A Tale of Two Schools:
The Human Story Behind the Destructive School Actions in Chicago

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Summary: A Tale of Two Schools

On December 28, 2011, Simon Guggenheim Elementary School paraprofessional and homeless education coordinator Sherri Parker received an alarming call from one of her students’ parents. The student’s mother informed Parker that shortly before Christmas, the school had called her and recommended she transfer her child to another school. The caller said that since Guggenheim would be closing, the teachers would not return after Winter Break. Later in the day, despite the parent’s affirmation that she wanted her child to remain at Guggenheim, an official Chicago Public Schools transfer form was delivered to the family’s temporary residence.

More families contacted Parker, notifying her that they had also been asked to transfer their children to other schools. Hearings on the proposed closure of Guggenheim had not yet been held and the Chicago Board of Education would not vote on school actions for two months, yet there was a deliberate attempt already in motion to transfer out Guggenheim’s homeless students.

At its February meeting, the Board approved the shuttering of Guggenheim. This was the culmination of years of actions placing the West Englewood neighborhood school in a constant state of instability. In its final two years, the school had three different principals, making it nearly impossible to develop any long-term plans for improvement. After fighting off a closing attempt in 2010, the new Chicago Public Schools-appointed administration forced out tenured teachers and left their positions vacant for months, delaying the academic and socio-emotional development of more than 100 students. Class sizes ballooned out of control, epitomized by a 42-student 3rd grade class at the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. The closing threats and the unsupportive administration divided the Guggenheim community and teachers felt disrespected by the district’s failure to fulfill their requests for essential resources. Parents were literally shut out of the school and the Local School Council no longer had monthly meetings. After failing in its attempt to close the school in 2010, CPS pushed forward with a destructive plan, cutting teachers and the community out of the school improvement process. CPS then used the poor test scores and hostile school climate that it created through years of disinvestment and destabilization to justify the school’s closure in 2012.

On the West Side, Jacob Beidler Elementary faced similar worries. In 2011, CPS announced its intention to close the East Garfield Park neighborhood school and hand its building over to a charter school. Beidler students, teachers, and administrators were appalled by CPS’s decision, which was announced on the same day that the Board of Education approved the long-anticipated Beidler Campus Park. The Beidler community rallied, marched, and organized against the closing, finally convincing the school district to withdraw the proposal.

Two years and three CEOs later, CPS was back again, placing Beidler on the list of 129 schools that new CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett would consider for closure in 2013. Anger and fear flooded the Beidler community, which admonished CPS for interrupting students’ learning once again with threats of displacement. Like in 2011, the community fought for its school and was one of only two East Garfield Park neighborhood elementary schools to avoid direct impact from the 2013 proposed school actions.

How did all of this happen? What barriers to improvement do schools like Guggenheim and Beidler face, and what does CPS do to address these difficulties? What supports does CPS provide, and what additional resources would help schools succeed? When schools are announced for closure, what is the value of community input at CPS hearings, and to what extent do CPS representatives encourage an open discussion with all involved parties? How smooth and
effective are the transition plans, and how does CPS ensure that students continue to learn without suffering a significant drop in morale? Through case studies of Guggenheim and Beidler, *A Tale of Two Schools: The Human Story Behind Destructive School Actions in Chicago* uses testimony from teachers, staff, administrators and community leaders to answer these questions and to provide a much-needed examination of the causes and effects of school actions.

Both Guggenheim and Beidler faced incredible resource shortages. Obsolete technology would routinely break down, textbooks were not available for all students, and teachers bought more than half of their supplemental materials out-of-pocket. CPS made it difficult for schools to educate the whole child, providing insufficient wraparound services and neglecting to fund art, music, physical education, foreign language and technology classes on a regular basis. By placing utmost importance on holistic reforms and fully utilizing its few resources, Beidler is building a stable school climate based on collaboration and a clear vision for the future. Guggenheim, however, never got this chance.

Despite butchering the transition at Guggenheim and failing to give schools essential resources, CPS now wants to close 54 schools, the most at one time in American history. In the past few years, the criteria for school actions have been capricious and conflicting. In 2012, CPS stated that it was closing “underperforming” schools to “help” students, but this year, CPS is “helping” students by shuttering “underutilized” schools and supposedly providing more resources for full or overcrowded schools. Had it survived last year’s school actions, Guggenheim, which was overcrowded for many years, would not be targeted for closure under the 2013 criteria. Rather than instituting contradictory policies year-after-year, apparently based on the whims of its ever-changing Central Office administration, CPS needs to focus on research-based aspects of school improvement.

Instead of closing neighborhood schools, CPS must target resources to strengthen existing programs, add supports, remove inequities, provide schools with stable leadership and ensure that teachers have what they need to educate and nurture their students. Schools cannot be saved by closing them, and communities cannot prosper without well, resourced, fully supported, quality schools. CPS is contributing to a vicious cycle of disinvestment and population flight that severely hinders the possible revival of established African-American and integrated communities.
Introduction

For years, students enrolled in racially and economically segregated schools on the South and West sides of Chicago have lacked the resources of many of their North Side and magnet school peers. On the March 21, 2013, edition of Chicago Tonight, Chicago Public Schools CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett stated that families and teachers in under-resourced schools should be angry that their children and students were not “the beneficiaries of what other children have.” As Byrd-Bennett indicates, these resource deficiencies have enraged communities. These communities want state-of-the-art technology for their children. They want arts and music. They want a well-staffed faculty to ensure small class sizes and provide one-on-one instruction and intervention. Parents want a full science and social studies curriculum that emphasizes experiential and tactile learning, not just textbooks and lectures. They want a diverse offering of after-school programming. Parents want high-quality wraparound services. As CPS continues to disinvest in these areas, resources at many South and West side schools are becoming even scarcer, while at the same time, the district punishes these schools for not meeting performance benchmarks.

Rather than supplying schools with the resources needed to educate students, CPS has taken the “cut-and-run” approach, closing neighborhood schools in the poorest areas of the city and adding instability to already-unstable childhoods. CPS claims declining enrollment and “underutilization” as the reason for these closures (despite opening new charter schools in the same areas), but the district’s strategy would significantly reduce the likelihood of any future reinvestment or repopulating in the communities affected by school closure. If there is no local school to send their children, why would a family move to the area? If families are not moving into the area, why would businesses or the city spend money to beautify or provide new opportunities in the community? CPS is creating a vicious cycle of disinvestment and population suppression that severely limits the ability of African-American communities on the South and West Sides to reemerge as thriving neighborhoods. By closing neighborhood schools, CPS and Mayor Rahm Emanuel are declaring these communities dead zones that are unworthy of targeted investment.

