

Chicago from home to school: why segregation persists and current reforms may only make things worse

Public education is an essential component of democratic society, founded on the principle that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion or economic background be given equal opportunity to learn and thrive. The idea that such equity can flourish in racially and economically segregated schools has been thoroughly debunked; creating equality in schools cannot be fulfilled until school segregation is addressed. National and local surveys show that parents from various backgrounds exhibit a preference not just for equitable opportunity, but for diversity in schools.¹ If support for integration already exists, why then does segregation persist?

In Chicago, there are several factors contributing to the segregation of schools, including:

- the hyper-segregation of Chicago's neighborhoods,
- the emergence of choice (or lack thereof) in educational options,
- and the lack of overarching guidance regarding the promotion and sustainability of school diversity.

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Segregation in education and housing cannot be viewed in isolation; the two are inextricably linked, as segregation in one reciprocally impacts the other, resulting in unconscionable inequities for school-aged children. A recent national report by the Equity and Excellence Commission notes: "While some young Americans—most of them white and affluent—are getting a truly world-class education, those who attend schools in high poverty neighborhoods are getting an education that more closely approximates school in developing nations."² Moreover, reports show that metropolitan areas with greater levels of racial segregation have poorer education equality. This is clearly the case in Chicago, a city that is continually cited as one of the most segregated in the nation. In fact, data analysts have named Chicago the *most* segregated city based on 2010 census data.³

Yet, the issue is multi-faceted, and simple neighborhood dynamics and demographics are not the only factors influencing school quality. Virtually all parents have an inherent motivation to provide the best possible opportunities for their children, meaning that choice and the leveraging of individual resources further complicate the educational landscape. However, choice, perhaps counter-intuitively, does not translate into greater diversity. Often, the plethora of school options available to parents in Chicago—neighborhood, private, and charter, to name a few—only serve to further stratify educational quality by race and class. As one researcher succinctly states: "People who have the most power and information get the best choices."⁴ Parents with ample time, resources, and a greater understanding of the options available, are better equipped to make an informed decision. Such parents may opt out of enrolling their



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child in the neighborhood school if they find a seemingly better alternative elsewhere—even if that means moving out of the city entirely in an effort to access suburban school systems. However, simply understanding the options available does not ensure enrollment in a non-neighborhood school. Parents and children must traverse often complicated application processes that can include testing requirements, lottery assignment and, for private schools, tuition fees. Parents with limited time, financial resources, and the know-how to navigate this system ultimately have much less “choice” than their more affluent and savvy peers.

Housing segregation and its influence on neighborhood school segregation, in conjunction with the economic stratification inherent in school choice, lead to vast educational inequities based on race and class. For example, a recent report analyzing school segregation in New York, which has a system of neighborhood zoning integrated with more flexible enrollment options, provides evidence of this interplay that can be applicable to Chicago. “If zoning and choice tend individually towards segregation, their combination in the hybrid system of student assignment... is a perfect storm of segregation and unequal access. Put starkly, New York City’s hybrid system allows parents with means to flee schools they don’t like even as it excludes others from the schools affluent parents do like.”⁵

Lastly, since the fallout of what some would consider forced integration practices fueled by litigation, there have been no overarching policies, programs, or guidance aimed at intentional, sustainable integration of Chicago’s schools. This is only complicated by the proliferation of private, selective enrollment, magnet, and charter schools that operate either wholly or partially outside of CPS’ purview. Furthermore, schools essentially “compete” with one another to garner the best teachers, students, and resources, perhaps to the detriment of city-wide educational equality. For this to change, diversity must be seen as an asset to the learning environment and guidance for sustaining diversity must be provided to individual schools while consistently assessing the landscape of Chicago’s school diversity overall.

As CPS has instituted the most dramatic educational reforms in Chicago history, it is imperative that critical assessments are made regarding the history of school segregation and the potential impacts of school reform.

This report will:

- outline research regarding the benefits of integrated schools,
- analyze the link between housing and education,
- assess the ways in which segregation has fueled both the current state of education in Chicago and may be aggravated by CPS’ reforms,
- and make recommendations for ameliorating segregation and furthering school diversity

The Positive Impact of Integrated Schools

Research has shown integrated schools to be of great benefit to all students, even wealthy white students. White residents who have had the opportunity to live in racially and ethnically diverse settings benefit from numerous social advantages. Professor Robert A. Garda, Jr. of Loyola University of New Orleans School of Law stresses the benefits of diversity in increasing cross-cultural competence and furthering marketability to potential employers, stating that Fortune 500 companies seek out this type of competence in employees: “Their arguments are essentially, ‘We want to hire kids that have been exposed to a wide variety of ideas. We want to hire kids that are comfortable working in a multi-racial workplace, selling products to a multi-racial market and dealing with business partners on a global scale.’”⁶ Yet many white students lack this type of cross-cultural competency due to a critical lack of exposure to racial diversity: “The average white child attends a school that is seventy-seven percent white in a country with only fifty-seven percent white students. And these general statistics are misleading, as more than half of white students attend schools that are more than ninety-five percent white. What is shocking is the fact that white children have less contact with minorities in schools today than they did in years past despite the fact that there are many more minorities in schools today.”⁷ This suggests that segregation is actually increasing at a time when the population is diversifying.⁸

