



**The BLACK and WHITE**

**of  
EDUCATION**

**in  
CHICAGO'S**

**PUBLIC**

**SCHOOLS**

**CLASS, CHARTERS & CHAOS**



*A Hard Look at Privatization Schemes Masquerading as Education Policy*

# **The Black and White of Education in Chicago's Public Schools**

**Class, Charters & Chaos:  
A Hard Look at Privatization Schemes  
Masquerading as Education Policy**

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November 30, 2012

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# Executive Summary: The Black and White of Education in Chicago's Public Schools: Class, Charters & Chaos

## *A hard look at privatization schemes masquerading as education policy*

In *The Black and White of Education in Chicago's Public Schools*, the Chicago Teachers Union exposes the falsehoods and inequities created by an education policy that, rather than being held publicly accountable, is controlled by the profit-minded corporate community. As the paper proves, this debilitating policy of closing neighborhood schools and replacing them with privately-run institutions is a misguided, ineffective way to improve educational outcomes for Chicago's children.

Here are some of the negative outcomes and inequitable conditions of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) privatization policy:

**Educational Apartheid:** 88 percent of students affected by CPS School Actions since 2001 are African-American. Schools more than 99 percent students of color ("Apartheid schools") have been the primary target of CPS school actions—representing more than 80 percent of all affected schools. These students face a wide range of challenges outside of school, including high levels of violence and trauma, but are still expected to serve as test subjects for unproven school reform schemes. The massive school closings that have been part of CPS' broader strategy dating back to the 1990s have drastic consequences: they tear apart school communities, disrupt deep and strong relationships between students, parents, and teachers, and dismantle organizations which are often students' only centers of stability and safety.

**Actions Aimed at High Schools:** Low scores on the Explore assessment, which is taken at the beginning of students' freshman year, have a strong correlation with the likelihood of school actions. Despite having absolutely no control over these scores, nine of the 10 high schools with the lowest Explore scores from 2009 to 2012 have been the target of school actions. More than 90 percent of students in these schools are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL), and eight schools are more than 95 percent African-American. Rather than closing schools, CPS needs to implement proven, research-based reforms.

**The Dishonesty of Underutilization:** CPS' claims about school capacity has varied significantly from year to year, increasing from 65,000 "extra seats" in 2011 to 100,000 in 2012 alone. To the extent excess capacity exists, the main driver is the District's aggressive charter proliferation campaign. It is dishonest for the District to talk about underutilization when it has inhabited, acquired or constructed space to educate almost 50,000 additional students in the last ten years and has plans to open another 60 charter schools over the next several years. Further, "underutilization" numbers perpetuate the trend of CPS schools continuing to have the highest class sizes in Illinois. Simply put, closing schools means less available classrooms and more students are crowded into the classrooms that remain.

**Misguided Attempts to Reduce the Budget:** Despite the District's assertion that spending must be reduced, *annual* CPS spending for charter schools increased by 624 percent between fiscal years 2004 and 2012. Closing neighborhood schools does not save significant money. Even if the District closed 100 schools, annual savings of \$50-\$80 million constitute only 1-1.5 percent of the District's operating budget. Further, those savings do not reflect increased costs for transporting students, emergency response costs associated with increased violence or the costs of fracturing a school community. These counterintuitive policies have only harmed students—not increased fiscal capacity.

**The Chaos of School Closings and the "Portfolio District":** Charter proliferation and portfolio management policies destabilize the District with no systematic educational benefits to students in sight. At the core of the portfolio strategy is a belief that if competitive business principles—including organizational destruction—are applied to schools, then educational outcomes will radically improve. Portfolio policies specifically target sanctions instead of support to the bottom 5 percent of schools. Charter operators, such as ACT, KIPP-Ascend and Urban Prep, have repeatedly caused disruption by closing their doors and moving locations, while still convincing CPS to spend at least \$18.6 million rehabbing buildings that the original neighborhoods' students

could no longer use. As parents and community leaders have argued, closing neighborhood schools risks losing dedicated teachers and increases safety concerns.

**The Educational Failure of Charter Schools:** One of the biggest myths about charter schools is that as a whole, they outperform CPS neighborhood schools. However, in addition to insignificant *average* differences, certain populations of CPS students have *better* outcomes when they attend neighborhood schools instead of those run by charter operators. Charters have performed worse even in high-need areas. Among elementary schools with a 90 percent student population that qualifies for a FRL and are at least 90 percent black, charters average at the 33rd percentile in reading test score gains. Their neighborhood school counterparts score at the 43rd percentile, outranking charters by 10 percentile points on reading test score gains. CPS magnet elementary schools also significantly outperform comparable charters on CPS' accountability measures. On average, non-selective magnet schools outrank charters by 12 percentile points in reading and two percentile points in math.

**Test Prep Network:** The Noble Network has a laser-like focus on ACT scores despite a lack of predictive validity for college success. Freshmen and sophomores take *quarterly* "Hedgehog" exams (written by teachers) that utilize ACT style questions and power standards. Juniors are required to take a "collegiate seminar" twice a week after school that is really just an intensive ACT prep course. Since pay is linked to test scores, Noble teachers are forced to spend a large portion on test prep. According to a Noble teacher, "There is a lot of individual pressure by the teachers since it's tied to pay, which I think makes a significant difference in the mentality for the teachers. I must teach these kids how to do X, Y and Z or else I won't get my bonus. It's a much more corporate style atmosphere in general." Instead of actual teaching, students are drilled to prepare for test questions.

**Teacher Diversity and Churn:** In CPS, the percentage of students of color far exceeds the percentage of teachers of color across CPS. However, this diversity gap is especially prominent at charter schools. At charters, more than 95 percent of students were black or Latino/a, while only a combined 30 percent of teachers identified as either black or Latino/a, resulting in a diversity gap of 65 percent across charter schools. The UNO Charter Network has a student population that is 95 percent Hispanic but only 11.6 percent of its teachers identify as Hispanic or Latino/a. The Noble Street Network is composed of 95 percent students of color, but only 19 percent of their teachers identified as black or Latino/a. Annual staff overhaul is a systemic feature of charters. While age and experience certainly play a role in teacher turnover, charter school teacher attrition cannot be explained just by the fact that their teachers are younger and less experienced. While 67 percent of CPS *first year* elementary teachers returned to their school, only 54 percent of *all teachers* returned to their UNO campuses. A similar retention gap exists in high schools, with 75 percent of *first year* CPS high school teachers returning but, for example, only 65 percent of *all teachers* at Noble. This large turnover in charters influences teacher experience—charter teachers average about four years of experience, compared to 14 years for CPS teachers.

**Reclaiming Real Innovation in Neighborhood Schools:** In 2010, Bill Gates said, "Charter schools are especially important right now because they are the only schools that have the full opportunity to innovate." Charter "innovation" has not produced broad achievement gains, and what we do know about their practices indicates that rapid charter proliferation has compounded and amplified the most egregious forms of educational apartheid found in CPS. The supposed 'bureaucracy' that holds back innovation in neighborhood schools is not an inherent feature of public neighborhood schools but an intentional policy of disinvestment that withholds resources for innovation in neighborhood schools and gives additional funding and autonomy for charters. There are many innovative approaches that neighborhood schools can use to improve instruction and learning through collaboration and professional development. The Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) focuses on building capacity for ongoing professional development for K-3 teachers and reducing class sizes. Lesson Study, which focuses on teacher collaboration, is another innovation that warrants expansion. The Responsive Classroom format aims to develop social skills of cooperation, responsibility, and empathy in concert with the acquisition of deep subject knowledge, decision making and motivation for learning. These are just a few proven alternatives to the regime of test-based accountability. They can replace our rigorous but meaningless standardized testing practices with assessment systems built on challenging, subject-specific tasks, a wide array of demonstrated knowledge, extensive documentation and active learning.

**CPS must end the failed policy of closing or otherwise acting against neighborhood schools and replacing them with charter schools. Instead, CPS should provide neighborhood schools with the resources needed to give students and parents the schools they deserve.**

## Introduction: Years of Failed Educational Policy

In 1995, the Illinois state legislature instituted mayoral control over Chicago's public schools. Signaling the corporate community's intrusion into education, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) would now have a "CEO" with business experience instead of a Superintendent with education experience. A few years later, the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago issued recommendations that became the foundation of CPS' Renaissance 2010 policy. Subsequently, educational policies took on the character of business practices. Practices like competition, investment in "winners" versus disinvestment in "losers" and outcomes-based planning all replaced proven educational practices of collaboration, more attention to those in greater need, rich curricula, and emphasis on hard-to-measure qualities such as creativity, critical thinking, and love of learning. It is hard to believe that the corporate community's interest in education is unrelated to the profit motive. The U.S. education market is a \$500 billion business! While the details of how corporations make profits from this industry are still unfolding, the details of the harm to students from business-based policies are apparent.

The closing of schools to turn the education of Chicago's students over to charter management organizations is a failed policy. While charters began as a vision for teacher-led, unionized schools that would lead to innovations to be shared across all schools, charter operators have pursued a different agenda. As a result, charter schools perform no better, and in many instances worse, than comparable neighborhood schools. The slash-and-burn approach to schooling that lies at the heart of the "charter bargain" must be abandoned and replaced with policies based on proven supports for schools in need. By continuing to accelerate school closings, "turnarounds" and charter school proliferation, CPS ignores the evidence that their policy is a failure. The Districts' actions are destructive, particularly in low-income, African-American communities.

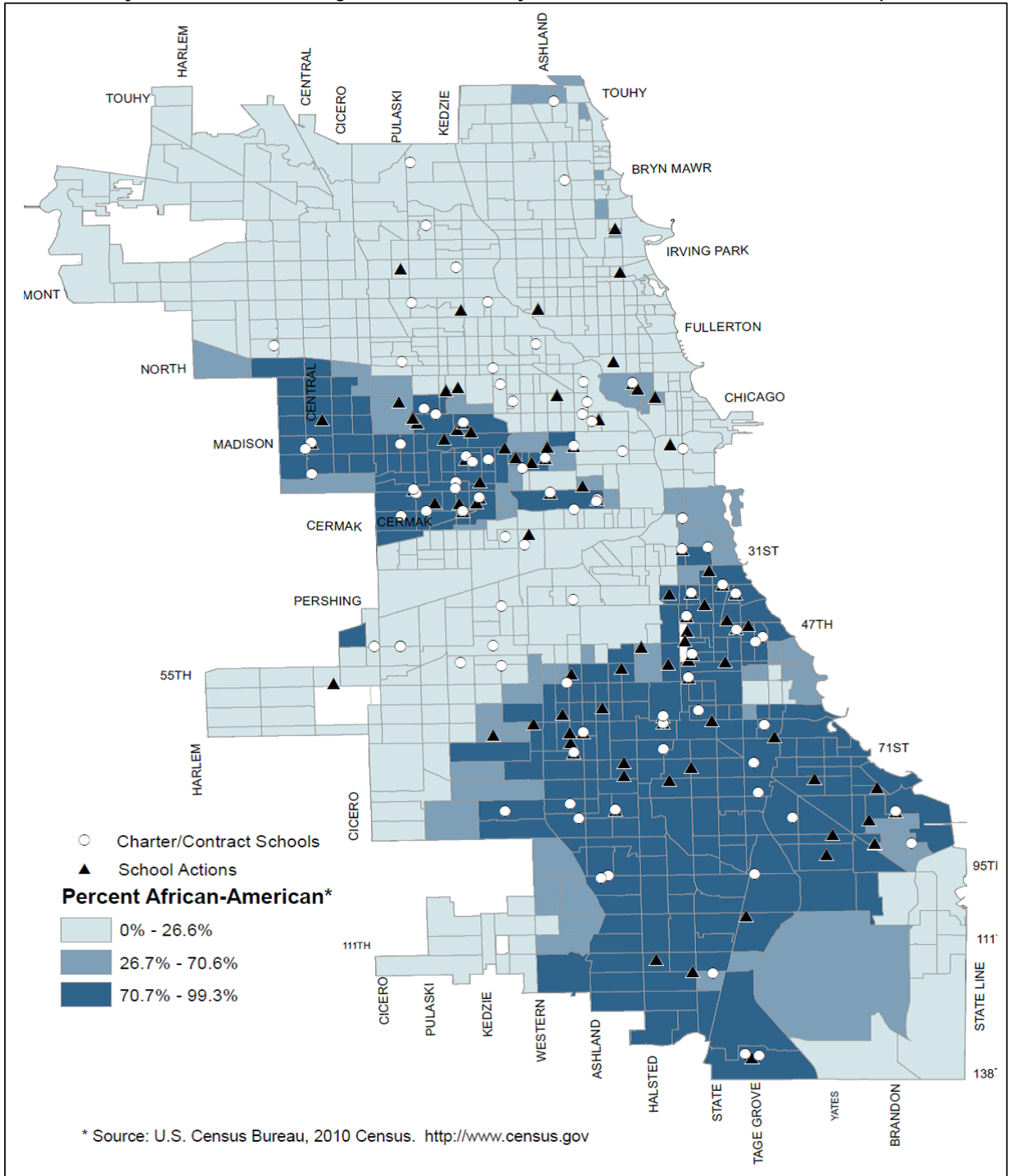
The map below (Figure 1), graphically portrays the concentration of school actions and charter proliferation on the South and West Sides of the city. These areas have lowest median family incomes and frequently include demolished public housing sites. More than 95 percent of turnaround schools are located in census tracts<sup>1</sup> with the lowest median family income range. There are few school actions or schools run by charter management operators in areas of the city where the wealthiest Chicagoans live. The policies of CPS only further the destabilization of neighborhoods already disrupted by housing and employment crises, poverty, and racial segregation.

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<sup>1</sup> Census tracts are small areas within counties that are used by the U.S. Census Bureau to track and analyze socio-economic and population data over time and across geographies. Since they are small (between 1,500 and 8,000 residents), they are thought to be relatively homogenous in terms of the characteristic information the census collects about the people that live there. For more information about census tracts, visit the U.S. Census Bureau website: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

Figure 1

Predominantly African-American neighborhoods are subject to both school actions and charter proliferation.





Although some exceptions do exist, in general, the 20-year-old policy of moving children from school to school has failed dramatically. On average, educational outcomes for CPS students have not improved, despite claims to the contrary. Instead, the policy of closing, turning around, consolidating or phasing out neighborhood schools and turning the education of Chicago's students over to charter management companies has:

- increased racial segregation in schools in general
- depleted stable African-American neighborhood schools in particular
- increased student mobility, particularly in areas with high concentrations of school actions
- promoted disrespect and poor treatment of teachers by blaming them instead of CPS policy for under-performing schools
- expanded unnecessary testing while decreasing opportunities for deep, conceptual learning
- increased punitive student discipline

The current "underutilization crisis" has been manufactured largely to justify the replacement of neighborhood schools by privatized charters. CPS claims that it needs to "right-size" the number of schools to match the number of students, but that position is not supported by the facts. Actually, CPS has opened more than 100 new schools and acquired or constructed space to educate close to 50,000 additional students in the last ten years. Many of the new schools were placed in areas where existing schools had been closed. As part of the Gates Compact, CPS has pledged to open at least 60 new schools run by charter management organizations. If the problem is "underutilization" or "under enrollment," why spend hundreds of millions to create new schools?

While the policy of school closing and opening has not moved education in Chicago forward in any significant way, the benefits to charter school operators, private testing companies, real estate interests, and wealthy bankers are growing. This report analyzes the mechanisms and effects of the District's schemes that masquerade as educational policy. The report has three major sections. Part One, "Playing Musical Chairs with CPS Schools—Facilities Decisions and School Actions in the Age of Mayoral Control," assesses the processes and outcomes of school actions, facilities decisions, and charter proliferation. Part Two, "Students First or Students Last? Setting the Record Straight on the Portfolio District," investigates the realities of student outcomes, District and charter budgets, charter waiting lists, and the Gates Compact. Part Three, "Innovation in Name Only: Charter Education," examines the true nature of charter operators' alleged innovations: excessively test-focused curricula, harsh discipline for students, reduced diversity in teaching staffs, exploited teachers, and reduced parental input about their children's education. Together, these sections describe CPS' failed public education policy. In Part 3, this report also describes truly innovative policies which have been implemented in neighborhood CPS schools. For other policy suggestions, the reader may obtain the "Schools Chicago's Students Deserve" document on the CTU website at [ctunet.com/deserve](http://ctunet.com/deserve).

## **Part 1: Playing Musical Chairs with CPS Schools—Facilities Decisions and School Actions in the Age of Mayoral Control**

### **A Short History of School Attacks**

The Chicago Board of Education's facilities decisions have a long and controversial political history, but the most recent iteration can be traced to 1995, when the Illinois state legislature granted complete control of the schools to the Mayor of Chicago. The city was once "hailed as a pioneer for putting local school decision-making into the hands of elected school councils,"<sup>2</sup> yet the practical operational effect of mayoral control was a concentration of power in the mayor's office and CPS central office. This shift made education policy less democratic and increasingly directed by business community and politicians, with reduced input by actual educators. Since mayoral control began in 1995, the District saw increases, positives (graduation) and

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<sup>2</sup> Lipman, P., Smith, J., Guststein, E., & Dallacqua, L. (February 2012). Examining CPS' plan to close, turn-around, or phase out 17 schools. *Data and Democracy Project: Investing in Neighborhoods, Research Paper Series, Paper #3*. Retrieved from <http://www.uic.edu/educ/ceje/resources.html>

negatives (racial achievement gaps and percent of students leaving the system). Huge resource disparities proliferated—selective enrollment schools, turnarounds and charters received state of the art facilities, equipment and supplies, while neighborhood schools serving low-income students of color deteriorated. These disparities, supposedly established to give “choice” to parents, reflect a two-tiered system akin to what is commonly understood to be apartheid.

Disparities grew under Arne Duncan, who was tapped to lead CPS in 2001. During Duncan’s tenure, the number of facilities decisions and school actions skyrocketed. In 2004, CPS launched the Renaissance 2010 initiative (Ren10), with the intention of improving schools by closing at least 60 low-performing neighborhood schools and opening 100 new schools in their place—mostly a mix of charter, contract, and performance schools, but also several magnet, selective enrollment, and new neighborhood schools. Ren10 was based on recommendations from the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago<sup>3</sup> and the federal guidelines of No Child Left Behind, which allowed Districts to close or turn around schools that failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on state exams.

Throughout the Ren10 process, CPS had NO master facilities plan. Without any coherent strategy, CPS phased out, consolidated, and turned around 17 schools in early 2012, in addition to the dozens of schools acted against in the previous 10 years. Facilities decisions were so ad hoc and haphazard that pressure from parents, teachers and community groups for a moratorium on school actions gained traction in the Illinois state capitol in 2009 and 2010. A bill that would have put the brakes on this policy was watered down during the legislative process (CPS lobbied heavily in opposition to the bill), and the resulting legislation did not call for a moratorium. Instead, the state created the Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force (CEFTF) to oversee CPS’ facilities decisions. Under the law, CPS is required to create a 10-year master facilities plan, but, as of press time, churn at the administrative level may lead the District to miss the January 2013 deadline. Furthermore, CPS is asking the state legislature for a four-month delay in announcing which schools will be targeted for closure in 2012-13. This confusion in direction was further complicated by CPS when it created a new advisory council to “engage the community,” despite the fact that the CEFTF operates in that role. In other words, when the District does not like the rules, it acts to change them rather than follow a process that was designed to protect the best interests of families.

It is unsurprising that the “reform” plan of the corporate community, represented by the Commercial Club, focused on gutting neighborhood schools and punishing teachers for the sake of private profits. Chicago’s corporate leadership has been attempting to control public schools and weaken public sector unions for more than 100 years.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, since mayoral control began in 1995 and gentrification has spread across the city in earnest, Chicago’s political and corporate elite have used school reform as a strategy to attract and retain middle class families in the city, while controlling and closing schools in low-income communities of color.<sup>5</sup>

## **Educational Improvement or Educational Apartheid?**

In all, tens of thousands of students have been directly impacted by CPS School Actions since 2001.<sup>6</sup> 88 percent of students affected are African-American. Schools that are over 99 percent students of color (“Apartheid schools”<sup>7</sup>) have been the primary target of CPS school actions—representing over 80 percent of all affected schools. Black communities have been hit the hardest—3 out of every 4 affected schools were economically poor and intensely segregated African-American schools.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago (2003). *Left behind: A report of the education committee*. Chicago, IL. Note: the Civic Committee members are Chicago’s corporate elite, the chairmen and CEO’s of the top corporations operating in Chicago. For a list of its members and initiatives, visit <http://civiccommittee.org/index.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Shipps, D. (2006). *School Reform, Corporate Style: Chicago 1880-2000*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.

