

SABOTAGE OF NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

The Impact of Chicago Public Schools "Reforms"



Chicago Public Schools (CPS) targets numerous schools that serve African American students for school closings, turnarounds, phase-outs, and consolidations

- Since 2001, CPS has closed, turned around, phased-out, or consolidated over 100 schools; all of which were in low-income communities of color (mainly African American), except two.
- While 88% of students affected by CPS school actions are African American, they only comprise 42% of the total CPS student body.
- While almost 10% of the students in affected schools are homeless, they only comprise 2.6% of the total CPS student body.

CPS school actions fracture school communities, and destabilize neighborhoods

- School actions compound the harmful effects of gentrification. Most school actions have been in communities where public housing was torn down and/or there has been a dramatic increase in house prices, in effect, pushing out residents. Others have been in areas destabilized by high rates of home foreclosure. In Bronzeville, the Mid-South Plan to close 20 of 22 schools was linked to the CHA Plan for Transformation.
- When CPS closes a school it disinvests in our children and our community. In 2012, Price Elementary School held 110 students, and had a budget of \$3.8 million. When CPS closed Price, those resources were removed from the community, and the students shouldered that disinvestment. Students lost their after-school programs, jazz band, and STEM science program; and CPS provided minimal support for them to attend their new school 4 miles away.
- In Bronzeville, there were spikes in youth violence when students were displaced by multiple school closings. From 2010-2012, there was a 300% increase in homicides (Chicago Police data) in an area besieged by school closings where just two neighborhood schools remain.

CPS school actions have had disastrous results for students, schools, and communities

- School closings destabilize neighborhood schools. At Beethoven Elementary School in 2008, 82% of students met or exceeded state standards. When nearby Farren Elementary School was phased out, its students were sent to Beethoven. Three years later, the scores at Beethoven had fallen to 58%.
- School actions have dramatically reduced the number of African American teachers in CPS. From 2001-2011, the overall percentage of African American teachers in CPS dropped from 40% to 30%. In 2011, African Americans comprised 65% of the teachers in schools slated for closure, and 40% of teachers who were subsequently laid-off.
- Students do not benefit from CPS actions. As many as 80% of the students who were forced to transfer when their neighborhood school closed, were placed in schools that performed no differently than the ones they left.
- CPS policy creates conditions in which schools are termed 'failing,' and subsequently closed. Dyett High School is a prime example of school disinvestment. Critical resources and award-winning programs were systematically removed from Dyett, and further destabilized by the lack of consistent school and area leadership – creating the conditions to 'justify' closure.

There is an alternative

- All children deserve a world-class school in their neighborhood.
- CPS should give struggling schools necessary resources, and support a community-driven "Sustainable School Transformation" process grounded in educational research, teacher knowledge, and community wisdom.
- We need a Board of Education that is ELECTED and REPRESENTATIVE of CPS students and families.

This fact sheet was developed by Dr. Pauline Lipman and Rhoda Rae Gutierrez of the University of Illinois at Chicago in partnership with the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization