

July 26, 2023 Board Meeting Written Comments
Received between Monday, July 24th and Thursday, July 27th
Submitted via Written Comments Form

1 I would like Abdul Muhammad to be reinstated as a Principal within CPS. Mr. Muhammad is an amazing Leader, Mentor and the catalyst which sparked the success of many young men and women in Chicago including myself. His presence is necessary and as a past student at CVS HS... 05 Graduate, I was inspired to reach greater heights which allowed me to become a great Leader and Mentor myself to many young men and women across the world.

My book "How To Become A Successful Young Man" was dedicated to Mr. Muhammad because he gave toolkit and the spark needed to succeed in life.

Successful companies need the right people in the right position and to lose Mr. Muhammad would be a detriment to all of the youth that his presence is needed.

2 I am a proud parent of two children that attend South Loop Elementary and have lived in the South Loop for over 15 years. We have enjoyed living in Chicago and have started up two businesses that help make this our home. My wife and I are very active in the school and have been watching all of the discussions regarding the growth of the Near South Neighborhoods and have seen its growing pains. As every year passes, we get more and more worried that there is not going to be an option for our kids to attend public schools and that would force us to leave the South Loop and maybe the City. As we have watched many other families make that tough decision we hope for a better future.

We have seen many options come and go. From converting Jones to a neighborhood school, to NTA conversion to a neighborhood school to the recent development to build next to NTA. Each plan has its plusses and minuses. I understand that it is hard to make everybody happy, however the South Loop is growing and that is not changing any time soon. The current plan has progressed the furthest and is really the best overall. But if it gets blocked, what is the plan? Where is the urgency to keep these families in Chicago?

CPS, CHA and The City have worked hard to understand the needs and have put together a great plan that we fully support. The Near South High School plan as currently written is not only welcomed but is badly needed. The population growth over the past couple of decades in the Near South supports the need for a viable and local option for a neighborhood high school, which does not currently exist. For us the distance is over 30 blocks to get to the current "neighborhood" school.

We agree that more funding needs to be provided to other neighborhood schools in the area, but that doesn't take away the need for a high school for all of the kids in the Near South neighborhoods. This is not an either/or situation. A Near South high school has been long overdue and communities have continued to grow. The current plan does support additional funding for these schools, so to say that we should do one or the other is not the case.

Will The Board support our efforts to keep this Near South High School project on track? And if not, what is the timeline for an alternative? At this point we are at the end of our

	efforts before we start moving out, selling/closing the businesses we have and opening up in the suburbs where there is a clear path for a local school.
3	I have serious concerns for my school (Lindblom Math and Science Academy) We are still without a principal and the new school year is upon us.
4	Cadres are listed as full time employees and often work every single school day. Cadres should be eligible for full benefits and some paid time off. Guest teachers are subject to some of the same challenges as teachers and should be able to earn paid time off like any other employee.
5	I am concerned that the draft for parental leave, to be voted on today does not include those who are considered guest teachers(substitute teachers)specifically displaced teachers, cadre, and TAT. Cadres are designated as full-time by CPS. I believe that some sort of parental leave should be granted to them if they work all student attendance days the previous school year. A flat exclusion leaves some CPS staff out when it comes to parental leave. The policy should be more flexible and accessible to this specific group, based on days worked. It does not have to be an identical length of weeks. The policy can be revised to offer something fair and flexible, involving actual days worked in the previous 12 months. It is a misconception to think that guest teaching is not a full-time job. That thinking is no longer the case. Guest teachers are not temporary when they work most or all student attendance days year after year. Many fill vacant positions for entire academic years. CPS relies on guest teachers to cover absent teachers and vacant positions, many of whom have done this job for 2,5,10 or more years. It is a misnomer to label guest teachers temporary, when in fact many are not. Please seriously consider how to include guest teachers in all the job categories mentioned in the parental leave policy. There are approximately over 5,000 CPS employees in the categories stated. Board members, please examine the numbers in Frontline, the number of teachers guest teachers cover in a school year. The coverage is massive, over 200,000 days covered in a given school year. Also study how much of the CPS budget is used for guest teachers. Studies have been done that include this information. NBR Working Paper Series Preferences, Inequalities, and Incentives in the Substitute Teacher Market, www.nber.org/papers/w30714 . This study specifically looked at CPS. There are also insights in FutureEd articles. This is not just about parental leave, but other benefits as well that should be expanded to include guest teachers, and should be based on days worked.
6	Please invest in a near south high school for the rapidly growing near south community.
7	I am writing to add my support for the dire need for a near south high school. My future in this neighborhood depends on this happening in the near future. Thank you for taking the time to read this.
8	We desperately need a near south high school to serve several growing neighborhood communities on the near south side. There is no neighborhood high school within walking/easy driveable distance and our children and families deserve that opportunity for a quality public school education. We will move out of the city if the mayor and board of education choose not to do this.
9	Having a near south high school is very important to the community. This high school will be serving South loop, Chinatown and part of bridgeport. As a person who grew up in the area I had to travel quite a distance every morning to go to a high school. I have seen my old classmates dropping out of school due to transportation issue.
10	I fully support the new nearest South high school as it is currently planned and designed. Please bring a quality high school to this community.
11	Please support a public neighborhood downtown high school!

12	<p>As our population of high school aged children in this area continues to grow, as does the need for a public school option for those students. We have a wealth of expensive private school options and some selective enrollment ones, but a guaranteed spot at a safe school who will educate our high schoolers simple does not exist at this time. We have a diverse community and all ethnicities deserve better options.</p> <p>We are determining if staying in the city makes sense for our family. Without a high school option for our kids, this community will lose more families, including ours.</p>
13	<p>I would like the board to update the community on the status of the near south side high school project. The project was announced and seems to have stalled out. A high school serving near south communities such as Chinatown and the South Loop would make a huge difference to the families there. Please prioritize this project and improve communication surrounding it. Thank you.</p>
14	<p>I am 24 year resident of Printers Row (South Loop), with a daughter in 6th Grade at South Loop Middle School. We are so lucky to have such a wonderful neighborhood school, close to our home, where my daughter has been able to grow and learn with friends and neighbors she has known since she was a baby. For years, we have hope, and hoped that by the time she was approaching High School, the South Loop and surrounding areas (Chinatown & Bridgeport), would FINALLY, after MORE THAN 30 YEARS have a Neighborhood High School option CLOSE to the neighborhood.... We live directly across the street from Jones Prep, but my daughters chances of getting into Jones, based on our TIER 4 location would require her a PERFECT Score AND STRAIGHT A's are slim. Families continue to leave our community when they reach this point...and it is having a huge impact on out area. We love our community, and our life is here. We want our daughter to have the same High School experience going to High School with the friends she has grown up with....this is not an option in our area. My self and my family whole heartily support the proposed Near South High School. And if it stay on schedule, my daughter's class would be the FIRST to graduate from it! If it continues to get stalled...who knows what her high school future will hold.</p>
15	<p>Hello Board,</p> <p>I'm writing to you as a parent of a CPS student, a native Chicagoan, and a Black mother concerned about my child's opportunity to fairly and equitably access a neighborhood high school option on the Near South side.</p> <p>My daughter is currently a rising 5th grader at South Loop Elementary. We relocated back home to Chicago in 2021 from a neighboring state after experiencing a lack of diversity that negatively impacted my daughter's educational experience and socio-emotional development.</p> <p>As a native Chicagoan, Black, from a lower middle class upbringing, it was critically important to me that my daughter's educational experience be diverse in all ways, welcoming, and supportive. My family very intentionally poured over school demographic reports, far more than academic ones, to find a school with a majority BIPOC population while still very diverse, with small class sizes, and a range of intellectually and socially stimulating activities.</p> <p>We chose the South Loop community for that reason, despite having the resources to locate to comparable environments in Evanston or Oak Park and other neighborhoods with greater capital resources but less diversity because we value diversity in all its forms and the experience that comes with growing up and navigating a city like Chicago and how it prepared me for the world at large.</p>

It's for that reason that it has been extraordinarily disheartening to have my daughter's fair and equitable access to a neighborhood high school option, which is a standard in Chicago, be treated as negligible and negotiable.

Failure to ensure that students like my daughter have easy access to a neighborhood school to matriculate into creates an unnecessarily disruptive educational and social experience that is supposed to be at the heart of / guaranteed by a public education. Failure to create a neighborhood school for the Near South requires parents and students to make the hard decision to either relocate out of the city, into other neighborhoods, or to apply for selective enrollment - magnet schools is itself a form of educational and social manipulation that only further stratifies and segregates students along academic, racial, and economic lines rather than serving the very real needs of the vibrant and diverse community of families that would feed into the Near South high school.

The fact that my child and many others will have to travel further than others (that do have the neighborhood option) to access education is a failure and unnecessary obstacle for kids and families that will impact attendance, participation in school activities, family involvement in schools, and the amount of time spent on studies and recharging each day.

I implore the school board to take a greater and more sustained look at how its inaction to move forward on a school will negatively impact this and future generations of students. Further in a neighborhood that has underwent revitalization efforts by committed and diverse families over the last 30 years this lack of a neighborhood school will only drive flight which will only lead to a recurrence of economic downturn and instability in the neighborhood. The lack of a neighborhood school will only lead to additional segregation and stratification and that's exactly the situation we moved back to Chicago to combat.

16 Welcome, congratulations, and thank you for your service.

1. CPS needs to reform its budgeting practices to not just create a system that is financially sustainable, but also one that is equitable, transparent, and accountable to the children we serve. LSCs are marginalized, especially those that serve students of color, and are not given opportunities to develop their budgets. Schools need the freedom to direct investments and develop long-term planning while being accountable for their outcomes to ensure all children are successful.

2. We need to reform how we identify, protect, and serve our diverse learners. All students should be assessed for strengths and learning differences to empower families to be active in the education of our children while developing support services to those that need them. This includes classroom accommodations, paraprofessional support, and transportation that is truly accessible and not a Kafkaesque nightmare.

3. Health and Sexual Education needs to be revised to educate children about their bodies, body autonomy, and healthy relationships. Moreover, members of the school community need to be aware of their mandatory reporting status and provided with proper training and support. Most importantly, children need to be protected and survivors empowered, not silenced and shamed.

4. Accountability needs to be at all levels of our educational system. The bold reforms this board wants to implement will be stalled if some bureaucrats are allowed to maintain the status quo. We need accountability and transparency not just in the classroom and boardroom, but also at the desk of our administrators.

5. Policies need to be constructed with informed perspectives and unintended failures need to be remedied. It's unfortunate that the Parent Leadership Council was put on indefinite hold last year after identifying and proposing solutions to many of the problems this new board has prioritized.

I will continue to submit my research and recommendations to the board and hope CPS will finally accept my offer to formally collaborate on researching disparities and develop effective solutions.

Be well,
Dr. Angel Alvarez

Dear CPS Accelerated Placement Policy Committee and Board of Education,

I want to share my concerns over the limitations of CPS's Accelerated Placement Act policy again and ask that you make significant revisions before voting on it, as expected at your June meeting. The current policy has significant flaws and severely limits opportunities for advanced instruction, while having a discriminatory effect on historically underserved students.

The Accelerated Placement Act is an important legislation that aims to provide learning opportunities to high-achieving and hard-working students. It created significant improvements regarding the transparency of advanced learning opportunities through reporting. Moreover, the law calls on districts to address inequity in students historically identified as gifted. It is needed because all students have a right to learn, and too often, advanced learning opportunities have catered to the privileged.

The policy CPS implemented has created significant disparities and will perpetuate inequity if not addressed. I first raised concerns over the lack of opportunities for all advanced learners after CPS opted against the initial implementation of the Illinois Accelerated Placement Act (105 ILCS 5/14A-32). I explained how the law provides needed opportunities for advancement and transparency and, how a lack of compliance and an inappropriate reward system, was "of particular concern for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, persons with disabilities, and students of color."

"The pernicious effects of how CPS implements and adheres to policies means gifted children will continue to be underserved and underreported. Parents with the financial means to provide a better education for their children will move to other districts or invest their resources into private schools, exacerbating economic schism between neighborhoods and add barriers to escape the cycle of poverty. Moreover, the low numbers of gifted students in under-resourced schools may be used by unscrupulous individuals to perpetuate stereotypes of racial and ethnic inequality. This must not be allowed to happen." (Alvarez Public Hearing Comments, August 22, 2018). CPS administrators decided to create acceleration policies outside the conventional board approval process. I disagreed with their approach and predicted the changes would exacerbate preexisting inequities. The current policies and proposed minor changes are ineffective and unnecessarily burdensome.

The Kafkaesque operations of the policy are hard to defend when so many resources are wasted on bureaucrats implementing a program that accepted only 53 students into any form of accelerated instruction last year- less than a fraction of approximately 200,000 K-8 students. The effects on students of color that I predicted are also evident. Applications for accelerated instruction by students of color decreased, and the racial disparities regarding acceptance rates for Black and Hispanic students significantly increased. Non-Black and Hispanic students are more than 2.5x more likely to be accepted for single-subject acceleration, more than 1.5x as likely to be given early admission to kindergarten, more than 2x as likely to receive early entrance into first grade than Black and Hispanic students. Furthermore, no students were granted whole-

grade acceleration, begging the question as to why so many resources were wasted on forcing families to apply for opportunities that the District was so unwilling to provide.

The proposed changes will likely exacerbate the opportunity gap for accelerated instruction for not just Black and Latinx students, but for low-income, and students with disabilities. It calls on the District to “develop equity-based strategies reflecting the CPS Equity Framework in order to mitigate opportunity differences leading to achievement differences in access and success.” However, the District has an "Equity Framework" and racial disparities increased. The policy makes no mention of accommodations for students with disabilities and diverse learners are underrepresented in advanced learning opportunities in CPS. In fact, the proposed changes create additional barriers to equity by forbidding principals and school staff from providing accelerated instruction for gifted students that were excluded from the Office of Access and Enrollment draconian process. The facts are clear- the current policy is poorly designed and fails to identify talented students that would benefit from accelerated instruction. The racial disparities highlight the need to revise the policy and lift restrictions for all high-performing students so those that would benefit from accelerated instruction are able to receive it.