By focusing on an oversimplification of the problems of resource allocation and “underutilization,” CPS is ignoring these complexities. During her March 21 interview on Chicago Tonight, Byrd-Bennett draws a disingenuous conclusion from the widespread anger about unevenly distributed academic resources and disinvestment in Chicago by promoting the idea that, since their neighborhood schools have been dangerously under-resourced by CPS, parents should applaud her plan to close these schools and happily transfer their children to a different building farther away from their home. It is this misguided solution to a self-inflicted problem that has truly angered these communities. This year, more than 20,000 people have attended hearings on potential school actions, and most of them vehemently oppose CPS’s plans. Thousands of parents, students, teachers, and community members also expressed outrage over the cut-and-run approach to education at the March 27, 2013, Rally to Stop School Closings in Daley Plaza.
Research by the Chicago Teachers Union and other organizations has proven that in Chicago school closings are directed almost exclusively at predominately African-American neighborhoods. Eighty-eight percent of the students affected by school actions from 2001 to 2012 were African-American. Out of the 54 schools proposed for closure in 2013, 88 percent are African-American and only 125 of the 16,119 total students—0.78 percent—are white. Of the schools proposed for closure in 2013, 87 percent are “Apartheid schools,” a term coined by UCLA Civil Rights Project Co-Director Gary Orfield to indicate schools with student bodies that are 99 percent students of color.

While these demographics are certainly important, they do not tell the whole story of school closings; there is a fundamental element of the school actions debate that lacks significant research and attention. While academic and community organizations have done significant research on the aggregate effect and prevalence of school closings, CPS has failed to conduct in-depth “forensic” analyses of the closed schools themselves. At each school proposed for closing, consolidation, co-location or turnaround, there is a story, a story that involves real students, teachers, staff and administrators who are inextricably linked to their school. Schools are not just a building for students and staff; they are a second home. It is easy to lose the human element when analyzing complex data, but we cannot let these stories be forgotten when considering destabilizing school actions.

CPS has proposed an historic number of school closings in 2013. To contextualize these proposed actions, this report provides an autopsy of a school closed in 2012, Simon Guggenheim Elementary School, by analyzing the systemic obstacles to school improvement and the chaos that materialized after the school was announced for closure. This report also examines the school culture, resource deficiencies, and holistic improvements at Jacob Beidler Elementary School, a school that narrowly avoided school actions in 2013 after being proposed for consolidation two years prior. Both Guggenheim and Beidler faced two closure threats in only three years. Both survived the first, but while Beidler remains open, Guggenheim could not fight off CPS a second time.

This report uses testimony from teachers, staff, administrators and community leaders to provide a much-needed examination of the causes and effects of school actions at Guggenheim.
and the culture of fear created by closure threats at Beidler. Through these case studies, this report identifies the barriers to improvement that schools threatened with closure face, and examines how CPS addresses these difficulties. This report investigates the supports available at schools fearing closure and lists the additional resources that could help them succeed. These case studies also study the effectiveness of CPS transition plans and the value of community input at school actions hearings. Each element of these case studies is based on testimony or evidence from multiple sources.

Many of the holistic improvements at Beidler mirror the 5 Essential Supports (5Essentials). Based on more than 20 years of research, the University of Chicago’s Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) found that the 5Essentials consistently correlate with school improvement.8 The 5Essentials—Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Ambitious Instruction, Supportive Environment and Involved Families—provide a more comprehensive approach to school evaluation than simply using scores on standardized tests or “value-added” measures. Schools strong in the Effective Leaders support have principals that collaborate with teachers to formulate a coherent action plan. Teachers and administrators have a high level of mutual trust and respect, and work together to meet challenging goals. The Collaborative Teachers support evaluates the quality of professional development sessions, the level of commitment that staff has for the school and amount of trust and shared responsibilities between teachers at the school. Having Collaborative Teachers strengthens the Ambitious Instruction support; classroom lessons have clear, demanding goals that stress critical thinking and student discussion.

Students at schools with a Supportive Environment trust and respect their teachers, have multiple professional role models and feel safe and comfortable inside the building. Teachers focus on students’ individual needs, identifying those struggling to keep up with their peers while continuing to challenge students at the top of the class. Parents also benefit from the Supportive Environment, and, in schools strong in Involved Families, become active in their child’s education, feeling that they are partners for school improvement. These parents advocate for school resources and ensure that existing items and facilities in the area are well-kept. CCSR’s research shows that if a school is strong in three of these five supports, it is 10 times more likely to see significant improvement than a school that is weak in three or more supports.

While Beidler excels or is making significant progress on these 5Essentials, Guggenheim was denied the opportunity to develop these supports. After a thorough investigation of Guggenheim, this report concludes that CPS clearly did not provide teachers and staff with the necessary assistance to improve the school. In fact, they imposed policies that weakened all five of the Essential Supports. After beating the 2010 closing attempt, CPS restricted Guggenheim even more, creating serious barriers to the school’s proposed action plan. Then, two years and three CEOs years later, CPS came back to Guggenheim. This time, CPS completed the systematic destruction of Guggenheim, shuttering the school for good.
References

6 Excluding the two schools with the most white students, Stockton and Trumbull in the Ravenswood-Ridge Elementary Network, the number of white students drops to 42, only 0.28 percent of students affected at the other 52 schools. According to 2012-2013 school year 20th Day Enrollment Figures, Stockton and Trumbull have 40 (8.4 percent) and 43 (11.1 percent) white students, respectively. The next highest is Lafayette with only 11 white students.
7 If all the schools proposed for closure were analyzed as one school, that institution would itself be an Apartheid school, with 99.2 percent students of color.; 2013 CPS 20th Day Enrollment Figures. Accessed at http://www.cps.edu/Schooldata/Pages/Schooldata.aspx.
How to Dismantle Schools and Demoralize Students: CPS’s Systematic Destruction of Guggenheim Elementary

On May 26, 2011, his first day as CPS CEO Jean-Claude Brizard began a “citywide listening tour to engage Chicagoans in a dialog about educational issues.” During this “listening tour,” Brizard visited Chicago schools and talked with teachers, staff and students, ensuring that many pictures were taken along the way. Accompanied by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Brizard visited his first school, Simon Guggenheim Elementary in Englewood, where he spent a few hours “engaging” the school community. News outlets covered the visit, and CPS released vivacious statements, pictures, and videos of a compassionate Brizard and Emanuel chatting with staff and students and participating in classroom lessons. Just six months after getting his joyous photo-op, however, Brizard placed Guggenheim on the district’s school closings list, the second time in three years that Guggenheim had to fight to stay open.