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Nationally, and especially within the City of Chicago, this issue warrants immediate attention as the U.S. increasingly falls behind other countries in educational performance.¹⁰ The stratification of educational resources and the lack of cross-cultural competency will set future generations behind their counterparts around the globe. Recent demographic trends and the globalization of the economy necessitate multi-cultural fluency. It has long been documented that extreme educational segregation poorly equips African American students to meet the social and professional expectations of the dominant, white society. The same may be true for segregated white children who will be in the minority racially when they enter professional settings.¹¹

Integrated schools also produce greater equity in educational attainment. Researchers have found the socioeconomic characteristics of a school body impart direct and lasting consequences on low-income children, perhaps more so than any other factor influencing school quality: “A 2011 study by Berkeley public policy professor Rucker C. Johnson concludes that black youths who spent five years in desegregated schools have earned 25 percent more than those who never had that opportunity.”¹² Not only are racially and socioeconomically integrated schools better for students, but such environments also have the added benefit of fostering a desire for more integrated living environments and vice versa. Roslyn Arlin Mickelson, PH.D., University of North Carolina professor explains the relationship between

Cross-cultural competence

Educational equity

*Increased employment
marketability*

Intergenerational impact



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integrated schools and housing noting: “The synergistic nature of this relationship unfolds across the life course.”¹³ The benefits of integrated housing and education multiply when both are fostered in tandem and, taken together, their impacts are intergenerational: “The social science research on this relationship indicates that those who lived in integrated neighborhoods and attended diverse schools as children are more likely to choose to live in integrated neighborhoods as adults, where they then send their own children to integrated schools.”¹⁴ Efforts aimed at increasing integration in housing and schools are therefore mutually reinforcing. Despite the clear benefits of school integration, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) demographic data depict continued segregation that is consistent with residential segregation patterns.

Chicago School Composition and Demographics

4 As of October 2012, CPS reported 403,461 students; this was 690 fewer students from the previous year.¹⁵ Preliminary data for the first week of the 2013-2014 school year indicates a drop of about 3,000 more students.¹⁶ In reviewing demographic data for the four most prominent racial/ethnic groups in CPS, the 2012 school year witnessed an increase in white, Hispanic, and Asian students while the African American student population decreased, see figure 1 in the Data Summary Sheet.¹⁷ For the 2012 school year, Hispanic students made up 44.7% of the student population, African American students made up 40.5%, white students 9%, and Asian students 3.4%. Obscured by this overall data are the dramatically varied school by school racial and economic composites. For example, as was recently reported in a Chicago Reader article: “Forty-one percent of the city’s public schools...are at least 90 percent black. Sixty-eight percent of the black students enrolled in the Chicago Public Schools are in these schools. The vast majority of these students are from low-income families; many are living below the poverty line.”¹⁸ Moreover, although whites make up 31.7% of the city’s population, according to the 2010 census;¹⁹ white students are sorely underrepresented in Chicago Public Schools. While household compositions may play a role; one factor contributing to this discrepancy could certainly be the perception of CPS among white residents and higher income households.

Many Chicago residents feel that CPS offers inferior educational opportunities in comparison to alternative options, like private schools. Families will choose what they feel is the best option for their children, and research has shown that as household income increases, so too does the likelihood that parents will choose a private school option for their children.²⁰ More affluent residents, who tend to be disproportionately white, have access to social network resources that assist in the identification of “more desirable” school options, and thus expand school choice for this subset of the population: “higher status individuals are embedded in better networks that can act as more efficient sources for information about schools.”²¹ Furthermore, with increasing grade levels, there also exists the perception that public schools are less safe. This seems to correlate with the enrollment levels of white students according to CPS data. For 2012, the greatest enrollment of white students, in raw numbers, is at the kindergarten level, and as grade levels increase, enrollment by white students steadily decrease.



In reviewing figure 2 in the Data Summary Sheet,²² there also appear to be incongruences in *school type* depending on racial background. For instance, at the elementary level, white students make up a greater share of Special Education, Regional Gifted Centers, Classical Schools, and Elementary Magnet Schools than their overall average; while African American Students make up a greater share of the city's one Alternative School, Contract Schools, Small Elementary, and Performance Schools. Hispanic students appear to be overrepresented in Middle Schools and Asian students in Classical Schools. At the high school level, whites are overrepresented in Selective Enrollment Schools and greatly underrepresented in Career Academies, Alternative Schools, and Military Academies. African American high school students are overrepresented in Alternative Schools, Small Schools, Contract Schools, Career Academies, and Performance Schools; and underrepresented in High School Magnet and Selective Enrollment schools. Hispanic students appear to be slightly overrepresented in High School Magnet and Military Academies, and under enrolled in Small School and Contract Schools. Asian students are greatly overrepresented in Selective Enrollment high schools. Therefore, white and Asian students have greater representation in schools with less stringent attendance boundaries that may incorporate additional application requirements, like testing, for admittance.

There are also racial disparities in student body demographics based on *school network* or location of the school; this is not surprising as neighborhood segregation ultimately fuels neighborhood school segregation. Figure 3 in the Data Summary Sheet depicts the breakdown of racial demographics by network type according to CPS 2012 data. White students make up a greater share of the student body in the elementary level O'Hare and Ravenswood-Ridge Networks and the high school level North-Northwest Side Network; while African American students make up a greater share (over 75%) of the elementary level Rock Island, Burnham Park, Austin-North Lawndale, Skyway, and Englewood-Gresham networks, and at the high school level, the South Side network. Hispanic students makeup over 75% of the student body in the elementary networks of Midway, Fullerton, and Pilsen-Little Village. Asian students make up over 10% of the student body of the Pershing and Ravenswood-Ridge networks.