Best regards,
Dr. Angel Alvarez

ATTACHMENTS

Near South High School Community Survey

June 20, 2023

Goal: To provide Near South families with the opportunity to make their voices heard.

Method: We asked citizens in the Near South community to tell us about their families and explain why a new Near South High School is important to them. This survey was distributed via community and school social media groups throughout the region. Nearly 200 families in the Near South Region chose to share their story in the one-week window the survey was open. Every response is included below, and no responses were edited or removed. Some respondents provided their full name, some just initials, and some chose to not disclose their name.

Summary: Data summaries can be found at the end of this report, but the real value is in the compelling family stories below. These stories are representative of the diverse, engaged family population that has committed to public education in the City of Chicago. From Bronzeville to Bridgeport, Chinatown to South Loop, responses below tell the story of families who are begging for CPS and Chicago to match their own commitment to their children and community. These are families that have chosen public education and believe in public education and are ready to dig their heels in to help prove that a better path exists.

Chicago Public Schools and the City of Chicago have an opportunity to provide the nation with a shining example of a world-class, diverse, urban public high school. We can break the cycle of selective enrollment or suburbs and give committed CPS families the opportunity to keep peer groups together, communities intact, and young people thriving.

Tell us about your family and why this new high school is important to you.

We worry each day about where our child will attend. Will we need to leave the city we love so much? How will they have a prosperous high school years if they aren't placed with friends. This is needed in our community for our children to succeed.

-Courtney Doogan

We have lived in the south loop for 15 years. And looking at the neighborhood we felt this would be a great place to raise a family. Being part of the South loop elementary community has been great for our kids. Now that our oldest is approaching high school age we are very concerned about staying in the neighborhood without a good local high school. We will most likely put our house up for sale if a high school is not built and move out of Chicago.

-S.

Hello all, My name is Angelique Zobitz. I am 41 years old, Black, and mother to a amazing 10 year old daughter. As a native Southside Chicagoan, when I relocated back home to Chicago from a monolithic community, being able to come back to the south side, ensure my daughter was in a diverse and supportive school environment, and in a public school setting was important to me.

South Loop is our home because more than academics or income, the neighborhood and academic environment where diversity, representation, and social consciousness were/are the best fit for our ethnically and racially blended family. For our family, finding an environment where our daughter could truly feel like she belongs was/is important.

Right now, our daughter doesn't have a high school to matriculate to. And yes, when the time comes she could test into a regional gifted school or we could just enroll her in a private school, but diversity coming from my background also means academic as well as socioeconomic diversity.

The lack of a neighborhood school means we'll have to choose an option that encourages segregation - either by race, income, or academics, all of those options are contrary to equal and free education for all. And it definitely isn't one that would allow my daughter to experience the full spectrum of diversity or that represents our own

experience.

Further, I want my daughter to have the experience that all other neighborhood school attending students receive which is the opportunity to matriculate from one school to the next with a peer group that she's learned and grown with.

That said, we also need a solution that doesn't place an unfair burden to travel long distances on the students and families who live in the community. Options that are reliant on traveling an hour or more aren't fair or just when parents and students also have homework, work, and extracurriculars.

Without Near South High School, my family is likely to relocate either to Evanston or Oak Park.

-Angelique Zobitz

The neighborhood will continue to have families flee once students are a certain age without a respectable neighborhood high school. The logic of having two great CPS middle schools, but no great CPS high school doesn't make sense.

-Near South Citizen

I am a migrant who believes in education. I went to U of I in Champaign and I believe in public education and public schools. I live in south loop and we need a high school here - my daughter is 4 now and I want her to grow up in the city and get education here. If there is a high school that is in a safe and nearby location with excellent ratings we will be forced to move to the suburbs. I cannot afford private schools. And there is no way my daughter is going to a school which is rated 1/10 for decades.

-Masha Kocherginsky

We love the city. Best in the world. Let's fix it for our children, the future.

-Near South Citizen

I was born and raised on Chicago's South Side (Chatham) and currently reside in South Loop with my family. I tested into every school I've ever attended (Poe Classical, Kenwood Academy), and while I don't regret it, the landscape is very different today. I think most parents just want a good, solid neighborhood option for their kids without having to stress about tests, waitlists, available seats, travel, etc. The kids in this

community and the surrounding area are diverse and bright ,Ã why should they have to go all over the city for secondary education? I think people in South Loop (and the Near South Side in general) have wanted this for a long time. Let's find a viable location option and work through any issues people may have. And start building!

-Nicole Pegues Riepl

Build the school. There are two 1+ primary schools in the neighborhood. Build a high school that remotely comes close.

-Near South Citizen

I have a 5th and 6th grader in South Loop Middle School and without the NSHS we will have to put an added strain on our children for testing, maybe leave the city and for sure break up the incredible friend group we have both with the other students and parents.

-Sarah Chan

I lived in the Chinatown/Bridgeport neighborhood during the 1990's and attended CPS high school Whitney Young. My family did not own a car so my daily was up to 1.5 hours (45 minutes each way with no way of knowing if 126 bus was even coming on certain days). My brother attended Bogan so sometimes his commute was an hour each way (2 hours daily). The commute to the "neighborhood" Kelly high-school took nearly as long. There was no incentive to attend.

Fast forward to nearly 30 years later, there is still NO neighborhood high-school (walkable distance) supporting Chinatown. There is also no public neighborhood high-school supporting all of downtown and South Loop. I cannot count the paltry 75 neighborhood seats at Jones to be enough for even the surrounding 6 block area.

South Loop is a great community. We love the neighborhood and have been living here 20 years - paying hefty increases in taxes and association fees nearly every year. We love the diversity the neighborhood offers - and fully support our neighborhood CPS elementary school. South Loop residents should not have to face the choice of sending their kids to: private school, further than 2 mile commute, or leaving the neighborhood.

We need a neighborhood high-school for the South Loop.

-Jennifer Ng

Son is 7, want to keep staying in south loop community schools
-Near South Citizen

We're products of public schools and strongly believe in them. A good public school does not have to be a college prep for students to thrive - even students who are highly successful academically. However, the current high school for the south loop is unacceptable. Our community is divided because of it. Children who are together from kindergarten on are being scattered across the city because of the local high school. In our case, we will be going private if we doesn't test into Peyton or Jones, which is frustrating because we really believe in local schools.

-K.B.

I have a rising 5th grader who loves his school community and friends. Having the option of a neighborhood HS would take the pressure of testing off of a young kid (remember when that stress was reserved for high school kids?!) and allow him to attend a school with his exceptional group of neighborhood friends.

-E.B.

We are a family of four and we have lived in the South Loop for more than a decade. We love this neighborhood because of the diversity of its people. We are truly a melting pot of Chicago and we believe this offers our children the opportunity to gain experiences with the diversity of our city, country and world in the safety of one neighborhood. The one missing component of the South Loop is a truly neighborhood high school that would allow the relationships created in elementary and middle school to continue to flourish together as a neighborhood in high school.

-James Johnson

We would love to stay in the south loop and have an option for quality education for our three kids.

-Jennifer M Geiger

I'm envy families and friends in the suburbs that theirs kids could attend the same elementary and high school with their friends. In Chicago CPS selective enrollment pit kids against their friends to fight for a spot in good high school. This is not how education should be.

-Wayne Li

We are a family with 3 boys ranging from preschool to middle school. The prospect of NSHS supports our ability to stay on the city. We would strongly consider moving out of Chicago as a result.

-Near South Citizen

We own a home in the area, we have three kids, and want to send them to CPS school. One parent is a CPS teacher (in another neighborhood). We desperately want to be able to send all of our kids to CPS schools all the way through 12th grade.

-T.G.

We are a CPS family. We moved to the South Loop in 2003 when the long term plan for the South Loop and Chinatown areas included a new high school and expanded elementary school to support all the new families coming in. This was the promise of the city to us in return for bringing our families to CPS/Chicago.

-Kristin Komo

Our family has been proud to be a part of the South Loop school and the near south community, as a whole. We are all involved in clubs and sports at school and in the area. We feel that our 4th and 6th graders thrive in their diverse school and neighborhood community. We would love for this community to continue to grow and thrive throughout their highschool years without having to force our children to participate in the strenuous and, frankly ridiculous testing protocols to get into a school that is 3 blocks from our home versus one that is miles away.

-Tracy Colwell

The proposed high school would our family of 3 children stay in the CPS system.

-B.G.

My wife and I currently live in Dearborn Park II with our young daughter. We are well-educated (both lawyers) and graduated from the University of Chicago Law School and top universities. We have lived in various parts of the South Loop for over a decade and love it. We each grew up going to public schools (not in Chicago) and would love for our daughter to go to CPS. Public education is extremely important to us, and we hope to contribute to the reputation of CPS and the schools in the South Loop by sending our children to CPS and being engaged parents, even though we could financially afford to send our child to a private school in the neighborhood. That said, the current high school serving our neighborhood is not up to the standards that we would expect from a community that is rated by CPS as being Tier 4. This prevents individuals from staying in the city (and in the South Loop) and forces members of the community to choose non-CPS options. We want to stay with CPS!

-J.M.

Our children needs a neighborhood high school to serve Chinatown, Bridgeport, South Loop, Armour Square. There is a huge education gap without the high school.

-Conrad Ing

2 public school children 1 in HS and other starting elementary school

-Saadia Siddique

My son will never be able to test into a selective enrollment program because he struggles with ADHD. He needs a local high school where he can be with his peers. Phillips is too far from our home in the South Loop.

-S.S.

The presence of a neighborhood High School is if vital importance for us. With an entering 6th grader in our family, she is already beyond stressed about Academic Centers, testings, selective enrollment... If she won't get into any of those, we, like many others we know who have already done it, will have to move to the burbs.

-Chiara Gasparetto

I grew up in the South Loop. Its way past time we had a neighborhood high school for this very diverse community.

-Matt Wos

I have 2 kids.

-Y.R.C

I have two small children (3 and 1) and hope to stay in the city and have a CPS HS for them to attend!

-L.K.

A new near south neighborhood high school is much needed. Over the past 50 years, Chicago fails to invest education targeting the Asian community. Chinatown has been actively advocating for a high school without much success. Many children in near south value education and they spend much resources on their own to get into selective enrollment schools. However, not all children have the capability to get into highly competitive schools. These students are also high performing students in which the city of Chicago should be investing to these bright youngsters for the future of our city.

-Near South Citizen

My daughter lives across the street from Jones Prep yet is in the district for Dunbar. We live the South Loop but this insanity is the only reason we may have to leave.

-A.P.

I grew up in Bridgeport and currently living in the South Loop. We never had a good quality neighborhood high school for as long as I can remember. Our community has waited a long time for this. It's time to make it happen for our children.

-J.C.

I have 2 kids that needs a nearby high school where they can easily access.

-C.

I would like my son to go to a diverse school close to his home. He already didn't test well for gifted for kindergarten (not accepted) so I'm afraid that there are no school options for him when we get to high school. If this high school is not built, we will most likely move out of the city to avoid the ultra competitive testing of CPS to get into a decent school

-L.M.

Chinatown has NEVER had its own high school. It is LONG overdue to give the kids of Chinatown a school that is well-resourced to meet their needs (bilingual support, etc.)

-Sarah

I have been a Chicago resident for 25 years and live in the Near South Side neighborhood. I have one child, and they have been enrolled in Chicago Public Schools since kindergarten. Having a high school that is close by and connected to my community is very important to me; not having a high school that is close and connected to my community would make it very difficult to stay in our neighborhood. Chicago in general, and the mid-income and affluent neighborhoods in particular, make it very costly and difficult for families with multiple or older children to stay in the city.

-Kaveh Hemmat

My husband and I have one 18 month old and one on the way. We have lived in the south loop for 14 years, originally not from Chicago.

-Near South Citizen

My husband and I have lived in the south loop since 2008. Our intention was to move to the suburbs in a few years once we had kids. But we decided to stay in the south loop, knowing our kids can grow up in this great diverse city and that our neighborhood had a highly rated elementary school. We now have 2 boys, 7 and 9, who are excelling in South loop elementary school. We are hoping to have a

neighborhood high school for them to easily transition to, that is nearby, and an option for them to continue their education with many of their peers and friends in the community.

-Jennilee Cheung

We love the south loop but there is a not a great option for high school here. There is only SLE K-8.

-Emily Bhandari

My family absolutely loves the near South side community of Chicago - in fact it is all that we have known being transplants from the East Coast. As our family has grown, our connection to the area has grown - economically, socially, and educationally. While the experience here has been near perfect, the challenge of having to figure out where our two children will go to high school has been a growing source of anxiety for our family. While it is our desire to remain in this community, the reality that we may have to relocate if a viable secondary school is not available for them is ever present.

-Anonymous

Our son is now in 6th grade at South Loop elementary, and would live a local high school in the community for this neighborhood when he graduates.

-LG

I don't have a family, but I have a home I. The South Loop that I've been in for 24 years. And I hate watching all these families leave when their kids hit HS age.

-Diana Turow

We have lived in the South Loop for 7 years now and we have found our people! The diverse community and family support we have found is amazing and we couldn't be happier! Our oldest son just entered kindergarten and even though he is at Ogden Elementary due to its proximity to my work, he will be going to South Loop for middle school and hopefully high school. Getting to foster and continue all the relationships we have invested in over the last 7 years is not only important to us as adults, but definitely to budding teenagers whose entire lives revolve around their friend circle.

With all the new construction going up around us, we are thinking ahead and wondering where all those kiddos will go after SLES. A local high school would make us even more cohesive as a community and would be one of the most diverse schools based on all of the friendly faces we see in our neighborhood. Jones is a great school, but the rigorous entry criteria make it prohibitive for so many students that it is not a feasible neighborhood option. Please give us the school South Loop deserves!

-Irena Bellins

I have two daughters and it's important to have a successful open enrollment high school so I don't have to send my children to St. Ignatius. I am a believer in public schools and want a public, open enrollment, neighborhood options that meets the needs of my children. We are currently zone into Tilden and that is not large enough and does not have enough programs to offer students.