<sup>5</sup> Lipman, P. (2009). Making sense of Renaissance 2010 school policy in Chicago: Race, class, and the cultural politics of neoliberal urban restructuring. (Working Paper GCP-09-02). Retrieved from Great Cities Institute Working Paper: [http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/gci/publications/workingpaperseries/pdfs/GCP-09-02\\_Lipman.pdf](http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/gci/publications/workingpaperseries/pdfs/GCP-09-02_Lipman.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> School actions include Closings, Turnarounds, Consolidations, and Phase-outs.

<sup>7</sup> Apt term referring to schools with 99 percent or more non-white students, coined by Gary Orfield, Co-Director of The Civil Rights Project of UCLA

<sup>8</sup> Referring to schools that were at least 90 percent Black and at least 75 percent Free or Reduced lunch.

These students face a wide range of challenges outside of school, including high levels of violence and trauma, but are still expected to serve as test subjects for unproven school reform schemes. Schools serving wealthier and whiter students would never be expected to fire the entire school staff; yet, this disruptive tactic has been used repeatedly on the South and West sides of Chicago. Moreover, school actions like closures and turnarounds disproportionately target experienced African-American teachers. In 2011, African-Americans—26 percent of all teachers—represented 65 percent of teachers in schools tapped for closure and 40 percent of tenured teachers laid off.<sup>9</sup> The number of African-American teachers will likely decline even more, as black teachers make up only 20 percent of the District’s teachers with five or fewer years of experience.<sup>10</sup> The proliferation of charter schools also contributes to the decline of black educators and the racial imbalance between the teachers and the students in CPS, Only 22 percent of teachers identified as black among CPS charter schools in 2011, compared to the roughly 60 percent of black students in charters.

The massive school closings that have been part of CPS’ broader strategy dating back to the 1990s have drastic consequences: They tear apart school communities; disrupt deep and strong relationships between students, parents, and teachers; and dismantle organizations that are often the only center of stability and safety for students. Overall, students have not benefited from schools closings or turnarounds. Despite the illusion of “choice,” students affected by school actions have most often landed in schools that struggle as much as their previous school.<sup>11</sup> In a consolidation or closure, those students are sent to a receiving school that may be several miles from their original neighborhood school. The transferred students have to navigate transportation challenges and cross gang territories that put them at risk of violence. Additionally, studies have shown that student achievement in the receiving schools is negatively affected by the school closings.<sup>12</sup>

Charter and turnaround schools do not serve all neighborhood students. If the original school endured a closure and restarted as a charter, students in the new school usually have a different composition than the previous mix of students—fewer special education students, fewer students from the neighborhood and fewer low-income students.<sup>13</sup> Charter schools require an application process for lottery admissions, which has the effect of weeding out students who have difficult family situations or less interest in school. The school action policies of CPS have a disproportionately negative impact on the students who most need policies that actually improve the quality of their education.

While school closings and disruptions have required vast resources at both the District and school level, simple yet effective interventions to help students have been defunded and ignored over for decades. The *Chicago Tribune’s* recent series on truancy at the elementary level in CPS sheds light on the tragic and complex life struggles that impede the ability of so many children living in poverty to make it to school.<sup>14</sup> As with other challenges associated with the effects of poverty and segregation in Chicago, truancy is especially prevalent in South and West Side communities. As many as 20 percent of black elementary school students missed more than four weeks of school in 2011 due to truancy, gaps in enrollment and absences.

The reasons for truancy have their roots in poverty and the difficult familial circumstances of the students, but schools can still help children when they have the resources to individually and personally monitor the students who consistently fail to appear in school. The *Tribune* series indicates that for some

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<sup>9</sup> Data from 2011 ISBE Teacher Service Records and CPS Position Rosters.

<sup>10</sup> Caref, C., & Jankov, P. (2012, Feb 16). The schools Chicago’s students deserve. Retrieved from [http://www.ctunet.com/blog/text/SCSD\\_Report-02-16-2012-1.pdf](http://www.ctunet.com/blog/text/SCSD_Report-02-16-2012-1.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> de la Torre, M., & Gwynne, J. (2009). *When schools close: Effects on displaced students in Chicago Public Schools*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

<sup>12</sup> Brummet, Quentin (2012). *The effect of school closings on student achievement*. Retrieved from [https://www.msu.edu/~brummetq/SC\\_Students.pdf](https://www.msu.edu/~brummetq/SC_Students.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> de la Torre, M., Allensworth, E., Jagesic, S., Sebastian, J., & Salmonowicz, M. (2012). *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools in Chicago*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research [http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/publications.php?pub\\_id=163](http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/publications.php?pub_id=163)

<sup>14</sup> Jackson, D., Marx, G., Richards, A. (2012, Nov. 11). An empty-desk epidemic. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-11-11/news/ct-met-truancy-mainbar-20121111\\_1\\_west-side-school-elementary-grades-school-for-four-weeks](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-11-11/news/ct-met-truancy-mainbar-20121111_1_west-side-school-elementary-grades-school-for-four-weeks)

suburban school districts coping with rising poverty, the use of truant officers and social workers to reach out to students and their families are of crucial importance in making sure children don't end up out of school and forgotten.<sup>15</sup> Truant officers are long gone from CPS—the last one was fired in 1992. Like other essential support staff, even when CPS had them, there were never enough truant officers to go around, with most working in at least three schools.<sup>16</sup> The data from that period indicate that trancies went up in the years following the loss of truant officers.

Instead of providing schools with resources and funding so that they can properly offer wrap-around supports, the District has attacked and shut down schools they label “failing.” Schools that have been closed, turned around and phased out all had histories of high chronic truancy in the years leading up to the disruptive school actions. High schools that faced school actions from 2008 to 2011 had chronic truancy rates averaging over 50 percent in the years prior to closure. Elementary schools that faced school actions over those years had nearly one in five students chronically truant. The District’s contradictory response to such evident need for targeted support shows how misguided the policies of austerity and school closures are.

## Actions Aimed at High Schools

*“We’ve done six years of growth in four years. The students come to Crane at 4th, 5th or 6th grade level. According to ISBE, all schools on the West Side are failing.”* Steven Gothy, a 19-year veteran teacher at Crane, testifying at Crane’s school closing hearing in 2012

While the details of why schools are subject to school action changes from administration to administration, data from CPS’s Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) tests paint a clear picture of which high schools are targeted. EPAS is a testing battery developed by ACT, Inc., and comprised of a four-section standardized test that is administered in the first three years of high school.<sup>17</sup> Table 1 below lists the ten schools with the lowest average Explore scores in the 2009–2012 EPAS testing cohort. Because the test is given in September of students’ freshman year, **high schools have practically no impact on how students fare on the Explore.** Yet these schools were almost all subject to some kind of school action (some multiple actions) over the past 15 years.

Table 1. Lowest average Explore score 2009–2012 cohort.

School Name	2009 Avg. Explore	School Action
ROBESON HS	11.5	Reconstitution (1997)
TILDEN HS	11.7	Turnaround (2012)
MARSHALL HS	11.9	Turnaround (2010)
FENGER HS	11.9	Turnaround (2009)
CRANE HS	11.9	Phase-out (2012)
ORR HS	12	Turnaround (2009)
CORLISS HS	12.1	Early College STEM School (2012)
DYETT HS	12.1	Phase-out (2012)
DOUGLASS HS	12.2	--
HARPER HS	12.3	Turnaround (2009)

<sup>15</sup> Marx, G., Jackson, D. (2012, Nov. 12). Small town succeeds where Chicago fails. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-11-12/news/ct-met-truancy-galesburg-20121112\\_1\\_truancy-hearings-school-attendance-outreach-workers](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-11-12/news/ct-met-truancy-galesburg-20121112_1_truancy-hearings-school-attendance-outreach-workers)

<sup>16</sup> Forte, L.W. (1994). As truancy rises, agencies launch new tactics. *Catalyst Chicago*. Vol V. No 8. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/assets/assets/extra/1994/4CATMay1994.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> The three EPAS tests are the Explore (freshman year), Plan (sophomore year) and ACT (junior year). Available from <http://www.cps.edu/SchoolData/Pages/SchoolData.aspx>

In other words, a *single measure that these high schools can't possibly control* correlates strongly with the probability of a school action taken against them. Instead of school actions, why not provide proven measures like counseling for trauma, robust health care and an engaging curriculum instead of test prep for students at feeder schools<sup>18</sup> to these high schools?

As the following table demonstrates, the high schools subject to school action, unsurprisingly, experience high levels of poverty and intense racial segregation.<sup>19</sup> Yet no CPS policy is aimed at ameliorating the effects of racism and poverty. Instead, CPS policy contributes to these effects.

**Table 2. Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility and percent Black students in high schools subject to school action.**

School Name	Free & Reduced Lunch percent	percent Black
ROBESON HS	96.3	99.3
TILDEN HS	94.6	67.8
MARSHALL HS	92.2	97.9
FENGER HS	97.1	97.9
CRANE HS	93.1	95.2
ORR HS	91.6	86.2
CORLISS HS	89.7	97.5
DYETT HS	93.2	97.2
DOUGLASS HS	92.9	98.1
HARPER HS	96.5	98.3

As the table shows, it is African-American students from low-income homes who disproportionately experience the effects of school actions at the high school level. Students who—as indicated by their incoming Explore scores—have likely been underserved by their elementary schools need evidence-based reforms, not more educational apartheid. Instead of implementing proven reforms, the District has turned struggling neighborhood high school into laboratories, allowing educationally-inexperienced, profit-driven businessmen to experiment on low-income students.

### **Underutilization: Just Another Excuse**

The school closings and consolidations proposed to take effect starting in 2013-1014 are being justified by claims of “underutilization.” The excuse is that because school enrollments are low and schools have excess space, CPS suffers from inefficiencies that could be remedied by combining schools. CPS claims to have capacity for more than 100,000 students that now goes unused. This number is greatly exaggerated. In 2011, just one year ago, it was reported as only 65,000.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, a school's utilization rate can change dramatically with slightly different inputs, which makes the measure perfect for furthering a political agenda rather than a practical and well-designed policy. For instance, the District can change a school's attendance boundary to reduce the number of students assigned to a school. The school's utilization rate then declines when those students do not attend. Also, the method of calculating the number of extra spaces assumes large classes and insufficient space for non-class usage, extracurricular activities and community outreach. The utilization rate would change markedly if the

<sup>18</sup> Feeder schools are neighborhood elementary schools within a high school's attendance boundary. Students at these schools who do not go to a magnet/selective-enrollment/charter school are scheduled to attend their neighborhood high school.

<sup>19</sup> All FRL and Racial/ethnic data available through the schools search function at [http://www.cps.edu/Schools/Find\\_a\\_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/Schools/Find_a_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx)

<sup>20</sup> Rossi, R. (2011, March 9). Schools chief: CPS should put one-year freeze on new charter schools. *Chicago Sun-Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/4209995-460/schools-chief-cps-should-put-one-year-freeze-on-new-charter-schools.html>

District were to include school space for community organizations as is done in many places across the country.<sup>21</sup> In their 2009 report, the Data and Democracy Project suggested an alternative way to look at school capacity, considering educational appropriateness relative to the programs and goals of each school as well as best practices in education. They demonstrated the rich array of educational programming in use at two elementary schools then slated for closure due to underutilization.<sup>22</sup>

According to Mary Filardo, a national expert on school facilities and pro bono advisor to the Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force, CPS' current "one-size-fits-all" policy for space utilization doesn't make any sense because it doesn't account for programmatic variations, the age and size of the students, or the type of special education support the school provides.

It doesn't matter if the room actually has 18 pre-K students or if it's a self-contained special ed room with five autistic students – those rooms have 12 and 25 empty seats, respectively. There's no accounting for whether the school has a gym or lunchroom or playground, or whether a classroom converted to a science lab can fit the same number of bodies as a classroom full of desks.<sup>23</sup>

Filardo says that other school districts use a "far more sophisticated" approach that accounts for "how each room is being used." For example, CPS could allow for smaller class sizes in schools with more space available, which is the practice in some districts and which research recommends, according to Filardo.

The main driver of excess capacity, however, is the District's aggressive charter operation proliferation campaign, construction of new buildings, and the acquisition of others. It is dishonest for the District to talk about underutilization when it has inhabited, acquired or constructed space to educate almost 50,000 additional students<sup>24</sup> in the last ten years and has plans to open another 60 charter schools over the next several years.

"Underutilization" is CPS's excuse to close and/or consolidate neighborhood schools in black communities and hand over facilities to unaccountable private operators. Figure 2 below clearly shows the geographic relationship between underutilization and charter proliferation. As charters open, neighborhood schools lose students. For instance, in Englewood, even though some census tracts have lost more than 30 percent of their populations,<sup>25</sup> charter operations have expanded greatly while CPS neighborhood schools lose population. Those neighborhood schools are then designated as under-enrolled and must recruit students to stay open, even if they outperform charters on the District's own measures. Underutilization is created by CPS policy and then used to justify that policy, even though the policy is ineffective.

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<sup>21</sup> Filardo, M., Vincent, J.M., Allen, M., & Franklin, J. (2010). Joint use of public schools: A framework for a new social contract. Berkely, CA: Center for Cities & Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.21csf.org/csf-home/publications/ConceptPaperJointUseofPublicSchools.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Fleming, J., Greenlee, A., Gutstein, E., Lipman, P., & Smith, J. (2009). Examining CPS' plan to close, phase out, consolidate, turn-around 22 schools. *Data and Democracy Project: Investing in Neighborhoods, Research Paper Series, Paper #2*. Retrieved from <http://www.uic.edu/educ/ceje/articles/DataAndDemocracyRelease.pdf>

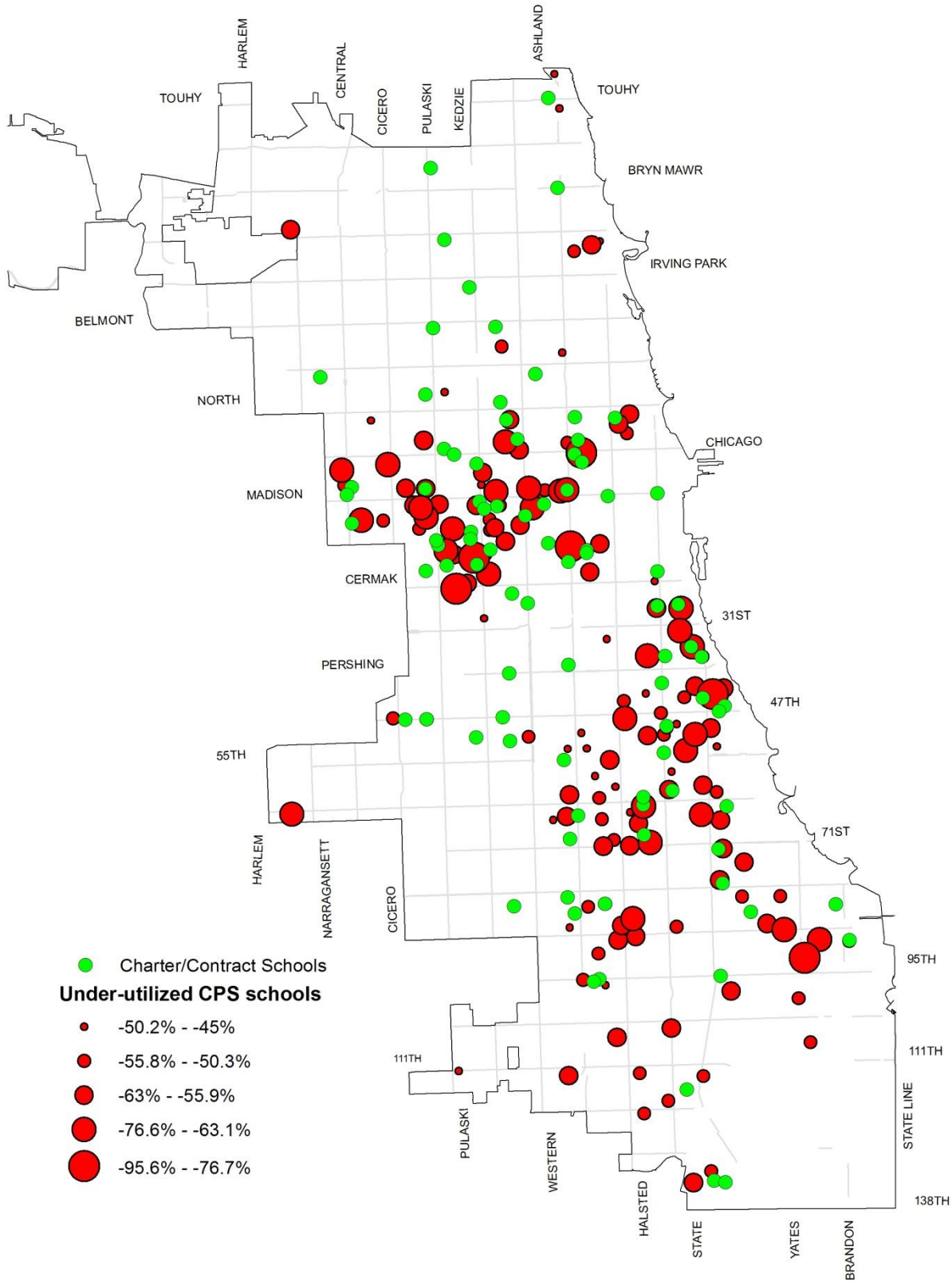
<sup>23</sup> Black, C. (2012, Nov. 27). On school closings, a political ploy. *Community Media Workshop*. Retrieved from <http://www.newstips.org/2012/11/on-school-closings-a-political-ploy/>

<sup>24</sup> Calculation derived from CPS facilities data

<sup>25</sup> Maps with 2010 census population changes accessed at <http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/map>

Figure 2

Underutilized schools and charter proliferation.



## Portfolio Chaos

Charter proliferation and portfolio management policies destabilize the District with no systematic educational benefits to students in sight. Under Arne Duncan, CPS implemented a portfolio strategy with four main elements: decentralization, charter expansion, closure of “failing” schools and test-based accountability.<sup>26</sup> At the core of the portfolio strategy is a belief that if competitive business principles, including organizational destruction, are applied to schools, then educational outcomes will radically improve. Kenneth J. Saltman (2010) explains this perspective:

The portfolio district concept implements what has been since the 1990's discussed in educational policy literature as market-based “creative destruction” or “churn.” This perspective considers public schools to be comparable to private enterprise, with competition a key element to success. Just as businesses that cannot turn sufficient profit, schools that cannot produce test scores higher than competitors’ must be “allowed” to “go out of business.” The appeal of the portfolio district strategy is that it appears to offer an approach sufficiently radical to address longstanding and intractable problems in public schools.

The portfolio metaphor is based on stock portfolios: Keep the strong stocks and sell those that underperform to cut one’s losses. That students are viewed as tradable securities is problematic enough. Worse is the fact that portfolio policies specifically target sanctions instead of support to the bottom five percent of schools.<sup>27</sup> As the section above on the link between Explore scores and high school actions explains, these schools are usually highly segregated and overwhelmingly serve students in poverty. Rather than direct funding towards in-school resources that address poverty and segregation—the root causes of these schools’ academic challenges—the District’s portfolio approach views the schools as unsuccessful competitors who must “go out of business.” The cost to communities, students, and staff of the resulting chaotic closures and forced mobility shows this is not only an unsound approach, but a tragic use of our resources, time and capacities.

An aspect of the chaos resulting from portfolio policies is illustrated in Figure 3 below and in Appendix A. Charter operators have often been allowed to choose where they want to operate (CPS schools, churches or charters’ own facilities), sometimes over very short periods of time. Neighborhood schools have been forced to share their buildings with privately-run charter operations—sometimes with little advance notice—and some of these schools have had multiple co-shares over the years as the charter operators hop around from building to building in search of better “schoolmates.”<sup>28</sup>

For example:

- ACT Charter moved twice, temporarily suspended its operations and then reopened two years later under the management of a different charter operator at yet another co-shared neighborhood school.
- KIPP-Ascend had six different locations in nine years, three of which were former public schools.
- As Urban Prep, an all-boys charter school, expanded, it had four different locations for three campuses and had to change two school names because the original neighborhoods were not the final neighborhoods.
- At least eight public schools were closed or forced to share space with a charter.