There are also differences by network based on percentage of, what CPS codes as: bilingual students, special education students (SpED), and students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. District-wide averages are as follows: 9.4% bilingual students, 12.8% special education, and 86.2% students receiving free or reduced lunch. However, there are wide variances in the number of bilingual students based on network type; ranging from a low of .18% in the ES Network - Englewood-Gresham to a high of 44.6% in the ES Network - Pilsen-Little Village. Regarding the percentage of special education students, the variances are not as stark, yet still significant, with a low of 9.8% in the ES Network – Pershing and a high of 18.4% in the Network – Alternative. Students receiving free or reduced lunch, a proxy measure for low-income students, varies from a low of 67.9% of the ES Network - Ravenswood-Ridge, to a high of 94.3% of the ES Network - Garfield-Humboldt (see figure 3 in the Data Summary Sheet for network averages). When drilling down to the school level, there are even greater discrepancies. For instance, there are 7 schools with 100% of students receiving free/reduced lunch, and 5 schools with between 10-15% of students receiving free or reduced lunch. When reviewing network averages, and more so

school-by-school variances, there are great disparities in school makeup by racial demographics, bilingual and special education students, and students receiving free or reduced lunch. Finding ways to integrate school settings on all of the above factors may increase equitable educational opportunities in Chicago.

According to CPS data for the 2012-2013 Adequate Yearly Progress report, about 60% of Chicago Public Schools, including charters, were on Academic Watch Status,²³ meaning these schools were not meeting state performance targets based on standardized testing. In addition, 194 elementary schools and 54 high schools were on probation.²⁴ There is a clear need to address academic inconsistencies in CPS, and Chicago Public Schools' new plans for educational reformation, on the surface, seem to address just that. However, it is imperative that such plans also serve to increase school integration and educational equality. Without such an effort, disparities in educational attainment will persist, and the quality of a student's education will continue to be determined by factors such as the where the student lives or the financial resources of her/his parents.

Chicago Public School Reforms

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Simply based on the inequities in CPS demographics and performance, there exists a great need for educational overhaul in Chicago. However, the current CPS plans are highly contentious and have sparked a firestorm of conflict among parents, the Chicago Teachers Union, community groups, and CPS administration. The Chicago School Board voted to close 49 schools, the largest number of closings in Chicago history. It is also the largest number of closings that any school district across the country has ever attempted. Over the years, school closings have been initiated due to "underperformance," yet the most recent wave of school closings have purportedly been prompted by budget deficits and school "underutilization." Opponents question the underutilization argument for several reasons.

First, CPS pinpoints neighborhood demographic shifts as the culprit behind underutilization—forces outside of CPS' control. In doing so, CPS treats schools and their neighborhoods as discrete and separate. On the contrary, scholarly research has demonstrated that education and housing are fundamentally linked. Policy choice in one affects the stability and efficacy of the other. Closing 49 (mostly neighborhood) schools will undoubtedly have adverse effects on already struggling housing markets and without community investment, may also precipitate further vacancies. Second, if a budget deficit and underutilization have necessitated school closings, it follows that charters should not be expanding; yet the number of charters are indeed growing and CPS is funneling significant resources to charter operators. For example, on August 19th, CPS issued a request for proposals for the creation of new charter schools.²⁵ Lastly, the utilization crisis was created using a formula based on the 30 students per classroom marker decided by the Board of Education (BOE). The BOE claims that this is the most efficient teacher to student ratio; however, this directly contradicts widely accepted research showing that smaller class size is more conducive to productive learning environments.²⁶ The utilization formula also does not take into account smaller classrooms needed for special education student populations, smaller rooms for music and art classes, and the overall benefit of a smaller student population. Many



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schools have also instituted creative repurposing of traditional classrooms for adult education classes or other programs that have a community-wide benefit, yet also skew the student per classroom ratio.

Aside from the shifting reasoning behind school closings, the impacts are consistent: “Ninety-eight of the 100 school closing and phase-outs in Chicago since 2001 have been in schools with predominantly African American and Latino students.”²⁷ This is reflected in the higher mobility rates of black versus white students. Mobility rates for majority black schools are three times that of majority white schools.²⁸²⁹The constant transfer of students from school to school, which disproportionately impacts African American and Hispanic students, disrupts education in a number of ways, such as increased dropout rates and lower test scores and achievement.³⁰ It is clear that mobility is disruptive to a child’s education, even affecting non-mobile students at schools with high rates of mobility (30 percent or higher).³¹ The impact of unprecedented school closings will play out over the next school year and beyond. However, it is important to take a step back and understand the dynamics of housing segregation and how this has played into neighborhood school segregation and “underutilization.”

The Link between Housing Policy and Education Reform

7 Segregation in the housing market is truly the lynchpin of neighborhood school segregation, and as such, changes in the housing market will continue to impact the educational landscape of the city. Stefanie DeLuca, John Hopkins University professor expounds on this issue: “For poor and minority families, where their children attend school is a direct function of constrained housing opportunities, and often related to housing discrimination, access to public transportation or where parents can find low wage work. As a result, over 70% of minority children attend high poverty and mostly segregated schools and their test scores lag precipitously behind their white counterparts.”³² Because schools and housing are so intertwined, the closing of Chicago’s schools is both the product of, and will be greatly impacted by, the rapidly changing housing market.