-Cara Boss

This new high school is NOT important to me. I am more concerned with using CHA for low income families. When the housing projects were on this land there was not any type of push for a new high school and the students were forced to attend the neighborhood high schools. I am not against a new high school I am against the location

-Near South Citizen

We have two children age 8 and 3; the older is going into 3rd grade at SLES, and we plan to have the younger start after preschool. The potential of a new neighborhood high school is very exciting to us as an option to stay within the same parent/teacher community to which we have strong ties and cultivated many relationships.

-Mike Chen

The South Loop has no neighborhood school, and realistically no families from the South Loop will send their children to the Phillips Academy. In my over 20 years living in the South, numerous friends have moved their families to the suburbs and more recently Indiana because they cannot afford a private school and feel they have no other option. It is unacceptably stressful on the families and puts 8th grade students under immense pressure to score high enough to get into a Selective Enrollment School.

-Laurie Montplaisir

We are sick and tired of the 2 year middle school stress out our kids through to get into a decent school, since our neighborhood does not offer a neighborhood option. Jones does not have a field onsite and no Friday night lights. They are not that diverse.

-Near South Citizen

Our daughter is mixed and wed like a diverse high school assigned to her home area.

-M.Z.

I'm a single mother of a fourth grader boy, who is an average student that loves learning. This community helped me raise my child, and without a viable high school, life will get increasingly challenging for us as we would have to move.

-Edona Kurtolli

Hello, as residents of the south loop it's so imperative that we have a neighborhood high school. As the mother of an insanely bright and creative child, who has an IEP, I worry that not having a neighborhood option will mean paying for private school once she graduates. As a solid middle class working family, paying for private high school means reducing the likelihood we will be able to help our daughter pay for college, and lessens the chances for our family to close the wealth gap between Black and White families in Chicago.

-Liz Aguirre

Family with two young children

-B.B.

I have been a South Loop resident for 17 years and I have two sons who attend South Loop Elementary School. I am a first-generation Latina who benefited greatly from quality neighborhood schools that were within walking distance from my home. My mom did not drive so my ability to walk to all my schools from elementary through high school, and do so safely, was paramount to our family. My family did not have money

for private school, or college, so having access to these quality public resources was key to where I am today.

My husband and I moved to the South Loop when we were dating and not even thinking of starting a family, however over the years we have grown with and in the South Loop and watched the Near South area develop. We got married, started a family a little over a decade ago, and while we loved the area, we were considering whether or not to move to the suburbs due to the public school issues many have faced in Chicago.

It was our neighborhood public school, with its quality education, close proximity to home, and family involvement that made us stay when many of our friends in other parts of the city fled to the suburbs once their kids hit school age. Unfortunately, without a neighborhood high school in the Near South area (the school assigned to us is 4 miles away, two neighborhoods away from us) we are again faced with the dilemma of whether or not we will be able to stay in the city. Our only alternative would be to put our children through the obscenely rigorous process of selective enrollment for what is only a marginal chance they could get into Jones Prep (our only neighborhood high school, which unfortunately is not a neighborhood school), or hopefully a SE school that is not several miles away. That severely limits our choices, and we cannot afford private school for two children.

-Jen Majerus

We have been in southloop for past 10 years our 8 year old in few years will be going to this school.

-Monika Jaiswal-Oliver

Bridgeport needs a high school.

-Adriana Haro

I have lived in the Bridgeport/Chinatown community for over 50 years. My 3 children graduated from CPS high school, with the youngest graduating in June 2023. The new high school is important for my family because we support our community. Current neighborhood high schools in our community are not feasible because of distant, low academic standards and/or safety reasons. We need a community high school that will address these issues. I am fortunate that my 3 children graduated from selective

enrollment schools, but every year, i have seen families in my community worry where their children will go for high school. I am Chinese American and academics are a very important part of our culture. A 94% to 95% high school graduation rate for Asians shows our strong commitment to academics.

-Sammy Moy

I am 24 year resident of Printers Row (South Loop), with a daughter in 5th Grade at CPS South Loop Middle School. We are so lucky to have such a wonderful neighborhood school, close to our home, where my daughter has been able to grow and learn with friends and neighbors she has known since she was a baby. For years, we have hope, and dreamed that by the time she was approaching High School, the South Loop and surrounding areas (Chinatown & Bridgeport), would FINALLY have a Neighborhood High School option CLOSE to the neighborhood, but again that dream seems to be stalled, yet again, and we are faced with the stress, pressure and anxiety of CPS High School GAME. We live directly across the street from Jones Prep, but my daughter's chances of getting into Jones, based on our TIER 4 location would require her a PERFECT Score AND STRAIGHT A's are slim. Families continue to leave our community when they reach this point, and it is having a huge impact on our area. We love our community, and our life is here. We want our daughter to have the same High School experience going to High School with the friends she has grown up with, this is not an option in our area.

My self and my family whole heartily support the proposed Near South High School. And if it stay on schedule, my daughter's class would be the FIRST to graduate from it! If it continues to get stalled, who knows what her and her friends high school future will hold

-T.R.

We've lived in the South Loop for over 20 years. A feasible option for public school has always been very important for our family. We currently don't have a feasible option for high school. Our older kid is now in high school at Jones through the selective enrollment. If our daughter does not get into high school through selective enrollment in a few years we will face important decisions including leaving Chicago Public schools as a result of NOT having a feasible neighborhood school option. A Near South high school would be a feasible alternative, potentially a school that will enable deeper connections with our diverse community members of South Loop, Chinatown and Bridgeport.

-E.S.

This new high school is important to my family so that we have a nearby, neighborhood highschool that serves the diverse community of the Near South. The Near South has grown over the past 15 years and its growth supports the development of a neighborhood highschool located near so that families and students are able to walk to school as needed. Currently, the only neighborhood highschool is not within walking distance, and the other highschool in the Near South is selective enrollment only. A new highschool that serves our community will enable many families, including mine, to make the decision to stay in the near south community long-term, increase property values and attract more families long term to the neighborhood. It is a win-win for everyone and our children and the future of this neighborhood deserves that.

-M.B.E.

Without it it would be close to impossible to consider staying here.

-Jonas Thorrud

The school is important because I have four children. Two of which will benefit greatly from Near South. There are not many options for neighborhood schools. I was lucky enough that my current freshman got accepted somewhere elsewhere. By what if he didn't get accepted? His neighborhood school would be Philips. He would not enjoy going there and wouldn't be safe traveling alone either. There are multiple shootings in the area where he would need to get off the bus to attend his neighborhood school. The kids safety is my top priority. Our current neighborhood school is just not located in a safe neighborhood.

-Rachel

My kids are in the neighborhood and we hope there is a high school before they are ready to attend. We would hate to be forced to move to make sure our kids have a decent close neighborhood school.

-L.H.

Our family values neighborhood schools, their proximity and walkability. We value public schools and believe every kid deserves free, quality education.

-AOKH

We have 2 children and have lived in South Loop since before our children were born. We see too many families who have to decide on paying for a private HS, test into a selective enrollment or worse feel they have to move because we lack a neighborhood high school.

-Kevin Carmody

No high school near the neighborhood , every kids need to take bus for more than half hour one way to school.

-Near South Citizen

We will likely need to move if we don't have a good neighborhood high school for our kids.

-Near South Citizen

It's important to the neighborhood but just my family to have a school that represents the neighborhood.

-Near South Citizen

It's important for our family since I have a 4th grader in CPS. We need a viable option. The selective enrollment process is stressful and not for me. There is a need there was a need 30-40 years ago when we went to HS and still a need now.

-Amy Moy

I have a son entering the reginal gifted center at NTA this fall and another younger son at home. We need a HS in the neighborhood for many reasons but #1 is a sense of community for kids in their community. All kids in the city deserve to be able to get to a safe, close, dependable and well run school within their own communities. Without this school we will be leaving the city in the next few years.

-A.S.

We have chosen to stay in the city because of our strong neighborhood schools. Our children are approaching high school and if a school is not built we will have to leave. Our neighborhood high school is way to far away and over crowded.

-Laura Evans

This new high school is important to the South Loop neighborhood and my family. I have an elementary aged child at the current time and there is not better time to think about her future. Having a high school nearby would allow us to continue to live in Chicago South Loop. It will allow us the flexibility of having a school nearby that can accommodate the growing number of families in South Loop.

-A.D.

We've lived here for the past ten years and would love to stay long term, but we have 3 kids (2 at SLES and one in daycare who will also go to SLES), so the deciding factor will likely be high school. Right now we'd have to hope they get into a selective enrollment high school (and be shuttled around the city, possibly to different schools). Private school tuition really isn't an option for us, so we would likely move outside Chicago. I went to public school K-12 and college. We believe in public education and this community should have a viable public option for high school.

-Laurel Cherian

We have lived in the South Loop for over 10 years. When we first moved into our condo, we were surrounded by empty parking lots and empty lots here in the Printer's Row area. Nearly every year we have lived here, our neighborhood has expanded around us. We have basically lived in a construction zone. Point being, the growth of our community demands a high school our children can go to. The children of the South Loop deserve a school and will thrive in a school where all ethnicities and cultures combine to form a wonderful place to learn.

Our kids realize they have no option for a high school and have already begun to feel the pressure and anxiety knowing how well they will have to test in order to be considered at schools such as Jones. That is unacceptable. Our kids have a hard enough time navigating this world. They deserve a high school in the South Loop.

-Near South Citizen

We have twin 11 year Olds and we would love a public school that allows them to continue their education with other neighborhood kids.

-Julius Dickens

My husband and I have lived in the South Loop since 2011, we had 3 kids here and the oldest is 5 years away from high school. If my oldest doesn't test into a good high school, we would leave for the suburbs. We would not attend the neighborhood high school.

-Anita

We have so few options and would hate to move out of the area for this reason

-Near South Citizen

When I was young, my large family was not very well off. We had no money for tutors or private schools or sometimes even for food, and our public neighborhood school was always a place where everyone who lived in the community was welcomed and supported.

I moved to Chicago as a stay at home mom with my eldest, then 1, and I had NO IDEA how complicated and competitive just attending high-school would be for her...and I had two more kids since arriving.

The selective enrollment program seems great for some but not equitable for all. It relies so heavily on a child's ability to test well, and often it relies on what resources you have had - tutors and more - to which a majority of kids just don't have access.

Since my daughter began school (in 2020 during covid, so she was fully remote for Kingergarten - and she had also not attended pre-k cause of no tuition budget and confusing application processes) she has struggled with a lot of her testing. She was in classes with other kids who had private tutors and were through paid private pre-k, and she struggled to keep up.

Not til she got to 1st grade did she get to attend school in person, and when she did she was put with a class of the kids who performed similarly on tests. Several even struggled to write their own name. All her friends and all those kids who were tutored and had such advantages were put into a different class. And the kids knew it. Even

called themselves the smart class and hers the dumb class.

Once she got a teacher and in person education, she soared to the top of the class she was in, but she was limited still by the other kids having different resources...even different schoolwork, and she desperately wanted to catch up.

We are a single income home. Daycare is too expensive that my potential earnings could not offset it. We have no money for extra tutors. Even just to keep up with her classmates and her school fundraisers push us financially further than we should go. We have not been able to bridge that gap by throwing money at the problem, and she was obviously being treated differently than the other classes were...and I see that in the selective enrollment process.

Kids of means are favored who had the extra money to get all these private tutors. To join outside learning centers. Who could pay for pre-k tuition. And they get into the schools nearest us and the kids who don't test quite as well or haven't had these advantages get relegated to a school with lower funding and lower education standards and they meet what my daughter did entering first grade.

Kids who are in school in their neighborhoods with their friends and are given a chance to aspire to what the more well off kids can do thrive. Do I have science to back it up? Not clinical sort of science, but I've seen some experiments in person.

Throughout my daughter's 1st and second grade year, I have thrown myself into volunteering. As Room Parent both years. I help work book fair. I organize their winter dances. I help get volunteers for field day and I and the lead volunteer for our twice a year choral concerts. I KNOW a lot about how her school works. I have seen from inside.

When I realized how the classes were divided and why in her 1st grade year...and saw how she hit a wall by being shoestring'd by the class she was sorted into and wasn't being given the same lessons as her peers... I SPOKE UP. I shared this knowledge with every mom and dad I could. I spoke to staff and to her teachers. It wasn't an equitable learning environment for these kids. And this wasn't limited to these lower grades. This only intensified as they proceeded toward 8th grade.

Doing my time at book fair I spoke to many parents of older kids. The stresses of selective enrollment. How "if your kid isn't in academic centers, the school pretty much gives up on them and focuses on the kids who have those advantages and can get into

those better funded and higher performing schools." How the closest selective enrollment school near us. JONES. has families rallying to ONLY allow selective enrollment kids...essentially to keep out the neighborhood riff raff...like my daughter may one day be.

Now. When she entered 2nd grade, the school did away with their assignment practices from the year before. All the kids were taught the same lessons with the same grading criteria. And oh how my baby thrived. She's got all A's and reading above her grade level, even without all the tutors and the rest. She was giving equal footing and treated the same as her peers. She also is a kind person who through these two years has been a reliable student and friend for her classmates and teacher. In her first year, she helped the kids who were struggling. She even helped teach those who struggled to write to get their name right. She includes everyone as often as she can. There is nothing but pure love in her heart for her neighborhood school and her fellow classmates...and this influence between students allows for everyone to grow. And this can't happen with selective enrollment school.

She had peers who were above her scholastically to aspire toward. She had friends who were galling behind and she was able to help them...and they could get the help they needed just by being in a mixed populous of the place where they live.

This neighborhood school will give so many communities access to desperately needed RELIABILITY. Stability. Community. They won't have to worry if their kid would have access to a good school...or if their kid would have to travel far to get to their school - it would be here and close to home. With their friends and with their communities to raise them up.

Breaking off the "best" from any community and isolating those who are struggling is rarely the answer when one searches for equity and equality. It separates. It limits potential. It limits growth. It makes many feel unwelcome or as the other when we should be doing what we can for the public by bringing everyone together and allowing the haves and have nots to just BE PEOPLE together and not be defined solely by which tutor you had or which academic center you were able to get into.