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<sup>26</sup> Saltman, K.J. (2010). Urban school decentralization and the growth of “Portfolio Districts Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit. Retrieved from <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/portfolio-districts>

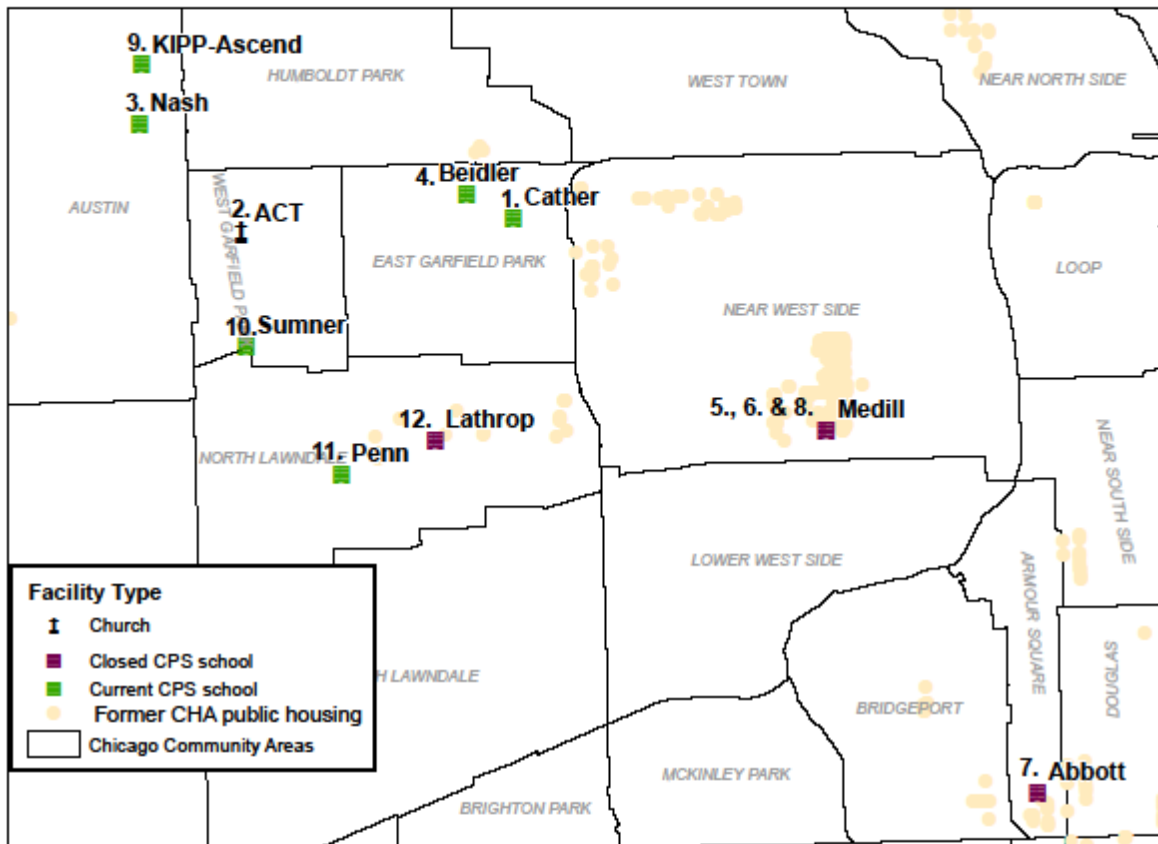
<sup>27</sup> Duncan, A. (2009) “Turning around the bottom five percent”. Remarks at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Conference. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/06/06222009.html>

<sup>28</sup> Myers, J. (2007, May 1). Going to the head of the class. *Catalyst Chicago*. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/2007/06/01/going-head-class>



Figure 3

Facility chaos created by charter expansion.



Some of these schools have received multiple actions:

1. Cather has co-shared with ACT Charter and also with Urban Prep - East Garfield. ACT only stayed a year, according to CPS board reports.
2. ACT moved back to the church it originated in, and then temporarily suspended its operations.
3. This year, ACT will reopen as a KIPP school and move into Nash.
4. When CPS wanted Urban Prep to expand, it was going to give Beidler to Urban Prep and move the students from Beidler to Cather, but community opposition prevented that move.
5. Medill closed in two phases - in 1998 and 2009.
6. In 2009, the Air Force Academy was temporarily located at Medill.
7. In 2010, Abbott closed and in 2011, the Air Force Academy moved in.
8. Urban Prep - East Garfield then moved into Medill and renamed itself Urban Prep - West Campus.
9. KIPP-Ascend opened in 2003 in McNair.
10. After a reportedly rocky relationship with McNair, CPS moved KIPP-Ascend into Sumner just weeks before school started in 2005.
11. KIPP-Ascend moved to Penn in 2009. In 2010, KIPP demanded that CPS give it more space at Penn but the Penn community fought back.
12. Lathrop was just closed in 2012 after a phase-out and it will temporarily host KIPP's temporary expansion which will itself be phased-out by 2017.

The story of ACT Charter, KIPP-Ascend, and Urban Prep illustrates the absurd workings of this haphazard facilities program: frequent moves, high social and financial costs and a lack of a coherent plan for improved educational outcomes. **CPS spent at least \$18.6 million rehabbing buildings that the original students could not use!** Most importantly, thousands of students' school communities were uprooted and

thrown into chaos, which negatively affected their academic progress. The portfolio strategy may or may not be a good way to run businesses, but it is a destructive strategy for a school system to employ.

## Opportunistic Philanthropy and Charter Proliferation

An additional crucial and little-known element of charter proliferation is the large financial windfall that can flow toward investors. The schemes have different forms, but all, at their core, are about transferring public wealth and resources to private hands through extreme leverage (debt) similar to the financing structures that led to the Great Recession in 2008. Private equity magnate and ardent charter supporter Bruce Rauner (namesake of Noble's Rauner College Prep) floated perhaps the largest of these ideas in 2010. His plan was rekindled earlier this year after he became a very public and very vocal opponent of the CTU during its strike. If enacted, Rauner's plan would raise about \$200 million in equity, borrow \$600 million and purchase 100 CPS schools that the investor group would then lease to charter operators.<sup>29</sup> In such a plan, the investor group would reap two benefits: First, they would receive steady streams of revenue from the leases, and second, they could claim tax credits from depreciation on the buildings. This plan would be a transfer of public wealth to private hands in three ways:

1. Public school buildings would be sold to private individuals, thereby limiting public access to places that are centers of communities.
2. The public would ultimately pay to lease back its own buildings. Charters' main source of operating revenue is per pupil expenditures and other support they receive from CPS. CPS is funded by tax dollars. Effectively, this plan takes the Chicago parking meter deal and applies it to schools. These leases, which would need to be sufficiently high to ensure a profit for investors, drain money away from educating students.<sup>30</sup>
3. Tax credits for wealthy investors limit available tax revenue for public projects and further shifts the tax burden away from those most able to pay and toward those with less, thereby making the tax system less fair.

Given the real economic benefit to investors and the ideological bent of the beneficiaries, plans like Rauner's abound. It is no surprise that so many charter supporters come from the ranks of those known as "vulture philanthropists." An August, 2012 Reuters article lays out the true scope of this push:

The K-12 market is tantalizingly huge: The U.S. spends more than \$500 billion a year to educate kids from ages five through 18. The entire education sector, including college and mid-career training, represents nearly 9 percent of U.S. gross domestic product, more than the energy or technology sectors. Traditionally, public education has been a tough market for private firms to break into -- fraught with politics, tangled in bureaucracy and fragmented into tens of thousands of individual schools and school Districts from coast to coast. Now investors are signaling optimism that a golden moment has arrived. They're pouring private equity and venture capital into scores of companies that aim to profit by taking over broad swaths of public education.<sup>31</sup>

**Clearly, charter proliferation is big business.** It is a business that is part of the CPS failed policy which, at least since the implementation of Renaissance 2010, has disproportionately and negatively impacted African-American students, used students at struggling neighborhood high schools as guinea pigs, created the excuse of underutilization and instituted chaotic portfolio policies.

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<sup>29</sup> Hinz, G. (2010, July 26). Venture Capitalist Bruce Rauner floats plan to raise cash for public schools while supporting charters. *Crain's Chicago Business*. Retrieved from <http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20100724/ISSUE05/100033712/venture-capitalist-bruce-rauner-floats-plan-to-raise-cash-for-public-schools-while-supporting-charters>

<sup>30</sup> Hinz, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Simon, S. (2012, Aug 1). Privatizing public schools: big firms eyeing profits from U.S. K-12 market. *Huffington Post* Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/02/private-firms-eyeing-prof\\_n\\_1732856.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/02/private-firms-eyeing-prof_n_1732856.html)

## Community Resistance to School Actions

Members of affected school communities strongly opposed Renaissance 2010 and are mobilizing against future school actions. Every school action required a public hearing, and parents, students, teachers and community members participated in dozens of these events. Their heart-wrenching testimony spoke to the unmeasured qualitative realities experienced by thousands of students on a daily basis. If CPS had as its primary goal improved educational outcomes, these school actions would not occur.

In 2005, Bunche Elementary was closed, ostensibly due to a persistent culture of failure at the school. However, policy decisions made by CPS had a significant impact on the students' performance, as recounted by the school's librarian, a 27-year veteran:

You are announcing this maybe a month before our ISAT and Iowa scores? You don't think our kids are devastated by this? And we also know that you have spent over a million dollars to renovate that building. I was there when you renovated it. A month and a half before school let out, we had to pack up all of our belongings and still have class. We couldn't use some exits because the construction crew was there. They had – they were taking asbestos off the roof, and men showed up in white suits and masks, but all our windows were open because the air conditioning wasn't working. Then in September when we came back, these "undedicated" teachers of "chronic failures", we came back to a construction mess that you would have walked away from. And because the school was not finished, we, the teachers, were expected to clean this up.<sup>32</sup>

In 2008, CPS proposed that De La Cruz School be consolidated with Finkl Elementary. De La Cruz was spared that year only to be closed the following year. During the 2008 hearings, a teacher from Whittier elementary spoke against the action, even though she did not work at De La Cruz:

In your maps, Finkl seems like a very close school. But in reality, some of our students will have to walk up to a mile to be able to get there. In your maps that you see CPS, you do not see all the gang signs and all the gang boundaries that our kids are going to have to walk through to get to Finkl. You have to put a face to that. Our kids are going to be walking through very, very dangerous areas just to be able to get to the new school.<sup>33</sup>

A school social worker from Bradwell Elementary spoke of teachers' particular commitment to the children and the school at a 2010 hearing:

In November, 2008, as a school social worker and Double Dutch coach and Cheerleading coach there at Bradwell, we loaded approximately 30 girls on a bus for the first time in five years to participate in the CPS Double Dutch competition. Not one girl on that bus had ever tasted the sweet flavor of a team effort that led to our first place in the region. A loud but joyous ride on the bus home left everyone feeling confident and excited about the next step... After walking only a half a block away from the school, a young man in a hooded vest pulled out a gun and began shooting in the direction of those students and the staff member. The staff member shielded the children, gave them a firm and quick instruction, and the children ran towards 79th Street. She stayed and waited in pain, bleeding and shot until all of those children were accounted for and safe with their guardians.<sup>34</sup>

Almost every hearing was filled with similarly impassioned testimony about the value of a community's schools. School communities even resorted to civil disobedience to protest the takeovers and disinvestment in their schools. For example, parents at Whittier occupied the school's field house for more than a month in 2011 to prevent a library and community center from being demolished. Piccolo school parents

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<sup>32</sup> Board of Education of the City of Chicago (2005). Bunche school closing report, p. 47-48.

<sup>33</sup> Board of Education of the City of Chicago (2008). De La Cruz school closing hearing report, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup> Board of Education of the City of Chicago (2010). Myra Bradwell Elementary School turnaround hearing report, p. 30.

Retrieved from <http://www.cps.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/SchoolClosingBradwell.pdf>

occupied their building in early 2012 to protest a turnaround. Ten community members were arrested outside of the mayor's office in November 2012 as an act of civil disobedience against school actions that had not even been identified. Clearly, parents and community members are dedicated to their neighborhood schools and are outraged about the attacks against public education. Given the level of support for these schools, an effective educational policy would build on community strengths in an attempt to improve the schools' academic outcomes. Since the school action policy is about privatization rather than improved outcomes, though, non-educators' voices are prioritized over those of dedicated parents, teachers and administrators. Bunche Elementary became Providence-Englewood charter school, UNO used the building that housed De La Cruz, and Bradwell was turned around and operated by AUSL.

If the related policies of school actions and charter expansion were subject to democratic processes or judged by their success at promoting higher levels of academic achievement, the District would discontinue them. In their place, CPS would institute policies to support students. Initiatives such as smaller class sizes, additional social service and health workers, or increased opportunities for faculty collaboration would be steps in the right direction. Instead, CPS subjects schools to serious actions that have negative short-term and unknown long-term consequences.

## **Part 2: Students First or Students Last? Setting the Record Straight on the Portfolio District**

### **Charter Elementary Schools Are Worse Options for Students**

One of the biggest myths about charter schools is that as a whole, they outperform CPS neighborhood schools. This could not be further from the truth. In addition to insignificant *average* differences, certain populations of CPS students have *better* outcomes when they attend neighborhood schools instead of those run by charter operators. Students in highly segregated, low-income apartheid schools, students in schools with higher than average poverty levels and students attending CPS magnet schools all have higher test scores—an unreliable measure, but nevertheless the one CPS uses to make high stakes decisions—than comparable students at charters.

Each year, CPS analyzes elementary student test score growth in order to assign each school a performance score called “value-added.”<sup>35</sup> This measure is said to control for demographic factors and prior achievement in order to accurately measure the impact of a school on its students' test scores relative to that of other schools with similar student populations. Since its development in 2008, this measure has played a significant role in the “Performance Policy” and has most recently become a crucial factor in the annual school closings. The CPS Performance Policy is the accountability policy of the District that determines the survival of schools based almost exclusively on standardized test scores. This raft of measures and explicit criteria for determining probation and eligibility for closure are meant to introduce a sense of objectivity to the process of destroying school communities. Instead, with new performance criteria added and standards arbitrarily raised, the number of “failing” schools on probation has increased from less than 100 in the year 2000 to nearly 250 this year. District officials can essentially close down or turnaround any low-income school they set their eyes on by just adjusting the annual school closings criteria. Last year several schools were identified for turnaround due to their poor test-score “growth” as indicated by the value-added measure, despite having average or above-average performance.

Charter school proponents often claim that while their schools clearly lag in overall performance, when taking into account demographics and prior achievement, charter school students achieve more test score growth than students in similar neighborhood public schools. The CPS data show that this is clearly not the case. While the CPS value-added data already control for demographics, it is useful to look specifically at some demographic subgroups of schools that are most likely to be at risk of closure and conversion into charters. As shown in Figure 4, below, and Appendix C, among schools whose students are at least 90 percent

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<sup>35</sup> Chicago Public Schools (2012). School Level Value Added Scores [Data file]. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/DataFiles/SchoolLevelValueAdded2010\\_2012.xls](http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/DataFiles/SchoolLevelValueAdded2010_2012.xls)

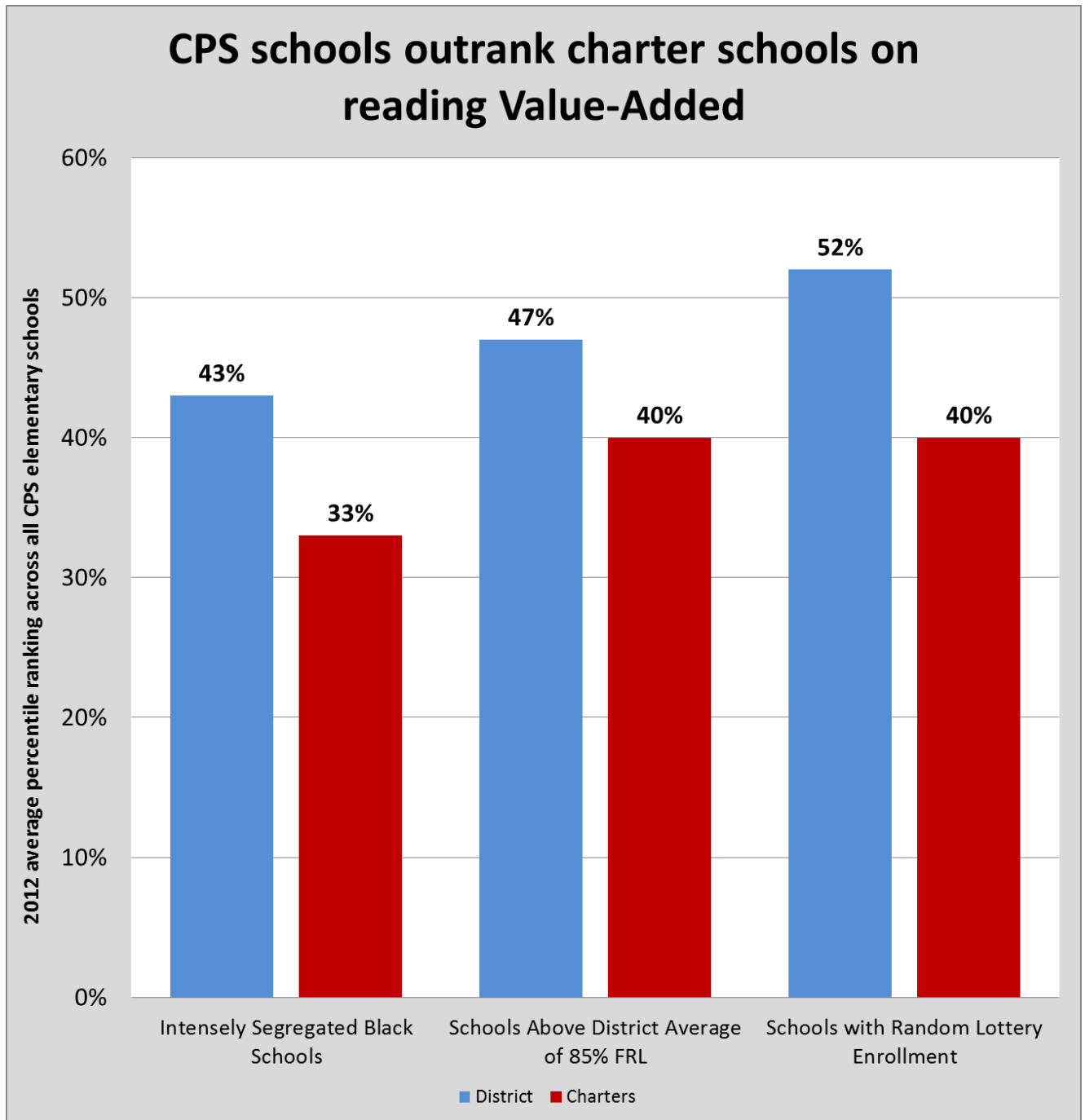
Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) and at least 90 percent black, charters average at the 33rd percentile in reading test score gains. Their neighborhood school counterparts score at the 43rd percentile, outranking charters by 10 percentile points on reading test score gains, even though most neighborhood schools don't require an application process to get in.

Among these intensely segregated schools, traditional public schools outperform charters despite the fact that they serve a higher percentage of students with IEP's than charters. Charter schools in this sub-group had only 10 percent of students with IEPs compared to the 13 percent in traditional public schools.<sup>36</sup> As shown in Figure 4, below, and Appendix C, charters are not a better option for students attending intensely segregated and predominantly low-income schools.