A majority of schools that have or will be closed are located in predominantly African American neighborhoods that have experienced radical changes to the housing stock in recent years due to:

- gentrification
- public housing demolition
- foreclosure and disinvestment



Gentrification

For more than two decades Chicago's dominant housing strategy has fallen under the purview of gentrification. The aim of this strategy is to attract investment and affluent residents, in order to revitalize previously neglected and disinvested neighborhoods. Ostensibly the intention is to enrich the city's tax base and acquire greater revenue to augment public services and amenities for all Chicagoans. In reality however, the benefits of gentrification are often enjoyed by only a small segment of the population. Traditional gentrification practices have culminated in rigid residential stratification along the lines of race and class and produced a bifurcated urban experience—creating one city awash with public resources, investment, and amenities and another city neglected by public and private investment, targeted by predatory lending, heavily surveilled by police, and perpetually on the chopping block through austerity policies.

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Schools and housing are tightly bound together under the auspices of gentrification in two ways. First, “choice” or exclusive schools have been used as a place-based urban development tool to aid in the redevelopment of neighborhood markets. It is important to note here that although gentrification is sometimes viewed as a naturally occurring market phenomenon, local governmental agencies (in Chicago, the three dominant forces are the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), and the City) play a powerful role in shaping markets and opening spaces for investment. Some of the former sites of Chicago's infamous public housing, like Cabrini Green and the Robert Taylor Homes, provide apt examples. In the mid- to late 1990s, large stretches of public housing stood in the way of lucrative investment and development. Subsequently, on both the north and south side of Chicago's loop, the CHA, CPS, and the City allied with Chicago's business and real-estate community to dismantle public housing, in order to create local neighborhood markets by both paving the way for investment and attracting affluent residents. Many former public housing residents received Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), and in the absence of tens of thousands of public housing units, the private market was to absorb these residents while creating enhanced opportunity through increased housing choice. The culmination of choice through the voucher program should, theoretically, result in greater racial and economic neighborhood integration; however, a look at 2010 HCV data illustrates that the HCV program has largely failed, reproducing residential segregation on the basis of race and class through similarly restricted housing options in the private market. Almost half of all HCV holders live in only 10 of Chicago's 77 community areas on the south and west sides of Chicago.

Overall, haphazard gentrification has priced out and pushed poor and working-class households from gentrifying neighborhoods and into neglected neighborhoods and precarious private housing markets, while CPS has financed the construction of exclusive schools and the closing of fully public schools in gentrifying areas.³³ Those who depend on subsidies were thus pushed from areas receiving copious place-based investments and into resource starved neighborhoods, reflected by the quality of their public schools.



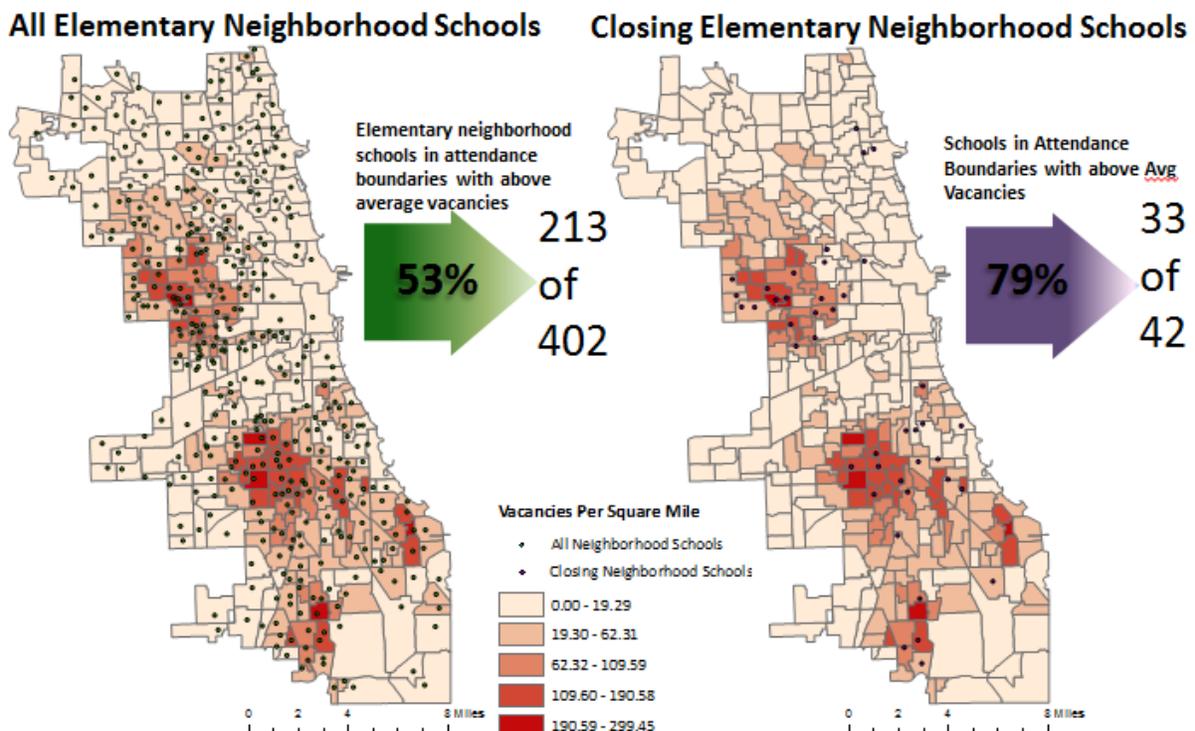
Foreclosure and Disinvestment

The federal government's marriage of home ownership and poverty amelioration further exacerbated residential segregation and disinvestment in Chicago. Billions in federal tax expenditures now go to home ownership,³⁴ yet in hindsight, this has overwhelmingly backfired on poor and middle-class black and Hispanics. First, black and Hispanic households have disproportionately relied on homeownership as a wealth building tool.³⁵ However, this wealth building tool turned into a pitfall for many, as research has shown, Black and Hispanic home seekers who qualified for prime loans were disproportionately steered into riskier and costlier sub-prime loans. Accordingly, these communities have been disproportionately impacted by foreclosure. Successive waves of foreclosure have siphoned tens of billions of dollars in income and wealth from these communities. Even before the most current housing crisis, geographer David Harvey stated that "the low income African-American population of the United States was estimated to have lost somewhere between \$71 and \$93 billion in asset values through predatory sub-prime practices."³⁶ Between 2007 and 2010, black and Hispanic families have lost 27% and 41% of their net wealth, respectively.³⁷

The foreclosure crisis, which has torn through Chicago relentlessly, has devastated black and Hispanic neighborhoods, creating massive disinvestment.³⁸ One need only walk or drive through some of the hardest hit areas to see large swaths of vacant land and dilapidated or vacant buildings. The hardships are not only experienced by homeowners in these communities, renters also face instability as a result

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Vacancy Rates in Chicago Public School (CPS) Attendance Boundaries and CPS Elementary Neighborhood Schools, Chicago, 2013



of foreclosure and disinvestment. The Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing reports that renters in foreclosure typically face forced displacement; consequently, "More than half of LCBH survey respondents with children were forced to switch schools when displaced by foreclosure."³⁹

Though underutilization is a dubious austerity policy, the fact remains that school closures are occurring in areas with higher vacancy rates. Since about 70% of all vacancies are foreclosure related, it is safe to say that foreclosure related vacancy and disinvestment contributes to instability in CPS. This is especially true for area-wide attendance schools that depend on their proximate population. The figures above show that a disproportionate share of neighborhood schools pegged to close are in area-wide attendance boundaries with higher than average vacancy rates. Finally, the loss of public and affordable housing and the recent wave of foreclosures further destabilize schools by contributing to population loss and an increase in homelessness in the student population. Between August and December of 2011 CPS's homeless student population increased 31% from 10,535 to 13,888 students. The homeless student populations are about double the CPS average in attendance boundaries with higher than average vacancy rates. Low utilization rates lead to school closings, in turn leading to further disinvestment in these same communities.

Clearly, the vastly altered housing landscape in Chicago has contributed to population shifts, and the concurrent CPS policies now intensifying, may only exacerbate racial segregation and inequities in housing and educational opportunity.

School Closings May Exacerbate Segregation

The closing of neighborhood schools paves the way for the privatization of public education—the leading model of which is charter schools—and this may be problematic for a number of reasons, including:

- data fail to indicate that charters outperform traditional public schools
- charter schools are less accountable to CPS and the public
- charters are not required to draw students from the surrounding neighborhood
- charter schools tend to engage in selective enrollment practices, limiting access to many students

Catalyst Chicago, an independent education research group, found that 40% of closed CPS schools are now privately run.⁴⁰ However, charters have not been shown to produce the results many supporters purport. Research has failed to show that students benefit more from charter schools as opposed to a quality neighborhood schools; and despite being funded by public money, charter schools are less accountable and more selective than public schools. Charters are not required to draw students from the surrounding neighborhood and therefore may engage in more selective enrollment and retention

practices. On average, less than one fourth of charter school students live within the surrounding area. As a result, charters have significantly lower poverty rates and rates of limited-English-proficient and students with disabilities than similarly situated neighborhood schools. A 2009 Collaborative Equity and Justice in Education Report, “The Charter Difference: A Comparison of Chicago Charter and Neighborhood High schools” showed that charter high schools enroll 6-7% fewer low-income students, half as many limited-English-proficient students, and statistically significant fewer special needs students than neighborhood schools.⁴¹ Larger charter school networks also tend to only retain students that meet their criteria despite having “open enrollment.” A noted charter technique used by the Noble Charter Network for selective retention is the enforcement of harsh discipline methods, including discipline fines.

The propagation of charter schools may therefore have the unintended impact of furthering levels of segregation in Chicago. “Lack of access to publicly funded schools threatens further segregation of our schools. If this is continued unabated, neighborhood schools may become the primary provider of education to our students who are in the greatest need, and the most costly to educate.”⁴² One troubling result may be the resegregation of students with disabilities. Over the years there have been great advances in the equitable education of students with disabilities, yet with charters becoming more common, and their tendency to limit the number of special needs students, students with disabilities may face constricted educational options. In fact, the Chicago Teachers Union has filed two federal lawsuits based on the ill effect of school closures on students in need of special education.⁴³ It is unclear whether CPS is fully prepared to provide the same level of services for students at their new schools and if all the individualized education plans will be successfully transferred to the “welcoming” schools.

As part of CPS’ school closing plan, displaced students were to end up in better achieving schools; however, with the enrollment constraints of privately operated schools and the limited traditional public school options available, this may not be the case. In a 2009 study examining the impacts of 18 elementary school closures The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research found that 82% of students relocated from one underperforming school to another underperforming school. This is not surprising as children swept up in the school closing conundrum are often isolated within segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods. David Rusk, president of the Metropolitan Area Research Corporation, succinctly explains the replication of underperformance through relocation: “High poverty neighborhoods produce high poverty schools. In high poverty schools most children will fail no matter how many extra resources are poured into their schools or how much ‘accountability’ is required of their teachers.”