Let's build a stronger neighborhood with this school-
-Jaclyn Stuard

We love the city. We enjoy the access to the Lake, parks, museums, and all the city has to offer while keeping commute times lower to also enjoy more time with family. Unfortunately, this will likely have to end as without an actual neighborhood High School the mental health of our child has been negatively effected by the pressure to be prefect. Perfect test scores, perfect grades, the competition the elementary school (principal, teachers, counselors, parents, other students) puts on near south child is fierce. The assigned high school is a 30-40 minute commute away. The chance at the local high school is about 1 in 50. Why are the kids of the near south put in this situations?

-Near South Citizen

With a rising 5th grader and another upcoming child, I am seeking the same quality education my kids are receiving at our local elementary beyond those years into high school. I do not want to be forced to leave the city for this situation. I don't want my kids to be faced w undue stress. I don't want them to leave their friends because continuing education options do not exist.

-Near South Citizen

We have lived in the South Loop for a long time and have two kids that go to school here. It's important to us to have a viable neighborhood school to serve the community.

-Near South Citizen

Access to good public education is a key foundational piece to a community. The current alternatives for a public high school education are not sufficient to meet the needs of the growing number of families in the area.

-Near South Citizen

We both work and don't have a car. The school in the neighborhood is essential to us.

-Ivan Gotti

It would mean a a safe and solid high school in the area that would serve the needs of many children in the area including mine.

-Near South Citizen

We have lived in the south loop since 2008 and have watched this entire area grow and change in the last 15 years. What's lacking is the local high school for these students in the south loop/chinatown and neighboring neighborhoods. We have had more friends/families that we can count who have moved out of Chicago because of the high school situation in the south loop.

-Ken Brown

We moved to SL in 2004. We now have 2 kids. One in HS and one in elementary. Our older one is in Jones. We had been thru the selective enrollment process with our older son. We understand how much pressures and efforts to just get in a school which is walking distance to us and in our neighborhood. But our second son aren't as academically strong. We just want our kids able to attend school near by without worry about commuting. I think we pay a fair share of tax, but I cannot understand why we don't have a neighborhood HS within our hood. Without a nearby public HS option, we are thinking of moving out of Chicago after our high schooler graduated. I feel like we are being force our from our beloved home. We love the neighborhood, we like the area, we love our jobs in Chicago, but the government had fail us. We moved here 19 years ago before we had kids, we had been heard plan for a new HS for a long time, but I cannot believe we are still waiting for a neighborhood school. We had many friends moved out of Chicago because of the school reason. They are all good citizens. I don't know how many more people the city willing to lost before realizing the problem. But this is a simple math, by investinging a near south high school, the city can retain the families and attract more to move in. Don't get me wrong, we want more people to pay tax, so that the city can have budget for programs for other needed neighborhoods.

-W.M.

This high school would be a place for all children in the near south communities to continue their education. Right now, our high school options are very limited and often the 8th grade students will be sent around Chicago to other high schools. In the current situation, if my child does not test into a high school, I would move to a community that has a good high school or send to a private school.

-Near South Citizen

I am raising my two children in the neighborhood, and they both attend South Loop Elementary. A Near South High School would be a great place for my kids as they continue to grow and develop in CPS and the neighborhood. My wife and I have been lifelong residents of Chicago, and want our children to grow up in the city and in CPS, and this high school helps us do that.

-Ryon Lancaster

My daughter is very smart, however she doesn't always test well, making it difficult to enter a selective enrollment school. I love the south Loop neighborhood and the families in it. I would like her to maintain those connections and continue to grow with these families.

-Near South Citizen

We live in south loop and currently attend SLES. Without having good high we'll probably have to move out sooner rather than later so kids have enough time to make friends in new place.

-Eugene Grim

We moved to Bridgeport because of its diversity and neighborly feel, but now realize that doesn't translate necessarily to the schools. Building a high functioning high school for the areas of Bridgeport, Bronzeville, Chinatown, and South Loop will reduce the stress (financial and emotional) on some families to ship their kids to private or "test in" schools. And it will rebalance what is perceived to be a lack of equity between neighborhoods.

-Matthew Carlozzi

Strong local schools create strong local communities and that's key to my family's happiness here and our willingness to stay in the city and raise our family instead of decamping to the 'burbs. We need a local neighborhood high school that is close to our neighborhoods so our kids don't have to wake up early/get home late because they are commuting all over the city to get a quality education. A quality education is another family value for us and our local high school is not very close and it also has low scores, which makes me unsure about sending my child there.

-Jennifer Geiger

I have been part of the effort to secure a neighborhood high school for years. Sadly it did not come to fruition in time for my 15 year old daughter, but I am hoping that it can be an option for my now 11 year old son. A school that is part of the Near South area and that is emblematic of the diverse mix of families in the area will be an integral part of sustaining growth and stability of the area. A Near South HS is not just something the area wants as an add on, it is an essential piece of fortifying and maintaining the area for families for years to come.

-David B. Sudzus

We have lived in the Near South/South Loop as property owners since 2008 and with kids in CPS since 2016. As a mixed race family, the South Loop and Near South have a very relatable and progressive household mix. We were fortunate to see the South Loop Middle School built and opened, while seeing the adaptation for NTA into a neighborhood high school flounder, even as NTA became a gifted magnet/neighborhood elementary facility. A neighborhood high school to serve the Near South area is long overdue, in order to preserve a racially mixed community in the area and continue to promote an economic growth that will benefit the entire city. We attended K-12 public schools in California and Connecticut and would like to have our kids in CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS through high school and stay in Chicago. Naturally, selective enrollment options exist throughout the city. With declining population and lower birth rates in general, Chicago faces hard decisions. A Near South neighborhood high school should be an obvious choice to help maintain the Central Business District while the city also continues in the Invest South/West initiatives.

-A.K.C

A viable high school option is vital to stabilize neighborhood growth

-J.C.

I have 2 young children who will be entering Pre-K and Kindergarten this fall at Chicago Public Schools. Even though they are a ways off from high school, as a product of the Chicago Public School system myself, I am invested in making sure they stay in CPS schools through high school. We are in an area of the city that is in

desperate need of a new quality neighborhood high school and without this one being built, we will be forced to look elsewhere and possibly have our kids travel further distances to get to and from school each day.

-Victoria Fennell

I have raised three children in the South Loop from birth and my oldest is now in middle school. This is a wonderful, vibrant and family-friendly community but without a viable high school option.

-A.R.

Our family is relatively new to the south loop/near south side. We are hoping to set long term roots here and having an accessible high school in the community would help with that decision. Our children are pretty young and not quite school age, the decision to remain or leave the community will be heavily influenced by the education opportunities that are available.

-B.J.

If there's a high school in the area we'll be committed to stay in Chicago and CPS. We won't have the need to looking forward to moving out to the burbs.

-L.G.

Our children already missed out on so much community time due to the pandemic, that losing it again when they start high school will be a great loss for them. Allowing them to maintain their community for another 4 years will be beneficial to them as individuals as well as to the community in South Loop, since families won't have to move to get their child into a different neighborhood school. -A.D.

We are a family of 4, we have two boys (4yo and 9yo). Our oldest just finished 3rd grade at South Loop Elementary school. We have lived in the South Loop for 12 years. We love our neighborhood and would love to continue living here. However, we need a neighborhood high school for our two boys. Otherwise, we will be forced to move.

-T.G.

Without a car, traveling 5 miles each way for high school would be a burden. So, we're stressfully hoping for nearby selective enrollment placement to keep my kids nearby and with access to a full slate of AP classes.

-Near South Citizen

I currently live in the South Loop with my husband and son (not yet in school). Love the neighborhood and nearby area. Don't ever want to leave. There are good elementary school options to feed into, but long term we will have to eventually consider whether we can stay in the area or not depending on our child's needs for education. Having a good neighborhood/feeder school like Near South High School would make it much easier for us to stay living & involved within the community. Both of my husband & I went to public schools and would prefer that for our son.

-Rachel Yanover Chan

South Loop Elementary/Middle has an amazing community. It would be wonderful for this to continue through our children's high school years.

-Near South Citizen

This community needs a high school. The future is upon us. This is the right school in the right location for the right community. A lot of good planning has gone into this proposal. Let's make it happen!

-Jacob Seid

My husband and I live in Bridgeport and have kids currently in elementary school and high school, as well as a baby on the way. Unfortunately, our neighborhood public high school (Tilden) does not feel like a decent option for our kids. With a 5-year graduation rate of less than 60% and an enrollment of less than 200 students (tiny for a high school, and way under-enrolled for its size), I do not believe that our kids would get the best education at Tilden. In addition, the school is 3 miles away in a neighborhood our kids are not familiar with, which is a drastic difference from their elementary school which is 3 blocks away. As a result, we have sent our oldest to a charter school that is closer and that we believe is higher quality, though we'd much prefer to stay in CPS and support neighborhood schools if there was a good option. Our other kids are currently in middle school and will sadly see their friends going to a bunch of different

high schools, since there is not a great neighborhood option. They end up getting split between public high schools in other neighborhoods, charter schools, and private schools. Many students leave the public system altogether, taking with them the per-pupil resources that could instead be used if CPS were able to get them to stay.

If there was a new high school on the near south side, we would definitely prefer it to our current neighborhood high school, and to the charter school we currently send our oldest kid to. Although our older kids likely will not benefit from the new school since it will take some years to get built, our kiddo on the way would, and we also believe our neighborhood elementary schools would be strengthened if there were a better public high school option nearby.

-Near South Citizen

We've been residents of the South Loop since 2003 (minus a few years in CA) and have watched this wonderful neighborhood blossom. It's to the point where we can't go to a restaurant, coffee shop, or the library without running into friends. My son's a rising 6th grader at the vibrant South Loop Elementary school, friends with kids he's known since infancy. We could have sent our son to a magnet or private school, but we chose not to. We just want that same opportunity for him in high school. We have the privilege and ability to be able to look outside CPS for our high school options, but we don't want to. We believe in diversity, public education and community, and there's a real opportunity for Chicago to demonstrate these values with a new Near South neighborhood high school. It's time to support another neighborhood success story.

-Sarah Masiulewicz Marren

I live in the South Loop and it's good to have more than 1 option for high school.

-K.S.

We moved to South loop from Brazil 5 years ago. We love how diverse is this neighborhood. My kids are growing fast and my oldest going to 5th grade - we are scared to have to move outside Chicago to have access to a good high school.

-Caroline

We have raised two kids in the South Loop CPS system. We know it's too late for our kids, but this beautiful neighborhood needs a HS. SLES does an amazing job with its kids and they should be able to continue together in a neighborhood HS.

-Emanuel Ghebremichael

Being committed to neighborhood schools requires having physical neighborhood schools.

The proposed HS reduces the distance for 80%+ of the neighborhood and would end reliance on selective or charter schools or (for those with the resources) moving or private schools. Evidence points to diverse schools achieving better results for students.

This proposed school is the best option right now. It makes use of state money to get it done that can't be used otherwise.

-Anthony Downing

My siblings and I are all way out of school. But I do have family members and friends who would benefit from a high school like this. It would broaden the options and pressure of choosing a high school. I think the new location is a convenient spot for all locations. I understand that the Asian community would benefit from this high school, but as long as more ethnicities are welcomed and accepted into the high school I support this new high school.

-Near South Citizen

My husband and I live in the south loop and also own several rental properties in the area. We have two children, aged 6 and 16. Our daughter just finished kindergarten at South Loop Elementary School and our teenage son attends high school outside of the city. I am a former CPS teacher and am a strong supporter of public education and one of the things I love most about our neighborhood is a strong, diverse, community-based public elementary school. I would love for my child to attend a public CPS school for high school, as well.

-A.W.

This high school is very important to my family since that would mean less pressure for my kids to get into a well academic high school. My oldest have dyslexia and it would be hard for him to score well on exams.

-Jamie Moy

Near south high is important to our family and community because it gives our children more and closer opportunities to their neighborhoods. There are multiple elementary/middle schools in the area, but to bring a fresh start to the community is what we need. Most of South Loop elementary / middle school students will have to go to High School outside of their neighborhood. Our community needs this!

-D.J.

We are a young family with a 10-year-old child. A

New high school would demonstrate that the Near School is a real neighborhood with infrastructure and resources for families and not just young professionals and empty-nesters.

-Dan O.

If we want to keep families in the city and add to the vibrancy and diversity of the city, we need a school that is accessible to all.

-E.O.

We are a young family who have purchased a house in Bridgeport. We love the city (and the south side!) but fear the lack of a viable high school will be what makes us leave for the suburbs.

-Mike Novak

My husband and I have lived in the South Loop for 16 years. We love it here and have chosen to raise our three kids here. We have a neighborhood grade school we love that is diverse in every way. We all have good friends and support systems. Yet when my oldest (now entering 6th grade) was entering 4th, we started seeing friends leave the city because of the uncertainty of high school in our neighborhood. We did our own house hunting in the suburbs, but we didn't want to bail on the city and contribute

to the declining enrollment at CPS, so we clung to the hope that the Near South neighborhood High School dream would become a reality so that we could give our kids a solid HS option that didn't include all the pressure that comes from selective enrollment or the added expense of putting three kids through private school. This school means a lot to SO MANY families just like mine.

-Stephanie McAndrew

We want have opportunity to raise kids in the community we are in. I believe the new high school will represent the diversity of the neighborhoods. I believe kids shouldn't travel far out to get great education.

-Jolanta Vrubliauskas

Our family has lived in the South Loop since 2006. We have put our heart and soul into this community and our local public school, South Loop Elementary. During this time we have watched our community pull together to create a challenging and nurturing school community for our students. It is why we have stayed in the South Loop for so long. We have been a part of the movement for a new school at least three times since our children started elementary school. Now our children are in high school and still there is not a neighborhood high school option that makes sense for the South Loop. Our children endured great amounts of stress preparing for Selective Enrollment tests and grade requirements to get into those schools. This process takes a great toll on a family and it is unhealthy to put our children through these motions. In order to keep tax paying families who contribute to our schools and provide endless hours of service to their communities, we will need a neighborhood high school. Without a neighborhood high school, the city will lose the diversity that exists in this wonderful community. It is likely younger families will leave to the suburbs and the thriving socioeconomic conditions in the South Loop will change. The South Loop is a neighborhood where positive change exists in the City of Chicago. If you invest here, you will see benefits to not only our neighborhood, but the neighborhoods that surround us.