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<sup>36</sup> Chicago Public Schools (2012). School Year 2011-2012 Racial/Ethnic Survey & Limited English Proficiency, Special Ed, Low Income, IEP [Data file] Available from <http://www.cps.edu/SchoolData/Pages/SchoolData.aspx>

Figure 4



School choice models also inherently increase student mobility. Providing families with options on where their children attend school means that students will change schools.<sup>37</sup> Research on the effect of increased student mobility is clear: student achievement declines. Mobility is very disruptive to children's education and even non-mobile students are affected by student mobility in schools with high rates of mobility (30 percent or higher).<sup>38</sup> In the 2011 school year, 110 (16 percent) of CPS schools had mobility rates of 30

<sup>37</sup> DiCarlo, M. (2012, Aug. 27) Student attrition is a core feature of school choice, not a bug. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://shankerblog.org/?p=6602>

<sup>38</sup> Education Week. (2004, Aug. 4). Student mobility. *Education Week*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/student-mobility/>

percent or higher.<sup>39</sup> Sixteen of these schools had mobility rates above 50 percent, meaning that at least half of the students at those schools came and left during the school year. Mobility affects students' ability to develop social relationships and increases the risk of behavioral problems and dropping out. Since the populations most affected by mobility are homeless and low-income students, it's no surprise that schools in communities with high rates of homelessness and low-income families also have high rates of mobility and are struggling academically. Charters exacerbate mobility in a district with already-high mobility rates. As a result, neighborhood schools face more challenging educational dynamics, even for those students who remain in one school. Thus mobility affects more than those who move. The District's misguided charter proliferation policy will therefore only serve to increase student churn and make the process of raising achievement that much more difficult.

## **CPS Magnet Schools are More Effective than Charters**

Comparisons of charters to traditional public schools is inherently unfair, even when holding demographics and other factors constant, since most public schools do not have an application process that parents must navigate in order to enroll their children. Such processes, even when not based on a formal selective enrollment procedure, still can lead to the selective enrollment of students who have a higher likelihood—due to home, community or other environmental factors—of making relatively high achievement gains. However, there is a subset of CPS schools that mirrors the same enrollment guidelines as charters—the elementary magnet schools that enroll students by random lottery.

As shown in Figure 4 above, CPS magnet elementary schools significantly outperform comparable charters on CPS' accountability measure. On average, charter schools with numbers of FRL greater than or equal to the District average, have reading score gains at the 40th percentile and math at the 55th percentile. CPS non-selective magnet schools with similar levels of FRL outrank charters by 12 percentile points in reading and two percentile points in math at the 52nd percentile in reading and the 57th in math. Taken together, it's clear that charters do not improve student test scores any more than do neighborhood schools with similar student populations. It is important to note that even compared to the magnet school sub-group, charters under-enroll students with IEPs. Why not increase the number of these successful magnet schools, instead of turning over more schools to less-successful charter operators?

## **School Closings Policy is Unsound**

**If CPS were inclined to attack charter school networks with the same vigor as they do struggling neighborhood schools in intensely segregated black communities, the entire charter elementary school operation would be shut down.** In fact, when confronted with facts about charter schools struggling with student achievement, charter proponents are quick to point out that they believe the lowest performing charters should be swiftly shuttered. To do otherwise, as Andrew Broy, director of the Illinois Network of Charter Schools, put it, "would negate the very essence of the charter bargain."<sup>40</sup> This stance reveals the fundamental ignorance within the corporate school-reform movement about how to improve schools, and the cold rationale of business practices imposed upon the institution of public education.

The data showing charter schools performing no better, and in many instances worse than comparable neighborhood schools, is a testament to the need for research-based innovations, sustained resource investments and positive working and learning conditions in all of our schools. It is not the charter school staff and communities that need to be over-turned—it is the slash-and-burn approach to schooling that lies at the heart of the "charter bargain" that must be abandoned. Rather than close existing schools, CPS should provide school supports that have a track record of success; a broad and deep curriculum based on inquiry rather than mindless testing; trauma counseling and healthcare; opportunities for professional collaboration and growth; respect for professional judgment; and real opportunities for parental decision-making and involvement.

<sup>39</sup> Chicago Public Schools (2012). Mobility Rates [Data file]. Retrieved from [http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/Datafiles/mobility\\_rates\\_overtime\\_d20111004.xls](http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/Datafiles/mobility_rates_overtime_d20111004.xls)

<sup>40</sup> Broy, A. (2011, April 5). Independent authorizer will enhance charter school quality. *Catalyst Chicago*. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/2011/04/05/independent-authorizer-will-enhance-charter-school-quality>

## Charter Waiting Lists are Part of the Spin

Charter operators justify their expansion through their claims of long waiting lists for student admission. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Andrew Broy repeatedly refer to the wait list but the number fluctuates wildly. In May 2012, CPS told WBEZ that 10,000 students were on the waiting list.<sup>41</sup> On September 19, the *Chicago Tribune* editorial board claimed 19,000 students were on the waiting list,<sup>42</sup> and CBS Channel 2 News reported, “They still encourage parents to call, because sometimes a spot opens up at the last minute.”<sup>43</sup> Emanuel frequently uses the number 18,000 as the size of the wait list, yet Broy tweeted during the CTU strike that there were 3,000 spaces immediately available at charters for parents who wanted to enroll their children.

If nearly 20,000 students really are waiting to enroll in charter schools, how is it possible that spots available to anyone, whether or not already on the waiting list, would just open up? Just as charter promoters like to lump all charters together to mask wide achievement disparities across the charter networks, the issue of the wait list is not universal to all 100-plus charter schools across the city. In reality, students are likely on multiple wait lists and are therefore double-counted. Some charters are in high demand while others are partly empty, mirroring the reality of CPS schools in general. Consequently, the exact wait list number is unknown. The fact is, however, according to the 2013 CPS budget,<sup>44</sup> collectively, charters were actually under-enrolled in 2012. Further, CPS does not publicize the huge waiting lists that parents experience when attempting to enroll their students in non-selective enrollment magnet schools. Why not expand those successful schools as a policy? The “waiting list” myth is another excuse used by CPS to promote its failed charter proliferation policy.

## The Real Budget Challenge: Facility and Charter Expansion

CPS cites budgetary reasons for plans to close and consolidate schools, yet their own charter proliferation policies have caused unnecessary expenditures. As “school choice” under Renaissance 2010 was ramped up, so too was capital spending on new facilities and rehabs of older facilities. These new and rehabbed facilities were generally not for neighborhood schools (unless a turnaround occurred), but went to selective schools or facilities given to charter operators.<sup>45</sup> Often, millions were spent to upgrade functioning neighborhood elementary schools for use as charter high schools. Between fiscal years 2004 and 2012, CPS *annual* spending for charter schools increased by 624 percent, debt service (interest paid to banks and other lenders) increased by 52 percent and capital projects (new buildings, additions and renovations) increased by 84 percent. Spending on teacher and administrator salaries grew by a relatively low 10.6 percent.<sup>46</sup>

Charters also benefit from sweetheart facilities deals, often after a traditional public school has been closed and the building has been turned over to a charter operator. CPS routinely leases buildings to charter operators for the bargain-basement market rate of \$1 per year. At least thirty-three charter campuses currently benefit from \$1 leases.<sup>47</sup>

The history of the CPS budget indicates that the District’s priorities include the proliferation of non-union charters and the financing of real estate programs that benefit a relative few. School actions like consolidations and closures are part of a larger privatization policy, and not mainly about saving money. The cost savings of closings is tiny compared to the claimed scope of the problem and no amount of cutting costs is a remedy.

<sup>41</sup> Lutton, L. (2012, May 18). 100 new Chicago schools in 5 years...again. *WBEZ*. Retrieved from <http://www.wbez.org/news/education/100-new-chicago-schools-5-yearsagain-99276>

<sup>42</sup> Chicago Tribune Editorial Board (2012, Sep. 19). The future of Chicago’s schools. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-09-19/news/ct-edit-teachers-20120919\\_1\\_cps-principals-ctu-president-karen-lewis-striking-chicago-teachers](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-09-19/news/ct-edit-teachers-20120919_1_cps-principals-ctu-president-karen-lewis-striking-chicago-teachers)

<sup>43</sup> Tucker, D. (2012, Sep. 17). Some parents sending kids to charter schools due to teachers’ strike. *CBS Chicago*. Retrieved from <http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2012/09/17/some-parents-sending-kids-to-charter-schools-due-to-teachers-strike/>

<sup>44</sup> See CPS FY 2013 Budget, p. 13. Available from [http://www.cps.edu/FY13Budget/Documents/FY2013\\_Budget\\_Book.pdf](http://www.cps.edu/FY13Budget/Documents/FY2013_Budget_Book.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Chicago Public Schools, Department of Operations (2012). School Assessments [Data file] Available from <http://www.csc.cps.k12.il.us/servlet/CIP?ASMT=Y>

<sup>46</sup> Calculations derived from CPS’ 2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, p. 174-175. Available from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/Financial\\_information/Pages/Annualreport.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/Financial_information/Pages/Annualreport.aspx)

<sup>47</sup> Based on analysis of CPS Board of Education Board Actions. See Appendix D for additional charter facility support.



School officials have pegged savings from closed schools at \$500,000-\$800,000 per school annually. Even if the District closed 100 schools, annual savings of \$50-\$80 million constitute only 1-1.5 percent of the District's operating budget. Further, those savings do not reflect increased costs for transporting students, emergency response costs associated with increased violence or the costs of fracturing a school community. Research on six cities—including Chicago—by the Pew Charitable Trust supports the contention that closing school buildings does not save money.<sup>48</sup> This study found that savings were small unless they were combined with major layoffs, and surplus building sales were often difficult and did not result in major windfalls to districts.

As outlined above, most charter schools do not perform better than neighborhood schools. But if these are the types of educational opportunities the elite philanthropists and hedge fund operators have relegated for predominantly low-income students in urban schools, perhaps charters are at least cheaper to run? Again, this push for privatization has absolutely nothing to do with cost savings. In fact, CPS officials admit that charters do not save money: "As in other recent years, the proportion of the district's students being educated in privately run charter or contract schools continues to grow, though budget officials say that does not have any cost savings benefits."<sup>49</sup> In other words, the District is projecting a huge budget deficit at the same time it is attempting to expand a program that results in no budget savings and, as detailed in Appendix D, actually drives fairly significant costs, including money for expansion, startup funds, ongoing operations, facilities and undifferentiated costs such as food service, transportation and pensions. This is a strategy for failure if the District wants to be on sound financial footing, but it is a successful strategy if the goal is to shift money from unionized public school educators to private operators and the banks, investors and venture capitalists that promote them.

A final issue of increased charter spending is whether the money is actually spent on educating students. Charters have much higher administration costs and their CEOs are well compensated for running small operations, as can be seen in Figure 5 below. For example, Urban Prep's CEO made 353 times per student what CPS's CEO made!<sup>50</sup>

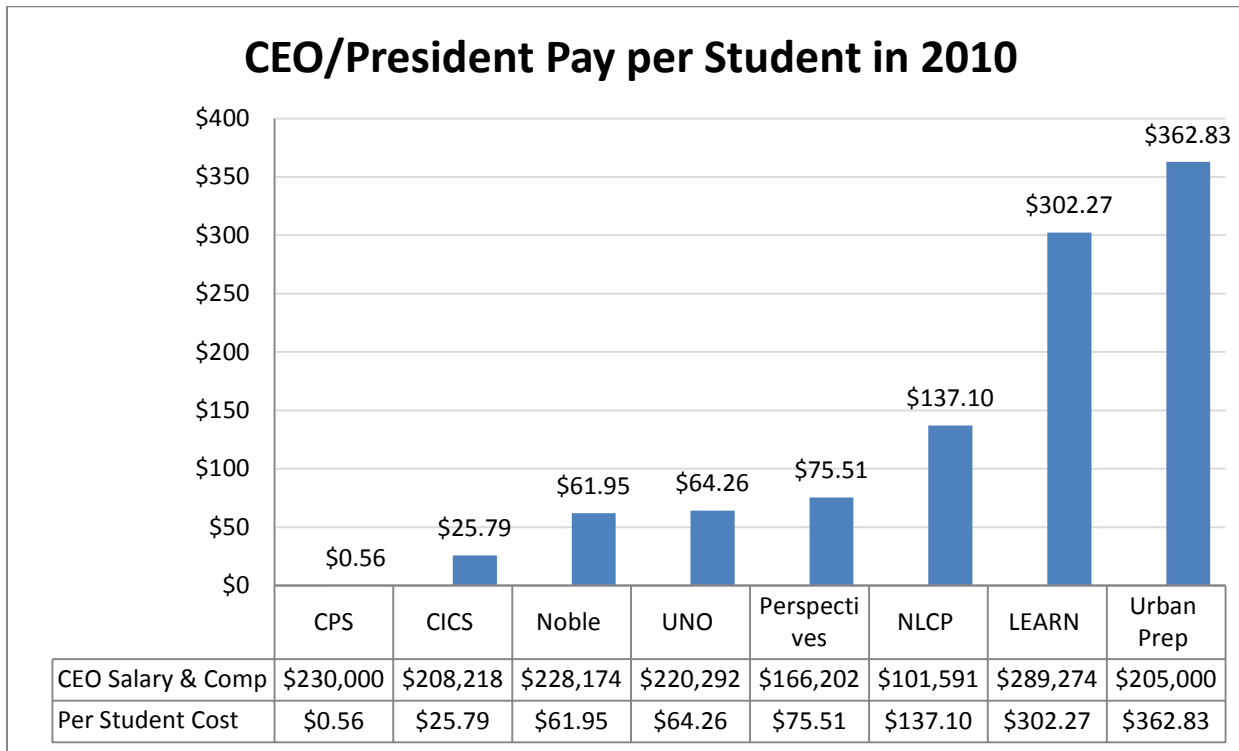
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<sup>48</sup> Dowdall, E. (2011) *Closing public schools in Philadelphia: Lessons from six urban districts*. Philadelphia, PA: Pew Charitable Trust Philadelphia Research Initiative. Retrieved from [http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Philadelphia\\_Research\\_Initiative/Closing-Public-Schools-Philadelphia.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Philadelphia_Research_Initiative/Closing-Public-Schools-Philadelphia.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> Lutton, L. (2012, July 6). Chicago schools budget avoids 'staggering' cuts by draining reserves. *WBEZ*. Retrieved from <http://www.wbez.org/news/education/chicago-schools-budget-avoids-staggering-cuts-draining-reserves-100680>

<sup>50</sup> All charter CEO data sourced from 2010 Form 990s. Available from [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org). CPS CEO salary available from [http://www.cps.edu/About\\_CPS/Financial\\_information/Pages/EmployeePositionFiles.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/Financial_information/Pages/EmployeePositionFiles.aspx)

Figure 5



Charters are clearly not cheaper to operate, but because they are typically non-union, they appeal to wealthy funders like Bill Gates, Bruce Rauner and the Pritzker family. If CPS annual budget deficit claims were honest and the school board was serious about addressing it, charter expansion would come to an end. Given that charter proliferation is a pet project of education privatizers and allied politicians, it is clear that this policy will continue unless communities and teachers organize to stop it.

### The Gates Compact

Despite the serious proliferation of charter operations in Chicago, charter supporters continue to maintain that they need more money, even after signing a pact with CPS that guaranteed more funding for charter operations. CPS and the Gates Foundation agreed to a “District – Charter Collaboration Compact” in late 2011.<sup>51</sup> This agreement has the potential to turn control of Chicago’s educational policy over to a private, unaccountable foundation and ensure a major increase in funding for charter operators.

The Gates Foundation, which has become a leader among philanthropies working to influence public policy, has benefitted greatly from this arrangement! In return for CPS adding \$23 million in funding to charter operations in FY13,<sup>52</sup> the Gates Compact gives CPS a paltry \$100,000 and allows them to compete for additional funding. That \$23 million comes directly out of neighborhood school budgets. If Chicago does not receive any additional money from Gates, charters will receive \$230 from CPS for each \$1 the Gates Foundation contributed. The Gates Compact also provides for additional capital spending for charter operators, including possible debt guarantees and bonding authority.<sup>53</sup> However, because CPS’s debt rating was downgraded in September 2012, future borrowing costs will increase and instructional priorities in the District’s operating budget will be crowded out for years to come.<sup>54</sup> Such a decision places undue financial risk on CPS,

<sup>51</sup> Complete Gates Compact document available at [http://cps.edu/NewSchools/Documents/Chicago\\_District\\_Charter\\_Compact.pdf](http://cps.edu/NewSchools/Documents/Chicago_District_Charter_Compact.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> CPS FY2013 Budget, p. 36

<sup>53</sup> See the Gates Compact document for a further explanation.

<sup>54</sup> Moody’s Global Credit Research. (2012, Sep. 27). Moody’s downgrades Chicago Board of Education’s GO rating to A2 from A1; Outlook remains negative. *Moody’s Investors Service*. Retrieved from [http://www.moody.com/research/Moodys-downgrades-Chicago-Board-of-Educations-GO-rating-to-A2--PR\\_256408](http://www.moody.com/research/Moodys-downgrades-Chicago-Board-of-Educations-GO-rating-to-A2--PR_256408)

yet there was no public debate or discussion about the Compact's outcomes. Gates "philanthropy" will end up costing CPS money while dictating policy changes not beneficial to students.

## The Hidden Costs of UNO Expansion

UNO's expansion in Chicago exemplifies the troublesome way in which charter proliferation transfers public money to private hands through complex financing arrangements. UNO has been aggressive in expanding its charter operation, and has done this through a combination of direct state support and a rapid increase in financial leverage. UNO's ever-growing debt and accompanying high interest is paid out of taxpayers' pockets. In 2000, the UNO Charter School Network (UCSN) had outstanding debt of \$1.5 million, but by 2011 its debt had ballooned to more than \$71 million. In 2009, the state of Illinois gave UNO close to \$100 million. Even with state money, UNO's 2011 bond issue was still rated BBB- and given an effective interest rate of more than 7 percent.<sup>55</sup> UNO's expansion costs taxpayers money in several ways:

1. UCSN pays its debt through money earmarked for pupil expenditures. The debt is held by private investors, which means that tax money that is supposed to be for instruction is going to pay interest on debt instead.
2. UNO projects a near-doubling of enrollment between 2012 and 2019, even though four campuses do not yet exist. Increased enrollment results in increased revenue from CPS. In other words, UNO is speculating on future expansion and is borrowing money based on students it does not yet have. If this house of cards comes crashing down, who will be left with their bills and who will have to step in to educate (former) UNO students?
3. UNO projects an increase in revenue from the District. Any increase in money to charters necessarily comes out of traditional public schools' budgets.
4. UNO's "management fee" for the parent organization is 10 percent of the revenue of UCSN. Public funds are therefore being given to a private entity.

The educational results of almost 20 years of closing CPS-run schools and opening privately-managed ones show these policies to be expensive and failed experiments. School closings and charter proliferation do not improve education and are costly economic deals for the public. Yet, CPS continues to make policy decisions that help the billionaires but hurt the students—as indicated by expansion of charter schools—even though most are worse options for students, especially when compared to magnet schools. They continue their unsound closings policy and suggest an extension of it to the charters they recently opened, which would cause additional chaos for students and their families. They mislead the public about the charter waiting list, and mispend public money on facility expansion, agreements like the Gates Compact, and support of private entities. These failed policies must end!

## Part 3: Innovation in Name Only: Charter Education

"I ran the numbers when I was at CPS," said Terry Mazany, former interim CPS superintendent and CEO of the Chicago Community Trust. "Charters, based on . . . being freed from restrictions of bureaucracy, should be knocking the socks off neighborhood schools. But they're not. It's a dead heat."<sup>56</sup>

As the myth of successful charter performance has spread, the emphasis on innovation has expanded dramatically. In 2010, Bill Gates even said, "Charter schools are especially important right now because they

<sup>55</sup> Illinois Finance Authority. (2011, October 6). UNO Charter School Network Series 2011A & Series 2011B. Retrieved from <http://emma.msrb.org/EP580767-EP454900-EP854889.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> Marin, C. (2012, Sep. 11). Rahm Emanuel picked this fight with teachers. *Chicago Sun-Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.suntimes.com/news/marin/15081962-452/rahm-emanuel-picked-this-fight-with-teachers.html>

are the only schools that have the full opportunity to innovate.”<sup>57</sup> The narrative supporting this view is that charter schools, freed from the shackles of bureaucracy and union contracts, innovate their way to great results, while unionized traditional public schools serve as the educational sites of last resort. However, charter schools have a much cloudier reality with regard to innovation.

