on the equity indicators.

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<sup>5</sup> Westat conducted seven one-on-one interviews and eight focus groups of parents and educators representing affected schools and communities. Interviews were conducted with the following: Three CPS school and district leaders, one elected official, two community representatives, and one community organizer. Focus groups included:

- South Loop Parents (two focus groups with a total of 24 participants)
- National Teachers Academy Parents (two focus groups with a total of 32 participants)
- South Loop Educators (one focus group with 13 participants)
- National Teachers Academy Educators (one focus group with 15 participants)
- Outlying Boundary Parents (two focus groups representing Chinatown, Drake, Healy, Haines, and Bronzeville, with a total of 15 participants)



## FINDINGS

One of the topics which resonated with the parent groups and stakeholders was the historical context around past school boundary issues. Community stakeholders repeatedly referenced painful past boundary decisions that segregated schools by race and income. In 2005, CPS redrew the boundary lines which created a clear demarcation of between NTA and South Loop. Students south of 18<sup>th</sup> street went to NTA (then a low-performing school) and students north of that were zoned to South Loop (a high-performing school). This boundary resulted in lower-income, primarily African American residents being zoned to a low-performing school, while more affluent residents were zoned to a high-performing school. NTA parents feel that this boundary decision was made specifically “to exclude poor African American students and families from a high-quality school [i.e., South Loop]” and was seen as an example of how CPS historically has segregated schools.

*The two schools serve very distinct populations, differing significantly on all demographic characteristics*

Today, only 33 percent of South Loop neighborhood students are eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunches (FRPL) compared to 86 percent of the neighborhood students at NTA. A comparison of the demographics of the students of the two schools and the projected demographics of the combined school are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of NTA and South Loop schools: 2017-2018**

	National Teachers Academy			South Loop			Projected Combined Elementary		
	All	Neighborhood	RGC	All	Neighborhood	RGC	All	Neighborhood	RGC
Special Ed students	9%	11%	--	6%	7%	--	7%	8%	--
Economically disadvantaged	72%	86%	26%	31%	33%	20%	46%	51%	19%
White	7%	--	27%	25%	24%	34%	18%	16%	32%
African American	78%	92%	31%	46%	47%	38%	58%	63%	30%
Hispanic	7%	4%	17%	10%	9%	15%	9%	8%	17%
RGC students	23%	NA	NA	11%	NA	NA	17%	NA	NA

Note: NA = not applicable. ‘--’ = cell size too small to report. RGC students grade K-5 all attend NTA and students grade 6-8 all attend South Loop. Economically disadvantaged refers to students who are eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL). The projection was created by extrapolating the demographics from NTA in 2017-18, and assuming that all K-3 students would attend South Loop, and that 50% of grades 4-8 would attend South Loop (selected randomly).

In fact, because the NTA (neighborhood and RGC) population is 78 percent African American, it is less “diverse” than South Loop. Looking at the diversity index (the probability of having two students

who are from different racial categories), South Loop is 72 percent, while for NTA that probability is 38 percent. For the combined school, the diversity index is projected to be 62 percent.



Building on this historical context, participants expressed their frustration that CPS leadership had not effectively communicated with the communities throughout the decision-making process of this proposal. CPS has attempted to address this perception by conducting “community meetings, more than 25 small group meetings with various stakeholders, and collecting over 900 emails from parents and community members” (CPS Draft Transition Plan). From this input, CPS made modifications to the draft Plan to address community concerns; however, negative perceptions of lack of communication persist. One interviewed participant explained that CPS leadership might not be “getting equally balanced voice, and the result is [CPS] coming up with solutions people will continue to reject until there is open and transparent access to the decision-making process.” NTA participants were the most vocal in their frustration with the CPS decision-making process, with one parent saying, “I do not believe CPS will use any of this information as I intend.”

All participants agreed that the strongest recommendation was the need for CPS to authentically listen to all constituent voices. NTA parent participants emphasized the need for transparency in the decision-making process and “over-communication” from CPS. CPS has been transparent with operational aspects of the proposal, such as transportation, timeline, and transition support. Programmatic strategies, such as how the two schools will develop a new identity and staffing, would be developed with community input during the 2018-19 school year. However, it is precisely this lack of programmatic details that concerns parents the most.

All interview and focus group participants agreed that the current high school environment is not conducive to family and community engagement. At this time, only 3 percent of students attend one of the designated neighborhood high schools. All other students disperse throughout the city to 117 other schools, preventing the possibility of building a sense of community around school events such as sports, fine arts productions, and other student performances. The Transition Plan describes a comprehensive system of student supports to ensure that all students will experience a smooth

transition from one school to the other if the proposal is approved, which include supports for diverse learners, English learners, students in temporary living situations, and students’ social and emotional needs. These comprehensive systems of student supports should also be provided during the entire phase-in plan and extend to both the new high school and existing high schools in the area.

Participants agreed that having a safe and successful high school in the community would boost community engagement. Participants spoke emotionally on the topic of the stress and difficulty with the existing selective high school/lottery process and the break-up of the community when students disperse to far-flung high schools throughout the city. Focus group participants from the outlying communities agreed that having all the schools feed into a single safe high school would strengthen their communities. They shared excitement about having the opportunity to actively participate in high school activities and school/parent groups.



According to the CPS Transition Plan, funding will be designated to address school climate concerns. The plan creates a Culture and Climate advisory group made up of administrators, faculty/staff, parents, and students from both affected schools. This team will develop a shared vision, identify programming/curriculum needed to

fully support all students, develop staff development, and organize community events to encourage the merging of the two communities. That said, the potential integration of two successful schools with dynamically different school cultures still poses a significant challenge.

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*The two schools have very distinct cultures, each with a different focus*

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Participants from both NTA and South Loop boast a strong sense of community. They spoke of the “South Loop Way” and the “NTA Way” and participants indicated that both communities tie the success of the school directly to their school’s culture.

South Loop participants indicated that the South Loop community directly ties a successful school environment to rigorous, accelerated academic standards and achievement. As a result, South Loop participants strongly supported their school’s leadership, because of their “strong commitment to a high-quality education.” They also directly correlated high academic standards to the growth and development of their neighborhood. South Loop focus group consensus was that when a

neighborhood boasts an academically strong school, people will want to stay in the community. South Loop parents were also excited that the merging of the two schools would allow their children to learn about and experience alternative educational models (e.g., restorative justice, holistic learning, etc.).

Participants from the NTA community directly tied a successful school environment to student wellness, with a focus on the “whole child” and a culturally relevant curriculum. They emphasized that the NTA culture teaches students to advocate for themselves, developing “strong Black leaders of the community.” NTA participants believed their children “were well” due to strong, committed school leaders and teachers. They shared stories of the principal greeting each child by name at the start of each day, and one parent emphasized that the NTA school leadership maintains a consistent “message to the children of safety and acceptance.”

Participants from both NTA and South Loop strongly believe in their schools, their students, and their existing school cultures. CPS conducts an annual survey to assess perceptions of school culture across 5 domains. The 2017 survey results show that both schools are considered “strong” in “ambitious instruction” according to students and teachers. South Loop is also rated as “strong” or “very strong” in the other four domains, whereas NTA is “neutral” in the other areas (see Figure 2).

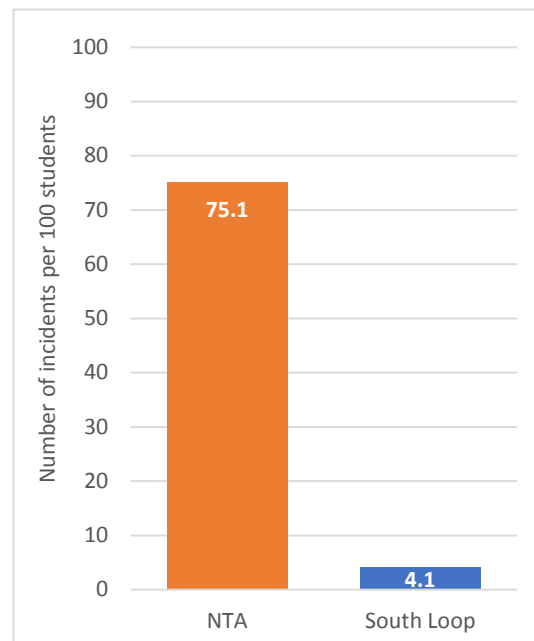
**Figure 2. School climate survey results 2017**



Source: [http://cps.edu/Schools/Find\\_a\\_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx](http://cps.edu/Schools/Find_a_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx). The response rates were not high enough to report out survey results related to school community, parent-teach partnerships and quality of facilities.

Discipline and attendance are another aspect of school culture. Looking at the data for both schools, discipline can be described by the number of incidents occurring during a given school year, as well as the number of students involved in at least one incident. Figure 3 shows the number of incidents per 100 students in the 2016-17 school year, with NTA having statistically significantly more disciplinary incidents than South Loop. Similarly, 22 percent of NTA students were involved in at least one disciplinary incident, compared to 3 percent of South Loop students. However, the severity of the disciplinary incidents should also be taken into account. To better understand disciplinary incidents, we created an index that included severity. The index was calculated as the number of incidents multiplied by the severity of

**Figure 3: Number of disciplinary incidents per 100 students in 2016-17**



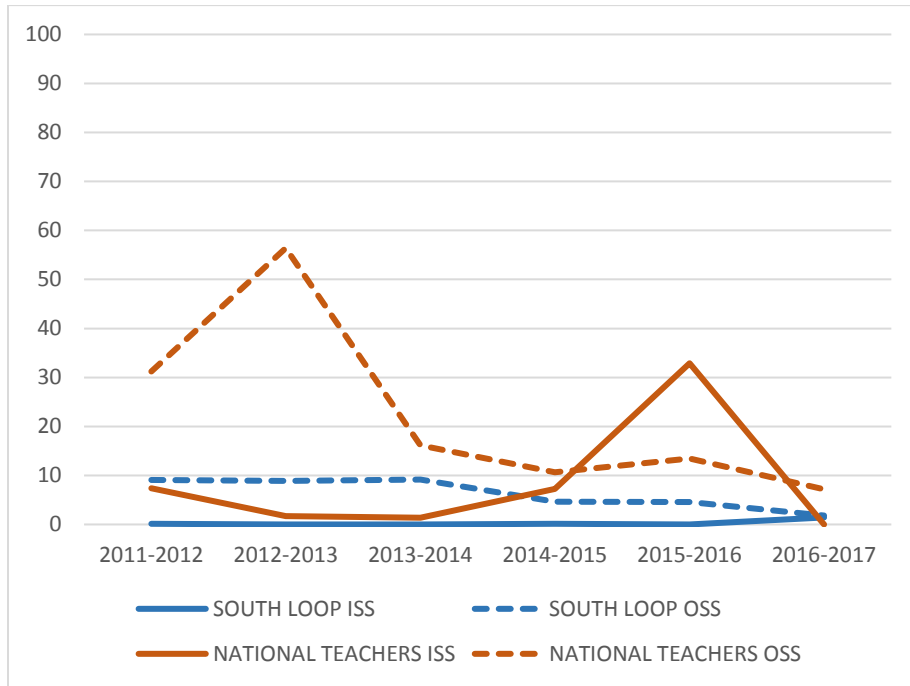
those incidents (from a scale of 1 to 6).<sup>6</sup> Looking at this index, we found that—for the 152 NTA students involved in an incident—the average severity index was 2.4. For the 20 South Loop students involved in an incident, this score was statistically significantly higher—3.5. That is, while NTA had more students involved in more incidents, South Loop had fewer incidents but of higher severity.

Westat also examined the number of in- and out-of-school suspensions over time in both schools (see Figure 4 below). Here we can see that the proportion of out-of-school suspensions have been declining for both schools, with NTA coming down from a peak in 2012-13. NTA also exhibits a dramatic decrease in the number of in-school suspensions since 2015-16.

