
School Closings and Turnarounds Do Not Benefit Students

Research About Closing Schools¹

- Students who had to move to a new school due to school closings were twice as likely to have to move again, compared to students with similar characteristics.
- There is no academic benefit to students. When displaced students reached high school, their on-track rates to graduate were no different than the rates of students who attended schools similar to those that closed.
- Students get lost in the shuffle when their schools close – they are sent all over the city and their records don't end up where they need to be, even in time for summer school.
- The amount of time and money that CPS spends on the school closing process (identifying receiving schools, figuring out transportation, trying to ensure that the students have the proper resources) could be used to help struggling schools instead of closing them.
- Closing “poor performing” schools and sending the students to other schools DOES NOT improve academic achievement because students would have to go to schools that are SIGNIFICANTLY better, which has not happened within the CPS system
- Only about half of displaced students enroll in the receiving schools designated for them to attend. CPS says the receiving schools will provide the services and resources the students need, but this is only promised for the designated receiving schools, which half the students won't attend.

Impact on Homeless Students

- Nearly 10% of the students enrolled in CPS schools chosen for school actions are homeless. Across all of CPS, 2.6% of students are homeless.² Homeless students are already at danger of being frequently displaced from their schools, and when school closures happen, are not adequately supported in their transition.³ At Dyett High School, which is to be phased out, 30% of students are homeless. CPS school actions will have a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable student populations.

¹ Gwynne, J., De La Torre, M. (2009) When schools close. Effects on displaced students in Chicago Public Schools. Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/CCSRSchoolClosings-Final.pdf>

² Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

³ Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness. (2010). The impact of school closures on homeless students in New York City. September 2010. Retrieved from http://www.icphusa.org/PDF/reports/ICPH_SchoolClosuresPolicyReport.pdf

School Turnarounds

- *Turnarounds disrupt relationships between students and staff.* Not only do these disruptions occur in the year of turnaround when most staff are replaced, but continue to occur year after year due to the high rate of teacher turnover at turnaround schools. Of the elementary schools that have been a turnaround school for 4 or more years, an average of only 34% of the original turnaround teachers remain at their schools.⁴ This is well below the district average, which shows about 50% of teachers leave their schools within 5 years.⁵
- *Why are students leaving turnaround schools*
 - Fenger High School went from an enrollment of 1200 in 2009, its first year of turnaround, to fewer than 700 students this year, a loss of 42%. Neighboring Julian has lost 200 students over that time period, a loss of only 14%.
 - Harper High School went from over 900 students in its first year of turnaround down to a little over 600 this year. It had over 300 freshmen in 2008-9; three years later, there are only 175 seniors left.
 - Phillips High School started its first year of turnaround last year with a little under 700 students, and is now down to fewer than 600, despite an increase in its freshman enrollment. At Phillips there are only 83 students in this year's Junior class, while last year's Sophomore class was over 200, a loss of 60%. Neighboring Dyett lost 30% of its sophomores and Tilden lost 8.5%. Yet, both of these high schools are on this year's school action list.
 - Where are all the students going? Are they being counseled out and expelled? Or are they "voting with their feet"?
- *Do turnarounds work to improve learning for students?* Outside research has concluded that they do not.⁶ The gains on standardized testing made by AUSL's most touted school, Harvard elementary, are no better, and in many cases worse than, many other neighborhood elementary schools that have not had millions of dollars funneled into them.⁷

⁴ CTU internal analysis. Schools included are Howe, Morton, Fulton, Langford, Harvard and Sherman.

⁵ Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., Mazzeo, C. (2009). The schools teachers leave. Teacher Mobility in Chicago Public Schools. Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/CCSR_Teacher_Mobility.pdf

⁶ Malen, B., Croninger, R. Muncy, D., Redmond-Jones, D. (2002). Reconstituting schools: Testing the theory of action. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 113–132.

⁷ Predominantly low-income neighborhood schools such as Altgeld, Gregory, Calhoun, Cather, and Dett all well-outpaced the gains made by Harvard in the 2007-2011 period on the % exceeding standards as well as % meeting & exceeding standards on the ISAT reading, math and composite.