### **The “Innovation” of Parental Exclusion**

Charter schools offer parents a choice, but they do not offer them power or democratic participation. Unlike traditional Chicago public schools, charter schools do not have elected Local School Councils (LSCs) with the power to determine budget priorities or select the school’s principal. Instead, they have boards of directors that seldom include any charter parents. LSCs were hailed as a model of local parent involvement when they formed due to a 1988 decentralization law. In fact, since Chicago’s school board is appointed by the mayor, LSCs are the only sites of democratically-elected school decision-making in Chicago. Almost 600 public schools have elected LSCs with parent, teacher and community member representation. Charter schools, on the other hand, have unelected boards of directors, often made up of people who do not have children at the schools. Noble Network of Charter Schools’ board of directors is mostly made up of corporate executives,<sup>58</sup> while Legal Prep Charter School’s board consists almost exclusively of lawyers.<sup>59</sup> Legal Prep’s advisory board has no listed parent members. These examples are indicative of limited parental charter school governance, an arrangement that charter operators demand, especially for-profit charters. Recently enacted “parent trigger” laws in seven states institutionalize this arrangement. Parents can vote, by signing a petition, to turn a school over to a charter operator, but their role in governing the school ends at that time and they thereby give up their official decision-making role in the school. Parents at the test case school in California later argued that they had been deceived, and the push for the parent trigger was led not by parents but by a charter operator front group called Parent Revolution.<sup>60</sup> In Chicago, UNO has been a huge proponent of parent “tricker” laws, even hosting private showings of a pro-charter Hollywood movie and distributing a list of public schools that parents should target.<sup>61</sup> Ostensibly, UNO would then receive those students (and their instructional dollars). Charter operators and parent trigger laws demonstrate that charters are about privatizing school governance rather than creating real options for community school development and parent involvement.

### **The “Innovation” of Selection In, Selection Out**

Are charters essentially selective schools? Charters claim that open lotteries and extensive wait-lists demonstrate that they accept anyone. Public school advocates point to the application process, parent contracts, discipline policies, as well as statistics identifying lower special education and English Language Learner (ELL) enrollments, as evidence that charters *enroll* higher-achieving students than neighborhood schools. Charter selectivity is shown in several ways.

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<sup>57</sup> Gates, B. (2010, June 30). Address to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools conference in Chicago. Retrieved 11/20/12 from <http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/node/2810>

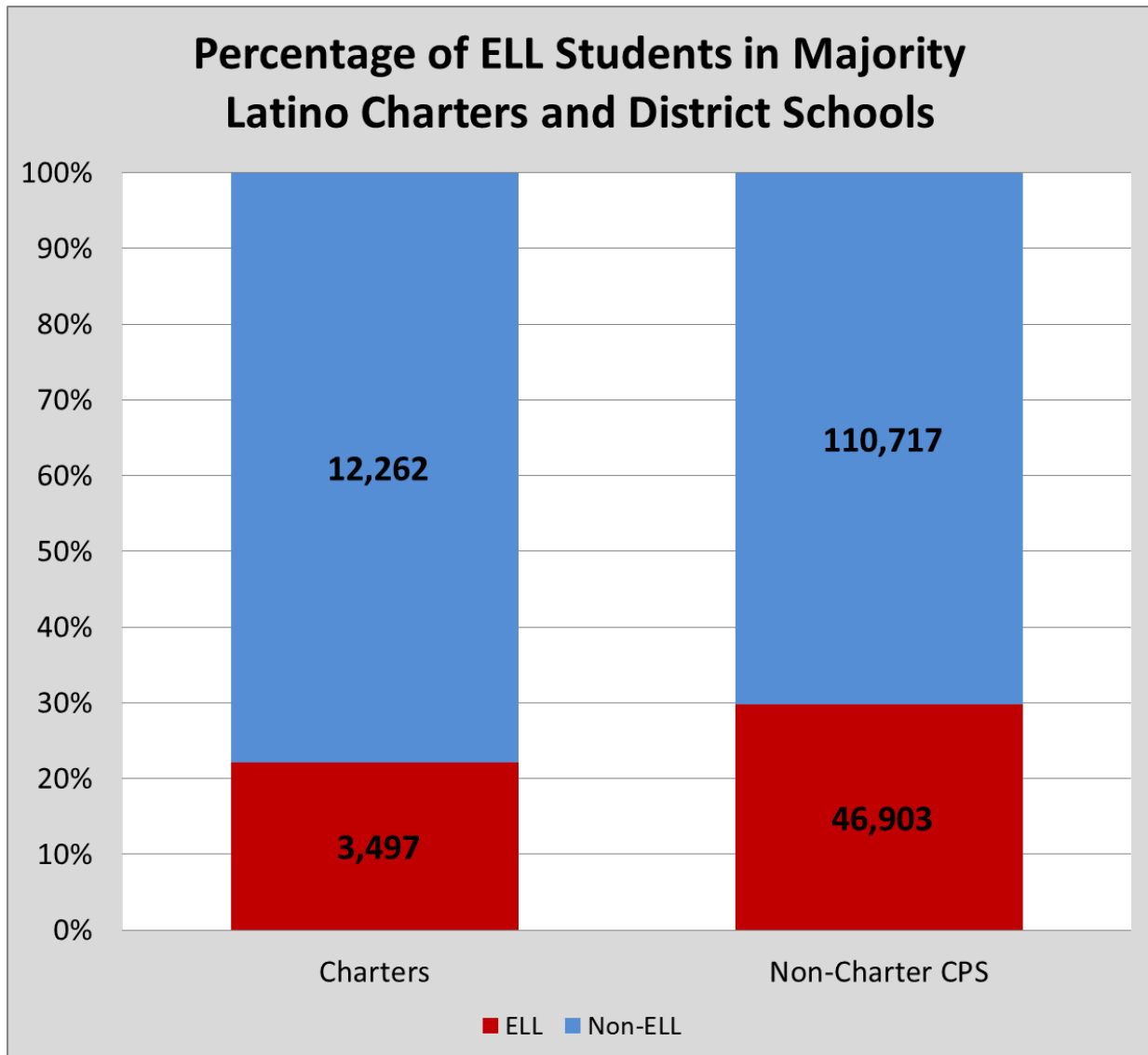
<sup>58</sup> Noble’s Board of Directors is listed at <http://www.noblenetwork.org/about-noble/board-directors-staff>

<sup>59</sup> Legal Prep Board of Directors is listed at <http://www.noblenetwork.org/about-noble/board-directors-staff>

<sup>60</sup> Rizga, K. (2011, April 7). The battle over charter schools. *Mother Jones*. Retrieved from <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2011/03/parent-trigger-compton-NCLB>

<sup>61</sup> UNO parent trigger target of schools can be found here: <http://ilraiseyourhand.org/content/uno-document-parent-trigger-and-list-schools>

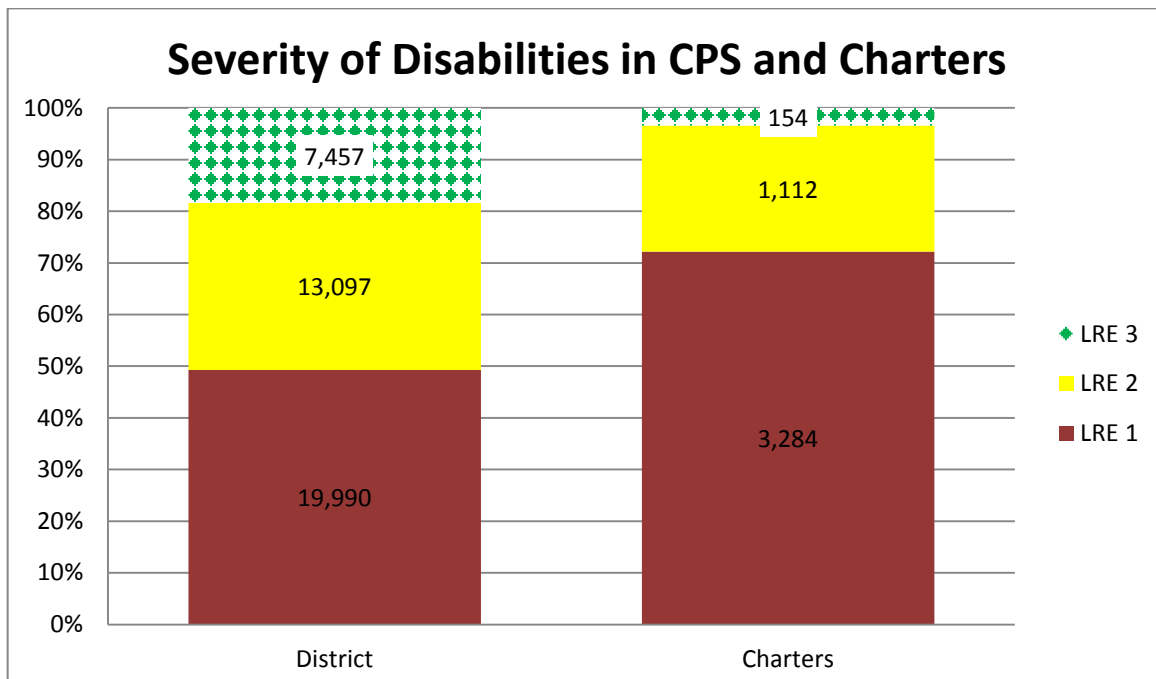
Figure 6



As Figure 6 above shows, charters enroll far fewer ELL students than traditional public schools. Among schools that are a majority Latino, ELL students make up 30 percent of District students but only 22 percent of charter students.

Charters not only serve fewer students with disabilities, but those they do serve tend to have milder disabilities, as shown in Figure 7 below. LRE 1 students make up 49 percent of students with disabilities at District schools but 72 percent at charter schools. LRE 3 students, who have profound disabilities, make up 18 percent of students with disabilities at District schools and only 3 percent at charter schools. These disparities explain a significant portion of the difference in per pupil expenditure between District schools and charters, and also demonstrate a significant selectivity difference between District schools and charters. District schools clearly must educate a wider range of challenging students.

**Figure 7**



CPS’s Explore data for the past several years shows revelatory patterns.<sup>62</sup> Recall that the Explore test is given in September of students’ freshman year, so it is a reflection of what the students can do on the test when they enter high school, not a reflection of anything the school has done. The top 10 schools for average Explore scores are, unsurprisingly, selective high schools. However, close behind these schools are several well-known charter schools that claim not to have a selective enrollment policy, including most Noble Street Campuses, UNO’s high school and two Chicago International Charter School campuses. Scores of incoming students to these charters are solidly in the upper half of all student scores, as measured by the Explore test. These particular charters have similar Explore scores to Kenwood, Chicago Academy, Marine Military Academy, Rickover Naval Academy, Williams Medical Prep, Taft, Phoenix Military Academy, Lakeview, Hubbard, Morgan Park, Curie, Carver Military and Simeon high schools, most of which have some element of selectivity (e.g. military academy, career academy, large IB program).

As is evident from the data shown in Appendix B, not all charter high schools have higher than average incoming Explore scores. However, equally evident is that while charters do not get the highest-scoring freshman, many charters enroll students who demonstrate above average achievement on this particular measure. It is clear that some charters are positioned as alternatives to the elite selective enrollment public (and unionized) high schools. Furthermore, because of stringent registration requirements for parents and students, as well as strict discipline codes, charters likely enroll students with more educational supports at home than students in traditional public schools.

A joint *Catalyst Chicago*/WBEZ report found that more than one in 10 charter students transfer out of their schools. Students transfer for a variety of reasons ranging from discipline policy violations to high costs for credit recovery classes to low grades. Charters also expel students at a higher rate than District schools.<sup>63</sup> As a result, neighborhood schools face more challenging educational dynamics, even for those students who remain in one school. Thus mobility affects more than those who move. The District’s misguided charter

<sup>62</sup> Chicago Public Schools (2012). *Explore Grade 9 Average Scores* [Data file]. Retrieved from [http://schoolreports.cps.edu/cpsedu/schooldata/explore9\\_allschools\\_2012\\_all.xlsx](http://schoolreports.cps.edu/cpsedu/schooldata/explore9_allschools_2012_all.xlsx)

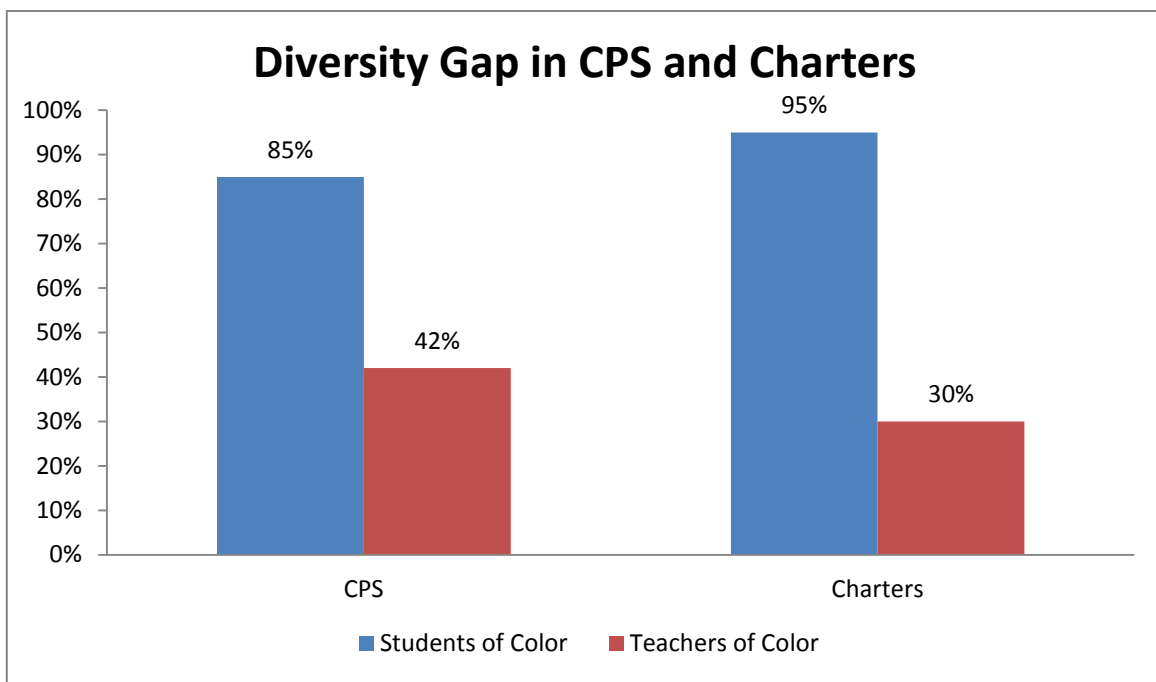
<sup>63</sup> Karp, S. (2010, Nov. 9). One in 10 charter school students transfers out. *Catalyst Chicago*. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/2010/11/09/one-in-10-charter-school-students-transfers-out>

proliferation policy will therefore only serve to increase student churn and make the process of raising achievement that much more difficult. Some charters do a better job than some neighborhood schools, but as a *policy* for school improvement, charter proliferation is harmful. Urban Prep loses an average of a third of its freshman year students by the time they are seniors. Their most recent cohort of students declined from 178 freshmen in the fall of 2008 to just 102 seniors in the fall of 2011.<sup>64</sup> As Urban Prep director Tim King stated, the environment at Urban Prep, notable for its discipline code, “won’t be for everyone.”<sup>65</sup> Despite this attrition, Urban Prep is lauded for its ability to get incoming low-scoring black males to college. By taking students with the most motivated families out of neighborhood schools and then sending back to those schools the most troubled students, charters contribute to increased difficulties in neighborhood schools.

### The Lack of Teacher Diversity in Charter Schools

There is a diversity problem in the CPS teacher workforce. The percentage of students of color far exceeds the percentage of teachers of color. This gap has increased over the past decade, and is a system-wide problem for CPS. However, the diversity gap in CPS, while alarming, is less alarming than found in charters. As shown in Figure 8, in 2011, black and Latino/a students composed 85 percent of non-charter CPS schools, while teachers who identified as black or Latino/a composed 42 percent of the teacher workforce, a diversity gap of over 43 percent. At charters, over 95 percent of students were black or Latino/a, while only a combined 30 percent of teachers identified as either black or Latino/a, resulting in a diversity gap of 65 percent across charter schools.

Figure 8



The diversity gap between black teachers and black students in charter schools is over twice as large as that found in non-charter schools in CPS. In non-charter CPS schools, the diversity gap was roughly 15 percent in 2011, with 26 percent of teachers identifying as black or African-American and a student population that was 41 percent black. In the 2010-2011 school year just 21.5 percent of charter teachers identified as

<sup>64</sup> Data on freshman year and senior year enrollment available from 20<sup>th</sup> day enrollment data from CPS. Three cohorts of freshman data are used, the fall 2006, 2007, and 2008 cohorts.

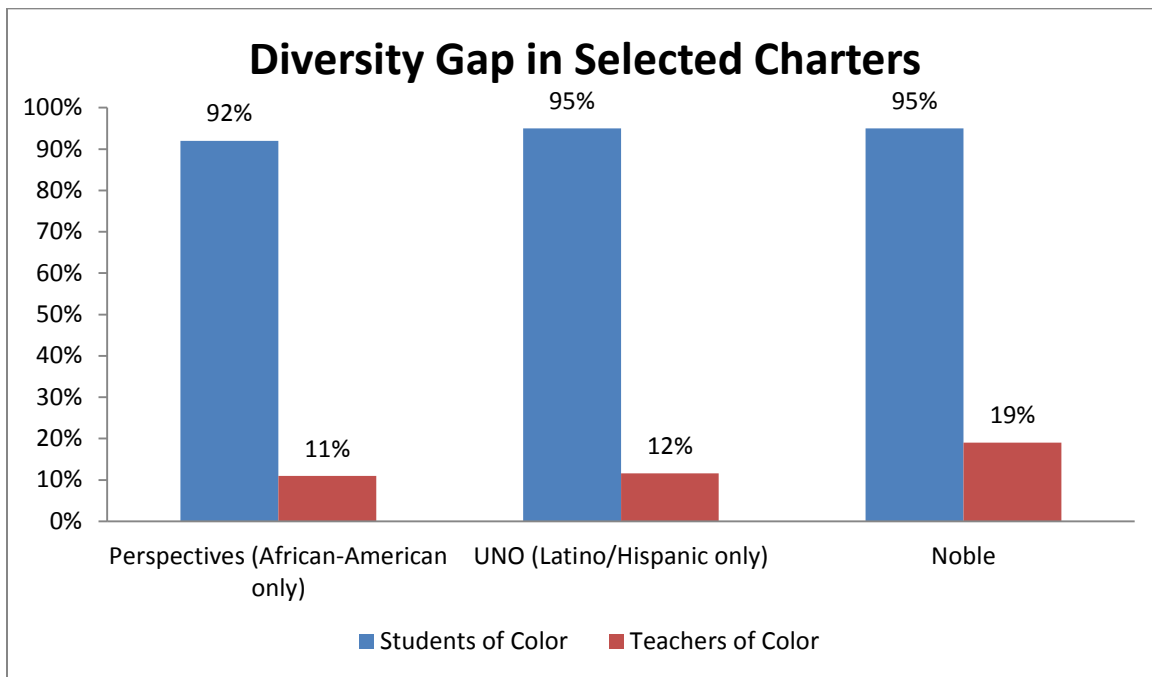
<sup>65</sup> Karp, S. (2012, Aug. 21). Jones and Urban prep shine as citywide college enrollment rises. *Catalyst Chicago*. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/2012/08/21/20362/jones-and-urban-prep-shine-citywide-college-enrollment-rises>

black or African-American.<sup>66</sup> Charter schools were composed of 60 percent Black students, resulting in a diversity gap of 38.5 percent.

Some charter networks have astounding diversity gaps, as shown below in Figure 9. The Perspectives Charter School Network has a student population that is roughly 92 percent black. Their teacher population in 2011 was only 11 percent black or African-American, a gap of more than 80 percent. The UNO Charter Network has a student population that is 95 percent Latino/a but only 11.6 percent of its teachers identify as Hispanic or Latino/a. The Noble Street Network is composed of 95 percent students of color, but only 19 percent of their teachers identified as black or Latino/a.

In these schools, students of color have a decreasing chance of having a role-model educator who shares the same cultural competencies and familiarities. Students and teachers of different races, ethnicities and backgrounds can, and do, work well together, but these relationships require levels of trust and respect built over time. Low numbers of African-American and Latino/a teachers, combined with employment practices that promote churn, eliminate shared staff experiences and thus make collaboration and trust-building difficult. The presence of teachers who can relate to students is important in the realm of expansion and sharing of positive and culturally responsive classroom management strategies. When teachers cannot relate to the students they teach, students' behaviors can be misread, and disciplinarian responses may be used as the default strategy.<sup>67</sup> Further, especially in segregated, low-income neighborhoods, it is important for students of color to interact with teachers and other professionals of color, so as to develop a broader view of future possibilities.

Figure 9



Chicago's charter schools, like most neighborhood schools on the South and West Sides, are deeply impacted by the segregation embedded into the institutions and geography of Chicago. Apartheid education exists in CPS, and both neighborhood schools and charter schools exhibit its traits. The alarmingly low percentage of

<sup>66</sup> Data are from the ISBE Teacher Service Records. Race data for the 2011-2012 are available but a significant number of charter teachers identified as "Unknown" in the 2011-2012 data. The 2010-2011 data was used because it was not impacted by so many "Unknowns".

<sup>67</sup> Karp, S. & Harris, R. (2011, March 2). Bridging differences. *Catalyst Chicago*. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/2011/03/09/bridging-differences>



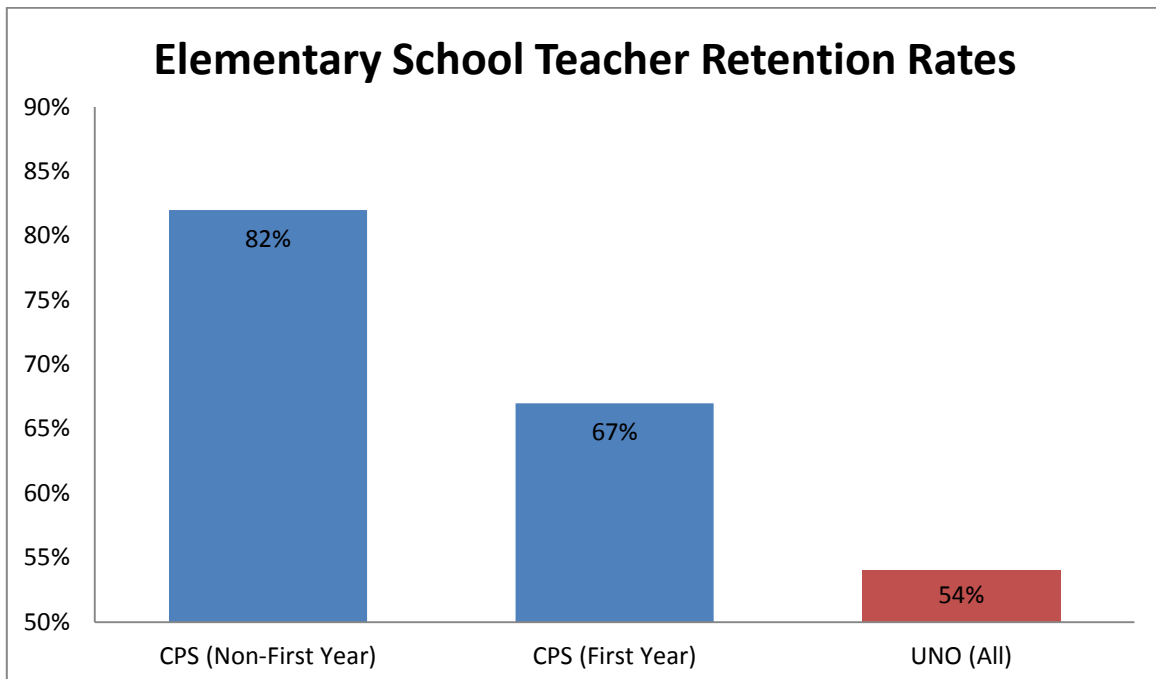
teachers of color hired by charter operators is another example of how charter proliferation compounds and amplifies the most egregious forms of educational apartheid found in CPS.

### The “Innovation” of Teacher Churn in Charter Schools

Many charter operators employ “innovative” hiring and managerial practices that result in an inexperienced, overworked and underpaid teacher work force. Rewards are small compared to the amount of work required. Charter teachers average about four years of experience, compared to 14 years for CPS teachers. Charter staffs are predominantly young with little or no teaching experience. Last year a quarter of all charter teachers were first-year teachers, and their average experience level dropped between 2011 and 2012. The annual spate of new teacher hires is not driven by charter proliferation; it is due primarily to the tremendous rate of turnover in charter schools.

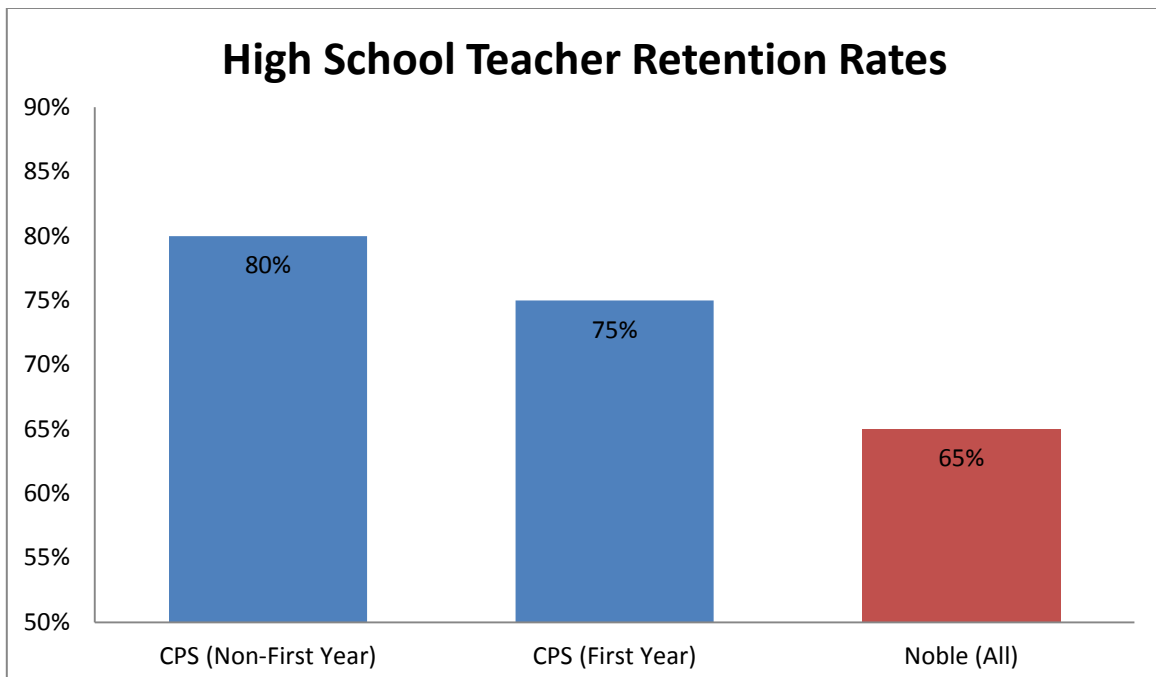
Annual staff overhaul is a systemic feature of charters. CPS charter school networks lost an average of 40 percent of their teachers from 2011 to 2012.<sup>68</sup> From 2011 to 2012, the UNO Charter Network lost an average 45 percent of their teachers, the Noble Street Network lost 35 percent, and the CICS campuses lost 40 percent.<sup>69</sup> Turnover rates across their individual campuses were often higher.

Figure 10



<sup>68</sup> Average charter-school network turnover rates calculated using ISBE Teacher Service Records.

<sup>69</sup> Individual charter network turnover rates and campus-level teacher turnover rates calculated using campus-level position rosters acquired through FOIA.



While age and experience certainly play a role in teacher turnover, charter school teacher attrition cannot be explained just by the fact that their teachers are younger and less experienced. A study of teacher mobility in CPS found that roughly 67 percent of first-year elementary teachers returned to their schools the following year. Among CPS high schools, around 75 percent of first-years returned.<sup>70</sup> As Figures 10 and 11 above show, retention rates at UNO and Noble are far below these rates. The average retention rate across the UNO elementary campuses was only 54 percent. Noble College Prep campuses average a 65 percent retention rate, with only one campus achieving a retention rate higher than the CPS first-year high school teacher average.<sup>71</sup> Though teacher turnover also plagues many CPS neighborhood schools, there is no subset of schools that have experienced as much endemic staff turnover as charters. Teacher turnover in charters exceeds any expectations for attrition based on the relative inexperience and youth of their teachers.

Teacher turnover has a disruptive impact on the school community. High turnover damages staff cohesion, trust, and relational patterns, inhibiting implementation and coherence of instructional programs, and harming learning environments.<sup>72</sup> Such disruption broadly impedes student achievement, not just for those students whose teachers left.<sup>73</sup>

Teachers value collective faculty input into school decision-making, instructional autonomy in the classrooms and administrators who respect and support the complex work of teaching. These are the working conditions most consistently associated with teacher retention and quality teaching.<sup>74</sup> The money used to deal with teacher turnover would be better invested in improved working conditions, learning environments and fairly compensating teachers.

<sup>70</sup> Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., & Mazzeo, C. (2009). *The schools teachers leave: Teacher mobility in Chicago Public Schools*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

<sup>71</sup> See Appendix D for campus level turnover rates.

<sup>72</sup> Guin, K. (2004). Chronic teacher turnover in urban elementary schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol.12, No.42, 1-25

<sup>73</sup> Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2012). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. (Working Paper No.17176). Retrieved from National Bureau of Economic Research: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17176>

<sup>74</sup> Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *Doing what matters most: Investing in quality teaching*. New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Retrieved from <http://www.nctaf.org/documents/DoingWhatMattersMost.pdf>; Ingersoll, R., May, H. (2011). *Recruitment, retention and the minority teacher shortage*. Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education. Retrieved from <http://www.cpre.org/recruitment-retention-and-minority-teacher-shortage>

Charter school proponents tout their schools as laboratories for autonomy and innovation. The realities of charter innovations are working conditions that are often hostile to developing stable teaching environments where staffs' collective knowledge and experience can accumulate and drive improvement. Teacher burnout and churn are institutionalized in charter schools as a feature rather than a fault.

### **Innovative Discipline: Intensive Crackdowns**

Charter operators pose their schools as safe and orderly alternatives to public schools in two rigid ways: strict discipline and dress codes. Dress codes are the most visible sign of "order." Urban Prep is well-known for its uniform of blazers and ties, and many schools have similar variations of this dress code. For instance, both CICS-Northtown and UNO require young men to wear ties and sweaters at school. Young women at UNO are also required to wear a tie. Uniform policies suggest to parents that a school is orderly and that students will be held to a higher standard, even if research suggests that uniform policies result in no better academic outcomes, no reduction in crime and no reduction in drug use.<sup>75</sup>

It is the discipline code, though, where the real "innovation" occurs. This innovation is damaging and harshly punitive in its application wherever it is used. Noble Street schools, however, serve as a particularly potent example of how discipline is used to harm students. A 2012 report from Voice of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE), Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE) and the Advancement Project analyzes Noble's discipline policies and clearly identifies the operations and effects of Noble's discipline code:

- Students receive demerits for a wide range of infractions, including un-tucked shirts, untied shoes, or visible possession of soda or potato chips. Four demerits results in a detention and students must pay \$5 to offset the "staff costs" of detention supervisors.
- If a student receives more than 12 detentions, the student must pay \$140 to take a behavior remediation class. Students who do not pay the fines are denied promotion to the next grade.
- Noble reaped huge rewards from this policy, collecting almost \$400,000 in fines since 2008.
- Noble also applies its discipline code in a racially discriminatory manner. The VOYCE/PURE report prompted an investigation by U.S. Congressman Danny Davis, who found that more than half of Noble students had been suspended at least once—three times the rate of students in CPS—and that 88 percent of African-American students had been suspended at least once.
- Other charters are replicating Noble's discipline code. "Violations of the UNO-CSN Uniform Policy and General Appearance Guidelines will result in detention and/or hours of community service."<sup>76</sup>

Harsh charter discipline codes and promotion policies also affect traditional public schools. Students who are expelled or counseled out of charters often end up back in neighborhood schools. As a result, neighborhood schools near charters often receive groups of "new" students throughout the school year. These students may or may not be more challenging to educate, but integrating new members into complex organizations is in either case a challenging task for the staff and students at a receiving school. Because charter operators can deny grade promotion for a range of infractions, including the failure of only one class, charter policies affect the classrooms of public school teachers. Noble Street is particularly strict with this policy. Documents obtained from the Rauner campus show that the school will nullify *passing* credits if all promotion requirements are not met. The only way to get credit for successfully completed courses is to be pushed out of the Noble network into a traditional public school. It is through policies like these that neighborhood schools near charter schools regularly receive former charter students. Neighborhood schools

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<sup>75</sup> Brunnsma, D.L. (2004). *The School Uniform Movement and What it Tells us About American Education: a Symbolic Crusade*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

<sup>76</sup> UNO 2012-13 Student Handbook. Available at [http://www.unocharterschools.org/sites/all/modules/ckeditor/ckfinder/userfiles/files/UNO\\_percent20High\\_percent20School\\_percent20Handbook\\_2012.pdf](http://www.unocharterschools.org/sites/all/modules/ckeditor/ckfinder/userfiles/files/UNO_percent20High_percent20School_percent20Handbook_2012.pdf). Quote from p. 37.

are required to educate everyone, not just those who are able to withstand military-level discipline at the age of fifteen.

School discipline practices harmful to students are all too common in both neighborhood schools and charters. However, the proliferation of charter operators touting strict discipline codes leaves the impression that there are only two choices facing urban schools—deal with misbehaviors through militaristic practices and penalties, or allow routine disruption to characterize the school environment. Harsh consequences such as suspension and expulsion hurt students by removing them from a supervised environment and denying them the chance of remediation within the school community. Disciplinary removals do not reduce disruptions to school climate and can even lead to net decreases in community safety.<sup>77</sup>

Research on early childhood and adolescent behavior and socio-emotional development shows that the proper response to misbehavior is to intervene in ways that promote students' rehabilitative capacities. Antisocial and disruptive actions should be responded to with more effective in-school supervision by trained professionals, utilize parent or caregiver involvement, foster peer collaboration to restore and build relationships and focus on developing interpersonal and cognitive-behavioral skills.<sup>78</sup> Students across the city are in need of discipline methods like restorative justice programs, but rapidly expanding charter operators like UNO and Noble do not use their freedom from the CPS discipline code to foster the principles of alternative, positive disciplinary approaches.

### **Test Prep Network: A Closer Look at the Noble “Secret Sauce”**

CPS uses the EPAS test battery referenced previously (in the Section: Actions Aimed at High Schools) to identify gains between freshman and junior years, and an assessment of EPAS gains shows a deeper and more complex picture than just the incoming Explore or ACT data alone.<sup>79</sup> Average EPAS gains across the District are about 3 points, but some schools significantly outpace the mean. Generally, the higher the incoming Explore score, the higher the gain between freshman and junior year. However, some charters post dramatic gain scores significantly outside what should be expected. This is especially true for Noble Street campuses.<sup>80</sup> The clear question is “why?” and the answer is an “innovation” that results from a misguided focus on test scores, another facet of the District’s troublesome educational policy.

The Noble Network has a laser-like focus on ACT scores and data analysis. Through the first three years of high school, Noble students are tested constantly. Freshmen and sophomores take quarterly “Hedgehog” exams (written by teachers) that utilize ACT style questions and power standards. Juniors are required to take a “collegiate seminar” twice a week after school that is really just an intensive ACT prep course, and in addition, they take a full battery of practice ACTs. Teachers then participate in large, network-wide meetings after every test in which they undertake concentrated item analyses. These meetings are led by the charter network’s chief education officer for data analysis. Grade level teams meet after the wider network meetings to develop a plan to reteach the information and to develop ten-question skill sheets that must be mastered. The standards are also integrated into ongoing in-class practice.

The problem with Noble’s ACT regime is that ACT scores are only intended to be a predictor of success in the freshman year of college, and at this task they are an imperfect measure. Some researchers claim that half of the ACT is effectively useless in predicting college success.<sup>81</sup> “The scores students receive on state tests may not be good indicators of college readiness, but students may believe that passage of the state test

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<sup>77</sup> Losen, D., & R. Skiba. (2010). *Suspended Education: Urban Middle Schools in Crisis*. Southern Poverty Law Center: Montgomery, Alabama.

<sup>78</sup> Lynn-Whaley, J., & Gard, A. (2012). The neuroscience behind misbehavior: Reimagining how schools discipline youth. Paper presented at the National Leadership Summit on School-Justice Partnerships, New York, NY. Retrieved from [http://school-justicesummit.org/papers/paper\\_2.cfm](http://school-justicesummit.org/papers/paper_2.cfm)

<sup>79</sup> See the Appendix B for specific EPAS gains data.

<sup>80</sup> See Appendix B for full list of top 20 EPAS growth schools.

<sup>81</sup> Bettinger, E. P., Evans, B. J., & Pope, D.G. (2011). Improving College Performance and Retention the Easy Way: Unpacking the ACT. (Working Paper No. 17119). Retrieved from National Bureau of Economic Research: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17119>

is just such an indicator.”<sup>82</sup> High school GPA and extracurricular involvement are better predictors of college success than standardized tests,<sup>83</sup> and even ACT and SAT agree that their tests are not as predictive as high school grades.<sup>84</sup> Unmeasured by the ACT is a student’s ability to persevere in the face of a new environment with different groups of classmates and often far from support networks, increasingly challenging college coursework and the reality of large student debt. Because standardized tests are such a poor indicator of college readiness, more than 850 colleges and universities have reduced or eliminated their test requirements.<sup>85</sup> As Saltman (2012) explains:

Charters imagine students economically as workers and consumers, and consequently they overemphasize high-stakes tests, which in turn pushes schools to treat knowledge as something that students consume and regurgitate rather than fostering the kinds of public education that prepares students to think critically about the world they inhabit and to learn to act as citizens with others to change it for the better.<sup>86</sup>

Observational evidence suggests Noble’s obsessive test prep comes at the expense of a wider, deeper and more engaging curriculum. In fact, Noble is so focused on test prep and test scores that the network makes a clear test prep exception for suspended students in its notoriously strict discipline code. These students may “enter the school to take or prepare for state assessments.”<sup>87</sup> One problem with this approach, however, is that Noble’s method works better in math and science than reading, where critical analysis cannot be taught with constant drill. Reading scores have not improved despite the intensive data analysis and repeated practice. The limited, and in many instances negative, impact that test prep and other reforms centered on standardized testing have had on reading and other skills is generalized and well documented.<sup>88</sup> While some Noble students achieve higher ACT scores than the District average (and about equal to the national average), there is no guarantee that they are prepared for the rigors of college. Students may gain college acceptance, but their level of “college readiness” is questionable at best. The Noble Network’s focus on ACT scores exemplifies why students are not more prepared for the challenging academic environment of a college or university. One Noble teacher said, “We hold their hands through the process so much that the students aren’t ready for AP (Advanced Placement) courses.” Because the ACT prep process is so managed and they are so deliberately led through the process, students struggle in rigorous courses like AP classes where critical analysis and open-ended answers are the norm.

These outcomes lay with Noble’s administration, not with the students or even staff. Noble often staffs AP classes with inexperienced and untrained teachers who are provided no incentive or monetary resources to attend AP seminars. The teachers’ only “incentive” is a purely market-based behaviorist one: get a 10 percent AP pass rate (defined as three or better on a five-point scale) or be fired. In fact, this high-stress personnel policy is at the core of Noble’s employment practices. Teachers were locked into no-raise contracts at the end of the 2011-12 school year and then Noble instituted a longer day for teachers with decreased preparation time for 2012-13—in essence, codifying more work for less pay. Teachers do have an option, though: Merit pay is available! In fact, Noble’s merit pay is directly tied to gains in EPAS scores. Teachers receive individual bonuses based on an expectation that students grow by three points per year (six total) between Explore and ACT. These expected EPAS gains are significantly larger than the District’s mean EPAS gains. According to a Noble teacher, “There is a lot of individual pressure by the teachers since it’s tied to pay, which I think makes a

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<sup>82</sup> Conley, D. T. (2011). Redefining college readiness, Volume 5. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center.