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<sup>6</sup> Group 1 lists behaviors that are inappropriate. • Group 2 lists behaviors that disrupt. • Group 3 lists behaviors that seriously disrupt. • Group 4 lists behaviors that very seriously disrupt. • Group 5 lists behaviors that most seriously disrupt. • Group 6 lists behaviors that are illegal and most seriously disrupt. See pages 18-31 for examples: [http://cps.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/SCC\\_StudentCodeConduct\\_English.pdf](http://cps.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/SCC_StudentCodeConduct_English.pdf)

**Figure 4. Number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions per 100 students by school, 2011-12 to 2016-17**



Note: ISS = in school suspension; OSS = out of school suspensions.

Looking at attendance data, there are no statistically significant difference in the number of absences between NTA and South Loop students, with about 7 days missed for neighborhood students, and 4 days missed for RGC students.



The CPS Transition Plan provides funding to create leadership positions focused on transition support. One such position will be a transition coordinator assigned during SY 2018-19 and maintained at least through 2019-20. This coordinator would act as a point of contact for transitioning students and families, directing them to support and resources and would work with school principals to assist in programming and other supports identified by the Culture and Climate Team. Both NTA and South Loop parent and educator participants understood that the changes in school leadership and staffing would effectively change the individual missions of the schools (i.e., South Loop’s academic rigor and NTA’s holistic approach).

Both NTA and South Loop participants were also concerned about the loss of familiar leaders if the transition takes place. With each school having a very clearly distinct philosophy of education, parents worried that their children would lose the very leadership philosophies that made their individual schools successful. A CPS leadership interview participant acknowledged these differences in school culture saying, “The schools have so much to share with each other. South Loop has a very strong academic focus while NTA has done an amazing job of creating a culture and core values around motivating students and bringing a sense of community.” However, it is these strengths that focus group participants believed might be lost by combining the schools. While the South Loop participants felt that the proposal would have some positive impacts, NTA participants felt the implementation of the current CPS proposal would have lasting and severe negative impacts on both their children and their community.

Of greatest concern, across both communities’ participant groups, was the concept of “integration” which they perceived could have negative consequences.

South Loop parents expressed concern that the transition had the potential to seriously disrupt student learning. NTA educator and parent participants agreed, indicating that rather than an “integration”

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*The underlying anger and distrust must be addressed before any movement towards a merger can occur*

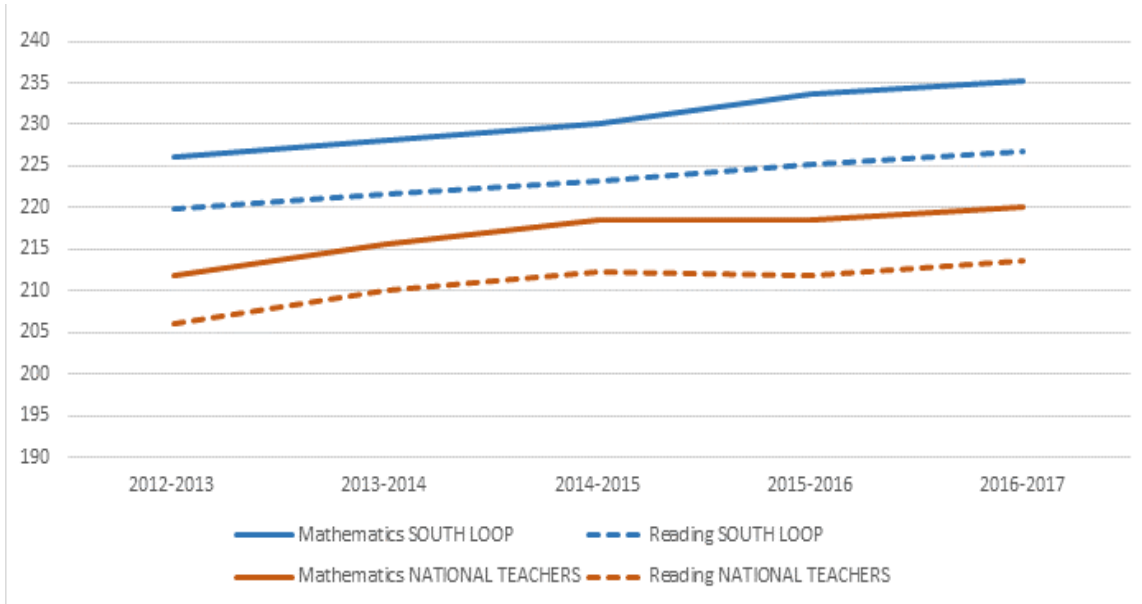
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of schools, the implementation of this proposal would result in unbalanced impacts, where one community wins and the other loses. An outer-boundary parent expressed a similar sentiment by saying, “Just because there’s a mixture of people does not mean good things will happen.” One South Loop educator emphasized the need for CPS to address underlying anger, which has been building between the communities. Some participants, though, believed that if done correctly, long-term benefits of having a high-quality, diverse school would be great, making the school a model for others to follow. This work would fall under the auspices of the proposed Culture and Climate Team, which would be tasked with addressing problematic issues surrounding the concepts of integration and merging of the two schools.



Both South Loop and NTA are rated as 1+ schools, and both have shown a steady increase in test scores over the last 5 years, as illustrated in Figure 5, below.

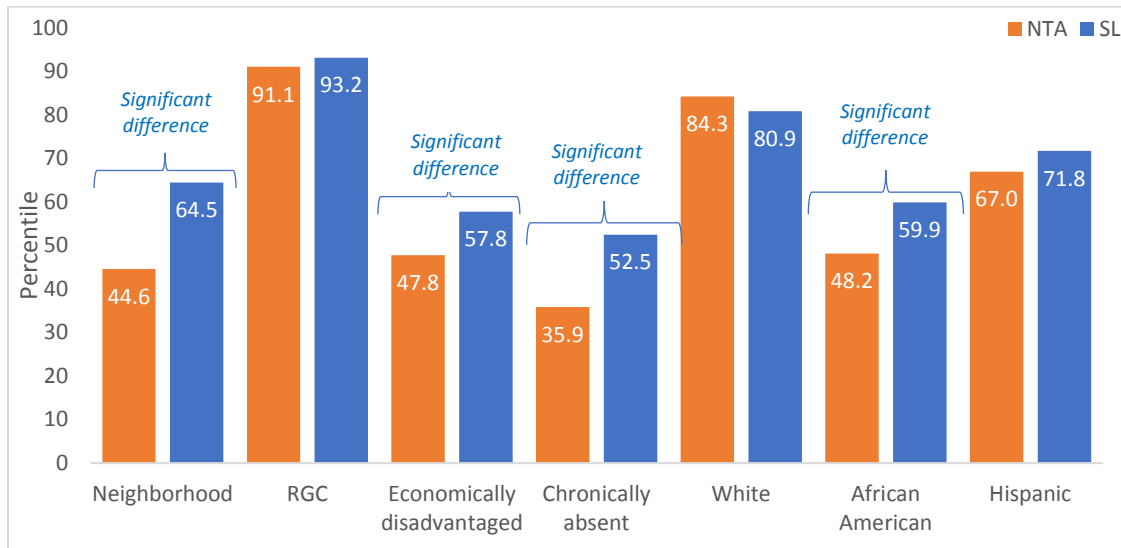
**Figure 5: Spring math and reading scores (grades 3–8), spring 2013- spring 2017**



Figures 6 and 7 show that South Loop neighborhood students, students who are eligible for FRPL, African American, and chronically absent (missing more than 18 days of school) students in South Loop score statistically significantly higher in both math and reading than their peers in NTA.

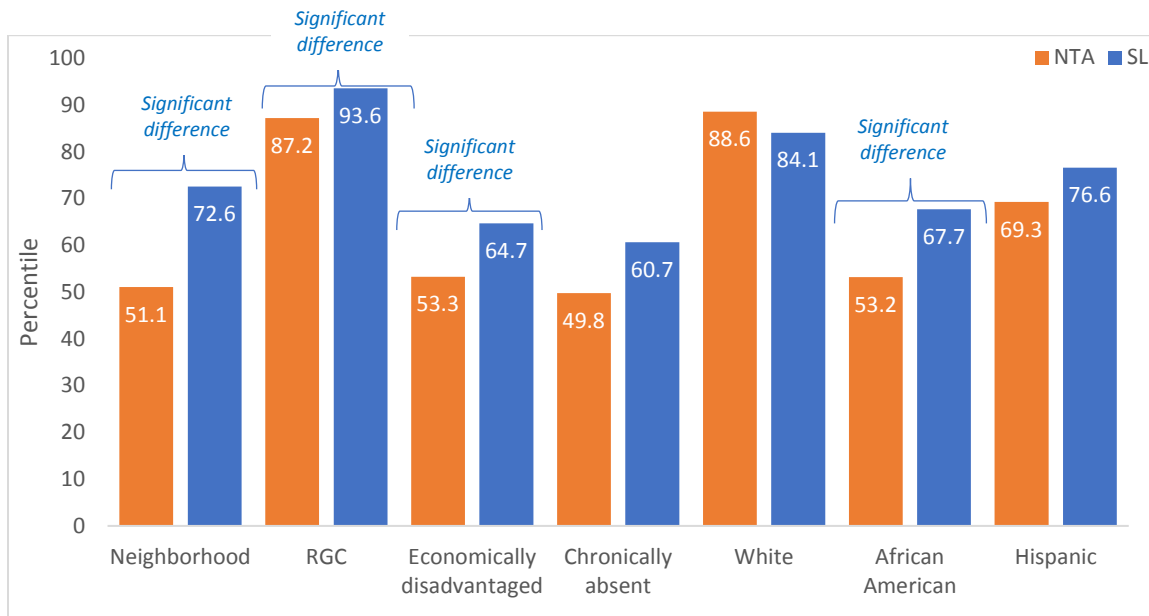


**Figure 6. 2016-17 math achievement by demographic and academic characteristics**



Note: "Significant" difference refers to a statistically significant difference between the two schools at the .05 level. RGC students grade K-5 all attend NTA and students grade 6-8 all attend South Loop. Economically disadvantaged refers to students who are eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL).

**Figure 7. 2016-17 Reading achievement by demographic and academic characteristics**

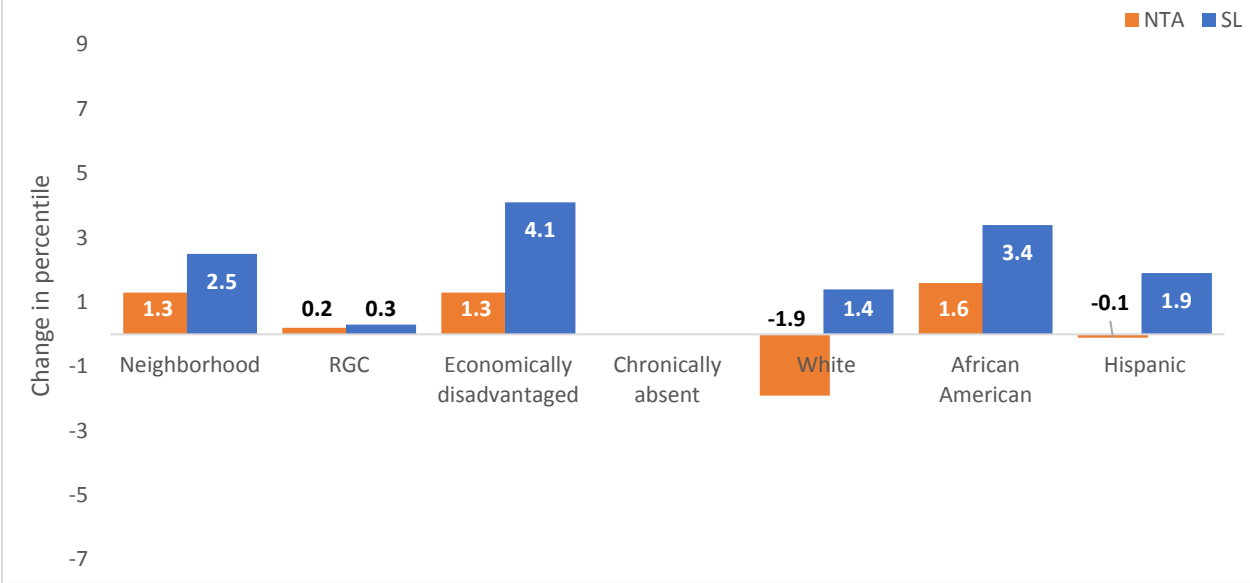


Note: "Significant difference" refers to a statistically significant difference between the two schools at the .05 level. RGC students grade K-5 all attend NTA and students grade 6-8 all attend South Loop. Economically disadvantaged refers to students who are eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL).