Guggenheim has twice been the target of CPS school actions. Arguing that the school was failing to meet performance standards, then-CPS CEO Ron Huberman placed Guggenheim on the 2010 school actions list along with 14 other schools, all but one having an almost exclusively African-American student body. Led by teachers, parents, students and community leaders, Guggenheim organized a spirited resistance, presenting their case at community hearings and creating materials to counter the district’s accusation that the school was failing its students. Opponents of the closing cited the lack of resources and attention given to Guggenheim and questioned CPS’s use of performance data. Despite the hearing officer’s recommendation to close the school, Guggenheim’s united resistance convinced Huberman to remove the school from the closing list.
However, just two years later the Guggenheim community was again forced to fight to keep the school open. CPS argued that Guggenheim, located at 7141 South Morgan Street in Englewood, had only made minimal progress since the proposed closure in 2010 and the school’s students would be better served attending Carrie Jacobs Bond Elementary School, located at 7050 South May Street, four blocks northwest of Guggenheim. For students newly enrolled for the 2012-2013 school year and beyond, attendance boundaries would be redrawn, dividing Guggenheim’s area between Bond and Amos Stagg Elementary School, a Level 3 school under the management of the Academy of Urban School Leadership (AUSL).

Despite a valiant effort from many of the same people as in 2010, Guggenheim could not persuade CPS and the Chicago Board of Education to spare the school from closure in 2012. Network Chief Adrian Willis claimed that CPS, through the 2010-2012 School Improvement Planning for Advancing Academic Achievement (SIPAAA), had invested an extra $1.5 million in Guggenheim, but the school still had not improved to an acceptable performance level. Closer investigation and inquiry, however, reveals that very little of the SIPAAA was actually implemented by CPS, and the district actually spent less on Guggenheim in 2012 than it did in years prior. According to veteran Guggenheim teachers, educational resources became scarcer as years progressed at the school, with the decline reported as early as the late 1990s. During the last few school years, teachers received little-to-no money for supplemental classroom materials. If teachers wanted science lab equipment, journals, maps or other essential supplies, they had to purchase them out of their own pockets. Teachers also stated that they had no input in textbook selection and that the books were often not purchased in sufficient quantities for all students.

Rather than helping Guggenheim with the resources it needed in the classroom, CPS simply replaced the administration, which, between 2010 and 2012, had three different principals. In the summer of 2010, CPS brought in a new principal and assistant principal with a combined one year of administrative experience. Three teachers with more than 20 years of CPS teaching experience—and the utmost respect and admiration of their colleagues—left the school within the first semester of the new administration’s reign. With ever-changing lesson
plans and school policies coming from the inexperienced administration, teachers and staff felt that their opinions and approaches to teaching were no longer valued or respected. The community struggled to have its voice heard, but with the Local School Council (LSC) dismantled and extra barriers erected, it was difficult for parents to get involved in their school. Wraparound services, desperately needed in impoverished Englewood, were virtually nonexistent, with a part-time psychologist and social workers not having nearly enough time to address all the students’ needs. When Guggenheim closed, the school had only one paraprofessional on staff. Guggenheim did not have a counselor on staff from the 2004-2005 school year to February 2011, almost six years without this essential support.6 Accounts from Guggenheim staff, as well as from those who worked with the Guggenheim community, portray a school deeply divided, with the administration viewing the teachers and community not as partners for school improvement, but rather as opposing forces, creating a hostile environment in the school. Seeing progress in the children that they spent much of their time teaching, the teachers believed that their strategies would work if given the proper resources from CPS and the school’s administration, but these supports never came. Students from disadvantaged, high-poverty communities such as Englewood need holistic supports to help them thrive academically. Englewood has been devastated by skyrocketing foreclosure rates and is among the most crime-ridden areas of the city, but CPS still failed to recognize the need for wraparound services.7

Guggenheim needed a full, well-resourced curriculum, much like the curriculum found in wealthy, politically-connected areas on the North Side of Chicago, with art, music, physical education, foreign language and a plethora of after-school activities. The teachers needed high-quality textbooks and a complete set of supplemental materials to engage their students with ambitious lesson plans and experiments. CPS needed to strengthen the 5 Essential Supports at Guggenheim, working with the community to hire a collaborative, visionary administration; encouraging teachers and parents to partner in school improvement efforts; providing teachers with the resources necessary to design a full, challenging curriculum; and creating small class sizes that allow teachers to address students’ individual needs. Simply put, Guggenheim was never given this chance to improve. Instead, CPS and its hand-picked administration created a contentious school climate and failed to address corrosive problems that systematically destabilized and dismantled Guggenheim until its final days in June 2012.

Students on the Move: Homelessness and Student Mobility

Mirroring the distressed Englewood community, Guggenheim served an almost exclusively African-American student body. For the 2011-2012 school year, CPS reports Guggenheim’s student body as 97 percent African-American.8 Without a single white student, Guggenheim was an “Apartheid school” [schools that have 99 percent students of color] in 2011-2012. The students’ families struggled to gain the resources needed to live comfortably, with 94.5 percent qualifying for free or reduced lunch in 2011-2012.9 Perhaps the most unique aspect of the Guggenheim student body was its high percentage of homeless students. CPS reported that at the end of 2011, 65 Guggenheim students—22 percent—were in temporary living situations, which is a student living in any situation that is not permanent, such as in a homeless shelter, on the street or “doubling up” with relatives or friends. The school’s homeless liaison, however, stated that she had 91 children, a third of the student body, who qualified as homeless.10 Given the high mobility of homeless students, the number of
children in the homeless education program would change throughout the year, but Parker’s group always remained large in number. Guggenheim consistently has been among the schools with the highest percentage of Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS).

Teaching homeless children adds obvious challenges. Attendance is inconsistent and given their difficulties outside of school, children can struggle to focus on academics. When children are worried about where they will sleep that night and how they will get their next meal, it is understandably difficult to concentrate in the classroom. Simply put, homeless children have much more to worry about than understanding the daily lesson, practicing their reading, completing their homework or preparing for the ISAT. They are concerned for their survival.

The large amount of homeless students at Guggenheim contributed to the school’s high mobility rate, which was fifth-highest among all CPS elementary schools in 2012: an astonishing 53.9 percent. This means that about 157 children transferred in or out of the school during the year. This rate was nearly three times the district’s already high average of 18.3 percent. Guggenheim’s 2012 mobility rate also surpassed its Englewood-Gresham Elementary Network’s average by 20 percentage points. While the excessively high student mobility in 2012 can be explained by the proposed school closing and CPS encouraging students to transfer (more on this in the “Transferring the Homeless” section of this report), Guggenheim regularly had one of the highest mobility rates in CPS. Since 2000, the mobility rate at Guggenheim has never been below 28 percent, with an average rate of 41 percent over the past 12 years. In each year since 2003, Guggenheim’s mobility rate was at least one-and-a-half times higher than the CPS average. The mobility rate at Guggenheim has been higher than the Network average in all but two years from 2000 to 2012. (For more data on Guggenheim’s mobility rates, see Appendix A.)