<sup>83</sup> Bowen, W. G., Chingos, M. M., & McPherson, M. S. (2011). *Crossing the finish line: Completing college at America’s public universities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

<sup>84</sup> Strauss, V. (2011, Aug. 17). 2011 ACT scores show problems with college readiness. [Blog post]. *Washington Post* Retrieved from [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/2011-act-scores-show-problems-with-college-readiness/2011/08/16/gIQABKu4JJ\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/2011-act-scores-show-problems-with-college-readiness/2011/08/16/gIQABKu4JJ_blog.html)

<sup>85</sup> Listing of test-optional colleges can be found at <http://fairtest.org/university/optional>

<sup>86</sup> Saltman, K.J. (2012). *The Failure of Corporate School Reform*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Press.

<sup>87</sup> Noble Network of Charter Schools (2012). Student and parent handbook – 2012-2013. Retrieved from [http://uiccollegeprep.noblenetwork.org/sites/roweclark.noblenetwork.org/files/images/handbook\\_12-13.pdf](http://uiccollegeprep.noblenetwork.org/sites/roweclark.noblenetwork.org/files/images/handbook_12-13.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> Nichols, S. L., Glass, G. V., & Berliner, D.C. (2012) High-stakes testing and student achievement: Updated analyses with NAEP data. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 20(20). Retrieved from <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/1048>

significant difference in the mentality for the teachers. Like I must teach these kids how to do X, Y and Z or else I won't get my bonus. It's a much more corporate style atmosphere in general." Noble's audited financial statements for FY2011 show more than \$3 million in bonus salaries compared to \$26.2 million in base salaries. Even with an incentive structure, though, Noble's teachers are underpaid. Network teachers earn an average of \$50,290 a year, about \$20,000 less than the average unionized CPS teacher.<sup>89</sup>

To be fair, charter operators are just utilizing a "high-pressure" version of standardized testing, which itself is part of a much wider change in the process of education for test scores instead of education for social and civic engagement. The real issue is the push to master a task of dubious import: if test scores are bad at what they are intended to do, why focus so much on the test score? The full answer is beyond the scope of this report, but the relevant portion of the answer is that the one "innovation" that has been adopted by charters and District schools alike is data-driven management to push up the wrong test scores. No similar push has been made to improve outcomes like Advanced Placement scores because those tests cannot be manipulated in the same way—they require broad and deep content knowledge, as well as clear evidence of reasoning ability that can only be developed through rigorous curriculum, individual initiative, and supportive environments. While vital, a challenging curriculum in a high school is not enough to remedy systemic challenges like intensive poverty, segregation or denial of health care so many of Chicago's students face on a daily basis.

### **Public School Disinvestment and Charter Diversion**

Charter operators have not fulfilled charter schools' initial goal of innovative teaching and collaborative practices. They began as a vision for teacher-led, unionized schools that would lead experiments and share innovations with neighborhood schools, but school districts and charter operators have pursued a privatization agenda instead. The supposed "bureaucracy" that holds back innovation in neighborhood schools is not an inherent feature of public neighborhood schools but an intentional policy of disinvestment that withholds resources for innovation in neighborhood schools and gives additional funding and autonomy for charters.

A succinct example of this disinvestment and diversion came in 2010, when the Montessori Program at Stagg Elementary School was in high demand with 125 students on the waiting list.<sup>90</sup> CPS, however, did not provide funding to expand the successful program, which was funded for only three classrooms at Stagg. Instead, CPS showed its preference for privately-run schools and granted the expansion to a charter school in the same Englewood community. CPS placed Stagg on the school turnaround list the following year, throwing its staff and environment into chaos and jeopardizing the continuity the Montessori Program had established among its students and staff. Innovations that are developed and invested in by staff and community members in neighborhood schools are all too often shunned, disinvested and destabilized by CPS policies.

### **Promoting Innovation and Investment in Neighborhood Schools**

The rhetoric of charters, turnarounds and other sweeping reforms touting "innovations" as the key to student achievement gains and school improvement enshrines the notion that any urban school that succeeds must have a "secret sauce." The main drivers for school improvement are not so mysterious. Research-based policies, targeted resource investments and reforms that are geared towards nurturing environments where teachers can effectively collaborate, and where school leadership and decision-making is inclusive and instruction-focused, puts schools on track for steady improvement.

The "secret sauce" approach to improving urban schools is dangerous because it emphasizes working around students' educational needs rather than truly addressing them. This is not the way to drive wholesale improvement across a school district that serves so many students with diverse needs.

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<sup>89</sup> Calculation derived from Illinois State Board of Education Teacher Service Record data available at [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/teacher\\_service\\_record.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/teacher_service_record.htm)

<sup>90</sup> Catalyst Chicago. (2010, Nov. 30). New charter schools slated for a school board vote. *Catalyst Chicago* Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/notebook/2010/11/30/new-charter-schools-slated-school-board-vote>

One of the striking conclusions of Bryk et al. (2010) on Chicago schools' improvement through the early 1990s is that, "the schools most disadvantaged by community context have to develop the strongest internal organizational supports to effect significant improvements for their students. Unfortunately, our data also indicate that achieving such organizational strengths is an exceedingly difficult task in highly disadvantaged community contexts." (p. 193)<sup>91</sup> Their findings show that much of the difference in student attainment between truly disadvantaged schools and schools in well-resourced communities are due to the immensely stressful challenges that the students face in their home and social lives—not because of inherent school practice factors.

*"In Chicago schools located in poor, crime-ridden neighborhoods, the problem is especially acute. Results from the Chicago Youth Development Study showed 80% of inner-city teen boys reported exposure to violence. Of children exposed to violence, more than 40% show symptoms of post-traumatic stress, according to the National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder."<sup>92</sup>*

*The fallout on classroom behavior and student achievement is significant. Nearly 80% of those surveyed feel that mental health issues are having a larger impact on classes than three years ago. As one school official told us, 'Students are unable to resolve conflicts without fighting. Fighting leads to other problems, which take valuable time away from instruction.' Just as troubling: nearly 60% in the survey believe mental health issues have a moderate to major impact on student absenteeism."*

—"Make student mental health a priority," Jane Mentzinger, Executive Director, Communities in Schools in Chicago<sup>93</sup>

For highly-disadvantaged student populations concentrated into segregated schools, resource investments that address students' difficult life circumstances must be made for broad school improvement to take root. In-school wrap-around social supports, diverse and wholesome curriculum, and small and engaging class sizes are the crucial pillars over which school-level organizational improvements are made. These investments, among others, are identified in the Chicago Teachers Union's blueprint for school reform, *The Schools Chicago's Students Deserve*. (Feb. 2012) CPS must build on these investments by promoting innovation in ways that knowledge about teaching can be generated and shared by school staff, and learning can become an inclusive, and culturally-relevant, positive social experience for students. Teachers need to be the driving force in improving teaching and learning, with the collaboration and coordinated support of their school leadership and the central office.

## **Building Knowledge About Teaching**

A much-needed innovation in CPS is a focus at the school-level on the generation and sharing of knowledge about teaching.<sup>94</sup> Instead of spending millions of dollars generating data about the performance of individual teachers, CPS needs to invest in ways that teachers can lead instructional improvements through collaboration and professional development. There are many innovative approaches to improving instruction and learning through this manner.

One such initiative, the Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) focuses on literacy instruction at the K-3 grade. The CLI program includes individual and small-group coaching for teachers, development of Model Classroom teachers, creation of literacy-rich environments and importantly, a focus on building capacity at the

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<sup>91</sup> Bryk, A., Sebring, P., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 193.

<sup>92</sup> Karp, S. (2012, June 18). Tragedy's aftermath. *Catalyst Chicago*. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/2012/06/18/20187/tragedys-aftermath>

<sup>93</sup> Mentzinger, J. (2012, June 8). Make student mental health a priority. *Catalyst Chicago* Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/2012/06/08/20169/make-student-mental-health-priority>

<sup>94</sup> Learn more about the need for an emphasis on collaborative improvements in teaching from Stigler and Hiebert, (1999). *The teaching gap: Best ideas from the world's teachers for improving education in the classroom*. New York: Free Press.

school-level for ongoing professional development. A combination of federal and private funding has brought the CLI program to a total of 11 CPS schools this year. However, interventions in early childhood literacy in CPS face the problem of large class sizes at the K-3 level, where small class sizes are especially critical to learning. CPS has consistently been at the top of Illinois school districts when it comes to early grade class sizes, ranking 12<sup>th</sup> highest at the K-3 level in 2011.<sup>95</sup> At the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year, one out of five classrooms at the lower grades exceeded the 28-student class size maximum.<sup>96</sup> The eight schools that implemented CLI in fall of 2011 had at the K-3 level an average of 25 to 27 students per classroom last year.<sup>97</sup> Creating literacy-rich environments in CPS often means dealing with limited resources. Only a quarter of elementary schools receive dedicated funding from the District to maintain a school library. Promising innovations at the early grade levels ought to be combined with the requisite investments in sound learning environments.

Another innovation that should be implemented in more schools is Lesson Study. Teachers need time to collaborate and actively criticize each other's lesson planning and delivery. The method of Lesson Study focuses on a particular research theme, which is specified by a study group of teachers for a grade or subject level. A lesson plan is developed by the study group, which is then taught by one member of the group while the others observe and analyze the thinking and learning that occur among the students. A debriefing follows with a group discussion about the lesson, which is used to refine the lesson for another cycle of teaching, observation and debriefing.<sup>98</sup>

These innovations in teaching are valuable because they build on the investments that the school staffs have made in their schools in order to drive learning improvements, and they prioritize the development of school-level capacity for further professional development. Investing in environments where teachers can effectively collaborate has another significant benefit—such environments retain teachers.<sup>99</sup>

## Learning Strategies, Not Testing Strategies

More fundamentally, schools must be lifted from the suffocating web of sticks and carrots that pushes performance on standardized tests as the premier goal of the learning and development work that schools do. With the toxic encroachment of mandated tests and its associated curricula into even the earliest grades, it is ever more important to reinvigorate programs that are developmentally appropriate, geared towards developing children's participation in learning, and enhance social skills such as cooperation and empathy.

One such approach, called Responsive Classroom, was introduced in several CPS schools through the Schools Project, an 11-year partnership between nine CPS elementary schools in low-income neighborhoods and the Erikson Institute. Responsive Classroom aims to develop social skills of cooperation, responsibility and empathy in concert with the acquisition of deep subject knowledge, decision making and motivation for learning.<sup>100</sup> Its implementation across the schools was widely varied. The program faced obstacles typical in CPS: large class sizes, insufficient support staff and teacher aides, unstable school environments marked by principal and teacher turnover, pressures of high-stakes testing and school probation and the deeper problem of children facing striking socio-emotional problems and difficult home environments.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Caref, C., & Jankov, P. (2012)

<sup>96</sup> Calculated based off individual class room student count data received from CPS.

<sup>97</sup> Based on 2012 ISBE School Report Card Data, available from <http://webprod.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getsearchcriteria.aspx>

<sup>98</sup> Learn more about professional development through Lesson Study from the Chicago Lesson Study Group at <http://www.lessonstudygroup.net>

<sup>99</sup> Allensworth, E. (2012). Want to improve teaching? Create collaborative, supportive schools. *American Educator*. Fall 2012. Retrieved from [http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Want\\_percent20to\\_percent20improve\\_percent20teaching\\_percent20- percent20EA.pdf](http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Want_percent20to_percent20improve_percent20teaching_percent20- percent20EA.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> Charney, R., Clayton, M., & Wool, R. (1995). *The responsive classroom*. Pittsfield, MA: North-east Foundation for Children

<sup>101</sup> Horsch, P., Jie-Qi Chen, & Wagner, S.L. (2002). The Responsive Classroom approach: A caring, respectful school environment as a context for development. *Education and Urban Society*. 34:365.



When faithfully implemented, Responsive Classroom practices can lead to valuable improvements in learning environments. Results from two other rounds of longitudinal studies of Responsive Classroom shows that its approach develops children's social skills, increases their positive feelings about school, and is associated with improved achievement. Responsive Classroom also improves teacher-student interactions, strengthens instruction, increases teacher collaboration and boosts teachers' self-efficacy.<sup>102</sup> The varied experience of Responsive Classroom in CPS shows the vital need for a systematic approach to innovation that involves concurrent investment in resources, and a climate for teaching unsullied by the ever-shifting mandates and testing that characterizes schooling in CPS.

There are alternatives to the regime of test-based accountability that replaces the rigorous but meaningless standardized tests with an assessment system built on challenging subject-specific tasks, a wide array of demonstrated knowledge, extensive documentation and active learning. This approach is exemplified by the New York Performance Standards Consortium, a collection of 28 small high schools that are exempt from state test-based standards and have developed a multi-layered assessment system much richer, more complex, and relevant to student learning.<sup>103</sup> Evaluations of the Consortium schools have shown that their students have both above-average graduation rates and college persistence rates.<sup>104</sup>

The complex and varied challenges that students must meet to persevere at schools where rich evidence of learning is prioritized over test outcomes, develops the breadth of learning strategies, social skills and perseverance necessary to become successful in college.<sup>105</sup> CPS should prioritize investing in solutions that create these environments from preschool through high school. Montessori schools and programs such as Responsive Classroom and CLI should be standard at the elementary level. Teachers should have ample opportunity to engage in group-driven assessments of each other's practices such as through Lesson Study. All schools should develop an assessment and accountability system that parallels the rich curriculum by focusing on wide documentation of learning, and diverse performance tasks.

Our schools do not need constant top-down overhaul in curriculum, standards, and assessments. Our communities do not need constant top-down assaults and turnarounds of their teachers and learning institutions. What schools need are the resources to succeed, and the freedom to create environments where meaningful inquiry-based learning is top priority, not outcomes on a bubble sheet.

This approach to innovation and investment stands in stark contrast to that offered by the world of charter schools. The world of school choice, competition and hyper-accountability ensures that all investments are only fleeting, as innovations will be swiftly and routinely strangled when short-term test score improvements fail to appear. Furthermore, when schools' livelihoods affect the bottom-line of private organizations and their profit-seeking financiers instead of the communities they are based in, educational goals take a backseat to green-colored incentives. Many of the 'innovations' offered by the charter schools are in fact the institutionalization of some of the worst aspects of the educational apartheid that afflicts our schools.

In Chicago, "innovative charter success" has really been the hyper-application of business practices that have routinely failed in both the private sector where they originate and the public sector where they are imposed: over-reliance on flawed indicators, simplistic behaviorist models of motivation, social control through

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<sup>102</sup> Rimm-Kaufman, S.E., Fan, X., Chiu, Y., & You, W. (2007). The contribution of the Responsive Classroom Approach on children's academic achievement: Results from a three year longitudinal study. *Journal of School Psychology*. 45.4:401-421.; Rimm-Kaufman, S. E., Larsen, R., Curby, T., Baroody, A., Merritt, E., Abry, T., Ko, M. & Thomas, J. (2012, September). Efficacy of the Responsive Classroom Approach: Results from a three year, longitudinal randomized controlled trial. Washington, D.C: Society for Research in Educational Effectiveness.

<sup>103</sup> Cooke, A., & Phyllis Tashlik. (2005). Making the pendulum swing: Challenging bad education policy in New York State. New York: Coalition of Essential Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.essentialschools.org/resources/317>

<sup>104</sup> Performance Standards Consortium. (2012). Data report on the New York Performance Standards Consortium. New York: Performance Standards Consortium. Retrieved from [http://performanceassessment.org/articles/DataReport\\_NY\\_PSC.pdf](http://performanceassessment.org/articles/DataReport_NY_PSC.pdf)

<sup>105</sup> Farrington, C.A., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E., Nagaoka, J., Keys, T.S., Johnson, D.W., & Beechum, N.O. (2012). *Teaching adolescents to become learners*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from [http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Noncognitive\\_percent20Report.pdf](http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Noncognitive_percent20Report.pdf)

uniformity and fear. Many charter networks dominate their school time with alarming test-based ‘drill-and-kill’ instructional practices. Charters seem unable to properly manage and educate all children, depending instead on strict discipline, routine fines, and ‘lottery’ application processes that end up selecting out the lowest-performing students. Charters also promote teacher churn and school instability as a feature of their organizational practices, rather than as an exception or problem to resolve. Worse, these failed business practices have been applied to traditional public schools in some of the most challenged city neighborhoods, and the results have not matched the costs, both human and monetary.

## Conclusion

To fully grasp the current disparities in Chicago’s schools, it is important to understand the causes and trends of status-quo education in Chicago. The District’s portfolio approach to school facilities management has benefitted connected corporate interests at children’s expense. Nearly all of the students affected by school closings, consolidations or turnarounds are low-income African-Americans. These students’ communities have suffered from years of disinvestment by the city: public housing has been torn down without immediately available alternatives, forcing families to flee the neighborhood in search of shelter; public spaces and public safety have been neglected; and community programs have been dismantled. The manufactured utilization “crisis” (the basis for future school actions) portends additional harm to those who have overwhelmingly borne the brunt of a failed policy.

The fact that targeted high schools—denied wrap-around services and devastated by constant policy changes—can be identified by a single test score they cannot possibly influence, suggests that the District’s agenda is not about improving educational outcomes. Further evidence of this agenda is the fact that unproven charter operators have been given carte blanche to play musical chairs with public schools’ former buildings. Understandably, parents, teachers and students have vociferously opposed these actions, only to be told again and again via the Board’s policy decisions that their voices do not matter. Chicago has created a vicious self-fulfilling prophesy. Disinvesting in neighborhoods reduces the sense of community, leads to fewer jobs and, in turn, lowers population. The disinvestment in schools makes it more difficult to afford the innovative programs needed to attract new students and increase the quality of education. Rather than reverse this trend of disinvestment, however, CPS and city leaders plan to shut down dozens of neighborhood schools and hand even more properties over to charter operators, or build new ones.

Perhaps the portfolio approach could be justified by innovative practices that led to broad and deep improvements in various District-wide outcomes, but available evidence does not support this conclusion. Educational outcomes have only marginally improved over the past twenty years. At the elementary level, neighborhood schools are better options for students in apartheid schools, and magnet elementary schools roundly outperform charters, even though charters are able to select students through the same lottery process. At the high school level, charter test score gains have come through intensive test prep that may raise scores but does not make students college-ready. The intensive focus on dubious test scores is an educational “innovation” shared by District schools as well. The District’s financial outcomes have been no better. School actions have had illusory savings and may increase long-term costs, while charter proliferation has proven expensive and has exposed the District to future financial risk. Social and governance outcomes likewise suffer. Charters operate without Local School Councils and thereby reduce parent involvement in educational decision-making. Charters enroll fewer special education students and English Language Learners and have major diversity gaps between teachers and students. Charter operators also churn through teaching staffs and have unnecessarily harsh discipline codes. These outcomes all point to a failed policy that should be ended, not continued and intensified.

Fortunately, nothing about Chicago’s status quo education policy is permanent. The past 20 years of misplaced priorities can be replaced by real innovation and student support. Rather than change management structures and processes that only indirectly affect the process of teaching and learning, CPS should directly prioritize evidence-based solutions. The District should provide students with social and emotional supports on the scale that they are needed. CPS should promote and expand existing educational programs like the Children’s Literacy Initiative, Lesson Study and Responsive Classroom, in addition to basics like classes in the

arts and vocational education. Rather than acquire new facilities, CPS can invest in the ones it already has by installing air conditioning and playgrounds and developing and staffing robust libraries. The District's emphasis on test-based measures obscures the fact that tests do not measure everything students should and could learn. We do not need a complex reorganization—we need a rational system with full opportunities for all students, not just some.

We can creatively rethink our conception of schools, too. Unused spaces inside a school building are potential school and community assets, not liabilities that should endanger one of a community's key sites of engagement. The solution is for the District and the city to enhance support to schools so that they can partner with their communities to repurpose underutilized space and help revive their school buildings as the attractive educational hubs that neighborhood schools ought to be. Such joint use of school facilities benefits both schools and communities and enhances educational opportunities and social capital.<sup>106</sup> How many neighborhood schools in Chicago's impoverished communities have sufficient funding to provide spaces dedicated to parent resources and adult education? How many have the capacity to share their communities' colorful and storied pasts of civil rights advocacy and resistance to racism and repression? How many spaces could be developed to activate students in true community engagement, opportunities that develop both learning and social bonds? There are tantalizing opportunities for real community schools, yet we live in a city where many of our school facilities don't even have the funds for proper libraries.