It is important to note that the demographics of the two schools are very different, as noted earlier in Table 1, with NTA serving a more disadvantaged population. However, even after controlling for poverty, demographics, and other factors,<sup>7</sup> South Loop students still scored significantly higher on spring 2017 MAP reading and mathematics assessments ( $p < .0001$ ) than their NTA counterparts.

Another way to consider achievement is to examine year to year growth. In fact, both NTA and South Loop are categorized as having “above average”<sup>8</sup> growth by CPS. And while South Loop students scored significantly higher on math and reading in the spring of 2017, when we examine year to year growth, there are no statistically significant differences (see Figures 8 and 9).

**Figure 8. Spring 2016 to spring 2017 mathematics growth by demographics and academic characteristics**

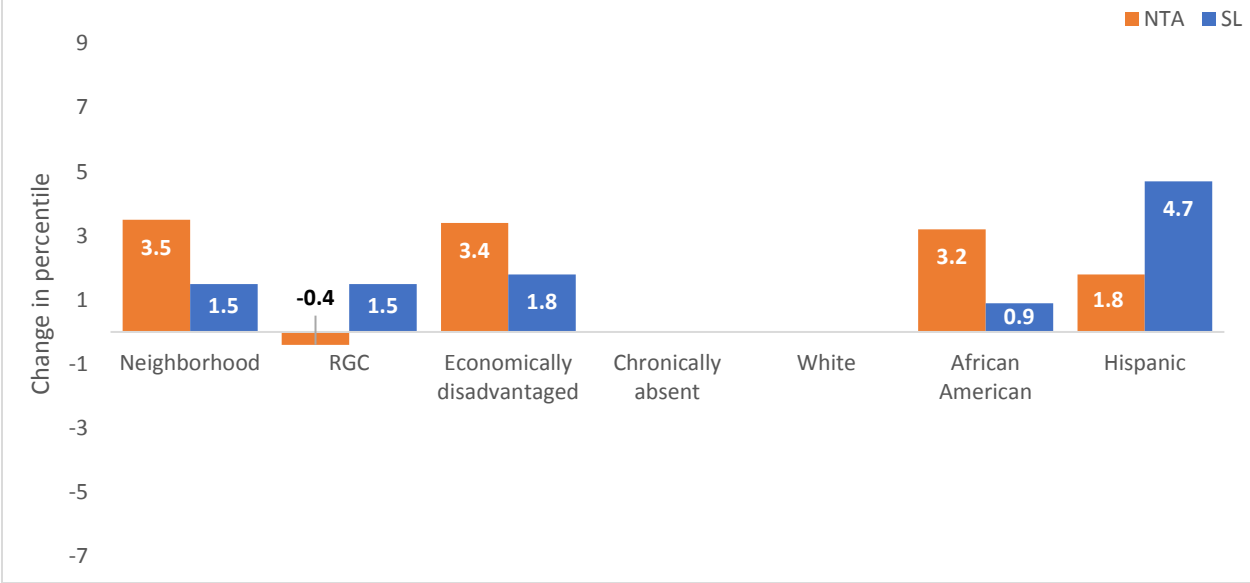


Note: None of the differences are statistically significant. Chronically absent is not displayed because the cell size was too small RGC students grade K-5 all attend NTA and students grades 6-8 all attend South Loop. Economically disadvantaged refers to students who are eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL.)

<sup>7</sup> The multiple regression equation controlled for gender, race, ethnicity, RGC status, Special Education status, Disability status, Free and Reduced Lunch status, and attendance.

<sup>8</sup> Student Growth measures the change in standardized test scores between two points in time, in this case between spring 2016 and spring 2017. This growth is compared to the average national growth for schools that had similar scores in 2016. A 50th percentile score means the school grew at the same rate as the national average. [http://cps.edu/Schools/Find\\_a\\_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx](http://cps.edu/Schools/Find_a_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx)

**Figure 9. Spring 2016 to spring 2017 reading growth by demographics and academic characteristics**



Note: None of the differences are statistically significant. Chronically absent and White are not displayed because the cell sizes were too small RGC students grade K-5 all attend NTA and students grade 6-8 all attend South Loop. Economically disadvantaged refers to students who are eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL).

While the data from South Loop and NTA does not allow us to predict the future achievement should the schools be merged, it is apparent the South Loop students currently realize high levels of achievement, with economically disadvantaged and African American students scoring significantly higher than their peers at NTA.

NTA educator and parent participants expressed concern about the large size of the new elementary school, feeling that the size would make it difficult to meet the needs of former NTA students accustomed to a small school environment with individualized attention. They firmly believed their primarily high-needs African American students thrive in smaller schools with individualized and differentiated instruction allowing them to succeed academically. South Loop parents and educators, while acknowledging the strain on NTA constituents, were generally positive when identifying impacts of the school merger. The South Loop educators were very excited about the possibility of working with a more diverse population while South Loop parents believed that it was “good to create a larger, more diverse community.”



**EQUITY  
AREA:  
EDUCATORS**

Analysis show that there are no statistically significant differences in the racial and ethnic makeup of each school’s teacher cadre. Parent participants from both South Loop and NTA expressed deep admiration and appreciation for the teachers, administrators and staff of each school. NTA parents directly tied the dedication of the faculty and staff to the academic, social, and emotional well-being of their children. However, there was great uncertainty regarding the process of selecting faculty, staff, and administrators for the proposed new school. South Loop educators were under the impression that while NTA teachers and staff would need to re-apply for their positions, South Loop teachers and staff would not. The South Loop educators felt “caught in the middle” and expressed a willingness to address concerns of NTA parents and community members. The Transition Plan acknowledges the need for purposeful staffing of the new school with high-quality administrators and teachers trained in equity issues, holistic instructional methodologies, and transition/change dynamics. The plan designates funding be used for purposeful professional development in each of these areas. However, NTA parents and educators worry that the teachers and staff at the new school would not be equipped to effectively handle the needs of the NTA population of students, but would, rather, expect the NTA students to transition back to a traditional school setting (i.e., not focused on a “whole child,” restorative justice approach) which would not be conducive to their well-being or academic success.



**EQUITY  
AREA:  
ACCESS**

Elementary School

Successful schools strongly believe and ensure that all students should engage in equitable student access daily with no hesitation to provide interactive, engaging, challenging, reflective, high-quality instruction using a variety of strategies that support all stages of student academic progress. The impression across all participant groups was that a successful (i.e., 1+ rating) school was being sacrificed for the promise of a high school. Consistently, participants expressed reservation regarding the proposed conversion, with one stating, “If they can close NTA, they could close our school.” CPS leadership acknowledged these concerns and addressed them by positing that it is rather a merging of two 1+ schools and emphasized that the merger of the two schools meets all CPS guidelines, including that students not be moved to a lower-performing

school (see Transition Plan in Appendix A). NTA parent and educator participants focused on the term “equitable” and its inherent definition of “criteria applied on a case-by-case basis to meet individual needs,” pointing out that this was at the core of the “NTA Way” and would be lost under the proposal.

NTA parent participants assumed that the youngest grades (e.g., Pre-K to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) would be assigned to the original South Loop building (Note: This has not yet been determined by CPS). Working with that assumption, they believed that since the transition begins with the youngest grades, their children would have to leave a great facility only to be placed in the old South Loop building, which was perceived to be “rundown” and “outdated.” It was the understanding of the South Loop parent and educator participants that the new building would be built even if the current CPS proposal was not adopted. The South Loop participants were excited about the possible return of the full RGC (grades K–5 currently reside at NTA), and improved library, nurse’s station, and other school support systems.

Proposed High School

All interviewees and focus groups agreed that having a neighborhood high school is extremely valuable and agreed that being able to spare their children from the stressful high school selection process was a significant benefit. That said, participants consistently expressed concern that existing high schools were being neglected in favor of establishing a new high school for a wealthier neighborhood. Focus group participants expressed reluctance to send their children to the existing high schools in the current boundary, and agreed that many families move away from the neighborhood to the suburbs or to be within the boundary of a “good” CPS high school.

The proposed high school would have a traditional neighborhood school boundary with the addition of a preference boundary that will provide families living just outside the neighborhood boundary with first access to any available seats after students in the neighborhood boundary enroll. The proposed neighborhood boundary incorporates the following



elementary school boundaries – Drake, Haines, Healy, NTA, South Loop, and Ward. The proposed preference boundary incorporates the following elementary school boundaries – Armour, Holden and Pershing.

While students are currently zoned to Phillips or Tilden (both level 2 schools) only 55 out of 2,032 attended in 2017-18. The remaining students attend 117 other high schools, travelling an average of 3.8 miles to school each way (ranging from 0.1 to 13.5 miles). If NTA is converted into a high school, this travel distance would be reduced by nearly two-thirds: to 1.3 miles. Currently, Asian students travel the farthest distance (4.1 miles), while White students travel the least distance (2.9 miles). Looking at the demographics of high school attendance by school quality, Table 3 shows us that 60 percent of all current high school students who live within the proposed boundary attend a level 1+ high school, and travel nearly 4 miles each way to do so. Moreover, the proportion of economically disadvantaged and minority youth attending a 1+ high school is substantially lower than the proportions attending lower ranked high schools.

**Table 3. Quality of high schools attended in 2017-18 by students in grades 9–12 who live within the proposed boundary**

School quality	# of students attending (n=2,022)	% of students attending (n=2,022)	% Economically disadvantaged attending (n=1,503)	% minority attending (n=1,809)	% Economically disadvantaged AND minority attending (n=1,428)	Average distance in miles
1+	1,220	60%	64%	87%	61%	3.9
1	117	6%	90%	99%	89%	5.1
2+	508	25%	90%	95%	85%	3.5
2	173	9%	92%	92%	86%	2.9
3	--	--	--	--	--	--

Note: ‘--’ = cell size too small to report. Economically disadvantaged refers to students who are eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL). Minority students refers to African American, Hispanic, Asian, and mixed race students.

While participating parents from outlying boundaries expressed that they did not want to see a 1+ school closed in order to make room for a high school, they were excited about the prospect of having a state-of-the-art high school nearby. They did, however, express great concern that because the NTA and South Loop students would have automatic entry into the high school, there would not be enough space and no priority status for their own students. Our analysis of CPS data indicates capacity of the proposed high school would be between 7 percent and 88 percent, under a varied set of assumptions, as illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4. Percent of school capacity, assuming different quality ratings of new high school**

School Quality Rating	Neighborhood + preference students projected 1,200 student capacity	Neighborhood + preference students projected 1,000 student capacity
Level 1+	73%	88%
Level 1	68 %	81%
Level 2+	46%	55%
Level 2	19%	22%
Level 3	7%	8%

Note: Neighborhood boundaries give students living in the boundary a guaranteed seat at the school. Preference boundaries give preference to students living in the boundary over other students in the city if additional seats are not occupied by students in the neighborhood boundary.