-Near South Citizen

We currently have a 4 year old who will be starting at South Loop Elementary fall 2024. While I have no concerns with the elementary school I am concerned with the current high school. Without a new high school we would either look at other CPS high

schools, private or need to move to the suburbs. I love our South Loop community and would love to stay here.

-Heather Savage

To be able to not have to move out of an area we love.

-J.K.

This high school is very important to my family and I because it gives us more options for a neighborhood school. Right now my neighborhood school is Phillips Academy and personally that's not an option. My son currently has and IEP and he has anxiety when testing so having to test to get into a school can be very tricky. This is why this high school is necessary.

-A.B.

We are a family of 5 (10,6,5 year olds). My husband and I bought our first place in the Southloop when it was just the 3 of us and we planned on staying here until kids go off to college. But due to the questionable future of what highschool our oldest daughter will land in, would depend if we stay here or not. It's definitely an unsettling, anxious feeling when having to think about this. This highschool would mean we could continue on with the same friends, supportive family members, community, and hopefully having amazing teachers, as in Southloop Elementary.

-M.F.

I have lived at 8th and Wabash for 20 years and have watched the neighborhood grow and change. I actually work as a provider in the Loop so I see lots of patients who live in South Loop. Throughout the years, we have talked about CPS and schooling and options. I now have a 7 year who happily walks every day to South Loop Elementary - she LOVES it! I love it. I love the neighborhood feel of it and the friends she has made all live nearby. Sure when she goes to 4th grad we will have to walk a little farther but still will be a neighborhood school. High school is the big question and a reason lots of my patients move out of the south loop and also why we may have to leave. I would love for my daughter to be able to test into Jones but then again do I want her to have all that pressure and focus on testing and scores? I would love for her to have a neighborhood option as the plan is once again for her to walk to school and have

friends who live nearby in our neighborhood. This high school is extremely important to continuing to support the South Loop neighborhood and keep it growing.

-Tiffany Athey

My grandma moved to Dearborn Park when it was new. My parents moved here over 20 years ago. I moved here with my husband and daughter 6 years ago. I have known the neighborhood from the beginning and seen the changes and development over the past 40 years. There are so many families with children now. When we moved into our building six years ago, my daughter was the only child. Now there are 13! Every time an adult moves out a family moves in. We love the community and the great grammar school was a huge selling point for us. It is so popular that a middle school had to be built to accommodate all of the students. But after that, kids have to go to another neighborhood for high school. That isn't right. The neighborhood is not what it was 40 years ago. South Loop is full of families now and needs a high school for them to go to.

-Holly Rowe

This new high school is important to increase education options for Bronzeville residents. It is important to prioritize diversity and include Pershing elementary school as a feeder school. Pershing is a diverse school that is closer to the proposed site than other schools and the boundary should go South to 35th street at a minimum to avoid worsening educational inequities. The Gap neighborhood in Bronzeville is 31st-35th street and should have the option to attend the near south high school as a neighborhood school.

-Christina Barriteau

It's not. There are high schools - invest in them more.

-A.I.

I want my kids to have the best education and opportunity and our current options are limited and inconveniently located.

-Hilary Van Kuiken

We live in a community that we love and want an option for both my children to stay in the community when they go to high school.

-Near South Citizen

Education is very important for our family, our kid's future. We'd like to see our kids build friendship within the community, learn and thrive.

-Near South Citizen

My family is 4 generations in the South Loop/Dearborn Park beginning with my Mom who retired here in 1984, myself/husband moved here in 1999, our daughter/son-in-law in 2016 and our granddaughter born here in 2016. We love this neighborhood for its diversity, proximity to museums, higher educational opportunities and employment. Our granddaughter is thriving in the South Loop Elementary School, and has developed deep friendships and loves the neighborhood.

When Mom moved here there were few children, a few more when we moved here, and since 1999 the neighborhood has exploded with families and lots of children. A local high school is needed as soon as possible to address the educational needs of the thousands of children who live here in the South Loop. Jones High School can not address the amount of children who need a good high school in their neighborhood.

-Debra Rowe

We need to buy a larger home to accommodate our growing family and want to know that there is a quality neighborhood school option for high school. Moving in the next year and want to stay in the South Loop.

-M.G.

We have two young kids and want to stay in The neighborhood long term and this would be accomplished with a neighborhood high school.

-Aida Sutardjo

I have two daughters at a local CPS elementary school and, while they,Äôre only in 2nd + 3rd grade, I already feel anxious and uncertain about what their high school options

will be. Without a strong local option, we are likely to move to the suburbs before high school begins or put them in private high school.

-Emily McMahon

We have a 2 year old and 4 year old and live in the South Loop. We love living here but don't feel that there are good options for high school, so are planning on moving before our boys reach that age.

-Near South Citizen

My son is young right but I am already thinking of high school options, if I should move now or later.

-S.I.

My wife and I have two children. We really love the Southloop neighborhood. We have lived here for two years. The main consideration for leaving is that there doesn't seem to be a great high school option. I know ourselves and many other parents would be very excited to have a new diverse high school in South Loop. I'm sure it would make the difference in staying or moving.

-Colten Barnaby

A new neighborhood high school will give my children an opportunity to excel and thrive.

-R.S.

We live in South loop and have 2 kids. South loop is a great neighborhood but people end up moving out of here because of lack of long term public school engagement plan. We would love to stay here if we could see a future with public a high school in the area.

-Near South Citizen

We are still a number of years away from high school but know the value of community based schools for our kids, and would love to have continuity of neighborhood education for our kiddos.

-C.S.

I have lived in the south loop for 14 years and started a family here. Having a near south side high school for my kids to attend would make staying in the neighborhood a possibility when they get to HS ages.

-A.K.

Tax paying family who desires top class education at public schools

-Near South Citizen

I recently moved to the South Loop and have 2 young children. I love the neighborhood and want to stay here and one of the biggest factors in that choice is feeling like there are strong options for school. I am also a child therapist and want to see the children I work with have good options for schools to give them the best futures.

-Jenna Salek

We have lived in Bronzeville for 23 years. Now that I have two kids, 13 and 7 year old, school options are very important. My 13 year old has very limited options for high school that I would be comfortable sending him to. We are looking at places in oak park for the schools alone. This move would make my childcare options for my youngest more expensive as well as my commute. Please give us another option

-Gabrielle Dyson

My ex-husband and I both live and own property in the South Loop. We moved here specifically for South Loop Elementary, a sense of community and for our son to get a diverse education. We want to keep our son as close to our neighborhood for high school but as of now are for sure looking outside of our neighborhood. There are no quality options that are in our bounds.

-William Sherman

We have 3 children; 2 in high school & 1 in kindergarten. 1 goes to Lincoln Park HS, one goes in the opposite direction - to Marist HS. The youngest is in a neighborhood school. It has been very stressful worrying about what HS my children will be able to attend. It is also extremely stressful to have children on opposite ends of Chicago in HS.

-Near South Citizen

We are a family with three small kids in the South Loop. Public school options are limited for the area and this impacts the ability of this area to achieve the growth potential that it has always had. People have kids, look at the public HS situation, and move out. A good public option will be a game changer for the area.

-Tony McAndrew

We've lived in the South Loop/Museum Campus since 2002. As we've grown up and had families/children, we're looking to have a neighborhood high school as our children get older. There is no high school that is a neighborhood school in the South Loop. Jones College Prep is selective enrollment.

-B.Y.L.

Schools are essential to building strong communities. Also, new schools with excellent facilities makes the learning environment for students better.

-Near South Citizen

The South Loop community is consistently growing with new, young and diverse families. My daughter goes to South Loop Elementary School and we have been great supporters of CPS. Being property owners, it is disheartening to think that the closest high school, Jones College Prep, is a selective enrollment where us as tax payers in the area cannot be guaranteed a place for our child in the closest high school. Thus, having the Near South High School that will include the South Loop in the boundaries of the school will be a big relief for us parents who seek a good school for our kids who live in the area without needing to relocate our lives to search for better high school for our kids. It will only be a big plus to the development of the community.

If by any chance this project is not supported, I do not doubt many south Loop families will be leaving the area or invest in private education instead.

-A.B.G.

I want to stay in the neighborhood for long and would like my kid to have great quality education.

-Tan

We moved to the south loop in 2012, and have a 7yr old. One of the reasons we've stayed in the neighborhood is because we knew a local high school was in development. The growth in our area alone supports this need.

-E.W.

There is no good neighborhood high school around the area. My child will be going to high school in a few years and it would be nice to have another option besides the competitive selective enrollment high schools.

-Near South Citizen

I live in the south loop area. I have two kids going to south loop elementary. If we have a high school this will be great. We do not need to move to other neighborhoods for better high school. I love south loop community and it will be great if we have a high school for our kids.

-Shilpa Dogra

My daughter and her family live in the South Loop and are talking about moving to the suburbs in search of a good high school. We are very close and a move would have a great impact on my wife and I who live in the loop.

-Joseph C Bremer MD

The south loop is a vibrant community filled with opportunity for growing families and businesses, however, the schools are lacking in the area. Without proper schools, families will leave the area which in turn negatively impact the neighborhood.

-Stacey Hultgren

Close by, culturally diverse

-Near South Citizen

We've lived in the South Loop for 19 years and decided to make and raise our family here. We've had a great experience with CPS thus far and have enjoyed having our elementary school in the neighborhood. South Loop Elementary has been great for my kids academically as well has provided them a very unique racially and economically diverse environment. We have really valued that and are looking for a similar environment for high school. This proposed Near South High School is a perfect fit for everything we are looking for in terms of location, potential academics and environment.

-Patrick Geiger

My husband and I have lived in the South Loop for the past 13 years. We have two daughters, age 7 and 9, who attend South Loop Elementary. Both my husband and I were public school educated (for him in France, for me in New Hampshire) and we excelled. (We both have PhDs in Physics and are scientists at Argonne National Lab.) We want a public high school education for our girls. To us, a public education is the best education since students are exposed to a wide variety of individuals with different abilities and backgrounds that reflect the greater community that they will grow to be a part of. The selected student bodies of selective enrollment schools or many private schools, in our opinion, do not reflect the greater community, and this is a detriment to students. We are greatly concerned by the way many top rated schools seem to have a culture of cut-throat competitiveness, treating academic achievement as some sort of sport. This is not healthy, and it is not a good way to for students to learn to be good citizens and well-rounded, well adjusted individuals. The Near South side community is an amazing, incredibly diverse community, with many families dedicated to supporting public education. A high school for this community is desperately needed and if developed, we are convinced would be exceptional. If a new high school is not built, we will find ourselves in a real bind. We do not want our girls to have to waste time on test prep and experience extreme stress from the

selective enrollment process. The cost of private school may be out of reach for us. (We would likely not qualify for any scholarships.) We would be forced to consider leaving the South Loop, a community that we love and in which we have set roots, for the suburbs so that our girls could attend a community public high school. This pains us greatly.

-Anne Marie March and Gilles Doumy

My family has lived in the South Loop since my oldest son, who's now going to college, was 2 months old. Because we are privileged enough to be able to afford private schools, tutors of all kind, and be within the neighborhood boundaries, 2 of my 3 kids were able to get into the Jones CP. My daughter with learning disabilities may not be so lucky. And she may not be able to carry the Jones curriculum load. In such a case, we'll have to move to get her into a good high school.

-R.F.

I have two kids at SLES and while they are great kids not having a good neighborhood public school has created a lot of stress and if the kids do not test into a good HS we will be forced to move.

-Tina Kabra

A new high school is important because it would foster a robust community. I like living in the south loop given its proximity to the lake and downtown. A school in the near south will help maintain a high quality of life for me and my family.

-Near South Citizen

We are a family of five who would very much like to continue to live in the South Loop. Part of the reason we chose to stay when we started our family was the quality of South Loop Elementary School and the plan (at the time) to open an equally high quality Near South High School. The only thing that would push us to move is if all of our kids cannot attend a quality high school that is reasonably nearby.

-Kathryn McMillan

The stress of getting into high school is ridiculous. No child at the 13-14 year age range should have that stress. We are putting undue stress on our kids who are already stressed not only from Covid, but from the increase in violence that you see in our neighborhood post-Covid.

-K.L.

We have lived in the South Loop for almost 15 years. Have moved homes but chose to remain in the neighborhood. We love that sense of community and neighborliness it has. There is wonderful diversity and culture and we've watched the high rises come and the population explode. We've encouraged family and friends moving into the city to look in the neighborhood as well. The kids were born and raised here and have made wonderful friends throughout their time at South Loop Elementary. Our oldest is only in 5th grade and already worried about what she'll do for high school. She wants to remain with friends but knows that is not likely without a closer neighborhood high school for her to attend. For me personally no closer neighborhood high school may mean moving out of the area. This is a decision our family dreads and continues to put off in hopes of the high school opening. We are both working parents and a long commute to another neighborhood would be very difficult for our family. A high tuition private school nearby may not be possible with college tuition still coming in the future. I very much hope the promises made will be seen through to fruition for our benefit and the benefit of so many other families now living in the Near South area.

-Near South Citizen

It is important to have a quality, public school option close to home. A local school option would provide a better sense of belonging to the neighborhood and make the decision to stay in the south loop easier for parents looking to send their kids to high school.

-Near South Citizen

We are a family in the south loop with a daughter just started kindergarten this fall. Would love to have an option for her when she gets older.

-Near South Citizen

12+ year South loop residents with 2 young school age children. Currently using private education as our zoned CPS option does not suit our needs, and lacks diversity.