Switching schools, something homeless students do frequently, can have devastating effects on a child’s academic success. Each time children change their school, they lose important mentors and friends. They often have to adapt to an entirely different curriculum, teaching style and school culture. Research estimates that because of these factors, students who switch schools lose 4-6 months of valuable academic time. This may even be a low estimate:
David Kerbow of the University of Chicago found that mobile students can lose up to one year of learning by sixth grade.¹⁵

“[W]ith all the craziness going on in these kids’ lives—crisis, loss of permanent housing, moving around—schooling should be stable. Rule of thumb: every time a child changes schools, they lose four-to-six months of academic time. Obviously they are putting a lot of energy into renegotiating their environment.”

— Rene Heybach, Law Project Director, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

Students who move between schools can have “lower achievement levels due to discontinuity of curriculum between schools, behavioral problems, and difficulty developing peer relationships.”¹⁶ Mobile students are more likely to drop out of school. High mobility at a school also affects non-mobile students. Given the lost months of academic time, teachers must dedicate extra class time to new students so they catch up to the rest of the class. This leaves non-mobile students without the proper instruction needed to stay at grade level. A study of California schools found that non-mobile students in schools with mobility rates higher than 30 percent had considerably lower test scores that those at schools with less mobility.¹⁷

A school closing inherently causes mobility, forcing all students to change schools, but schools with high homeless populations have an even more difficult time preparing their students for the disruption, as well as tracking them once the school has closed. This became very apparent at Guggenheim, which will be discussed in the “Transitioning to the End” section of this report.

**2010 Closing Hearings: Unified Resistance**

“When they were trying to close the school the first time, the involvement of our parents, as well as our former parents, was astonishing. We had everyone coming back to help us keep the school open. We had students that were away at college that were coming back. It was phenomenal. Every time we had a hearing, it was standing room only.” – Cassandra Love-Vaughn, Guggenheim teacher

Just seven days after CPS identified Guggenheim for closure in January 2010, the district held the first community hearing on the action at the downtown CPS offices, more than 10 miles away from Guggenheim. At the meeting, CPS outlined the reasons for the proposed closure, citing poor performance on standardized testing.¹⁸ Throughout its presentation, CPS made constant comparisons between Guggenheim and the district as a whole. While it is true that the school’s scores were below district average, teachers, parents and community members pointed out that Guggenheim’s mobility rate was far higher than the district average and that the school’s scores were largely in line with other schools in Area 14, a predecessor to the Englewood-Gresham Elementary Network. (See Appendix B for more details.)¹⁹ The attempted 2010 closure of Guggenheim is a perfect example of how CPS uses unfair, misconstrued data when considering school actions.

Teachers, staff, “overly involved” parents, and community leaders were also quick to identify the struggles of children living in the Englewood community. Many were homeless and even those in stable homes dealt with a neglected neighborhood with high crime, few
recreational options and limited access to health care.\footnote{21} Jonathan Jackson of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition spoke out at the hearing to oppose the proposed closing, arguing that Chicago needed to do a better job resourcing South Side neighborhoods such as Englewood. He explained that it was a false assumption to equate poor test scores with poor schools.\footnote{22} Ward 17 Alderman Latasha Thomas, who represents the Guggenheim community in southern Englewood, said that it was the Board’s responsibility to ensure that a school “does what it needs to do to allow those students, who are sponges for knowledge, to learn.”\footnote{23}

> “We compare them to other schools that have no homeless children and these schools have to deal with the indigent and the children that are sucking on gums, that have not had dental care, that have not had eye glasses; and just weeks from now, they have to compete on the same standardized exam.” – Jonathan Jackson, Rainbow PUSH Coalition spokesman, at the January 28, 2010, community hearing

Opponents of the closure also called out Chief Area Officer Adrian Willis and the Board of Education for not supplying the school with the proper resources and for neglecting to discuss important issues with the Guggenheim staff. Guggenheim teacher Jacqueline Jones argued that “the School Board has ‘supported’ Area 14 schools like Guggenheim by removing resources like lead literacy teachers [and] math coaching positions.”\footnote{24} Although Willis claimed to have spent more hours at Guggenheim than any other school in the area, teachers stated that he only met with the staff twice—one when he was first named chief area officer and again when he announced the proposed closing of Guggenheim. Limited contact from the area office made it nearly impossible to collaborate with district and Board representatives and organize a plan for improvement.\footnote{25}

> “Imagine ... if the CAO [Chief Area Officer] of Area 14, that’s Mr. Adrian Willis, had devoted more than 23 hours to support our school of the 528 hours our students have been in school this year. We have had 528 hours, and he’s only given us 23. That is less than 4 percent of his time.” – Gervaise Clay, Guggenheim assistant principal, at the February 3, 2010, community hearing
Student Activism in 2010

Despite having only seven days between the announcement and the first hearing, current and former Guggenheim students, their families and staff packed the hearings to testify on behalf of their school and to warn CPS and the Board of the damages closure. Approximately 40 current and former students signed up to speak at the January 28. Teachers and staff did not let the inconvenient location—125 South Clark Street instead of their own community—prevent students and families from testifying; they filled three busloads of current and former students and their families and drove them downtown. Another 16 current students signed up to speak at the February 3 hearing. Students advocated against the closing outside of the hearings as well. During one of their field trips to City Hall, one student asked Mayor Richard M. Daley why he wanted to close the school based on low test scores when Daley himself told the children that it took him three times to pass the Illinois Bar Exam. Teachers stated that, during the attempted closing process, their students received a firsthand experience in civic action.

“Guggenheim to me is an institution. The definition [of an institution] is a custom and practice or pattern of behavior that is important in the cultural life of a society, and that’s Guggenheim.” – Ernest Jones, Guggenheim coach & disciplinarian, at January 28, 2010, community hearing

Students spoke of Guggenheim as a family with dedicated teachers and staff. Echoing the testimony of Jonathan Jackson and other community leaders, one student spoke of the school’s role in helping children navigate their crime-ridden community: “Every day we walk down the street, you see violence, drug dealing, drug users; but when we come there, I feel like I can do something better than what I see.” Other students illustrated their strong bond and admiration for their school. “If you close this school, it’s like you’re taking away a part of this neighborhood. It’s just like taking away a child from its mother,” one student said. The teachers believed that the inspiring testimony of their students convinced CPS to remove Guggenheim from the school closings list. CPS, it appears, underestimated the amount of fight and passion for Guggenheim in the Englewood community.

“Guggenheim has been a leader to so many people for so many years. Shutting this school down will not only put a lot of people out of a job, but it will be breaking up a family. Teachers try their best to give students at Guggenheim the best education possible. But you wouldn't just be hurting the teachers and the students at Guggenheim; you would [be] hurting the community. Guggenheim is a way of life for our family. People can't comprehend how hard we work here at Guggenheim because they are not here.” – Student Number 5, February 3, 2010, community hearing
Planning for Improvement

“We implore you to sit down with us, address our concerns, [and] give us the opportunity to execute our proposed Action Plan. Closing Guggenheim or any other school is not the solution.” – Ernest Jones, Guggenheim disciplinarian, at the February 3, 2010, community hearing

As part of the 2010 resistance, Guggenheim teachers and staff created and presented a detailed Action Plan which they believed, if enacted, would greatly improve the school, as well as raise its test scores. The teachers wanted to sit down with the administration and the Area Office to discuss how this Action Plan could be implemented and how Central Office, the Area, and school staff could work together to improve Guggenheim. These meetings, however, never happened, and CPS ignored the teachers’ plan for improvement.

The Action Plan, which was a separate document from the SIPAAA and is available in Appendix C, detailed the academic problems at the school and offered concrete solutions to fix them. After years of dwindling resources and after-school activities, the Action Plan called for establishing drama and book clubs, founding a parent/student homework center, holding reading nights, hosting writing fairs, planning community barbeques and hiring supplemental math and reading resource teachers.

Many of these ideas came from the SIPAAA that Guggenheim teachers, staff, LSC members and administration had completed in the summer of 2009.30 The SIPAAA was a strategic plan that listed areas in need of improvement and identified programs that would help the school achieve its goals—an “investment” in Guggenheim. The SIPAAA planning group requested funds for various academic and enrichment activities such as spelling bees, science and history fairs, parent training supplies, education for homeless parents, nutrition programs, attendance awards for students, science journals, library books and new computers. The group also wanted funds for new staff positions, such as an art teacher, a music teacher, parent workers and after-school workers to help provide a full curriculum for Guggenheim students. The Action Plan and the SIPAAA, however, were dismantled when the new administration took over in the summer of 2010.

Staff members reported that for the planning of the 2006-2008 SIPAAA, created in the summer of 2005 under Principal Carolyn Baldwin, all teachers made lists of what they believed was working at the school and what was failing. Programs that were not benefiting students were scrapped. Priority areas of concern were extrapolated, and teachers and staff brainstormed strategies, programs and resources that could help address the issue. This process differed greatly from the 2010-2012 SIPAAA. Multiple staff listed as members of the 2010-2012 SIPAAA planning committee stated that they had never participated in any meetings and were not even aware of any SIPAAA meetings taking place.31 Although the SIPAAA is supposed to be revised biannually, teachers stated that they were unaware of any planning meetings from 2010 to 2012.32

Although Network Chief Adrian Willis claimed that the 2010-2012 SIPAAA was proof that CPS had invested in Guggenheim, the SIPAAA had very little of its supports funded.33 The “investment” did not happen, and the SIPAAA, much like the teachers’ Action Plan, was scrapped when CPS placed the new administration in the school in the summer of 2010. As a launching point for their plan for improvement, teachers had devised an all-volunteer tutoring
program for the summer of 2010 and had already enlisted staff, lunch aides and security to offer their time to help the students prepare for the new school year. Teachers called and emailed Central Office and the Board several times, but Guggenheim never received a response. It was the start of pattern of neglecting, stalling and killing programs that could have helped Guggenheim on the road to improvement.

“The new administration came in that summer and [the SIPAAA and Action Plan] were disregarded. We were going to come in over the summer and do summer tutoring, but we never got approval from the Board. Teachers called the Board, emailed the Board several times just to get approval. We weren’t even trying to get paid. We had lunch room aides and security all lined up. They were all going to volunteer their time, but it was never approved. We could have used that summer to continue to working with the students, but they didn’t approve it. They didn’t implement anything.” – Kimberly Walls, Guggenheim teacher

The Revolving Door of School Personnel

A revolving door of school administrators made it difficult to maintain any real plans for improvement. Over the same two-year period that saw three different CPS CEOs, Guggenheim went through three principals. Different ideas and strategic plans accompanied these administrative changes, constantly forcing teachers to adapt to new standards and guidelines. Because of Guggenheim’s probationary status, CPS removed Principal Mary McNair, who had been an administrator at Guggenheim since 2007, after the 2010 school year. Vikki Stokes, trained by New Leaders for New Schools, replaced McNair while Robert Hubbird replaced Assistant Principal Gervaise Clay, who had fought vigorously against the proposed school closing. In December 2011, only a year-and-a-half after taking the job at Guggenheim, Stokes left the school and Hubbird was promoted to principal, remaining in the position until the school’s closing.

Since Guggenheim was on probation, as were most schools in the region, the LSC had no power over the selection of these principals; CPS could select whomever it wished without resistance. As quotes throughout this report illustrate, as well as testimony from many people in the Guggenheim community at the closing hearings, Guggenheim teachers and parents did not support CPS’s choice of administration at the school. In the summer of 2010, CPS imposed a principal with only one year of experience as an assistant principal and one year of administrative “training” to guide the improvement of what the district called one of the lowest-performing schools in the state. Rather than choosing one of the Guggenheim teachers with a Type-75 to help familiarize her with the school, this principal chose someone with no administrative experience and no connection to Guggenheim as assistant principal. The new administration took over Guggenheim without the necessary experience to fix a struggling, under-resourced school that was now forced to live in fear of future CPS school actions.

Administrative upheaval led to instability among the veteran teaching staff. Only 57 percent of the teachers at Guggenheim in 2009-2010 were still at the school in 2012. Within the first semester of Stokes’s reign as principal, three veteran teachers resigned or were reassigned. One of these teachers had been at the school for nearly 20 years and regularly received “excellent” or “superior” evaluations for her dedication to educating the whole child.
Two Type-75 teachers, a 4th grade and a sixth-through-eighth grade math teacher, who was also the LSC secretary, left the school as well. These teachers complained about being “harassed” by the new administration and were irritated that their request for more Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel (PSRPs) – an appeal that was also in the SIPAAA – was ignored. They, as well as other teachers at the school, opposed the instability caused by ever-changing orders on lesson plans and the lack of templates to guide them through the wavering expectations. These experienced teachers took the lead in fighting against Stokes’s attempt to eliminate their 30-minute morning planning time. The teachers that remained at Guggenheim also were affected by a change in professional culture at the school; multiple teachers expressed constant fear that they could lose their jobs at any time under the new administration. Teachers reported that these actions, as well as a general lack of cooperative collaboration between the administrators and the educators, demonstrated a lack of respect that Stokes and Hubbird had for the Guggenheim staff and teachers.