Under the most conservative estimates of a capacity where the school holds 1,000 students and is rated as 1+, our analysis predicts that it will be at 88 percent of maximum capacity, after enrolling students from within the neighborhood and preference boundaries, leaving 220 available slots for the rest of the city.



Participants within each of the constituent groups identified three issues regarding fiscal investment and resource allocation. First, groups expressed concern over setting a precedent of closing a successful, high-rated neighborhood school. NTA parents and educators were distressed that all the time, effort and resources which had been put into making NTA a 1+ rated school would be lost. Second, participants questioned how resources would be provided to a new school when parents feel that resources have not been available to improve existing high schools. The CPS Transition Plan allocates \$3.5 million to fund transition and support mechanisms for students through graduation. Parent participants from both schools agreed that the allotted \$3.5 million set aside for the school transition probably would not be enough to cover everything required for transition support services for a new elementary school. Upon reading a summary of the transition plan at the focus group (see Appendix A), participants were confused about the allocation of the funding, many thinking that the funding would also be used for establishing the new high school. The Transition Plan, however, states:

*“CPS has set aside approximately \$3.5 million to support the transition<sup>9</sup> of current NTA students until they graduate. These funds will go toward supports and resources for students and families in order to ensure a smooth transition into one, unified school community.”*

<sup>9</sup> No mention is made in the transition plan of using the funding to establish the new high school.

## CONCLUSION

### Challenges

A myriad of concerns and challenges have arisen from the CPS proposal. The greatest challenge is ensuring that NTA students continue to receive the equitable services, culturally responsive teaching, and social-emotional support that NTA staff successfully provide. Currently, extreme mistrust of the CPS leadership is very high—NTA stakeholders perceive that their children are being displaced for the convenience of more wealthy stakeholders. In fact, the South Loop participants acknowledged that the burden of this proposal would be shouldered largely by the NTA community, with NTA students being the ones transitioned rather than the South Loop students. Projecting the enrollment of the high school, which would serve both communities, Table 5 illustrates the similarities and differences between the population that currently attends NTA and the projected population that would attend NTA should it be converted into a high school.

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*The greatest challenge is ensuring that the students of NTA continue to receive the equitable services, culturally responsive teaching, and social-emotional support*

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**Table 5. Comparison of current NTA neighborhood demographics with that of projected demographics of proposed NTA high school**

Demographic Variables	Current NTA students (N=723)	Proposed NTA high school (N=875)	Statistically significant?
	% students	% students	
Special Ed students	10%	11%	No
Economically disadvantaged	72%	78%	Yes
White	7%	9%	No
African American	78%	27%	Yes
Hispanic	7%	19%	Yes
Asian	4%	44%	Yes
<b>Diversity Index</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>69%</b>	

Note: “Significant” difference refers to a statistically significant difference between the two schools at the .05 level. Economically disadvantaged refers to students who are eligible to receive Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL).

We found that while the proposed high school is projected to be more racially diverse than the existing NTA elementary school population (with a diversity index of 69 percent compared to 38 percent), it would serve statistically significantly fewer African American students and more Hispanic and Asian students because the high school would draw students from neighboring communities.



CPS leadership acknowledged that past actions and failed promises had created an environment that would make the implementation of the proposal particularly challenging. They also emphasized that because “Chicago is so segregated, if we don’t start making hard decisions like this and having tough conversations, then we’re going to lose the great opportunity we have to create truly more diverse and successful schools.” However, a community member interviewed acknowledged, “Racial diversity is an important factor, but when you see it have a negative impact on students of color and a disruption to student lives, the benefits of diversity are not realized.”

Inherent in the perceptions of this proposal is the idea of having one “welcoming school” and one “closing school” with one school losing its identity and existence. This was the overwhelming understanding of the focus group participants. One parent stated, “Integration will be difficult because the process has created bitterness on many levels and all sides.” The perception of involuntary integration, is that “NTA students will always be ‘those kids.’” The Transition Plan, in some ways reinforces this perception by referring to the new school as “South Loop.” However, the plan does acknowledge inherent challenges and attempts to be proactive in addressing challenges through the promised allocation of funding, resources and support. In the event that identified challenges are overcome, there is great potential to develop a diverse, high-quality school environment and community that is able to address the holistic needs of all the attending students.

CPS leaders and community stakeholders interviewed also acknowledged the risks as well as the potential benefits inherent in such a school merger. Having a high-quality, neighborhood high school for the community to coalesce around was the most advantageous benefit identified by all participants. South Loop educator participants identified another benefit as being able to learn from NTA educators how to implement more high-quality differentiated and holistic approaches to learning and supporting students. When addressing the risk inherent in the plan, one of those interviewed stated, “Whenever you come up with a proposal like this, it’s met with a lot of resistance for a lot of different reasons. When you integrate homogenous communities, that’s hard. People have their own affinities and histories tied to their community schools.” One participant from the outlying boundary focus group urged the two communities to come together to “define the climate and culture of the new school,” adding that “too much screaming, with each person with their own vested interests

blocks out the needs of others.” One community stakeholder interviewed agreed, saying, “To have successful integration requires the valuing of both communities.” All participants agreed that **for the plan to have a chance of success, both school identities would need to be transformed into a new identity that develops and nurtures all students.** To make this happen, not only would surface-level changes be required (e.g., name changed, new mission/vision, new mascot, uniforms etc.) but deeper changes would also be needed (e.g., no more “NTA Way” or “South Loop Way” but rather a “New School Way”). Participants agreed that the new school would need a mix of educators from the two existing schools as well as familiar administrators from both schools. In fact, NTA participants emphatically recommended that educators, support staff, and administrators from NTA be transitioned to the proposed new school in order to continue supporting the NTA students.

### Recommendations

Equity is a process and must be a shared goal by all parties involved. There is an acute awareness that combining schools is also combining communities, and to that end, CPS understands the need to “continue to identify issues of concern” as demonstrated by requesting this study. The transition plan captures critical elements that must be addressed; however, we are still at beginning stages with much to be articulated and agreed upon. An open question that remains is the agreed upon “metrics of success and timeline” to assure that equity across a broad array of practices and outcomes is realized.

The recommendations that follow support the transition plan, stakeholder feedback, and data analyses organized by our key equity indicators.



### *Concerns and Recommendations from Interview and Focus Group Participants*

The following concerns and recommendations in Table 6 were identified by the participants in the interviews and focus groups. It is important to note that many of these concerns and recommendations have already been addressed in the Transition Plan that CPS provided. These concerns and recommendations are arranged within the identified equity indicators used throughout this report (see Table 6).


**Table 6. Focus Group participants and interviewees’ concerns and recommendations arranged by equity indicator with aligned details from Transition Plan**

Equity Indicator	Concerns	Recommendations	Transition Plan
<p style="text-align: center;">EQUITY INDICATOR: ENGAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of community support systems (e.g., health clinic, counselors, etc.)</li> <li>• “Integration”</li> <li>• Loss of community identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS needs to listen “authentically” to all voices</li> <li>• Decision-making transparency</li> <li>• Need for “over-communication”</li> <li>• Establishing parent advisory council</li> <li>• Creating social mechanisms for the two communities to come together (needs to include outlying boundaries when optimal)</li> <li>• Professional development centered around developing a sense of community, holistic approaches to education, restorative justice and social advocacy for students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS has conducted multiple town-hall meetings and focus groups to understand the concerns of affected community members</li> <li>• CPS has adapted the transition plan to address concerns expressed and to ease the transition</li> <li>• CPS has created a culture/climate advisory council (including educators, parents and students)</li> <li>• Advisory council will be responsible for developing a schedule of activities that bring the communities together – social venues and training. Activities include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop a shared vision</li> <li>○ Identify programming &amp; curriculum needed to support all students</li> <li>○ Develop training for educators and parents</li> <li>○ Organize community events to encourage the merging of the two communities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">EQUITY INDICATOR: SCHOOL CLIMATE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that “one community loses and the other wins” (i.e., imbalanced impacts)</li> <li>• Resistance to “integration”</li> <li>• Loss of unique school culture of NTA’s holistic approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to establish a new school identity/culture (“no South Loop Way or NTA Way, but a New Way”)</li> <li>• Address resistance as “authentic voice” –do not dismiss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has created a culture/climate advisory council (including educators, parents and students)</li> <li>• Advisory council will be responsible for developing a schedule of activities that bring the</li> </ul>

Equity Indicator	Concerns	Recommendations	Transition Plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train all educators/staff of the new school in holistic approaches to education &amp; restorative justice</li> <li>• Bring communities together in social venues and workshops to learn about best practices</li> </ul>	<p>communities together – social venues and training. Activities include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop a shared vision</li> <li>○ Identify programming &amp; curriculum needed to support all students</li> <li>○ Develop training for educators and parents</li> <li>○ Organize community events to encourage the merging of the two communities</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">EQUITY INDICATOR: LEADERSHIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of familiar administrators and teachers</li> <li>• Loss of foundational “educational philosophies” (e.g., “NTA Way” &amp; “SL Way”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create SMART goals for every aspect of transition</li> <li>• Need “over-communication” and transparency throughout the transition</li> <li>• Connect with business community to explore “effective mergers” processes</li> <li>• Connect with local universities to negotiate for services</li> <li>• Have high ideals</li> <li>• Identify fundamental and successful elements of educational practices from each school and develop a plan for incorporating these into the development of a new school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS has set aside funding (\$3.5 million) to provide support and resources throughout transition process</li> <li>• CPS has committed to addressing equitable staffing and has committed to having a Principal Transition Coordinator (PTC) who will support transitioning students and families</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">EQUITY INDICATOR: STUDENT LEARNING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerated learners will be “slowed down” to accommodate transitioning students</li> <li>• Large size of new school will adversely affect NTA students used to small-school individualized attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop detailed plan for addressing individual needs of children transitioning</li> <li>• Maintain high academic standards and rigor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS has committed to having a PTC who will support transitioning students and families</li> <li>• If the proposal is approved by the Board, the advisory council will begin to develop a plan for professional</li> </ul>

Equity Indicator	Concerns	Recommendations	Transition Plan
 <p>EQUITY INDICATOR: EDUCATORS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High academic standards/rigor is maintained</li> <li>• Selection of staffing – perception that South Loop educators/administrators will not apply for positions in new school, but NTA educators will</li> <li>• NTA educators – job uncertainty</li> <li>• Loss of familiar, supportive staff</li> <li>• Lack of training of existing South Loop teachers in holistic educational practices (e.g., restorative justice), thus loss of these supports in the new school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable staffing process (everyone reapplies)</li> <li>• Peer observations between schools prior to transition</li> <li>• Social interaction of educators</li> <li>• Professional development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Holistic educational philosophy</li> <li>○ Differentiated learning</li> <li>○ Restorative Justice</li> <li>○ Supporting students through transition/change</li> <li>○ Diversity/equity issues in the classroom</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Clear communication from CPS about expectations for new school leadership</li> </ul>	<p>development and a merging of the two school communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$3.5 million set aside for transition support, training and resources</li> <li>• Advisory council of educators, parents and administrators established to create detailed plan for professional development</li> <li>• Establishment of PTC to provide support and resources to transitioning students</li> <li>• The Transition Plan indicates that “a major factor in the proposed re-assigned boundary change of NTA schools is the desire to retain all of the exceptional teachers and staff that currently teach our students. We know this is a priority for the school communities”.</li> </ul>
 <p>EQUITY INDICATOR: ACCESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing a 1+ school</li> <li>• Potential overcrowding in the near future due to development/growth (both elementary and high school)</li> <li>• Loss of “equitable” and individualized access to support and resources</li> <li>• During transition years, having middle school students in a school with older students</li> <li>• Traffic issues –increased traffic around new school campuses</li> <li>• Managing multiple students going to different campuses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep both elementary schools and build a new high school on vacant land</li> <li>• Invest the \$3.5 million in existing high schools for renovation, operational and programming improvements to create a school to which the community wishes to send their children</li> </ul> <p><b>High School Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put money and resources into improving existing high schools to make them more enticing to community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NTA students will be transitioning to a 1+ school</li> <li>• CPS has conducted a demographic analysis to determine required number of seats (to accommodate all of the Near South community and outlying boundaries for the high school)</li> <li>• The transition process increases the high school population in conjunction with the decrease in middle school students (entire population shifts in age), resulting in the widest age gap within the new</li> </ul>