We,Âre a diverse, relatively high-income household paying significant taxes, and the current CPS neighborhood highschool provisions are unacceptable. As it stands, the neighborhood is only sustainable for young families, unless a proper highschool solution is created. Objectively speaking, Philips Academy is not reflective of, nor a proper solution for the South Loop neighborhood. We will 100% leave the city for the suburbs if an adequate neighborhood highschool isn,Ât forthcoming.

-N.S.D

It would build a stronger community

-Near South Citizen

My son has been apart of the south loop community for years now... he has been doing so good and I would love for him to continue to grow within that community because it gets him ready for what to expect in the real world after high school

-Y

I have 2 daughters and our part of the city needs a high school in our area please

-Lance Lim

We are a family of 2 boys and we value what South Loop Elementary has to offer. What we lack is a true neighborhood High school for our boys to attend (aside from Jones College prep, which is selective enrollment).

-Jeff Cheung

We don't have a decent school in the area and kids have to travel far

-K.M.

I live in the loop and have 3 grandchildren currently attending South Loop Elementary. They are definitely "stakeholders". Accessible public schools are the anchor of any community. CPS has perverted accessibility for the city's high schools by creating a system that results in favoring affluent whites, the workings of which few understand. The current system does nothing to strengthen community ties and make living in city

neighborhoods an attractive alternative to fleeing to the suburbs.

A Near South High School would be a great first step in bringing public education back to the communities in which the attendees live.

-C.B.

Growing up in Chinatown it was difficult for all since all of us of us had to travel quite far to go to a decent high school. I went to a high school all the way on Irving Pk and Marine Dr. That commute made school work, jobs and extracurricular activities difficult. Not having a local high school also took away from a sense of belonging because we were not part of the local community. There was a huge difference in participation for students whose families lived in the community and those of us who did not.

Chinatown children have always been excluded from those experiences because of the absence of the lack of a high school with ties to their community.

-D.E.

We are a family of 5. Been living in southloop for over 10 years. We have been very involved in southloop and knows a lot of people. Without a southloop high school, we will most likely look to move out of southloop in the next 2-3 years. This is a very serious topic for families like ours, where we have contributed large sums of taxes to our community. My realestate tax along is close to 20k a year, we can pay way less out in Naperville and wouldn't need to worry about this high school issue.

-Tom Chen

We have lived in the South Loop for the better part of a decade, and one of the main draws is the public school system. We want to be able to have our community to stay consistent throughout schooling.

-Ed Dryer

I have a son that's a freshman in hs. This new school would allow him to take more activities after school and have less of a commute.

-Patrick lee

My grandson is from a split home. The high school by his mother is Morton West, really bad. Fathers would be Phillips, which my middle daughter had to go to for special Ed & those teachers told me to do whatever I could to get her out of there! Other choice would be private, but there is no money for that. Our Ward school is the oldest in the city. Could we use a high school closer for Armour Park & Chinatown , we sure do.
-M.M.

I want my daughter to go to a school where I can walk with her to school. I don't want her to have to get up super early in order to commute to a far high school that isn't even truly in her neighborhood.
S.J.

As a parent, I have lived in the South Loop for 13 years. I moved here and purchased my first home. I had my first job after grad school in Chicago, and I have built a family here. I now have a 9 year old and an 11 year old who currently attend South Loop Elementary School. Our neighborhood has changed so much over the years. It has grown immensely and bloomed from having young professionals to becoming the homes of many young families. We have gone through a life-altering world pandemic, juggled kids and work from home during one of the longest Chicago Teachers Union strike in history, experienced protests, riots and looting which all have shaken our neighborhood and hearts in the South Loop. I have said my goodbyes to many long-time neighbors and friends with kids in the past few years who left South Loop for what they felt would be a better and safer life for their family. I have re-evaluated this neighborhood endless time since my children started attending CPS, and wondered if staying in this neighborhood that I love so much is truly in my children's best interest. The one big factor in South Loop, for many years now, is that it has a great neighborhood elementary school, but no great high school to match. This is a big stressor for parents and students and a huge factor in why so many families end up moving away once their children reach high-school age. Jones College Prep is a great high school and across the street from where my children and I reside, however, it is a selective-enrollment high school and my children do not have guaranteed access to this great education despite paying taxes in this neighborhood. This is why this new high school in South Loop is so important to me. Our neighborhood is growing and in desperate need for a great high school where our children can continue to thrive in their educational journey through the public school system. This new high school is needed to keep more families in this wonderful neighborhood so they can continue to proudly call South Loop their home. -Florence Tang

I have 3 boys, all of which are in elementary school and will move onto high school. I am not looking for a default option but for the best option that supports their educational and social emotional goals. I do think a Near South high school could be a good idea. However, I fear that it will come at the expense of schools like Dunbar and Phillips. Let's invest in academic programming to make these schools thrive - serious investment in academic programming, not feigned investment that amounts to required building maintenance or sports programming.

-L.N.

We are south loop residents who specifically purchased here with the intent of not moving. We have a great elementary option at SLE, but are not guaranteed Jones. We would love to have a neighborhood option to send our kids to. It's important that it's easily accessible by bike or walking as we are trying to limit our environmental impact

-Elizabeth Bilitz

With 4 kids under the age of 12 we are very interested in having a solid neighborhood public school option to send our kids to versus the current situation which leaves us very unsure and has already started to generate stress. So, yes we're very interested in this new high school.

-Near South Citizen

As an immigrant in the past, my friends and family went to different high schools back then. There were schools outside the neighborhood which were Chinese friendly until they were full. There was a period that many students went to Bogan HS by far southwest because there was a Chinese teacher who can speak our language. Few years later they stop taking in Chinese students, so many went to Hubbard HS which also in southwest side. Later students start going to Curie HS and now Kelly HS. Since these are all non-neighborhood schools, we were in the mercy of these schools to be willing to have a bilingual class or take in the Chinese students. I believe strongly that there should be a HS within the Chinatown area that offers continual bilingual education for our students in the community. Elementary schools within Chinese community offers bilingual education but it's lacking opportunities once at the high school level. Those students will have to travel far outside the community in order to

receive bilingual education. For those as new immigrants who don't know the layout of Chicago, it's cruel to make these kids travel far outside to receive an education.

-Near South Citizen

We would like to have a quality neighborhood high school available to everyone and continue the relationships built in elementary school. We also want a neighborhood high school available to the Chinatown neighborhood as there has never been a CPS high school close to that neighborhood to support that growing population and their families.

-Cathay Lancaster

I live in the neighborhood, my kids went to CPS (South Loop) and I think it is important to have good local schools in order to have a viable neighborhood culture.

-Todd Webb

High school students in my community travels far for high school. A neighborhood high school is necessary.

-Near South Citizen

I have 3 sons that currently attend CPS elementary schools in the proposed boundary. My oldest is going into 5th grade and we are already discussing/strategizing what our options are for high school, a stress that most parents don't have to face. Private school tuition for 3 kids is not an option, so this will be critical to our decisions to stay in the city or move to a place where all 3 kids can attend the same high school.

-V.C.

We want to stay in Chicago and have our kids continue with CPS.

- Maggie Tinsley

With all of the mental health and added pressure of teens, we don't need them worried about testing into schools. We don't need them getting lost without friends and having

to find their people. Allow them to attend school with their friends, have a solid high school experience.

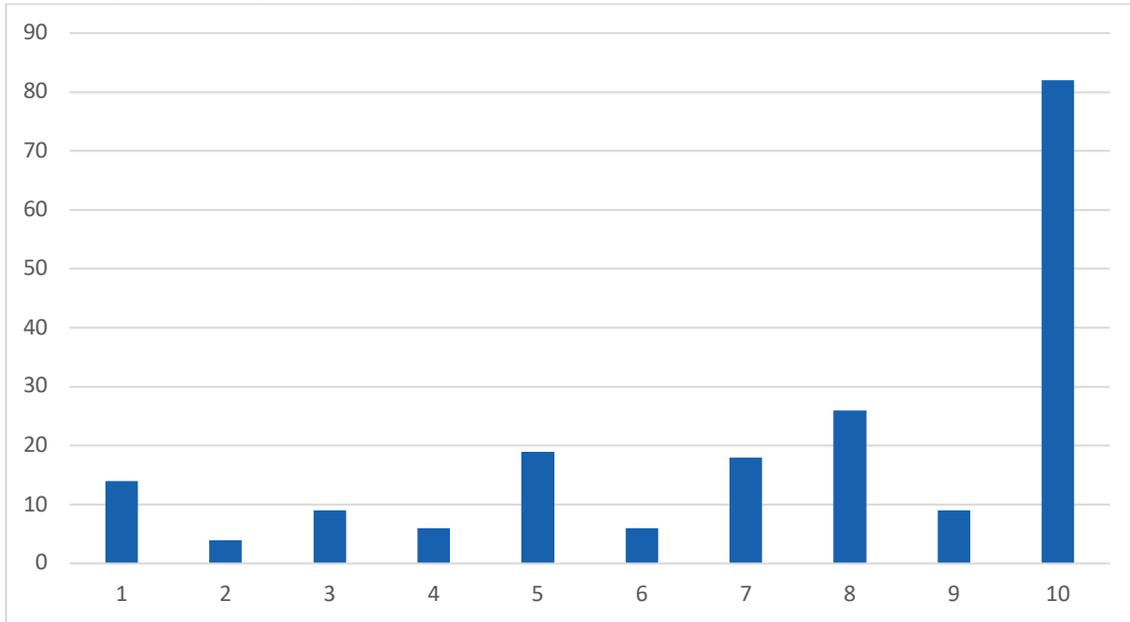
-Mark Boerema

My husband and I have lived in the South Loop for 17 years and we have a 4th grader in South Loop Elementary. We have loved living here and have loved the school, community and friendships that the South Loop has provided us. We have known far too many friends and family members that have gone through the process and stress of either trying to test into a high school or ultimately leaving the city due to the lack of close viable high school option in this area. It is very unfortunate. This area's population has been growing over the decades and more families have wanted to live (and hopefully) stay here. In order to do that, a viable high school is imperative. This area has amazing diversity, people, and so many attributes that make us want to stay. The high school would allow kids and families from the Near South area a safe, diverse, and quality education that has been lacking for years. Not only is the education important, but having families staying in the neighborhoods, kids going through their entire schooling with the same friends and neighbors and a general sense of community is important in so many ways. The stress put onto these young kids to test into schools is unnecessary and unhealthy. The discussion about a high school in this area has been going on for years and the time is now to make it happen.

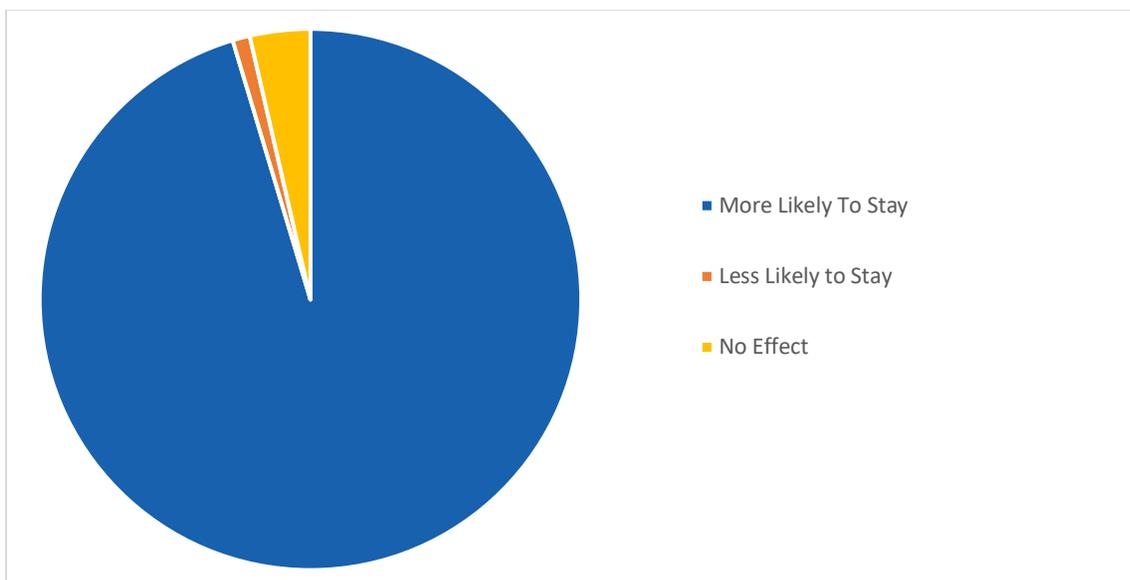
-Laura Gladfelter

Data Summary

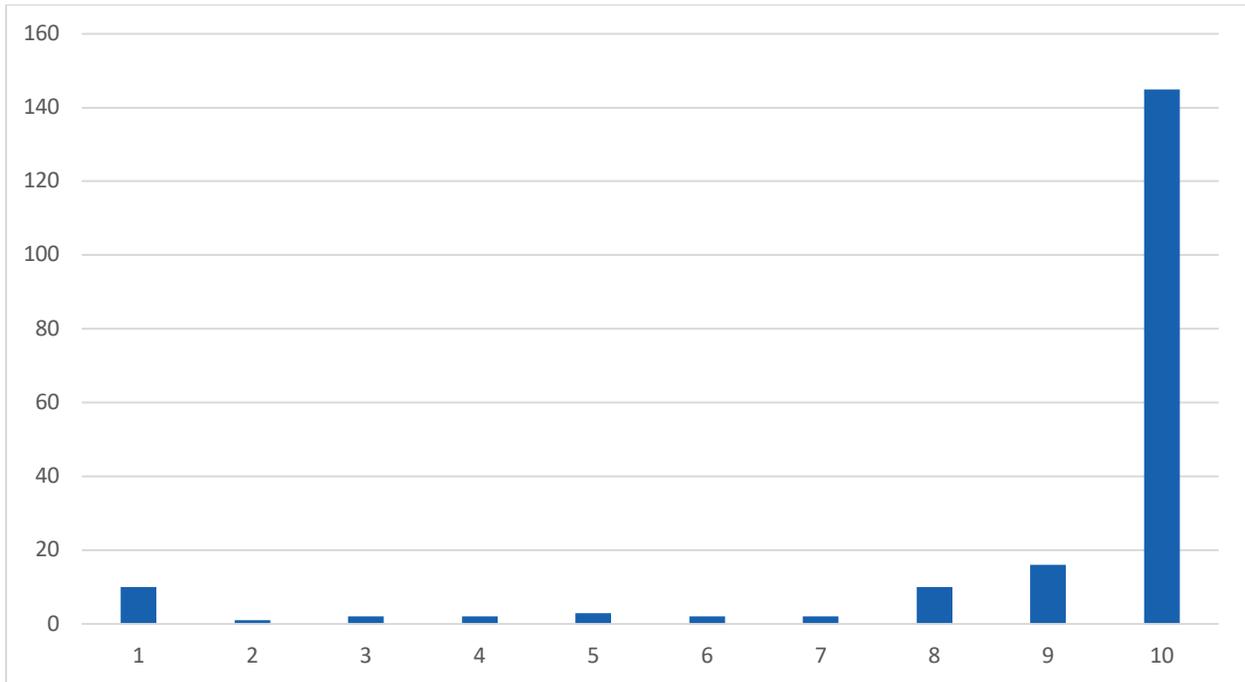
Without a new Near South High School, how likely are you to move outside of the City of Chicago for high school education? (1: very unlikely, 10 very likely)