The University of Chicago’s Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) lists Effective Leaders as one of the 5 Essential Supports for school improvement. Effective Leaders share leadership and responsibilities with the staff and ensure that teachers have significant influence over decision making at the school, making teachers partners in school improvement. Schools organized for improvement have principals that work to gain the trust and respect of the staff and collaboratively create coherent, long-term plans for improvement. At Guggenheim, however, the administration disempowered the teachers, whose input was not fairly considered. The administration treated the teachers as obstacles rather than partners, and regardless of the cause, there was clearly a lack of trust between the two sides, making it difficult for any type of cohesive plans for improvement to be implemented.

“They broke the family bond. CPS appointed Stokes and Hubbird to break the strong bond that the teachers had so that when CPS came back the second time [to close the school], we didn’t have those strong teachers to mobilize the parents and fight for the school. You had new teachers come in that weren’t as vested in the students as the old teachers were vested in the students and the parents. You had some staff that had been at Guggenheim for 20 years – people that have seen families come through the building, multiple generations. They were vested and ready to fight CPS.” – Kimberly Walls, Guggenheim teacher

“It looks nice on paper, they would write up all these plans, but they would never be consistent in what they said they were going to do. It would happen for a week or two, and then it would fall apart.” – Ifeoma Nkemdi, Guggenheim teacher

The CPS-picked administration struggled to manage the teacher turnover. Although the aforementioned 3rd grade teacher left the school in August, Stokes did not hire a replacement for her class until January, leaving the 3rd graders without a trained teacher for five months. The 4th grade teacher resigned in November, but a replacement was not hired until January. The middle-grades math position was left open for nearly three months, with the teacher transferring in January and the replacement not hired until March. Teachers reported that substitutes tried in
vain to control the classrooms as the students fell further behind academically. Then-Assistant Principal Hubbird suggested that it was difficult to find qualified candidates to take over the substitute-managed classrooms and that “the [full-time] applicants did not seem to meet the standards and expectations that we were looking for.” Hubbird acknowledged, however, that the unfilled positions had a negative “academic, social, and emotional effect” on the students. The inability to provide a trained instructor impeded the growth of more than 100 students as they could not maximize their time in the classroom. If the Guggenheim administration truly did not believe that the applicants they interviewed met their expectations, why didn’t the Network or Central Offices intervene and sift through the many people in Chicago looking for a teaching job?

ISAT scores dropped dramatically from 2010 to 2011 in the grades affected by teacher turnover because it is difficult for students to learn without a teacher. Even when the new teachers were hired, they had to get acquainted with rambunctious students while attempting to establish discipline and order in a classroom that had been without full-time teacher for months. The percentage of 3rd graders meeting or exceeding state standards in reading plummeted from 44.4 percent in 2010 to 14.7 percent in 2011. Fourth grade reading scores saw a 40 percentage point drop. Math scores dropped 37 percentage points for 3rd grade and 18 for 4th grade. Fourth grade science scores also suffered, falling 19 percentage points over the same time. While standardized test scores are certainly not the ultimate indicator of student or school performance, these drastic declines provide supporting evidence to the devastating effect of leaving students without a teacher for an extended period of time, which is hardly surprising. Why did CPS allow so many students to go without teachers for so long? And why didn’t the district consider these administrative errors when closing the school in 2012?

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<td>Math Meets/Exceeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science Meets/Exceeds</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td>33.3%</td>
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Mid-year Restructuring

The administration created more instability in January 2012 when Hubbird restructured 3rd-through-5th grade. Until January, Ifeoma Nkemdi taught 3rd, 4th and 5th grade math while her colleagues taught those students reading and science. Two months before the ISAT and a month after the school was proposed for closure, however, Hubbird decided to switch to self-contained classrooms for grades three-through-five, keeping each grade level in the same classroom for the entire day. Nkemdi now had to teach reading and science to her class of 38 3rd graders (this large class size is discussed in the next section of this report). Teachers that were only teaching one subject now had to prepare lesson plans for two more subjects. When interviewed by CTU, Hubbird stated that he did not believe that this change had any impact on student performance.

The middle grades, where teaching was a bit more stable, saw increases in their ISAT meets/exceeds scores. ISAT composite meets/exceeds percentages for seventh and eighth graders
rose from 65.5 percent in 2010 to 71.8 percent in 2011, including a remarkable 100 percent of eighth graders meeting or exceeding standards for reading. The two-year increase among seventh and eighth graders is even larger, increasing by 42 percent from 2009 to 2011. These ISAT scores prove that progress was being made among the older students, but CPS decided to emphasize the school’s overall decrease in ISAT composite, falling from 55.6 percent in 2010 to 40.0 percent in 2011. These overall numbers dropped because of low scores in the early grades, which were caused largely by teacher turnover. It is these complexities that CPS too often ignores when shuttering our schools.

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<thead>
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<th>7th Grade</th>
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<th>8th Grade</th>
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<td>Composite Meets/Exceeds</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
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</table>

“People feel a disinvestment in the school, the principal changes mid-year, how good is that? And all this conflict starts happening, it makes you feel like your school is disintegrating, and guess what, it is disintegrating.” – Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

The middle grades, however, were not completely without upheaval. The math teacher left Guggenheim in January 2011 and was not replaced until March (despite the fact that Assistant Principal Hubbird was an experienced math teacher). After being without a trained classroom leader for two months, the students were nearly impossible to manage. New Guggenheim teacher Henry Pera, who had more than 20 years of experience in CPS, had to spend almost all of his energy controlling his classroom and dealing with misbehavior. While his experience still allowed him to make progress with his students, Pera was in desperate need of assistance, either from the administration or from a trained PSRP. The school’s longtime disciplinarian who garnered so much respect that, as one teacher put it, students would stand at attention when he walked down the hall, had left the school one month earlier and been replaced by a martial arts instructor without any experience at Guggenheim.

“The discipline was completely out of control. I could not teach the class. 99 percent of my energy was dedicated to management and class control. They put me in a very hellish situation with minimum support, especially when the principal [Stokes] bailed out after the school was announced to be closed.” – Henry Pera, Guggenheim teacher
Managing Student Disruptions

Teachers viewed Jones’s absence and the administration’s unwillingness to deal with behavioral problems as the main reasons for increased student disruptions. Rather than removing misbehaving children from the classroom, the administration focused their attention on the teachers, blaming their classroom management. The teachers viewed this reaction as further disrespect from the administration, further reducing the mutual trust at the school and diminishing the Effective Leaders Essential Support. The administration’s discipline strategy also undermined the teachers’ authority over their classrooms, making students even more uncontrollable and teachers more demoralized. Day after day, teachers would have to interrupt their instruction to handle student outbursts or break up fights. Many of these students that consistently disrupted class were repeating the grade but had not been serviced by the special education program. Increased access to social workers and more resources for the special education program, both requested in the SIPAAA, could have vastly benefited Guggenheim students. Rather than implementing these proven aspects of school improvement, CPS ignored the teachers’ requests.