Equity Indicator	Concerns	Recommendations	Transition Plan
	<p><b>High School Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current high school situation is not conducive to family/ community engagement</li> <li>• Outlying students will not have a guaranteed seat at the new high school – worried about available seats for non-South Loop or NTA students</li> <li>• Worried about potential near-future overcrowding which would trigger more transitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at alternative locations for the new high school</li> </ul>	<p>high school being 5 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS will provide a shuttle bus to all campuses</li> <li>• CPS will increase the number of crossing guards to control traffic and walking students</li> </ul> <p><b>High School Issues</b></p> <p>New high school plans are not discussed in the existing transition plan</p> <p><b>Per the January 8, 2018, CPS Press Release,</b> the proposed neighborhood high school boundary will encompass the entire boundaries of the following elementary schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John B Drake ES</li> <li>• John Charles Haines ES</li> <li>• Robert Healy ES National Teachers Academy</li> <li>• South Loop ES</li> <li>• James Ward ES</li> </ul> <p>To reiterate, all current NTA students will be guaranteed a seat at the new high school regardless of whether or not they live in the school’s enrollment boundary.</p> <p>The larger proposed preference boundary will encompass the boundaries of the following elementary schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phillip D Armour ES</li> <li>• Charles N Holden ES</li> <li>• John J Pershing ES</li> </ul>

Equity Indicator	Concerns	Recommendations	Transition Plan
 <p>EQUITY INDICATOR: FISCAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will \$3.5 million budget be spent – does this include establishment of the new high school?</li> <li>• Loss of small-school setting for NTA students</li> <li>• Loss of successful school meeting the needs of at-risk students</li> <li>• Loss of money for existing high schools</li> <li>• Perception of money and resources being “funneled to wealthier neighborhoods”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify detailed budget for funding (\$3.5 million) – indicating on what money will be spent</li> <li>• Put money and resources into improving existing high schools to make them more enticing to community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS has set aside \$3.5 million for transition support and resources</li> <li>• Established advisory council of parents and educators who if the proposal is approved by the Board, will develop a detailed budget for the transition</li> </ul>

*Recommendations from Westat*

Family and Community Engagement (Create a shared vision that honors and values all voices)

- The Transition Plan outlines a process to create a joint Culture and Climate Team that includes a cadre of school leaders, teachers, staff, parents, and students from both elementary schools during the 2018-19 school year to support NTA and South Loop in creating a shared vision for the future. Due to the large number of active stakeholders, we suggest using interactive and structured protocols like, but not limited to, Open Space Technology, Problems of Practice, learning circles, customized gallery walks with highly skilled and trained facilitators to ensure all voices are heard and valued.
- In addition to the critical duties and responsibilities outlined in the Transition Plan for the Principal Transition Coordinator (PTC), we suggest that the PTC collaborate with the school principals to identify a number of ways in which parents and community stakeholders can actively participate in creating this shared vision (e.g., establish multiple advisory committees with specific areas of focus; and identify key priorities, goals, actions steps, and performance measures to guide the work and track interim progress). The ideas, recommendations, and suggestions will be shared and/or presented to the Culture and Climate Team.

- Though the Transition Plan indicates that there is a “desire to retain all of the exceptional teachers and staff” from both school communities and indicates that this is a priority, we strongly recommend that CPS communicates their staffing plan clearly explaining how administrators and staff will be selected for the new school. This will reassure the NTA community that NTA staff will play an integral role in the merging of the two school communities if the current proposal receives board approval.

#### Culturally Relevant Leadership Practices (Provide sustained professional learning focused on cultural responsiveness)

Funds will support professional development activities for staff, students, parents, and community members to engage in courageous conversations related to culture, class, and race. These activities will be invaluable to support the merging of the school communities. We also recommend the following additional culturally relevant leadership practices:

- Adopt and outline the ways in which the school leaders, teachers, and the entire faculty and staff will practice and activate culturally relevant leadership to ensure that all students are valued, honored, and celebrated.
- Provide purposeful, ongoing, job-embedded, and sustained professional learning that supports the shared vision for cultural responsiveness and culturally relevant pedagogy.
- Provide readily available resources, tools, suggested book studies, learning modules, etc., that support the school’s shared vision for achieving cultural responsiveness (see Appendix E for sample resources).

#### School Climate (Provide safe spaces for facilitated, interactive discussions)

- The Culture and Climate Team, as described in the Transition Plan, will include a cadre of school leaders, teachers, staff, parent, and students from both elementary schools during the 2018-19 school year. Since the team will focus on “identifying potential professional development or training opportunities for teachers and staff aligned with the shared vision,” we strongly recommend providing safe spaces to convene facilitated, interactive discussions using protocols



and processes that honor the principles of adult learning for the staff early in the transition process to collectively discuss their vision for school climate that continues to honor their vision for maintaining a safe space every day for their students that is harmonious, welcoming, and inclusive. These interactive and engaging sessions will take the conversations and discussions deeper after the “get to know you” socials that students, families, and teachers will be invited to attend.

- We also recommend that the Culture and Climate Team conducts a study on successful school integration using a plethora of resources including an article/book study, visit or conduct virtual meetings with successful school integration models (e.g., Morris School District in New Jersey, Clinton School District in Mississippi, Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky), and carefully review the successful tenets for successful school integration that these models advocate. Each of the examples listed continue to experience successes as well as challenges; therefore, having authentic dialogue with these districts and others may provide insightful information about successful school integration. Share your findings with CPS, the administrators, and school board to inform the school integration plan for two school communities.<sup>10</sup>

#### Student Centered Learning (Ensure differentiated, individualized, and student-centered learning)

The Transition Plan describes a comprehensive system of student supports to ensure that all students will experience a smooth transition from one school to the other if the proposal is approved. Although the description outlines supports for diverse learners, English learners, and support for students in temporary living situations, and students’ social and emotional needs, we also recommend the following:

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<sup>10</sup> Ablamsky, J. (2017, February 20). A model for school integration: Students in racially, socioeconomically integrated public schools perform better academically. [Non-profit organization]. Retrieved February 11, 2018, from [https://www.districtadministration.com/article/model-integration?&utm\\_source=google\\_gmail&utm\\_medium=social-media&utm\\_campaign=addtoany](https://www.districtadministration.com/article/model-integration?&utm_source=google_gmail&utm_medium=social-media&utm_campaign=addtoany)

Mader, J. (n.d.). How one Mississippi district made integration work: Can other districts follow suit? [News/Advocacy]. Retrieved January 12, 2018, from [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/mississippi-integration\\_us\\_57151ff2e4b0060ccda3df7c](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/mississippi-integration_us_57151ff2e4b0060ccda3df7c)

Potter, H., Quick, K., & Davies, E. (2018, February 9). A new wave of school integration: Districts and charters pursuing socioeconomic diversity [Advocacy/Research]. Retrieved January 12, 2018, from <https://tcf.org/content/report/a-new-wave-of-school-integration/>

- Provide support and technical assistance to school leaders and teachers on the differentiated ways instruction can be tailored to meet students' individual learning needs based on in-depth data analyses.
- Ensure that teachers have flexibility in the multiple approaches that have been successfully employed at both schools to support student-centered learning for continued student academic success.

#### Equitable Student Access (Reassure parents and students in outlying neighborhoods)

- In the spirit of over-communicating the details outlined in the Transition Plan and in the January 8, 2018, CPS Press Release that describes the proposed neighborhood boundary and the proposed preference boundary (see high school information in Table 6), we recommend providing more clarity to reassure the outlying neighborhoods that their students will have a seat at the new high school if the proposal receives board approval. Though the plan and January 8<sup>th</sup> press release clearly describes that the new high school will serve students in the Near South Area, we encourage an emphasis that this obviously includes students from Chinatown, Bridgeport, North Bronzeville, and South Loop. Parents who attended the focus group in Chinatown emphasized how appreciative they would be if student access to the new high school include all the potential students in the outlying boundary areas.

#### Diverse Staff of Excellent Educators (Implement an equitable plan to retain the exemplary teachers and staff from both schools)

- Though the Transition plan indicates that there is a “desire to retain all of the exceptional teachers and staff” from both school communities, we strongly recommend that CPS communicates a clear and equitable plan for staffing the new elementary school with administrators and teachers from both existing schools, thus ensuring a diverse staff of excellent educators.
- The PTC will play a supportive leadership role during the 2018-19 school year and in 2019-20. Though this is certainly an exemplary supportive leadership model, we encourage CPS to

further explore multiple leadership models (e.g., Lead principals for the new elementary school can implement a shared leadership approach to support the multiple schools on the campuses, and all three principals—lead principals of the elementary school and new high school principal—will work collaboratively for successful transition). Findings from the focus group sessions indicated strong advocacy for maintaining leadership at both elementary school communities.

- Ensure that both the new elementary and high schools participate in shared decision-making with CPS to recruit, hire, and retain a diverse cadre of excellent educators.

#### Fiscal Equity (Ensure transparent use of funds to support the transition)

We recognize that the Transition Plan has appropriated \$3.5 million to support the transition through a number of ways (e.g., ongoing professional development and training opportunities, a series of meaningful and engaging events and activities for students and families in the school communities, the creation of a purposeful Culture and Climate team, and a shuttle bus for NTA students transitioning to the newly-merged elementary school). In an effort to clarify a host of inquiries from the focus group participants, we recommend the following:

- Examine the resources that support the transition plan, which includes initial details to merge the two school communities and the ongoing professional development plan to ensure that equitable funding is allocated to support the unique needs to ensure a successful newly-merged elementary school and new high school.
- Communicate using multiple sources (e.g., designated page on the CPS website; newsletters; correspondence to both schools during both academic years, 2018-19 and 2019-20) a clear plan for how all existing support services will either remain in the NTA community or will move to the new school to continue to support the existing NTA students and their families.
- Ensure transparency and provide detailed budget information to both schools so that school leaders can clearly communicate allocations to the entire school communities to support the transition, integration, and ongoing professional development plans.

## High School Supports

While this analysis has focused primarily on the impacts of the elementary school transition, it is important to highlight the need for a plan for improvement of existing high schools around the Near South and surrounding neighborhoods as well as a detailed plan describing funding, operational, and programming efforts that will take place to make the new high school a 1+, safe school.

## APPENDIX A: CPS Transition Plan

Full Transition Plan from CPS



### **DRAFT TRANSITION PLAN For the Proposed Reassigned Boundary Change of National Teachers Academy**

#### **I. Introduction**

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is committed to providing every child from every community with a high quality education that prepares them for success in college and in life. CPS students continue to make record-breaking academic progress in every part of the city. Our vision is that all CPS schools can build on this progress by offering high quality, rigorous instruction from talented educators that help put Chicago students on a path to lasting success.

In May 2017, in response to community requests to strengthen educational options in the Near South area, CPS introduced a preliminary framework to expand high quality neighborhood options from pre-K through high school in the Near South area by expanding the boundaries of South Loop Elementary School (South Loop) and converting National Teachers Academy (NTA) to a neighborhood high school. This preliminary framework was designed to address key priorities in the Near South community, including providing a continuum of high quality neighborhood school options for all students from pre-K through high school graduation, as well as building diverse school communities.