Since this is the largest school closing by far, it remains to be seen what will happen to the many students now forced to change schools. But with the concerns about special education services as well as the fact that not all children are guaranteed to end up in a higher performing school, it is likely that many students already feel the negative impact of school closings. Furthermore, community disinvestment and population loss may only intensify with the closing of these neighborhood anchors.



Without investment in communities, and a commitment to integration in housing and education, low and moderate income students, black and Hispanic students, and students with disabilities will continue to bear the brunt of “reform.”

Conclusions and Recommendations

HUD Secretary, Shaun Donovan notes, “Brown vs. Board of Education stated that ‘separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.’ Well a separate housing system that prevents low income families from accessing good schools is also inherently unequal.”⁴⁴ This quote truly sums up the issue—housing segregation in addition to the proliferation of “choice” in Chicago schools, has ultimately led to disparities in access to quality education and addressing this is, at its core, a matter of effectuating social justice. The current state of education in the City of Chicago unfortunately exemplifies the urgency of this situation. Regardless of the volume of school closings, the new resources that may flow to schools, or the creation of new, privately run schools—if the city continues to allow for segregation of schools based on race, class, and ability, any change or reformation will not have the intended effect. Below are recommendations meant to begin the discussion of enhancing integration and overall school quality in Chicago public schools.

Recommendations

Community Outreach

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In order to address educational inequality, there must be greater balance in the landscape of school choice. Families with fewer resources require additional assistance in making the best choice for their school age children. Efforts must be made to educate families on the school options available to them to ensure that schools, especially selective enrollment schools, become more diverse. Conducting community outreach and providing a central school liaison or a referral program can enhance options for all.

Community Engagement

CPS should sustain and support community engagement programs at individual schools. Closing neighborhood schools has already greatly impacted communities. Especially for families invested in neighborhood schools or Local School Councils, the process of mass school closures has been destabilizing and disenfranchising. In fact, students from closing schools have been fanned out across 287 schools across Chicago, and only some are officially designated “welcoming schools”. Due to the destabilizing effects of the closings, enhanced community and parental engagement must be conducted to ensure the best possible transition for students and neighborhoods.



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Decentralization of CPS

Families and communities require greater access to and communication with CPS administration. This can be achieved through some degree of decentralization of the CPS central office. The process started with the creation of Local School Councils, however, continued decentralization is necessary to address the unique needs of a community. With such a large school district, run by a CEO, there is very little room community-minded decision-making. Board meetings are not sufficient for community input. Families and communities must be able to voice their needs and expectations of CPS in an efficient way.

Repurposing of Vacant School Buildings

CPS must commit to using vacant school buildings for positive community purposes. Greater numbers of vacant buildings in areas already suffering from a high vacancy rate due to foreclosure only encourages further disinvestment in a community. With input from the surrounding community, such buildings can be used for innovative, community centered programs and services that will mitigate the effect of vacant buildings in these vulnerable areas.

Understanding the Link Between Housing and Education

In the wake of the largest wave of school closings in the country's history, CPS and education and housing advocates must work to understand the interplay of the inequities apparent in housing and education. The school "underutilization crisis" did not develop in a vacuum. Housing, education, and even the city's violence issues are all linked together. Segregation in housing leads to segregation in education, and vacant properties perpetuate neighborhood disinvestment. Until there is recognition of the link between these issues, there will not be lasting solutions.

For starters, there needs to be a commitment to redevelopment in areas where former public housing was torn down. Not enough has been done to preserve affordable housing in gentrifying areas or stabilize areas that have been ravaged by foreclosure, vacancy, and overall disinvestment. There must be a more thoughtful link between housing and education reform, and with the vastly altered housing market, now is truly the time for innovative approaches to community and school stabilization.

Promotion of Diversity and Integration

CPS must formally commit to and create an overarching diversity policy along with tools to further school integration. The Chicago Teachers Union recently lamented CPS' lack of guidance regarding integration: "The Chicago Teachers Union has charged CPS with abandoning desegregation efforts and intensifying segregation through its policies. 'CPS does not even have a semblance of a plan for integration and equity in learning conditions and opportunities that those who fought for desegregation hoped to ensure,' the union asserted in a report last month."⁴⁵



Instead of simply offering more variety in school type and the visage of school “choice” while shirking from any outright commitment to integration, CPS should work with housing advocates to incorporate community renewal programs and school reform to ensure that schools and neighborhoods become more economically and racially integrated over time. By learning from failed policies of the past, Chicago can work toward community advancement while avoiding traditional gentrification which only served to displace residents. With comprehensive plans aimed at stabilizing neighborhoods and schools—through the stabilization or expansion of affordable housing in some areas and creation of community investment opportunities in others—Chicago may attract more affluent residents while retaining current residents. In addition, school boundaries should be drawn in a way that promotes integration, bringing together a mix of populations which can improve school quality and prevent flight out of neighborhoods schools. Finally, CPS must adopt and promote a new plan for school integration along with measurable benchmarks that may be assessed over time.

The future prosperity of children, communities, and the city depend on the advancement of equity in education. Chicago must work to ameliorate the injustices apparent in public education and implement innovative, lasting change.