“I had been there 12 years and I never saw the kids act the way that they did. It was like I was in a foreign land.” – Cassandra Love-Vaughn, Guggenheim teacher

Overcrowded Classes, Overwhelmed Teachers

Overcrowded schools mean overcrowded classrooms and overwhelmed teachers. The research on the effect of class size on student achievement is clear: Small classes are one of the best ways to improve learning. With small classes, skilled teachers can spend more one-on-one time with their students, forming mutually trusting relationships while identifying and correcting areas where children are lagging behind their peers, a key aspect of the Supportive Environment support. This is especially true in early grades. Tennessee’s Project STAR (Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio) found that kindergarten-through-3rd graders in small classes (15-17 students) had improved test outcomes, greater school engagement and increased grade promotion. Teachers also were able to spend more time teaching and less on classroom management and addressing student disciplinary problems. The improvement of teaching conditions also increased educator morale. Small classes are especially beneficial for low-income children, which represented 94.5 percent of Guggenheim’s student body in 2012. The STAR study found that low-income children with three years of small classes were over one-and-a-half times more likely to graduate from high school. Those students with all four years (K-3) of small classes were more than twice as likely to graduate. CPS ignored this research, however, inflating Guggenheim class sizes and making it more difficult for teachers to teach and students to learn.

Guggenheim’s SIPAAA requested additional funds to hire staff and reduce class size. Despite CPS’s current obsession with “underutilized” schools and “right-sizing” the district, Guggenheim was actually overcrowded for many years and had classes far larger than the size most productive for students. Last year, CPS was closing “underperforming” schools to help students, but this year, CPS is “helping” students by closing “underutilized” schools and supposedly providing more resources to schools like Guggenheim. Rather than instituting
A Tale of Two Schools

contradictory policies year-after-year, CPS needs to focus on research-based aspects of school improvement instead of the whims of its ever-changing Central Office administration.

Guggenheim’s lowest capacity in the past 12 years was 86 percent, above the 80 percent barrier that CPS currently uses to classify schools as “underutilized.” Until 2009, Guggenheim enrolled more students than its CPS-determined capacity of 300. (See Appendix D for more enrollment data.) While enrollment figures did decline as Englewood’s population decreased, the school was still at 97 percent capacity in 2012, the year Guggenheim was closed. Guggenheim was so crowded that the school needed to use a mobile unit to house additional rooms. Mayor Emanuel and his charter school allies state that families “vote with their feet” when it comes to school selection, but the district did not give Guggenheim any credit for being so popular that it became overcrowded for many years. Using Emanuel’s theory, Guggenheim must have been doing something right.

Guggenheim Enrollment: Percent of Capacity

*CPS classifies schools enrolled at less than 80 percent of capacity as "underutilized."
Rather than investing in new teachers for grades too crowded for one classroom, some of the students were placed in split-level classrooms. In split-level classrooms, teachers have to manage the academic standards and emotional demands of multiple grades within the same classroom while somehow finding the time to teach both grade levels the required material. This extra challenge further limits the amount of one-on-one time that teachers can spend with their students. These split-level rooms did not help reduce class size; split-level classrooms at Guggenheim were often large, with the 2011-2012 fifth/sixth grade split class having 29 students.
and the seventh/eighth grade class having 32. The age difference of students can create behavioral problems, much like in Nkemdi’s classroom (see previous box). One teacher stated that in her fifth/sixth grade split class, she could never get through a full lesson without some type of student disruption.

“It’s very hard to teach in a split-level classroom. You have your 7th grade academic standards, [and] you have your 8th grade academic standards. You got the kids who are not on grade level in either strain, and then you still got to try teach to the middle. But then after a while because of exceeds [on the ISAT], you have to teach to the top and hopefully they’ll make it there.” – Kimberly Walls, Guggenheim teacher

“We had a first/second grade split. And what I tried to explain was that these are two different curriculums. When you’re pushing kids together and you have some students that are barely able to recognize their letters, you’ve got a big problem.” – Freda Davis, Guggenheim teacher

The SIPAAA request to invest in teachers and PSRPs to help control classes was not honored. The “jack-of-all-trades” paraprofessional juggled her time between managing the homeless education program (which often involved fighting with the principal to ensure that laws were followed), coordinating multiple after-school programs, providing assistance to children in the special education program and helping overwhelmed teachers control their structurally dysfunctional classrooms. In February 2011, Guggenheim finally got a guidance counselor for the first time since the 2003-2004 school year. To assist the new counselor, the school partnered with the Adler School of Professional Psychology to bring in interns to provide art therapy and conflict resolution. In a school where a third of the students were homeless, social workers only visited the school once or twice a week and never had enough time to address all students’ needs. Teachers asked for an additional math and reading teacher to focus on struggling students because the large class sizes at Guggenheim did not allow the time or resources to intervene and raise them to the same level as their classmates. This request, however, was also ignored.

Engaging the Community and Parental Involvement

The teachers’ Action Plan created during the 2010 closing attempt, as well as the SIPAAA, highlighted the need to engage the community, inform families and encourage parents to take an active role in their child’s education. The staff intended to create a clear, concise newsletter, design a handbook to better structure tasks for parent volunteers, host a community barbeque and hold monthly school planning meetings with the community. They planned community talent shows, reading nights, math nights, science nights, writing fairs and a parent/student homework center to engage and enrich students, while giving parents and the community another opportunity to participate at the school. Teachers also wanted to have workshops and trainings for parents on the curriculum and programs offered at the school. Involved Families, one of the 5Essentials, can have a huge impact on student achievement, and
Guggenheim teachers planned many programs to incorporate parents and guardians into school activities.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the school also held a literacy program for parents. Staff worked weekends to brainstorm viable solutions for the low adult literacy rates in Englewood. Teachers had evening and Saturday reading classes for parents so they could better the community and enjoy literature with their children. The teachers viewed the low education of parents as a detriment to their children’s performance and wanted to help, but limited resources made the program impossible to continue.66

Prior to the 2010-2011 school year, Guggenheim made progress recruiting parent volunteers. These volunteers would tutor small groups and assist teachers with classroom management. At the 2010 closing hearing, Principal McNair said: “There were maybe one or two volunteers when I arrived in ‘07, and we increased that to nine volunteers who came on a regular basis. We had Open House on Saturdays so that we could have and talk to more parents.”67 This number had declined to four regular volunteers by 2012. [On the plus side, Principal Hubbird stated in an interview that some parents volunteered in the younger grades because they wanted to learn how to read.] Staff also alleged that paperwork for parent volunteers would routinely go missing once it was given to the principal.68

According to the 2010-2012 SIPAAA, increasing parent meetings, expanding “face-to-face contact with the community” and having an “open-door policy,” were key parts of improving the school’s learning climate and family involvement.69 In 2012, however, CPS allocated no money for community/parental involvement at Guggenheim.70 At the school level, the administration further de-emphasized the importance of these two areas of improvement—family involvement and a productive learning climate—and enacted policies that completely rejected the goals of the SIPAAA and the Involved Families Essential Support.