With a new facility under construction to relieve overcrowding at South Loop Elementary School, CPS is proposing expanding South Loop's boundaries south to include the entire National Teachers Academy's boundary. This will increase access to this new, state-of-the-art school facility and create one of the most racially and economically diverse schools in the city. In addition, expanding South Loop's boundaries seeks to right a historical wrong in the Near South area by including students who were previously excluded from South Loop. As CPS noted in a letter to Near South families earlier this year: "Years ago, when South Loop Elementary School was built, boundaries were drawn that excluded and separated low-income black children from their peers. This was wrong then, and it is wrong now, and this recommendation will right a historical wrong."

Additionally, gradually converting NTA to a neighborhood high school seeks to increase high quality, neighborhood high school seats in the Near South area. Current high school students in the Near South area have very few nearby high school options. Currently, only 8 percent of high school students in the Near South area attend their neighborhood high school and, as a result, 57 percent of high school students in the Near South area travel more than three miles to attend high school. Introducing a high quality, neighborhood high school option close to home will create a continuum of high quality options for Near South students in pre-K through high school graduation.

After introducing this proposal to the Near South community in May, CPS conducted extensive community engagement to seek further feedback on the preliminary framework. This engagement included three community meetings, more than 25 small group meetings with various stakeholders in the Near South and collecting over 900 e-mails from various parents and community members. As a result of this feedback, CPS amended its proposal to better serve the community. In particular, CPS drafted a more gradual conversion timeline for NTA students so that the vast majority of existing NTA students could continue their academic careers at NTA as the high school expands.

1

Based on additional input from community members, CPS also adjusted its proposal so that South Loop's boundaries will expand further south than 22<sup>nd</sup> street, to incorporate the entirety of NTA's current boundary and a high school boundary will be determined in coming weeks. Moving forward, we will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure that all children receive the best possible education from pre-K through high school graduation.

As part of this process, CPS formed a Near South Community Leadership Steering Committee, comprised of community leaders, educators and parents who will provide critical input as the process moves forward. CPS has engaged the Steering Committee to discuss transition supports needed to ensure success of this proposal. The Steering Committee's recommendations have been incorporated in the transition supports below. Should this proposal move forward, the Steering Committee will play a vital role in helping CPS and the community as we move into the implementation phase, including developing recommendations on plans for the new high school.

## **II. Summary of Action**

CPS is proposing to reassign National Teachers Academy's boundary and students over time, starting in the fall of 2019. National Teachers Academy is a K-8 elementary school located at 55 W Cermak Road that currently serves 729 students. National Teachers Academy has a pre-K program as well as a Regional Gifted Center program for students in grades K-5. South Loop Elementary School is a K-8 elementary school located at 1212 South Plymouth Ct. that currently serves 783 students. South Loop previously had a pre-K program located at its Early Childhood Center, located at 1915 S Federal St. However, due to overcrowding issues over the past five to 10 years, South Loop had to cut its pre-K program and use the space for additional kindergarten classrooms. South Loop also has an RGC program currently serving students in grades 6-8.

In the fall of 2018, all students attending National Teachers Academy can remain at NTA. The pre-K program currently at NTA will remain at NTA for the 2018-19 school year. In addition, there will be no changes to the boundaries of NTA and South Loop for the 2018-19 school year.

In the fall of 2019, NTA students in grades 3 and below will be transferred to South Loop Elementary School. These students will also have the option to transfer to a different elementary school, including their neighborhood elementary school. The RGC program for grades K-3 will re-locate to South Loop and phase in grades over time. In addition, the pre-K program currently at NTA will relocate to South Loop. In the fall of 2019, NTA students in grades 4 and above will have the option to either remain at NTA through elementary school and high school or transition to South Loop Elementary School.

In the fall of 2019, students living in the current NTA boundary will be zoned to South Loop Elementary School. The re-assignment of school boundaries will occur over the following timeline:

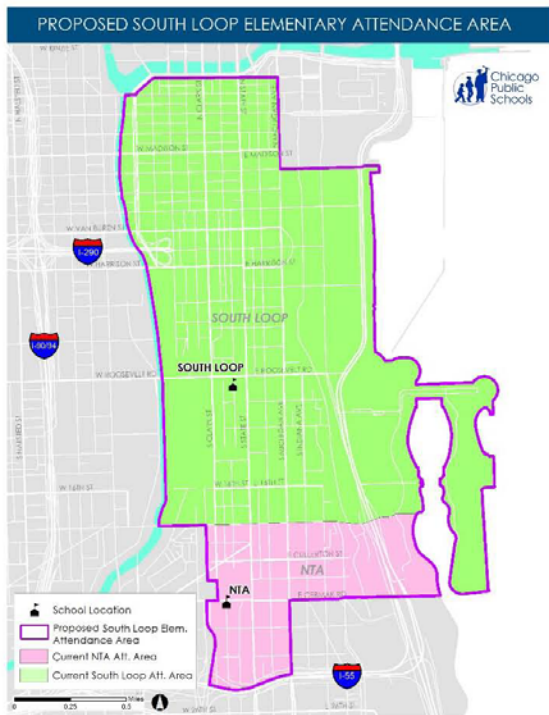
- Effective fall of 2019-20, for grades K-3, current NTA boundary will be zoned to South Loop. Students living in the current NTA boundary in grades 4-8 will remain zoned to NTA.
- Effective fall of 2020-21, for grades K-4, current NTA boundary will be zoned to South Loop. Students living in the current NTA boundary in grades 5-8 will remain zoned to NTA.
- Effective fall of 2021-22, for grades K-5, current NTA boundary will be zoned to South Loop. Students living in the current NTA boundary in grades 6-8 will remain zoned to NTA.
- Effective fall of 2022-23, for grades K-6, current NTA boundary will be zoned to South Loop. Students living in the current NTA boundary in grades 7-8 will remain zoned to NTA.



- Effective fall of 2023-24, for grades K-7, current NTA boundary will be zoned to South Loop. Students living in the current NTA boundary in grade 8 will remain zoned to NTA.
- Effective fall of 2024-25, for grades K-8, current NTA boundary will be zoned to South Loop.

Starting in SY 2019-20, NTA will simultaneously begin phasing in high school grades and phasing out the remaining elementary school grades, eventually converting to a 9-12 neighborhood high school serving students in Near South Area, including Chinatown, Bridgeport, North Bronzeville and South Loop. The timeline for this conversion will be as follows:

- In SY 2019-20, NTA will contain students in grades 4-9
- In SY 2020-21, NTA will contain students in grades 5-10
- In SY 2021-22, NTA will contain students in grades 6-11
- In SY 2022-23, NTA will contain students in grades 7-12
- In SY 2023-24, NTA will contain students in grades 8-12
- In SY 2024-25 and beyond, NTA will contain students in grades 9-12



The proposed re-assignment of NTA’s boundary meets the criteria of the Chief Executive Officer’s Guidelines for School Actions (Guidelines) because it is a proposal requested by parents or community members via the process to request proposals outlined in the Guidelines. Specifically, we have heard the request for this proposal from recommendations by public officials, parents, community members and community groups in the Near South area in the form of petitions, e-mail and statements at community meetings. This proposal is also consistent with the Guidelines because the resulting space utilization after the reassignment boundary change will not exceed any affected schools’ enrollment efficiency range as defined by CPS’ Space Utilization Standards. Finally, the NTA

students impacted by this proposed re-assignment boundary change are being provided the option to enroll at South Loop Elementary School, a higher performing school, as defined by the Guidelines.

CPS has set aside approximately \$3.5 million to support the transition of current NTA students until they graduate. These funds will go toward supports and resources for students and families in order to ensure a smooth transition into one, unified school community.

The transition plan outlined below summarizes what will be provided to support the transition of NTA and South Loop students and families into one school community. Throughout this plan, we will be offering answers to key questions and considerations that parents and community members raised throughout the community engagement process CPS held earlier this year. We expect to provide additional information as transition plans are finalized in partnership with the community and school administrations.

### **III. Community Building and Culture Integration**

One of the major benefits of this proposal is the opportunity to create a more integrated school community, not just among students but among parents and the broader community as well. Successful integration requires time, effort and resources to unite communities around a shared, cohesive identity. Though students from NTA would not transition to South Loop until the fall of 2019, the process to bring these two communities will start this school year, should the Board approval this proposal. These supports may be further customized as feedback is obtained at community meetings and a public hearing regarding this proposal. Additionally, resources may be adjusted to meet the unique needs of affected students if deemed necessary.

- Provide stipends for the creation of a joint Culture and Climate Team, with representation from principals, teachers, staff, parents and students at both NTA and South Loop, responsible for:
  - Developing a shared vision and set of values for the culture at South Loop;
  - Identifying any programs, curriculum, or other activities in school to achieve the vision;
  - Identifying potential professional development or training opportunities for teachers and staff, in accordance with vision;
  - Developing a schedule of activities, prior to the fall of 2019, to bring school communities together;
  - Create a schedule of activities, with input from the transition committee, for students and families to come together. Such activities could include pool parties, board game nights, merging of existing events at each school, tour of the new elementary school facility in SY 2018-19, specific events and forums for parents, mutual service project, pen pals and/or book share, opportunities for communities to learn about each other's culture, etc.
  
- Provide funding for activities through which NTA and South Loop students and parents can come together prior to fall of 2019. The schedule of activities will be determined with input from the joint Culture and Climate team and may include activities such as:
  - Pool parties, board game nights, cook-outs, joint talent shows and similar events;
  - NTA invitations to SL to attend their events and vice versa;
  - Students and families tour the new facility together once it is available (mid-year SY 2018-19);



- Specific events and forums just for parents;
  - Kids work on a service project together;
  - Joint leadership committees among students;
  - Book share or pen pals.
- Provide funding for professional development and/or training opportunities for students, parents and other community members, designed to help bring students and families from different backgrounds together (e.g. cultural and racial awareness trainings).
  - Explore options to provide affordable after school program options at South Loop Elementary School (e.g. Park District run after school programs, such as the program currently located at NTA).
  - Launch a community-requested Racial Equity Analysis to ensure that students and families from all backgrounds would be treated equitably in the transition and the years to come. CPS has budgeted roughly \$85,000 for a third party study.

#### IV. **Safety and security**

Through various community meetings and comments made at CPS board meetings, CPS has collected feedback from the community on the safety supports regarding this proposal. These supports may be further customized as feedback is obtained at community meetings and a public hearing regarding this proposal. Additionally, resources may be adjusted to meet the unique needs of affected students if deemed necessary.

- Examine any existing Safe Passage routes and determine the need to expand Safe Passage to support student travel to South Loop Elementary School;
- Expand the use of crossing guards as needed to ensure safety among students crossing the street;
- Provide a shuttle bus for NTA students who transition to South Loop elementary school;
- Work with the community to identify and address the any additional safety or travel concerns;
- Review Security Officer Staffing levels based on approved action.

#### V. **Supports for Students and Schools**

CPS is committed to ensuring a successful transition during this process. To accomplish this, CPS will provide the following supports to meet the academic, social and emotional, and specific learning needs of affected students. These resources may be further customized as feedback is obtained at community meetings and a public hearing regarding this proposal. Additionally, resources may be adjusted to meet the unique needs of affected students if deemed necessary.

##### ***Support for Students' Academic Needs***

To ensure students are academically prepared and supported with high-quality instruction throughout the transition, CPS will provide the following academic supports:

- A Principal Transition Coordinator (PTC) will be assigned during the School Year 2018-2019 and will be maintained at least through the 2019-20 school year. PTCs are former

administrators (principals, APs, Chiefs) who in many cases have helped ensure smooth transitions following school actions. The PTC will support the NTA and South Loop school administrations in handling the additional work that comes with school transitions, including administrative support such as helping the NTA administration close out school records and accounts for transitioning students and transferring those records and accounts to South Loop.