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Patricia Fron, MSW

Program Manager
Lawyers’ Committee for Better
Housing

Chris D. Poulos

M.A. in Urban Planning and Policy;
Adjunct professor, Northeastern
Illinois University

Jessica Schneider

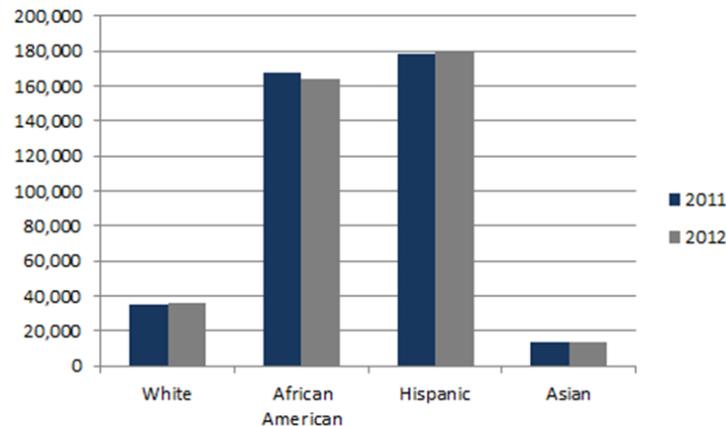
Staff Attorney
Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil
Rights Under Law, Inc.



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Chicago from home to school: Report Data Summary

CPS Racial Demographics, 2011 & 2012



Demographics by School Type, 2012

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| ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|------------|
| | Student | | School Type | % African American | | | |
| | Number | Population | | % White | % African American | % Hispanic | % Asian |
| | 1 | 5 | Alternative School | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 1,288 | Contract | 1.1 | 91.5 | 2.7 | 0.3 |
| | 4 | 884 | Small Elementary | 0.5 | 82.1 | 7.7 | 0 |
| | 5 | 1,816 | Classical | 21.1 | 42 | 10.8 | 16.2 |
| | 6 | 2,874 | Performance | 2.6 | 63.5 | 31.4 | 0.7 |
| | 8 | 1,145 | Special Education | 38.5 | 22.8 | 33.5 | 2.4 |
| | 10 | 4,664 | Middle School | 2.3 | 10.4 | 85.4 | 1 |
| | 12 | 8,762 | Regional Gifted Center | 21.4 | 35.3 | 33.6 | 5.1 |
| | 35 | 20,307 | Elementary Magnet | 15.5 | 36.7 | 39.1 | 4.9 |
| | 392 | 221,038 | Regular Elementary | 9.4 | 37 | 48.1 | 3.3 |
| TOTAL | 476 | | | 10.2 | 37.2 | 46.7 | 3.5 |

| HIGH SCHOOLS | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|------------|
| | Student | | School Type | % African American | | | |
| | Number | Population | | % White | % African American | % Hispanic | % Asian |
| | 4 | 1905 | Military Academy | 3.3 | 42.2 | 52 | 1 |
| | 4 | 1210 | Contract | 6.7 | 66.7 | 21 | 1.1 |
| | 4 | 1990 | Small Schools | 5.5 | 72.6 | 20 | 1.1 |
| | 4 | 816 | Special Education | 11.4 | 46.2 | 38.8 | 2.7 |
| | 5 | 6104 | High School Magnet | 10.5 | 23.6 | 59.1 | 5.2 |
| | 8 | 7927 | Career Academy | 1.2 | 65.1 | 32.7 | 0.2 |
| | 8 | 12025 | Selective Enrollment | 24.7 | 29.6 | 31 | 10.2 |
| | 11 | 1748 | Alternative School | 1.3 | 75.2 | 21.9 | 0.2 |
| | 17 | 7575 | Performance | 4.1 | 60.3 | 32.5 | 1.1 |
| | 45 | 49178 | General High School | 8.7 | 35.3 | 49.6 | 4.4 |
| TOTAL | 110 | 90478 | | 9.6 | 40.7 | 43.2 | 4.3 |

| CHARTER SCHOOLS | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------|
| | Student | | School Type | % African American | | | |
| | Number | Population | | % White | % African American | % Hispanic | % Asian |
| | 55 | 25809 | Elementary Charters | 1.5 | 58.6 | 35.7 | 0.7 |
| | 40 | 24391 | High School Charters | 2 | 57.3 | 37.4 | 1.3 |
| TOTAL | 95 | 50200 | | 1.7 | 58 | 36.6 | 1 |