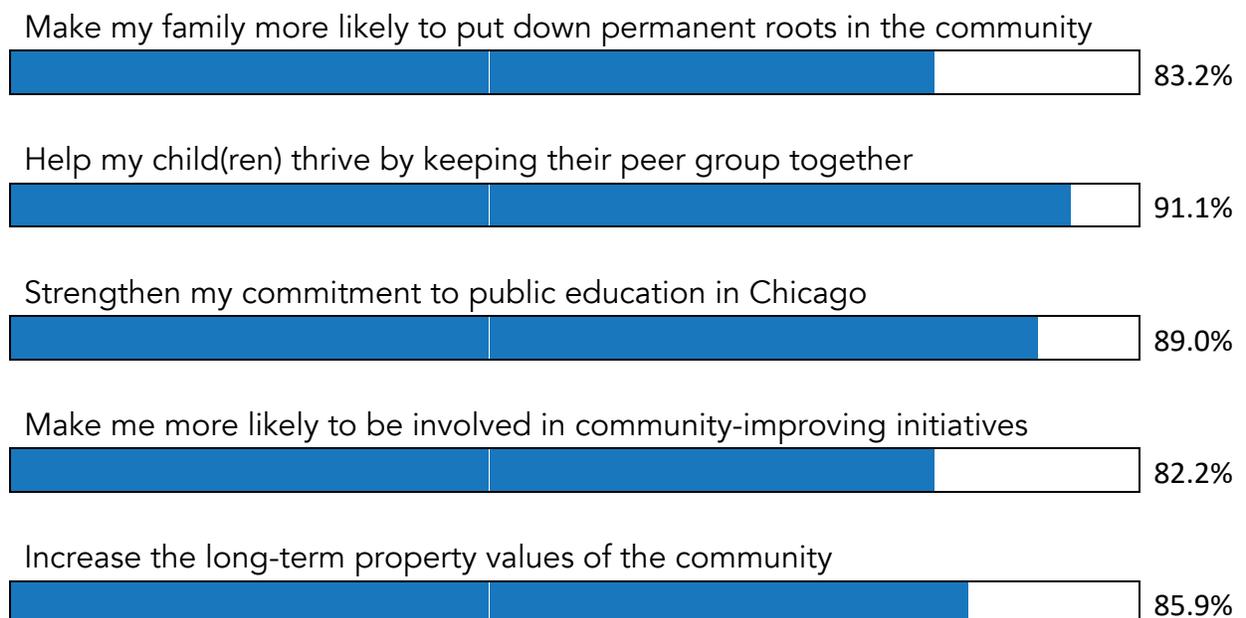
Would a new Near South High School make you more or less inclined to remain in the community?



Without a new Near South High School, how likely are you to look outside of the Near South region for high school education? (1: very unlikely, 10 very likely)



A new Near South High School would:



A new Near South High School would:



CPS Board Meeting Public Comments 7/26/23
Dr. Angel Alvarez

Welcome, congratulations, and thank you for your service.

1. CPS needs to reform its budgeting practices to not just create a system that is financially sustainable, but also one that is equitable, transparent, and accountable to the children we serve. LSCs are marginalized, especially those that serve students of color, and are not given opportunities to develop their budgets. Schools need the freedom to direct investments and develop long-term planning while being accountable for their outcomes to ensure all children are successful.

2. We need to reform how we identify, protect, and serve our diverse learners. All students should be assessed for strengths and learning differences to empower families to be active in the education of our children while developing support services to those that need them. This includes classroom accommodations, paraprofessional support, and transportation that is truly accessible and not a Kafkaesque nightmare.

3. Health and Sexual Education needs to be revised to educate children about their bodies, body autonomy, and healthy relationships. Moreover, members of the school community need to be aware of their mandatory reporting status and provided with proper training and support. Most importantly, children need to be protected and survivors empowered, not silenced and shamed.

4. Accountability needs to be at all levels of our educational system. The bold reforms this board wants to implement will be stalled if some bureaucrats are allowed to maintain the status quo. We need accountability and transparency not just in the classroom and boardroom, but also at the desk of our administrators.

5. Policies need to be constructed with informed perspectives and unintended failures need to be remedied. It's unfortunate that the Parent Leadership Council was put on indefinite hold last year after identifying and proposing solutions to many of the problems this new board has prioritized.

I will continue to submit my research and recommendations to the board and hope CPS will finally accept my offer to formally collaborate on researching disparities and develop effective solutions.

Be well,

Dr. Angel Alvarez

This was previously submitted but not included in the public comment section for 5/24/2023
<https://www.cpsboe.org/meetings/presentations-to-the-board/2344> (please include for both meetings)

May 24, 2023

Dear CPS Accelerated Placement Policy Committee and Board of Education,

I want to share my concerns over the limitations of CPS's Accelerated Placement Act policy again and ask that you make significant revisions before voting on it, as expected at your June meeting. The current policy has significant flaws and severely limits opportunities for advanced instruction, while having a discriminatory effect on historically underserved students.

The Accelerated Placement Act is an important legislation that aims to provide learning opportunities to high-achieving and hard-working students. It created significant improvements regarding the transparency of advanced learning opportunities through reporting. Moreover, the law calls on districts to address inequity in students historically identified as gifted. It is needed because all students have a right to learn, and too often, advanced learning opportunities have catered to the privileged.

The policy CPS implemented has created significant disparities and will perpetuate inequity if not addressed. I first raised concerns over the lack of opportunities for all advanced learners after CPS opted against the initial implementation of the Illinois Accelerated Placement Act (105 ILCS 5/14A-32). I explained how the law provides needed opportunities for advancement and transparency and, how a lack of compliance and an inappropriate reward system, was "of particular concern for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, persons with disabilities, and students of color."

"The pernicious effects of how CPS implements and adheres to policies means gifted children will continue to be underserved and underreported. Parents with the financial means to provide a better education for their children will move to other districts or invest their resources into private schools, exacerbating economic schism between neighborhoods and add barriers to escape the cycle of poverty. Moreover, the low numbers of gifted students in under-resourced schools may be used by unscrupulous individuals to perpetuate stereotypes of racial and ethnic inequality. This must not be allowed to happen." (Alvarez Public Hearing Comments, August 22, 2018). CPS administrators decided to create acceleration policies outside the conventional board approval process. I disagreed with their approach and predicted the changes would exacerbate preexisting inequities. The current policies and proposed minor changes are ineffective and unnecessarily burdensome.

The Kafkaesque operations of the policy are hard to defend when so many resources are wasted on bureaucrats implementing a program that accepted only 53 students into any form of accelerated instruction last year- less than a fraction of approximately 200,000 K-8 students. The effects on students of color that I predicted are also evident. Applications for accelerated instruction by students of color decreased, and the racial disparities regarding acceptance rates for Black and Hispanic students significantly increased. Non-Black and Hispanic students are more than 2.5x more likely to be accepted for single-subject acceleration, more than 1.5x as likely to be given early admission to kindergarten, more than 2x as likely to receive early entrance into first grade than Black and Hispanic students. Furthermore, no students were granted whole-grade acceleration, begging the question as to why so many resources were wasted on forcing families to apply for opportunities that the District was so unwilling to provide.

The proposed changes will likely exacerbate the opportunity gap for accelerated instruction for not just Black and Latinx students, but for low-income, and students with disabilities. It calls on

the District to “develop equity-based strategies reflecting the CPS Equity Framework in order to mitigate opportunity differences leading to achievement differences in access and success.” However, the District has an "Equity Framework" and racial disparities increased. The policy makes no mention of accommodations for students with disabilities and diverse learners are underrepresented in advanced learning opportunities in CPS. In fact, the proposed changes create additional barriers to equity by forbidding principals and school staff from providing accelerated instruction for gifted students that were excluded from the Office of Access and Enrollment draconian process.

The facts are clear- the current policy is poorly designed and fails to identify talented students that would benefit from accelerated instruction. The racial disparities highlight the need to revise the policy and lift restrictions for all high-performing students so those that would benefit from accelerated instruction are able to receive it.

Best regards,
Dr. Angel Alvarez

Disparities in CPS Advanced Academic Programs

Dr. Angel Alvarez, Presentation May 18, 2023
Slides for Board of Education Meeting May 24, 2023

What is the Accelerated Placement Act

Accelerated Placement Act (Public Act 100-0421), passed in 2017, effective 2018 (CPS did not implement)

- “NOT limited to those children who have been identified as gifted and talented, but rather is open to all children who demonstrate high ability AND who may benefit from accelerated placement;”
- “A FAIR and EQUITABLE decision-making process that involves multiple persons and includes a student’s parents or guardians;”
- “Procedures for notifying parents or guardians” for identification and applying for acceleration, and includes publication of a “report card” with participation and demographics. (Emphasis on identifying and servicing students that are historically overlooked.)
- “An assessment process that includes multiple valid, reliable indicators” to ensure “effective, and efficient referral, assessment, and placement practices.”

See IAGC: <https://www.iagcgifted.org/IL-Acceleration-Act>

Why is the Accelerated Placement Act Needed?

Accelerated Placement Act (Public Act 100-0421), passed in 2017, effective 2018 (CPS did not implement)

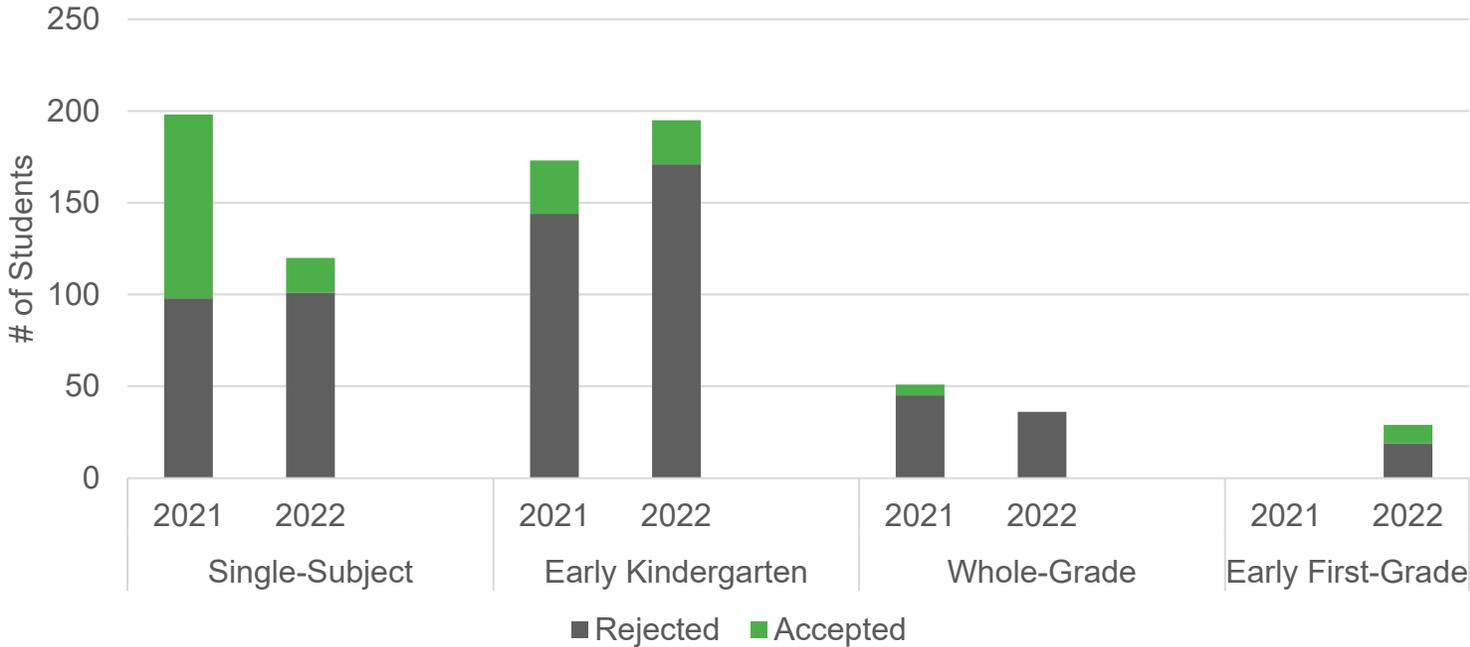
- Because it works!
 - [A Nation Empowered: Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students](#)
 - [What One Hundred Years of Research Says About the Effects of Ability Grouping and Acceleration on K-12 Student Achievement](#)
- Because systemic inequities have deprived many talented students from opportunities they deserve (particularly for low-income students, students of color, and diverse learners).
- Because “55% of Illinois school districts did not have policies permitting early entrance to Kindergarten and first grade, 46% did not have policies permitting acceleration in individual subject areas, and 90% did not have policies permitting whole grade acceleration.” (IL APA)
- Because there are both economic benefits to society and a moral imperative to foster the talents of our children.