- A school-based transition coordinator will be assigned during the 2018-19 school year and will be maintained at least through the 2019-20 school year. The school-based administrator will be responsible for ensuring transitioning students are supported throughout the transition process. The school-based transition coordinator will act as a point of contact for transitioning students and families, helping to answer questions and direct them to resources. In addition, the school-based transition coordinator will work with the principals to assist in the implementation of new programs or other supports designed to support students following the transition (e.g. supports identified by the joint Culture and Climate team).
- Students and parents will be given the opportunity to meet with school staff at South Loop Elementary School, including teachers, principals and other staff, prior to the beginning of the 2019-20 school year.
- School communities will work with CPS to determine any additional academic supports for transitioning students.
- CPS will provide comprehensive data on all transitioning students to the schools where students transition.

#### ***Support for Students' Social and Emotional Needs***

CPS understands that whenever students transition into new situations and environments, additional support is needed to help them adjust. CPS and the Office of Social Emotional Learning (OSEL) will consult with the NTA and South Loop school communities to evaluate existing SEL supports and determine additional resource needs for a school-specific plan that may include the following:

- Implementing restorative practices (such as talking circles and peer councils) to encourage peer-to-peer problem-solving and resolution;
- Developing behavioral health systems to identify when students have higher levels of social and emotional need, connect them to targeted interventions and track their progress to ensure success;
- Implementing targeted small group supports or circles aimed at helping students work through concerns associated with transition as needed;
- Access to social & emotional or trauma interventions for students in need of more individualized attention;
- Transition Team will work with OSEL to develop Student Leadership and Culture-Building Activities to ensure students feel welcome in schools they transition to;
- Providing professional development and training opportunities in trauma-sensitive practices, restorative practices, social emotional learning and other relevant topics to staff at schools where students transition.

### ***Support for Specific Students' Needs***

#### ***Support for Diverse Learners***

Students with disabilities and their families will be supported in the transition process through clear communication, continual support for academic instruction and ensuring that transition schools are fully able to implement student Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Students with disabilities, as with all students impacted by school actions, will receive intensive support to ensure their academic and social-emotional needs are met. Students with disabilities will also receive the following categories of support, adjustable to individual student/family need:

Current students with disabilities will continue to receive the following supports, required by law:

- A free and appropriate public education (FAPE)
- The implementation of the student's IEP in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- A focus on student academic and social emotional progress

In addition, a district representative from the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) will be assigned to work with families and students to support them. Specifically, the district representative will:

- Work with teachers on appropriate programming to support the diverse learners.
- Make sure classrooms are appropriately set up for the students with diverse learning needs.
- NTA families can reach their District Representative, Shani Boone, at [saboone@cps.edu](mailto:saboone@cps.edu).
- South Loop families can reach their District Representative, Sarah Briggs, at [srbriggs@cps.edu](mailto:srbriggs@cps.edu).

#### ***Support for Students in Temporary Living Situations***

- The CPS Office of Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) will continue the supports currently provided to Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) as required by law. These include free school meals, enrollment support, provision of required school uniforms and school supplies as needed, transportation assistance when eligible, and waiver of all school related fees.
- Students in Temporary Living Situations will be encouraged to attend any events in which they can meet with school staff and/or learn about schools to transition to.
- For those students who had been homeless prior to the 2019-2020 school year, their school of origin will become the first school they enroll in for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Students in Temporary Living Situations will have the opportunity to meet with STLS staff, in addition to other staff on the Transition Team, to discuss their options, develop academic readiness plans and safety plans to support them throughout the transition period.
- For families currently enrolled in the STLS program, younger siblings may attend the same school that their older sibling elects under this proposed action (assuming the younger and older siblings are both in high school).
- Additionally, CPS will provide professional development and support to staff on providing transition services for STLS students.

#### ***Support for English Learners***

- Current and future English Language Learners (ELs) will receive state mandated bilingual services (Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI)), as required. English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction provided by an ESL-endorsed teacher is part of both programs.

- Meaningful access to the core curriculum is provided to TBE students through native language instruction in the core content (language arts, math, science, and social studies).
- For TPI students, meaningful access to core curriculum is delivered through sheltered English content instruction and native language supports, based on the individual student's need, and provided by appropriately endorsed (bilingual- or ESL-endorsed) teacher(s).

***Support for Students' Transportation Needs***

- Provisions for specific student populations (i.e., student with disabilities, Students in Temporary Living Situations and NCLB qualifying students), as determined by the CPS transportation policy, will continue to apply.

**VI. The Teachers and Staff**

A major factor in the proposed re-assigned boundary change of NTA schools is the desire to retain all of the exceptional teachers and staff that currently teach our students. We know this is a priority for the school communities.

**VII. Additional Logistical Information**

***Information Regarding Choice of Schools***

CPS is committed to providing educational options that fit each student's unique learning needs and each family's priorities. To support families in understanding their enrollment options, information from the Office of Access & Enrollment is available:

- Online ([www.cps.edu](http://www.cps.edu) or [www.cpsoae.edu](http://www.cpsoae.edu)),
- By email ([oe@cps.edu](mailto:oe@cps.edu)),
- By phone (773-553-2060), and
- In person (42 W. Madison St. Chicago, IL 60602).

***Public Comment***

***Community Meetings and Public Hearing:***

CPS will hold two community meetings and one formal public hearing regarding this proposed action. Public comment will be accepted during each meeting or hearing. CPS is committed to considering community feedback and will amend this draft transition plan accordingly.

**Community Meeting 1**

January 9, 2018  
6 to 8 p.m.  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
(Hermann Hall Auditorium)  
3241 South Federal Street

**Community Meeting 2**

January 16, 2018  
6 to 8 p.m.  
Second Presbyterian Church  
1936 South Michigan Avenue

**Public Hearing**

January 29, 2018  
6 to 8:30 p.m.  
CPS Central Office  
42 West Madison Street

***Further Questions and Concerns:***

All of this information can be found at [CPS.edu/Transitions](http://CPS.edu/Transitions). If you have any questions or concerns regarding this proposal and the draft transition plan, please call Chicago Public Schools at (773) 553-1500 or email [Transitions@cps.edu](mailto:Transitions@cps.edu).

## Near South Proposal Summary (Distributed at Focus Group sessions)

*Note – The below information is a summary of the Near South proposal. This proposal has not yet been voted on by the Board of Education. The discussions from the focus groups will better inform a decision for this proposal. A potential board vote could occur in February following two community meetings and one public hearing in January.*

### Overview of proposal:

- **NTA high school conversion:** Convert National Teachers' Academy (NTA) to a high school serving South Loop, North Bronzeville, Chinatown, Armour Square, and Bridgeport communities over time, starting in SY 2019-20. NTA students in grades K–3 are re-assigned to South Loop Elementary School (South Loop); students in grades 4 and above will have the option to remain at NTA through elementary school and high school or transition to South Loop Elementary School.
- **South Loop expansion:** Add a new elementary school facility to the South Loop campus in SY 2019-20. Maintain existing facilities at South Loop—South Loop will be a three campus model. Expand South Loop's boundaries to incorporate NTA's current boundary over time.

### Detail on Elementary School Transitions:

- **Transition supports:** CPS has budgeted approximately \$3.5 million to support the transition of NTA students through graduation. These supports include:
  - Budget for a variety of events and activities designed to support community building and culture integration, starting the year prior to any proposed action;
  - Create a joint Culture and Climate Team comprised of staff, parents and student representatives from NTA and South Loop;
  - Collaborate with Principal and School-Based Transition Coordinators to assist with implementation of new programs and practices at each school, administrative support and other supports identified by both schools' leadership;
  - Support the implementation of restorative practices;
  - Provide ongoing professional development and training opportunities for school staff;
  - Provide a shuttle bus for NTA students who transition to South Loop elementary school.
- **High school guarantee:** All NTA students as of SY 2018-19, regardless of where they live, will have a guaranteed seat at the high school as they matriculate from elementary school to high school.
- **Elementary school transition details starting in SY 2019-20:**
  - Pre-K program will be located at South Loop.
  - Rising Kindergarten students living in NTA's current boundary will be zoned to South Loop.
  - Rising NTA students in grades 1-3 transition to South Loop.
  - Rising NTA students in grades 4-8 have the option to stay at NTA or transfer to South Loop.
  - Regional Gifted Center (RGC) program for grades K-3 will be located at South Loop. RGC program at South Loop will phase in grades over time.
  - RGC program for grades 4-8 will be located at NTA. RGC program at NTA will phase out grades over time.

- Conversion timeline (if proposal is approved by the Board of Education):
  - In SY 2019-20, NTA will contain students in grades 4-9
  - In SY 2020-21, NTA will contain students in grades 5-10
  - In SY 2021-22, NTA will contain students in grades 6-11
  - In SY 2022-23, NTA will contain students in grades 7-12
  - In SY 2023-24, NTA will contain students in grades 8-12
  - In SY 2024-25 and beyond, NTA will contain students in grades 9-12

**Detail on proposed HS boundaries:**

**Overview:** The proposed high school in the Near South community will have a traditional neighborhood school boundary with the addition of a preference boundary that will provide families living just outside the neighborhood boundary with first access to any available seats after students in the neighborhood boundary enroll.

- Proposed Neighborhood Boundary incorporates the following elementary school boundaries – Drake, Haines, Healy, NTA, South Loop, and Ward.
- Proposed Preference Boundary incorporates the following elementary school boundaries – Armour, Holden, and Pershing.

**Boundary Descriptions:**

- Neighborhood boundaries give students living in the boundary a guaranteed seat at the school. Many high school students choose to attend schools other than their neighborhood school. Across the district, approximately 22 percent of high school students attend their neighborhood school.
- Preference boundaries give preference to students living in the boundary over other students in the city if additional seats are not occupied by students in the neighborhood boundary.

**Current enrollment trends among students in proposed enrollment boundary:**

- Currently, only three percent of current high school students in the draft enrollment boundaries for the proposed high school attend their designated neighborhood high school.
- 69 percent of current high school students in the draft enrollment boundaries travel more than three miles to attend high school.

**Demographics and capacity information:**

- There are 2,037 high school age students living in the draft boundary area (including both neighborhood and preference boundaries).
  - The demographics of current high school students living in the enrollment boundaries are 27 percent African American, 19 percent Hispanic, 41 percent Asian, 10 percent White, 3 percent Other, and 74 percent Low Income students.
- The estimated capacity of the high school is between 1,000–1,200 students, depending upon final space configuration if the proposal moves forward.
- 60 percent of the current high school students who live in the draft boundary area attend a selective enrollment or level 1+ high school.
- Across the district, the highest percentage of high school students attending their neighborhood boundary high school is 63 percent at Washington HS.

**Sources:**

CPS Draft Transition Plan – <http://schoolinfo.cps.edu/SchoolActions/Download.aspx?fid=6311>  
 CPS Press Release on Jan 8 - [http://cps.edu/News/Press\\_releases/Pages/PR1\\_01\\_08\\_2018.aspx](http://cps.edu/News/Press_releases/Pages/PR1_01_08_2018.aspx)  
 CPS Community Meeting Presentation on Jan 9  
 CPS Steering Committee Presentation on Dec. 18



Proposed High School Boundaries Map



## APPENDIX B: Methodology

### Qualitative

Westat conducted seven one-on-one phone interviews and eight focus groups of parents and educators representing affected schools and communities. Interview time averaged 40 minutes and were conducted with the following:

- CPS Leadership (3 school and district-level leaders)
- Elected Official (1)
- Community Representatives (2 from out-lying boundaries)
- Community Organizer (1)

Focus group time averaged 90 minutes and included parents and educators from each of the affected communities:

- South Loop Parents (2 focus groups with a total of 24 participants)
- National Teachers Academy Parents (2 focus groups with a total of 32 participants)
- South Loop Educators (1 focus group with 13 participants)
- National Teachers Academy Educators (1 focus group with 15 participants)
- Outlying Boundaries Parents (2 focus groups representing Chinatown, Drake, Healy, Haines, and Bronzeville, with a total of 15 participants)

Participants from outlying communities were parents/guardians of students (several with multiple children) ranging from Pre-K to high school, with the majority representing elementary level students.