And yet there is a double affront to this vision. Not only are these opportunities foreclosed to Chicago's most disadvantaged communities, but the alternative arrangement has already been decided on by the business community—the mayor-appointed rubber stamp board, Astroturf advocacy groups, corporate philanthropists and the profit-driven investors lurking in the background. Their vision is one of school facilities as a Wild West landscape of school choice where anything goes, but equitable, integrated schools are rare. Parents are “sold” a bill of goods about these schools but if they fail to live up to their promises, parents cannot simply “switch brands.” The marketing approach is also about “fit”: Does your child “fit” the school? If not, the child may be thrown out in spite of the setbacks and humiliation that may cause. Children cannot be treated as products!

Research shows that the disinvestment and destabilization that has characterized the damaging school closures and the simultaneous rampant charter expansion is not a model for broadly improving public education. This is the true reason that charters cannot be scaled. The results that do happen come from students who have infrastructure and support that others do not. A school system where *all* students are successful would require a systemic shift in education funding and “reform” priorities that is simply unacknowledged by the current mainstream conversation. A privatization policy is, by its very nature, designed to benefit only a selected group of people, whereas the goals of an effective public policy are to benefit the vast majority.

This paper, along with countless other studies and reports, disproves the notion that privatization is the panacea for Chicago's public education. While charter operators and their philanthropist backers claim that public education is the problem, there are no consistent results that substantiate the belief that charters create better educational outcomes than neighborhood schools. When children become commodities and education becomes just another business, we lose the idea that all children, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, are entitled to a high-quality public education that provides each child with the conditions for success. The privatization and corporate reform experiment has failed. It is time to implement proven measures and reinvest in our neighborhood schools.

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<sup>106</sup> Filardo, 2010.

## Appendix A: Timeline of School Actions

### ACT

	Year	Board Report	Address	Notes
<b>Academy of Communication and Technology Charter School (ACT)</b>	1997	97-0122-EX4	4319 W. Washington	Approve charter for grades 7 - 12; not CPS property - New Mount Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church
	2004	04-0428-EX3		Renew charter; conditional approval and monitoring - must show increases in 2/3 of accountability measures (test scores, attendances, retention rate, graduation rate). If it fails to show increases, CPS can revoke its charter
	2005	05-1116-EX2		Amends previous board action to include indemnities
	2007	07-0328-EX2		Renew charter and increase capacity from 375 to 450 students
		07-0822-EX9	2908 W. Washington	Move to Cather
	2008	08-0827-EX6	4319 W. Washington	Move back to New Mount Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church
	2009	09-0527-EX3		Add 6th grade
	2010	10-0127-EX3		Don't add 6th grade
		10-0526-EX4		Voluntarily suspend educational services for two years
	2012	12-0125-EX3	1945 S. Halsted Ave.	Renew charter, change grade structure from 7 - 12 to grades 5 - 8 & KIPP will manage it; corporate office at 1945 S. Halsted Ave.
		12-0425-OP8	4837 W. Erie	Move to Nash
				Nash gets \$13 million in capital spending

### KIPP

	Year	Board Report	Address	Notes
<b>KIPP Ascend Academy Charter</b>	2003	03-0527-EX10	601 S. Central	Approve KIPP charter, grades 5 - 8. School is located at McNair according to news articles, but not according to CPS board reports. McNair was rebuilt in 2002 at a cost of \$16 million
	2005	05-0727-EX9	4320 W. Fifth Ave	Move to Sumner
	2006	06-1025-EX2	715 S. Kildare Ave.	Same location as Sumner but reported as different address in CPS board report
	2008	08-0602-EX5		Renew charter, increase enrollment to 330; the Board will identify a new location for the 2009-2010 school year
		08-0924-OP4	4320 W. Fifth Ave	Move back to Sumner
		08-1022-EX13	715 S. Kildare Ave.	Add grades K - 4 and increase enrollment by 619 to 949
	2009			Lathrop begins phase-out
		09-0325-EX5	1616 S. Avers	Move to Penn
	2010			\$2,777,657 in capital spending at Lathrop

2012	12-0425-EX3	1440 S. Christiana Ave.	Move to Lathrop; temporarily locate grades K - 2; add grade 3 and phase out K in 2013; add grade 4 in 2014; then phase out all grades by 2017
			Lathrop gets another \$3.4 million in capital spending

### Urban Prep

	Year	Board Report	Address	Notes
<b>Urban Prep Academy for Young Men</b>	2005	05-1116-EX14	6201 S. Stewart	Approve Urban Prep - Englewood. Englewood HS closed in 2004 and CPS spent \$3.4 million on repairs in 2006.
		09-1123-EX18	2908 W. Washington	Approve Urban Prep - East Garfield; co-share with Cather
		09-1123-EX19		Approve Urban Prep - South Shore at a location TBD
		10-0428-EX5	1014 E. 47th St.	Urban Prep - South Shore moves to "independent facility," across the street from UC - NKO (which is in an Arch Diocese building)
		11-0427-EX12		Renew Urban Prep charter
		11-0525-EX5	1326 W. 14th Place	Move Urban Prep - East Garfield to Medill
		2011		\$5,400,000 in capital spending at Medill
		11-0525-EX6	2710 S. Dearborn	Move Urban Prep - South Shore to Williams Multiplex
		2011		\$6,980,892 in capital spending at Williams Multiplex
		11-0727-OP3		Amend Multiplex lease - Urban Prep will co-share, not be sole tenant
		11-0824-EX12		Change name from Urban Prep - East Garfield to Urban Prep - West Campus
		11-0824-EX13		Change name from Urban Prep - South Shore to Urban Prep - Bronzeville Campus

## Appendix B: Explore Scores and EPAS Gains

### Lowest Incoming Average Explore Scores, Fall 2009 – Spring 2012 Cohort

Ten lowest scores and all average scores within 0.5 points. Mean 13.9; median 13.4; standard deviation 1.87.

School	Explore (Fall 09)
ROBESON HS	11.5
TILDEN HS	11.7
MARSHALL HS	11.9
FENGER HS	11.9
CRANE HS	11.9
ORR HS	12
CORLISS HS	12.1
DYETT HS	12.1
DOUGLASS HS	12.2
HARPER HS	12.3
RICHARDS HS	12.3
MANLEY HS	12.3
HIRSCH HS	12.3
CLEMENTE HS	12.4
SIMPSON HS	12.4
SULLIVAN HS	12.4
SCHOOL OF LEADRSHP HS	12.4
URBAN PREP CHTR-ENGLEWOOD	12.5
WORLD LANGUAGE HS	12.6
JULIAN HS	12.6
HOPE HS	12.6
YOUTH CONNECTION CHTR	12.6
PHILLIPS HS	12.6
KELVYN PARK HS	12.7
WELLS HS	12.7
GAGE PARK HS	12.7
TEAM HS	12.7
PEACE & EDUCATION HS	12.7
PERSPECTIVES CHTR CALUMET HS	12.8
VOISE HS	12.8
FOREMAN HS	12.8

**Above mean Incoming Explore Scores, Fall 2009 – Spring 2012 Cohort**  
Mean 13.9, standard deviation 1.87

<b>School</b>	<b>Explore (Fall 09)</b>
NORTHSIDE PREP HS	21.9
PAYTON HS	20.7
YOUNG HS	20.3
JONES HS	19.3
LANE HS	18.5
LINDBLOM HS	17.6
BROOKS HS	17.6
LINCOLN PARK HS	16.9
KING HS	16.7
CHGO AGR HS	15.7
VON STEUBEN HS	15.7
PROSSER HS	15.7
RICKOVER HS	15.2
CHICAGO VIRTUAL CHTR CAMPUS HS	15.2
KENWOOD HS	15.1
NOBLE ST CHTR-UIC	15
WILLIAMS, D	14.9
NOBLE ST CHTR-RAUNER	14.8
UNO CHTR - MAJOR HECTOR P.GARCIA	14.8
NOBLE ST CHTR-NOBLE	14.7
MARINE MILITARY HS	14.7
CHGO ACAD HS	14.6
TAFT HS	14.6
HUBBARD HS	14.6
PHOENIX MILITARY HS	14.5
LAKE VIEW HS	14.5
CHGO MILITARY ACAD HS	14.5
SIMEON HS	14.5
UNIV OF CHGO CHTR-WOODLAWN	14.4
MORGAN PARK HS	14.3
CURIE HS	14.3
CARVER MILITARY	14.3
KENNEDY HS	14.2
YNG WOMEN-CHTR CAMPUS	14.2
PERSPECTIVES CHTR IIT	14.2
UPLIFT HS	14.2
NOBLE ST CHTR-PRITZKER	14.1
PERSPECTIVES CHTR JOSLIN	14.1
NTH LAWNDALE CHTR-CHRISTIANA	14.1
NOBLE ST CHTR-GOLDER	14
BRONZEVILLE HS	14
HANCOCK HS	14

**Top EPAS gains, Fall 2009 – Spring 2012 Cohort**

<b>School</b>	<b>Explore (Fall 09)</b>	<b>ACT (Spr. 12)</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>percent Change</b>
NORTHSIDE PREP HS	21.9	29.6	7.7	35.16 percent
NOBLE ST CHTR-PRITZKER	14.1	21.4	7.3	51.77 percent
PAYTON HS	20.7	27.8	7.1	34.30 percent
NOBLE ST CHTR-UIC	15	21.9	6.9	46.00 percent
YOUNG HS	20.3	27	6.7	33.00 percent
NOBLE ST CHTR-RAUNER	14.8	21	6.2	41.89 percent
NOBLE ST CHTR-GOLDER	14	20.1	6.1	43.57 percent
NOBLE ST CHTR-ROWE CLARK	13.8	19.7	5.9	42.75 percent
JONES HS	19.3	25.1	5.8	30.05 percent
NOBLE ST CHTR-COMER	13.7	19.3	5.6	40.88 percent
LINCOLN PARK HS	16.9	22.3	5.4	31.95 percent
LANE HS	18.5	23.9	5.4	29.19 percent
NOBLE ST CHTR-NOBLE	14.7	20	5.3	36.05 percent
CHGO MATH & SCI ACAD CAMPUS HS	13.3	18.2	4.9	36.84 percent
CHGO ACAD HS	14.6	19.3	4.7	32.19 percent

Figures for all CPS high schools with reported data -

Raw gains points: mean 3.23; median 2.9; standard deviation 1.44

Gains percentages: mean 22.82 percent; median 21.49 percent; standard deviation 8.36 percent



## Appendix C: Value-Added Data

Sub group comparisons of CPS 2012 Value Added Data, with 2012 demographics	Schools Above 90 percent Black & Above 90 percent FRL		Schools Above District Average of 85 percent FRL		Schools with Random Lottery Enrollment	
	District	Charters	District	Charters	District	Charters
Type of School						
# of schools	158	21	356	46	14	49
Avg. percent Black	97.8 percent	96.1 percent	59.7 percent	67.9 percent	71.6 percent	67.9 percent
Avg. percent FRL	95.6 percent	96.3 percent	94.2 percent	94.2 percent	93.5 percent	94.2 percent
Avg. percent IEP	12.7 percent	9.6 percent	13 percent	9.4 percent	10 percent	9.4 percent
Avg. percent LEP	0.3 percent	0.4 percent	15.5 percent	12.4 percent	7.6 percent	12.4 percent
Average # of students	169	204	217	197	254	194
Avg. Reading Value Added	-0.23	-0.6	-0.1	-0.3	-0.03	-0.37
Avg. Reading Value Added Percentile	43 percent	33 percent	47 percent	40 percent	52 percent	40 percent
Avg. Math Value Added	0	-0.1	0	0.2	0.27	0.2
Avg. Math Value Added Percentile	48 percent	47 percent	48 percent	56 percent	57 percent	56 percent

Based on CPS 2012 Value-Added Data, available at

[http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/DataFiles/SchoolLevelValueAdded2010\\_2012.xls](http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/DataFiles/SchoolLevelValueAdded2010_2012.xls)

Restricted to 2012, "All Grades" data.

Demographics matched from CPS 2011-2012 School Year, Limited English Proficiency, Special Ed, Low Income, IEP Report, available at

[http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/Datafiles/lep\\_iep\\_frl\\_report\\_2012.xls](http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/Datafiles/lep_iep_frl_report_2012.xls)

and CPS 2011-2012 School Year, Racial/Ethnic Survey, available at

[http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/Datafiles/FY12\\_Racial\\_Ethnic\\_Survey.xls](http://www.cps.edu/Performance/Documents/Datafiles/FY12_Racial_Ethnic_Survey.xls)

## Appendix D: Charter Costs, Teacher Demographics/ Turnover

### Charter Costs

- Chicago's charter proliferation in 2012 cost \$11,361 on average for each of the 4,665 additional charter school slots.<sup>107</sup>
- A total of \$5.4 million was provided in startup funds and \$1 million in kind contributions to charter networks for the 10 new charter schools opening this year.<sup>108</sup>
- Based on this year's startup fund alone of over \$500,000 per school, adding new charters would wipe out any savings that could be generated by closing traditional public schools.<sup>109</sup>
- Last fiscal year, charters received 90 percent of all funds dedicated to support new school openings.<sup>110</sup>
- Charters also receive significant private funding through the New Schools for Chicago fund to support their operations. Charters will receive anywhere from \$1 million to \$5 million over two to five years.<sup>111</sup>
- Charters are allocated \$483 million in the FY13 CPS budget.
  - CPS projects approximately \$423 million in tuition payments
  - That number includes a flat 5 percent increase in the per pupil expenditure as agreed to in the Gates Compact.<sup>112</sup>
  - Charters received additional funding despite a projected deficit of several hundred million dollars.
  - CPS provides almost \$60 million in support to charters for food service, clinicians, student transportation, school security services and the normal cost of teacher pensions.<sup>113</sup>
  - Despite the District's claims of openness and transparency, the District's budget does not clearly outline the costs of in-kind support.

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<sup>107</sup> The FY2013 budget claims to be adding 2765 seats in new charter schools, and another 1900 seats in expanding grades. \$53 million of the \$76 million total in additional charter school investment was budgeted for the cost of the additional seats.

<sup>108</sup> Budgeted amounts are as of June 2012. 75 percent of the funds were provided in FY2012, and 25 percent in FY2013. The most recent approved Board Report from June is available here:

[http://cps.edu/About\\_CPS/The\\_Board\\_of\\_Education/Documents/BoardActions/2012\\_06/12-0627-EX4.pdf](http://cps.edu/About_CPS/The_Board_of_Education/Documents/BoardActions/2012_06/12-0627-EX4.pdf)

<sup>109</sup> Tim Cawley has estimated that closing a school could bring savings of roughly \$500,000 to \$800,000 per year.

<sup>110</sup> Program Number 009546, Program Name "New School Openings Other". Data available in the Budget by Program tab of the CPS FY13 Budget Interactive Reports.

<sup>111</sup> Ahmed-Ullah, N.S. (2011, April 20). Fundraising group plans to support 50 new charter schools in Chicago. *Chicago Tribune* Retrieved from [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-04-20/news/ct-met-cps-renaissance-0421-20110420\\_1\\_mayor-richard-daley-s-renaissance-chicago-international-charter-schools-gary-miron](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-04-20/news/ct-met-cps-renaissance-0421-20110420_1_mayor-richard-daley-s-renaissance-chicago-international-charter-schools-gary-miron)

<sup>112</sup> CPS FY13 Budget, p. 36

<sup>113</sup> The Civic Federation. (2011). A financial analysis of the Chicago charter schools: A financial indicator analysis and primer. Chicago: The Civic Federation. Retrieved from [http://www.civiced.org/sites/default/files/Civic\\_percent20Federation\\_percent20Charter\\_percent20School\\_percent20Report.pdf](http://www.civiced.org/sites/default/files/Civic_percent20Federation_percent20Charter_percent20School_percent20Report.pdf)

## Charter School Teacher Demographics

<b>2011 Teacher Race/Ethnic Composition 2011 ISBE Teacher Service Records</b>	All Charter Networks	Perspectives	UNO	Noble
White	64 percent	75.3 percent	77.8 percent	72.1 percent
Black or African-American	22 percent	11.0 percent	5.1 percent	8.1 percent
Hispanic or Latino/a	8 percent	3.3 percent	11.6 percent	10.7 percent
<b>2012 Teacher Experience ISBE 2012 Teacher Service Records</b>	All Charter Networks	Perspectives	UNO	Noble
Avg. Years of Experience	4	3.1	2.9	5.2
Median Years of Experience	3	2	2	4
percent of 1st years	26 percent	27.8 percent	40.3 percent	7.2 percent

All charter teacher demographic data from the ISBE Teacher Service Records, available at [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/teacher\\_service\\_record.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/teacher_service_record.htm)

2011 Data used for race/ethnic composition due to high number of “unknowns” in the 2012 data.

Records were restricted to full-time teachers with a Position Description that were one of the following, Elementary Teacher, High School Teacher, Junior/Middle Teacher, Kindergarten, Prekindergarten, Special Education Teacher.

## Charter School Teacher Turnover

Charter school teacher turnover rates based on ISBE Teacher Service Record Data from school years 2011 and 2012, as well as campus-level rosters received through FOIA.

Rosters were restricted to teacher positions. Retention rates represent the number of teachers that remained in the charter network (or campus when available) from the 2010-2011 school year into the 2011-2012 school year, as a percent of the number of teachers in that charter network (or campus) in the 2010-2011 school year. Attrition rates represent the percentage of teachers that left, or one minus the retention rate. Campus level turnover rates are only calculated for the UNO and Noble Networks. All other turnover rates are based off of network-wide turnover based on ISBE records. ISBE records do not identify individual campuses for charters that have more than one campus.

<b>2011 to 2012 Teacher Turnover Rates</b>			
<b>ISBE 2011 &amp; 2012 Teacher Service Records Charter Campus Teacher Rosters</b>	<b>Campus</b>	<b>Retention Rate</b>	<b>Attrition Rate</b>
UNO Charter Network	Bartolomé de las Casas	64 percent	36 percent
	Carlos Fuentes	64 percent	36 percent
	Gage Park Elementary	58 percent	42 percent
	Major Hector P. Garcia MD	63 percent	38 percent
	Octavio Paz	35 percent	65 percent
	Officer Donald J. Marquez	40 percent	60 percent
	PFC Omar E. Torres	61 percent	39 percent
	Rufino Tamayo	43 percent	57 percent
	SPC Daniel Zizumbo	67 percent	33 percent
	UNO Average	55 percent	45 percent
	Noble Network of Charter Schools	Noble Street	71 percent
Rauner		68 percent	32 percent
Pritzker		71 percent	29 percent
Rowe Clark		59 percent	41 percent
Golder		65 percent	35 percent
Gary Comer		66 percent	34 percent
UIC		84 percent	16 percent
Johnson		42 percent	58 percent
Muchin		61 percent	39 percent
Bulls		64 percent	36 percent
Noble Average		65 percent	35 percent
Perspectives Charter Schools	# N/A	56 percent	44 percent
Kipp Ascend Elem Charter School	# N/A	59 percent	41 percent
EPIC Academy High School	# N/A	61 percent	39 percent
Legacy Elem Charter School	# N/A	62 percent	38 percent
Ford Power House Charter HS	# N/A	62 percent	38 percent
Academy for Global Citizenship	# N/A	63 percent	38 percent

Univ. of Chicago Charter Schools	# N/A	63 percent	38 percent
Ace Technical Charter High School	# N/A	64 percent	36 percent
LEARN Charter Butler Campus	# N/A	64 percent	36 percent
Chicago Math & Sci Elem Charter	# N/A	65 percent	35 percent
Chicago International Charter	# N/A	67 percent	33 percent
Erie Elem Charter School	# N/A	67 percent	33 percent
Chicago Virtual Charter School	# N/A	72 percent	28 percent
Youth Connections Charter HS	# N/A	74 percent	26 percent
N Lawndale Prep Chtr-Christiana	# N/A	81 percent	19 percent
Namaste Elem Charter School	# N/A	81 percent	19 percent
Rowe Elementary	# N/A	83 percent	17 percent
Polaris Elem Charter Academy	# N/A	83 percent	17 percent
Locke A Elem Charter Academy	# N/A	90 percent	10 percent