CPS APA Implementation

- CPS was against the APA and did not implement it for 2 years after passage.
- I spoke against CPS's delays and advocated for underserved students to have more opportunities for advancement, particularly students that are low-income, students of color, and those with disabilities (August, 2018)
- CPS did offer accelerated instruction before APA, but it was secretive and inconsistently applied
- Eventually adopted a very limited policy with unnecessary hurdles
- I warned of the disparate effects for students in under-resourced schools (August, 2020)
- CPS enacted more restrictions in 2021
- Racial disparities for acceleration significantly increased
- Recommended policy changes will NOT correct disparities
- My approach benefits more students, is efficient, has greater transparency, runs at a lower cost, and is far more equitable than what was proposed by CPS.

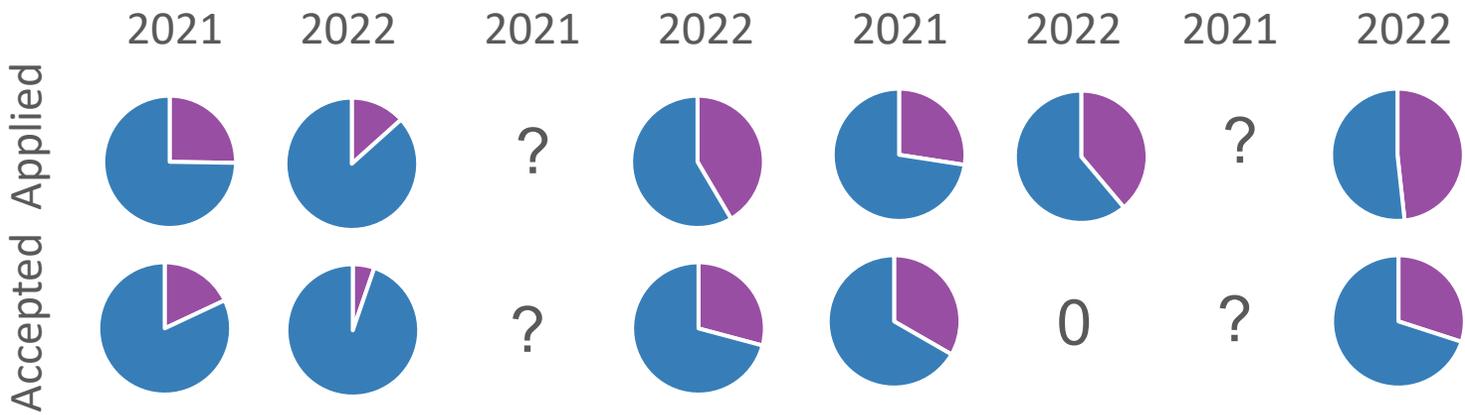
Changes to CPS's Accelerated Placement Act Policy Restricted Access to Talented Students

CPS Acceleration Outcomes: 2021-2022



Racial Disparities for Acceleration

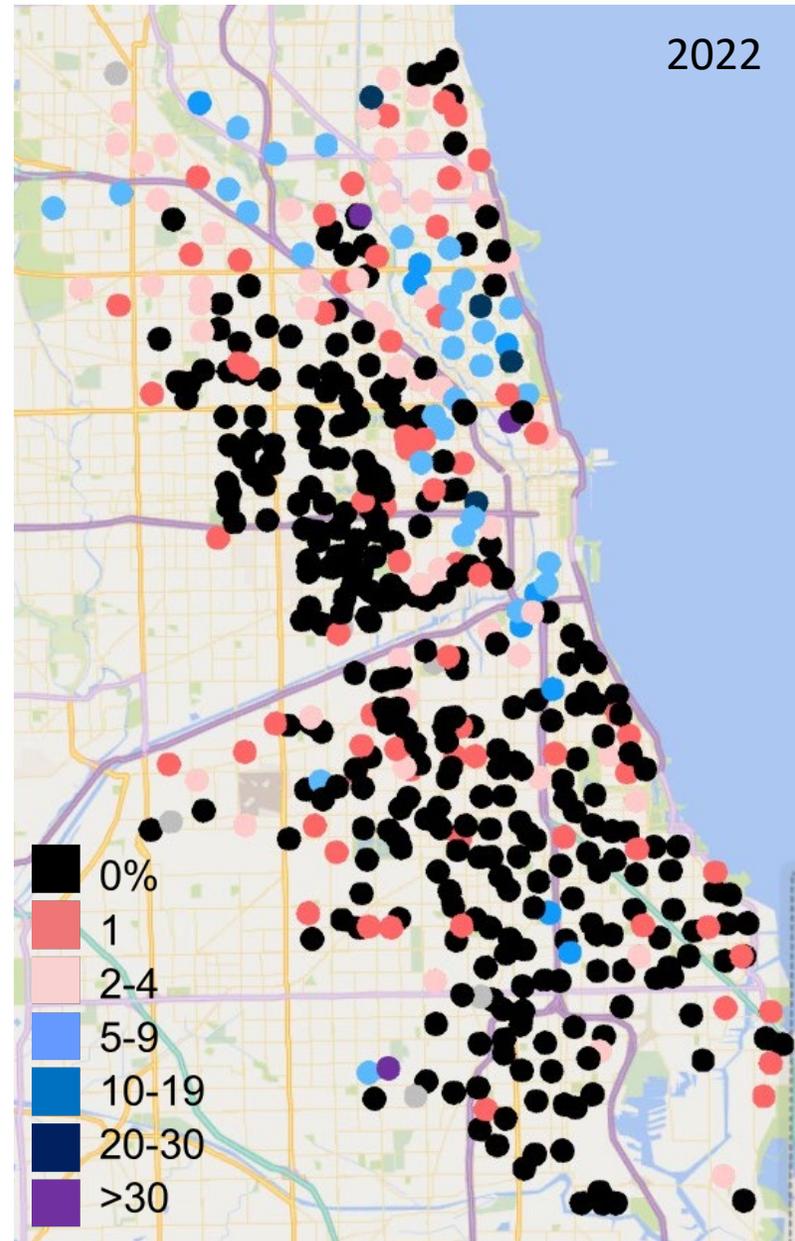
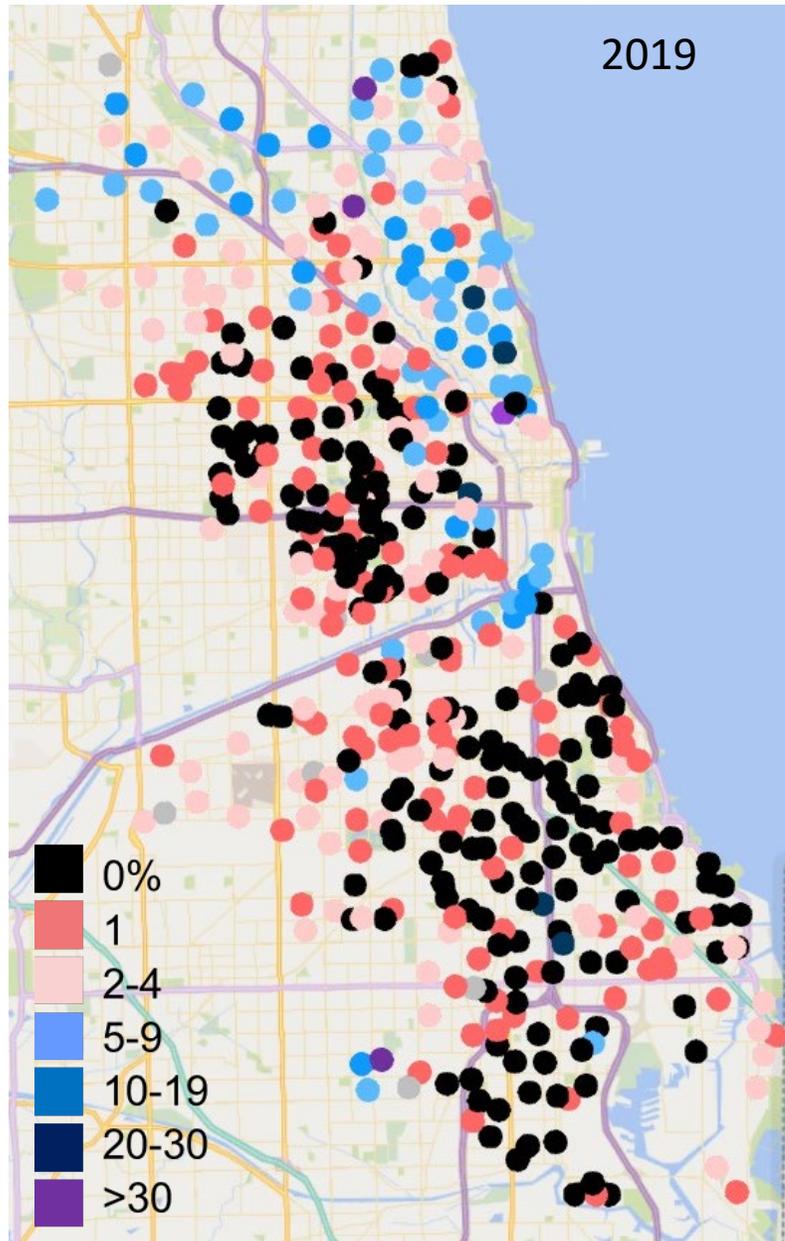
<u>Acceleration</u>	<u>Disparity Multiple*</u>
Single-Subject	>2.5x
Early Admission: Kindergarten	>1.5x
First Grade	>2x



■ Non-black and non-Hispanic
■ Black or Hispanic

*Disparity multiple: Odds of non-Black/non-Hispanic student acceptance vs Black or Hispanic applicants, Alvarez analysis 2023

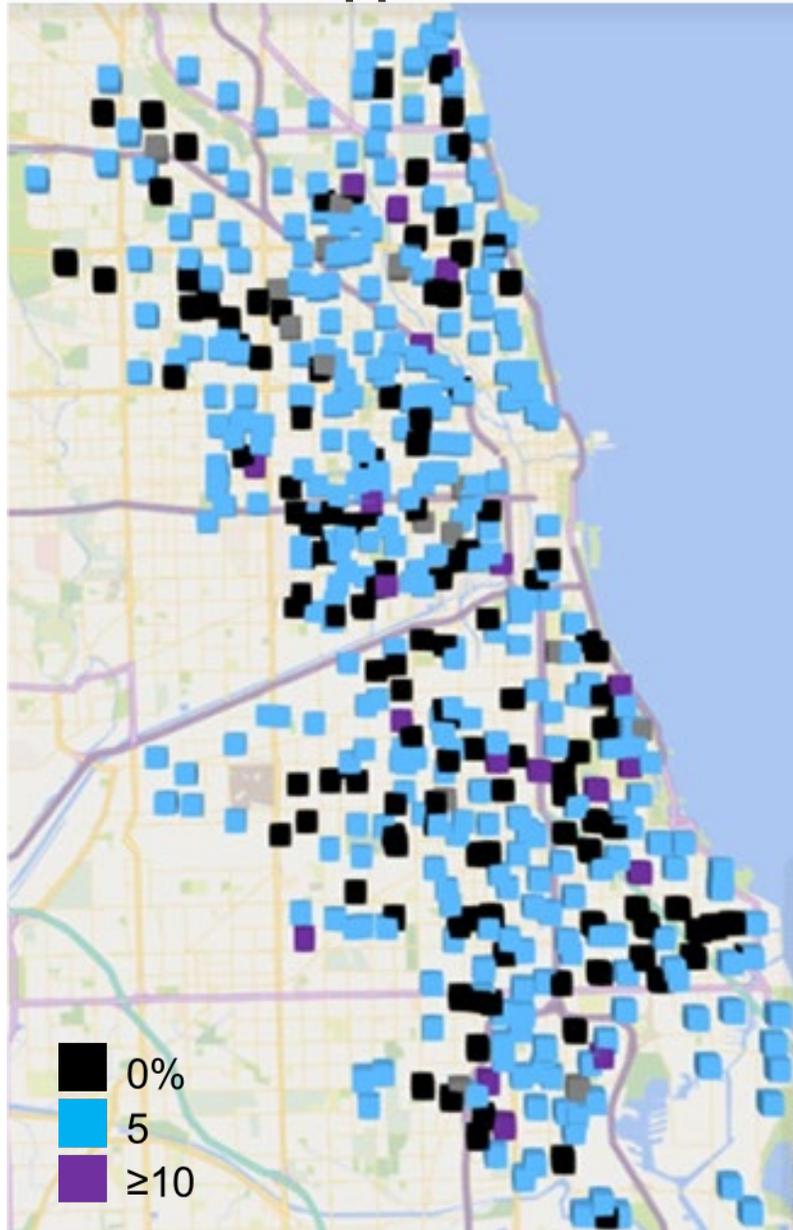
Maximum percentage of potentially eligible students based on just IAR testing criteria



Criteria for Eligibility are Draconian

- Two consecutive standardized assessments (Star 360/others) $\geq 95\%$
- Four quarters of perfect grades
- Level 5 on the IAR from previous year
- Must apply 9 months before the next school year (only 4-6th grade)
- Must test during narrow window in spring and exceed grade standards
- Must pass subjective assessment regarding readiness
- Must get permission from principal and teachers (possible retaliation)
- No consideration for diverse learners or underserved students
- Current policy benefits $<0.1\%$ of students, mostly those of privilege, and revised to be more discriminatory

Alvarez approach to more equitable advanced learning opportunities



Needed improvements

- Opportunities for accelerated learning must not perpetuate societal inequalities, student performance must be contextualized to school.
- Students should be automatically identified for eligibility based on above-grade-level performance.
- Multiple objective measures must be used to increase opportunities for acceleration, not be used to force students through multiple hurdles.
- Students with disabilities should be tested with accommodations and evaluated based on their talent, not their disability.
- Allows for advanced acceleration for exceptional students.
- A less bureaucratic operation allows for a more effective use of resources and avoids potential retaliation.
- Helps mitigate racial disparities that accumulate the longer students are in CPS.
- Serves as a model for the country.