- Pre-K (x3)
- 1<sup>st</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> (x4)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> (x4)
- 4<sup>th</sup>
- 5<sup>th</sup> (x3)
- 6<sup>th</sup> (x2)
- 7<sup>th</sup> (x2)
- 8<sup>th</sup> (x2)
- 10<sup>th</sup> (x2)

Using qualitative analysis software (NVivo), responses were analyzed using node-indicator, frequency and matrix coding systems. The following were identified nodes, with responses being coded to them:



<b>Systems Nodes</b>	<b>Attitudinal Valence Codes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive</li> <li>• Negative</li> <li>• Neutral</li> </ul>	<b>Response Type</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement</li> <li>• Question</li> <li>• Concern</li> <li>• Recommendation</li> </ul>
<b>Context Nodes</b>	<b>Components of Equity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family &amp; Community Engagement</li> <li>• Culturally Relevant Leadership</li> <li>• Student-centered Learning</li> <li>• School Climate</li> <li>• Equitable Student Access</li> <li>• Diverse/High-quality Educators</li> <li>• Fiscal Equity</li> </ul> <b>High School Issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing High School Issues</li> <li>• Facility Issues</li> <li>• Expected Impacts</li> </ul>	<b>Frequency</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts</li> <li>• Concerns</li> <li>• Historical Contexts</li> <li>• Community-Specific Issues</li> <li>• Wellness of Children</li> <li>• Resource Allocations</li> <li>• Facility Issues</li> <li>• Protocol Questions</li> <li>• Other (single-frequency responses)</li> </ul>

It has become increasingly accepted practice to utilize verbatim quotations in social research. Literature in qualitative research methodology identifies multiple purposes for using quotations within analytical text. Corden & Sainsbury (2006) identify 7 purposes for using quotations. They are:

- Presenting discourse as the matter of enquiry
- Presenting quotations as evidence
- Presenting spoken words for explanation
- Using quotations as illustration
- Using quotations to deepen understanding
- Using spoken words to enable voice
- Using quotations to enhance readability

Sandelowski (1994) explains that “Quotes are used to support researcher claims, illustrate ideas, illuminate experience, evoke emotion, and provoke response.” Quotations used to “illustrate emotions,” as used in this report, were identified as words which represented not just the speaker of the words, but multiple people within the focus groups or interview groups. These quotations are reflective of emotional impact of the topic and secondarily served the purpose of providing authentic voice to those who participated in the process.

## Quantitative

We received student-level demographic, assessment, discipline, and attendance data from Chicago Public Schools. All data sets were restructured, cleaned, and merged by student ID numbers. We examined missing data and outliers, deleted duplicate entries and coded those students who moved between schools. Altogether, there are 2 years of data (school years 2015-16 and 2016-17) for student assessment, discipline and attendance, and 3 years of data (2017-18 included) for student demographics.

Projecting the future demographics of the combined South Loop elementary school. The projection was created by extrapolating the demographics from NTA in 2017-18, and assuming that all K-3 students would attend South Loop, and that 50 percent of grades 4-8 would attend South Loop (selected randomly).

Diversity Index. Simpson's Diversity Index (Simpson, 1949) measures the probability that two individuals randomly selected from a sample will belong to the same categories. The formula used for our race diversity calculation is as follows:

$$\text{Diversity Index} = 1 - ((\text{proportion of White students})^2 + (\text{proportion of Black students})^2 + (\text{proportion of Asian students})^2 + (\text{proportion of Hispanic student})^2 + (\text{proportion of multi-racial students})^2)$$

Discipline and attendance. The number of discipline incidents per 100 students, the percentage of students involved in at least one incident, and the severity index were examined. The severity index was calculated as the number of incidents multiplied by the severity of the incident. The discipline data in 2016-17 were analyzed to determine if there were significant differences. A negative binomial regression was used because the variance was greater than the mean for both the total number of incidents and total severity score (Agresti, 2002). The attendance data in 2016-17 were analyzed to determine if there were significant differences in the number of days absent overall and by RGC status. An independent samples *t*-test was used to analyze differences in the number of days absent.

Academic performance. When comparing the academic performance of the two schools, mathematics and reading scores were provided descriptively (Figure 1) and analyses were conducted to determine if differences were statistically significant. Mathematics and reading scores in 2016-17 were analyzed to determine if there were significant differences across schools overall and for each subgroup using an independent samples *t*-test (Figures 2 and 3). Multiple hypothesis tests were corrected for each subject separately using the Benjamin-Hochberg technique. In these analyses there was no matching or adjustment for other demographic or academic characteristics. Since there are many factors that could affect student

academic achievement, we also looked at the difference in student MAP percentile scores across the two schools using multiple regression analysis. The regression analyses were limited to students who had both years (2015-16 and 2016-17) of MAP test data. Student demographic variables (gender, special education status, disability status, ethnicity) were included in the regression model. We also controlled for student baseline performance (student MAP percentile scores in year 2015-16), their attendance record and their program type (RGC vs. neighborhood). Regression analyses were carried out using spring 2016-17 MAP reading and math percentile scores as the outcome variables.

Projected high school capacity. The percent of students attending a neighborhood school is affected by the school quality rating. The higher the school quality rating is, the more likely neighborhood students will attend. Based on the neighborhood enrollment statistics across the whole school district, CPS compiled a table of expected percent of student enrollment by school quality rating (e.g. for level 1+ schools, about 43 percent of the students within the school boundary would attend). Based on the data provided by CPS, we first calculated the expected numbers of students who would enroll in the proposed NTA high school. The anticipated enrollment numbers would vary by school quality rating. The estimated capacity of the proposed high school is between 1,000–1,200 students. We first calculated the percent of student enrollment based on 1,200 student capacity. The percentage was calculated by using 1,200 students as the denominator and the anticipated student enrollment at each of the given school quality.

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## APPENDIX C: Equity Indicators

### Definitions

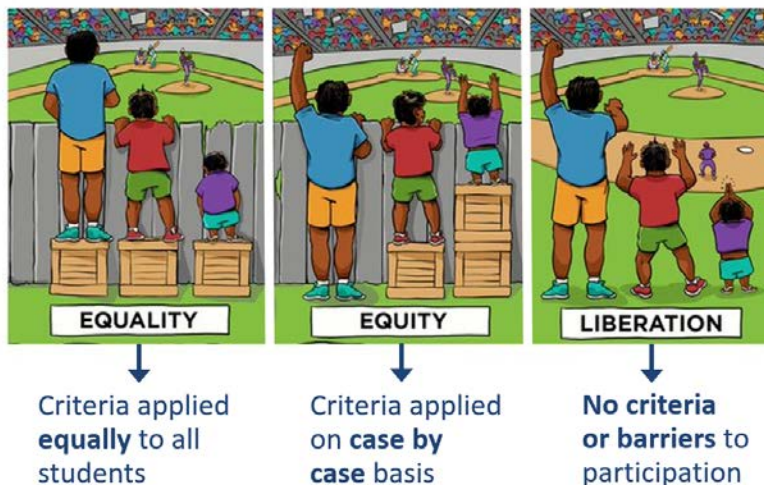
**Comprehensive Equity Indicators-** Targeted indicators which support the development and implementation of a comprehensive equity plan. These must be specific to the local district context. Can include, but are not limited to:

- Family and community engagement
- School climate
- Culturally relevant leadership
- Student-centered learning
- Diverse staff of excellent educators
- Equitable student access
- Fiscal equity

**Equality-** Criteria applied equally to all students.

**Equity-** Criteria applied on a case-by-case basis to meet individual needs of students.

**Liberation-** No criteria or barriers to participation. Involves having a curriculum that supports how all students are smart, emphasizing individualized/differentiated instruction, growth mindset and ethical and inclusive policies.



Citation: *Equality, equity, liberation*. (n.d.). [Digital Image]. Retrieved from <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/eli-erlick/why-equality-is-toxic-to-b-10319836.html>. This image has many iterations, but has become a go-to image for equity issues in education.

## Comprehensive Equity Indicators



### Framing the Comprehensive Equity Indicators

Purposeful strategic planning around equity issues is a hallmark for successful schools trying to eliminate equity gaps. Grounded in research and informed by equity studies, the seven equity indicators used to frame this report are part of a comprehensive approach to achieving educator equity through the technical assistance services Westat provides states, districts, and national organizations (Williams, 2015, 2016, 2017). While the indicators used in this report are contextually broad, it is understood that as districts and schools begin to implement strategies to eliminate equity gaps, there will be a need to work around both the broad indicators as well as indicators specific to the local school and community context. Below are brief descriptions of each of the seven broad equity indicators as well as a bibliography of additional resources.

#### *Family and Community Engagement*

Successful schools, more often than not, have made it a priority to engage and partner with the families and stakeholders in the school community through strategic, deliberate, genuine, and sustaining ways.

### *School Climate & Culturally Relevant Leadership*

Successful schools also embrace the importance of ensuring that all of their children are well by honoring and deepening their understanding of the funds of knowledge that each student brings to the school community, the multiple languages that they use, the amazing ways in which they are smart, rituals, ways of being, and practices that they experience in their homes, community centers, civic centers, and sacred, religious organizations. The adults in successful schools recognize that they, too, must share their own lived experiences with their students as well to create a welcoming and inclusive school atmosphere that embraces the uniqueness and similarities of all in the school community. Honoring these norms of daily school behaviors and having open dialogue in safe school spaces for both the students and adults create a harmonious, welcoming, and inclusive school community with curricula, activities, and opportunities to celebrate and learn continuously the importance of cultural responsiveness.

### *Student Centered Learning*

Successful schools also have a commitment to tailoring their instructional academic programming with the student at the center of the planning, development, and delivery phases. Deeply knowing, understanding, and appreciating the multiples ways that students learn, the importance of legitimizing their student voice in the learning-meaning making process, and creating a variety of learning strategies in school, outdoor, and community partnership settings to create these student-centered learning opportunities, is at the core of a school's faculty and staff ongoing professional development vision with the student always at the center of the complex planning, delivery, assessing, evaluation, and reflective phases.

### *Diverse Staff of Excellent Educators & Equitable Student Access*

Successful schools strongly believe and ensure that all students should engage in equitable student access daily with no hesitation to provide interactive, engaging, challenging, reflective, high-quality instruction using various learning strategies that support all stages of student academic progress. Every student is given opportunities to excel at all stages of their academic journey through a continuously rigorous academic program with a cadre of exceptional, diverse, excellent teachers, who are reflective, self-confident, culturally responsive, socially and politically aware, and content experts.

### *Fiscal Equity*

A successful school, in collaboration with its community partnerships, prioritizes the importance of fiscal equity for its school and neighboring schools and the greater state and nation. This means that they advocate to their school board and convey to its students, families, and communities that equitable school

funding is vital for its students, teachers, administrators, and community as a whole. Equitable school funding is a critical component to achieving comprehensive educator equity for all.

These seven equity indicators represent a more comprehensive approach to achieving educator equity. Because of that, from a neutral equity lens built around these seven framing equity indicators, we have analyzed and captured the participants' voices thematically to better inform the Near South Proposal. This report also frames our quantitative analysis, key findings, and recommendations around these seven framing equity indicators.

### Resource Bibliography

The equity indicators, which provide the framework for this report, were developed by Mr. Wesley Williams who has worked on equity issues with state and local education agencies for over 15 years.

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