Demographics by School Network, 2012

| Networks | Total # | % White | % African American | % Hispanic | % Asian | % Bilingual | % SpED | % Free/Reduced Lunch |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------|--------------------|-------------|------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| ES Network - Austin-North Lawndale | 12,394 | 0.7 | 89.7 | 8.5 | 0.1 | 3.2% | 13.3% | 92.2% |
| ES Network - Burnham Park | 13,255 | 3.3 | 89.3 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 1.5% | 10.3% | 80.5% |
| ES Network - Englewood-Gresham | 12,660 | 0.1 | 97.6 | 1.4 | 0 | 0.2% | 12.2% | 92.9% |
| ES Network - Fullerton | 30,493 | 8.4 | 8 | 79.5 | 1.5 | 33.9% | 11.4% | 84.9% |
| ES Network - Fulton | 11,816 | 11.2 | 33.3 | 47.7 | 3.9 | 14.8% | 14.8% | 74.0% |
| ES Network - Garfield-Humboldt | 10,720 | 0.4 | 67.3 | 30.8 | 0 | 12.1% | 11.0% | 94.3% |
| ES Network - Lake Calumet | 11,469 | 2.5 | 51.2 | 45.1 | 0.1 | 12.4% | 10.7% | 89.9% |
| ES Network - Midway | 31,041 | 6 | 15.2 | 77.3 | 0.2 | 31.0% | 11.6% | 89.8% |
| ES Network - O'Hare | 29,022 | 33.9 | 2.8 | 51.1 | 7.7 | 26.1% | 12.5% | 68.8% |
| ES Network - Pershing | 19,604 | 4.4 | 12.5 | 71.4 | 10.4 | 33.5% | 9.8% | 91.8% |
| ES Network - Pilsen-Little Village | 16,984 | 0.7 | 2.8 | 95.3 | 0.1 | 44.6% | 10.4% | 92.8% |
| ES Network - Ravenswood-Ridge | 27,535 | 24.3 | 17.8 | 40.1 | 12.7 | 25.9% | 11.9% | 68.0% |
| ES Network - Rock Island | 11,303 | 15.9 | 78.4 | 4.3 | 0.3 | 0.3% | 12.9% | 72.6% |
| ES Network - Skyway | 14,371 | 0.7 | 92.2 | 5.8 | 0.3 | 2.8% | 12.4% | 89.6% |
| HS Network - Far South Side | 8,323 | 3.9 | 72.2 | 22.6 | 0.1 | 1.8% | 15.0% | 87.9% |
| HS Network - North-Northwest Side | 33,362 | 20.9 | 15.4 | 51.8 | 8.4 | 8.5% | 12.7% | 75.2% |
| HS Network - South Side | 12,043 | 2.5 | 88.1 | 6 | 1.4 | 1.1% | 14.2% | 87.7% |
| HS Network - Southwest Side | 16,869 | 4.6 | 31.2 | 59.9 | 3.2 | 7.7% | 15.0% | 93.5% |
| HS Network - West Side | 15,026 | 5 | 40.6 | 49.9 | 3 | 6.8% | 14.9% | 88.3% |
| Network - Alternative | 1,525 | 1.1 | 74 | 23.3 | 0.3 | 1.3% | 18.4% | 86.7% |
| Network - AUSL | 10,720 | 2.6 | 73 | 22.9 | 0.4 | 6.3% | 13.5% | 93.5% |
| Network - Charter/Contract | 52,926 | 1.8 | 59.1 | 35.3 | 1 | 8.7% | 11.9% | 90.6% |
| District Totals | 403,461 | 9 | 40.5 | 44.7 | 3.4 | 15.47% | 12.43% | 72.37% |

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- ²⁵ http://www.cps.edu/newschools/documents/rfp_fornewschools.pdf
- ²⁶ CReATE brief.
- ²⁷ Rhoda Rae Gutierrez and Pauline Lipman. *DYETT HIGH SCHOOL & THE 3 DS OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM: DESTABILIZATION | DISINVESTMENT | DISENFRANCHISEMENT*
- ²⁸ This statistic was derived from comparing mobility rates of the top ten schools with the largest proportion of white students to the top ten schools with the largest proportion of black students.
- ²⁹ School closings have also decreased the percentage of black teachers, thus diminishing middle-class jobs for the black community. Between 2002 and 2012, black teachers declined from 40 percent of the overall teaching staff to 27 percent Lipman, P. *Rebirth of the Chicago Teachers Union*. Monthly Review June 2013
- ³⁰ CReATE brief
- ³¹ CTU Black and White of School Closings-p. 22
- ³² Stefanie DeLuca and Peter Rosenblatt. *Increasing Access to High Performing Schools in an Assisted Housing Voucher Program*. Finding Common Ground: Coordinating Housing and Education Policy to Promote Integration. Poverty and Race Action Council (2011).
- ³³ In fact, Bronzeville (the former site of the Robert Taylor Homes) was the first target of CPS' Renaissance 2010—a plan developed by the Commercial Club of Chicago, a consortium of Chicago's business leaders, to close down allegedly failing public schools and open exclusive schools in their place. At the time, Bronzeville was experiencing a rapid increase in housing prices and sales (Lipman 2004).

³⁴ : \$86 billion for the home mortgage interest deduction, \$25 billion for property tax abatements, and \$15 billion for exclusion of capital gains, for example State of the Dream 2013: A Long Way from Home: Housing, Asset Policy and the Racial Wealth Divide, United for a Fair Economy, 2013. <http://faireconomy.org/dream/2013/executive-summary>

³⁵ In 2010, home value accounted for almost 52% and 49% of the total assets held by Latinos and blacks, while it accounted for about 28% of all the assets held by whites.

³⁶ Harvey, David. *The Urban Roots of Financial Crises: Reclaiming the City for Anti-Capitalist Struggle*. Socialist Register 2012.

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⁴¹ Liz Brown and Eric Gutstein. *The Charter Difference: A Comparison of Chicago Charter and Neighborhood High Schools. A Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education Report*. University of Illinois-Chicago College of Education (2009).

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<http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20130515/chicago/ctu-parents-file-suits-stop-school-closings>.

⁴⁴ Philip Tegeler and Susan Eaton. *School Diversity and Public Housing Redevelopment. Finding Common Ground: Coordinating Housing and Education Policy to Promote Integration*. Poverty and Race Action Council (2011).

⁴⁵ Steve Bogira. *Trying to make separate equal*. Chicago Reader. June 2013.