According to Guggenheim staff, the administration’s attitude toward parents became increasingly hostile as the 2011-2012 school year continued, especially to those parents who advocated against closing the school. One staff member stated that Hubbird had asked her to stand by the back door of the building and prevent parents from entering the school.71 Extra security guards were brought into the school, not to help with student disruptions, but to prevent parents from coming into the building. Hubbird began imposing restrictions on when Sherri Parker, the school’s homeless liaison, could hold meetings for the homeless parents.72 At these meetings, Parker would distribute the legally required bus cards and often bring breakfast or lunch for the families. These meetings provided essential services and information to homeless families, but Parker still faced resistance from the administration.

“\textit{I would describe the feeling as one of hostility and discomfort at the school. The administration was unavailable [and] didn’t step in and solve problems.}”
\textit{– Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless}

Teachers also reported that Stokes would only see parents on designated days. While Hubbird alleged in an interview that he had an “open-door policy” with parents, multiple teachers and staff, including those that worked in the main office, dispute this claim. Office staff stated that under Hubbird, all parents requesting a meeting with the principal were required to write a detailed description of what they wished to discuss.73 Guggenheim parents had trouble dealing with this extra red tape; many of the parents could not read or write, making it impossible to fill out this form without assistance.
Teachers also reported that Guggenheim did not have an active LSC for the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. In an interview with the CTU, Hubbird claimed that he “engaged” with the LSC during his tenure at Guggenheim, helping them understand how the school’s budget operated. He stated later in the interview, however, that he did not recall if the LSC was actually meeting on a regular basis at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. A member of the LSC confirmed that it actually only met three times—in August, September and October of 2010—during the Stokes-Hubbird administration. Staff alleged that Stokes removed the school’s bulletin board that posted the dates of LSC meetings and stopped posting the meeting dates on the school’s marquee outside the building. LSC members indicated that the administration did not cooperate with them. Unlike under previous administrations, the LSC was not consulted about major ideas for school improvement, curriculum or activities.

Research has linked active LSCs to effective school improvement. CCSR found that “elementary schools that made substantial progress … have active LSCs.” A 2005 study by Designs for Change found that schools making the most progress had active LSCs with the power to select the school’s principal. Active LSCs work as partners with the school’s administration and serve as advocates for the students both academically and politically, far different than the relationship at Guggenheim.

As CPS limited the resources and destabilized the school, parents and the community became increasingly irritated with the learning environment for their children. The LSC, a vehicle of democratic power, was dismantled. Parents wanted to volunteer their time to assist their neighborhood school, but the new administration put up barriers to prevent them. It became nearly impossible for parents to even speak with their child’s principal. The administration treated parents and teachers as rivals rather than partners for school improvement. This division caused a further disintegration of the school community.

“A lot of the parents were illiterate. He began to create ways to make them unable to voice what they wanted to get out. He had us create a binder and wanted them to sit down and physically write down what their issue was, knowing that they couldn’t do it.” — Alisha Atwater, Guggenheim staff
Despite requests for each position in the SIPAAA, Guggenheim had no official art, foreign language or physical education program when it was closed in 2012. The school had art for part of the 2009-2010 school year, but the short-lived program ended when the part-time art teacher passed away in the fall of 2010. In January 2012, after the school had been announced for closure, Guggenheim brought in a part-time music teacher. Prior to this, however, ISBE teacher service records indicate that the school did not have a music or foreign language teacher within the school’s last decade. Physical education was also eliminated from the curriculum, after the 2008-2009 school year.

Guggenheim tried to use community partnerships to compensate for CPS’s neglect of fine arts instruction the school. In an attempt to “transform the culture,” Guggenheim partnered with Chicago Cares, a nonprofit organization that recruits volunteers to coordinate and perform community-building activities. Chicago Cares volunteers collaborated with students to paint about a dozen murals inside and outside the school. The group started a large mosaic outside the school, but it was left unfinished when the school closed in 2012. This partnership “beautified” Guggenheim while giving students an opportunity to experience art. The new administration also attracted two after-school activities that focused on the arts, SMART Club and Columbia College’s Center for Community Arts Partnerships (CCAP) program. These programs will be discussed in more detail in the “Supplementing the School Day: After-School and Summer Programming” section of this case study.

Research has discovered that arts education correlates with higher class attendance, lower drop-out rates and increased student ambition. Art and music programs can also enhance students’ confidence and self-image, develop their interpersonal skills, increase their creativity and...
and improve their abstract reasoning. Physical education can help students stay fit, develop social skills, practice teamwork, improve concentration and self-esteem, and increase positive feelings toward school. In an increasingly global society, fluency in a foreign language can be extremely beneficial. Research also shows that learning a foreign language at an early age can increase students’ cognitive ability.

Multiple Intelligence Instruction and Successful Community Partnerships

Before threats of closing, Guggenheim teachers attempted to give their students a full curriculum by incorporating fine arts into core subject instruction. Through this Multiple Intelligence curriculum—which incorporate many different skills, fields, and subjects, such as reading, art, culture and history, into the larger lesson—students could experience enrichment programs like art and music while reinforcing their reading and math lessons. Students also got the opportunity to learn not only through lecture but also through experiments and tactile lessons.

The Junior Great Books program utilized Multiple Intelligence by linking art, reading, and culture. In the program, students would discuss stories and create artwork based on the plot. This approach allowed the students to experience fine arts while engrossing them in the literature. The stories in the Junior Great Books program also supplemented teachers’ cultural education lessons. If students were reading a story about African culture, the Junior Great Books instructor could supplement the lesson by having students construct models of native African huts, make traditional African clothing, or perform customary African dances. Guggenheim teachers also employed Multiple Intelligence instruction by partnering with the Chicago Urban League and the Chicago Dance Company to teach reading through fine arts.

“Everything that was being presented in the classroom wound up in music or in the arts. The Junior Great Books program gave us a resident artist, so that when we were teaching about different cultures, [the instructor] would actually work with the students to create some of those cultures. Junior Great Books also tied mathematics to the art program. The instructor wove geometric concepts into the readings.... [In one lesson, students] used geometric figures to create the huts that were indicative to African culture. ... The students needed that additional stimulation to get interested in reading.”

– Freda Davis, Guggenheim teacher

“[It is important to tie all curriculum areas in for kids to learn. During social studies, kids in my class were building maps using different colored clay. Then they chose one state and did research on it. That tied into our history fair as well.”

– Freda Davis, Guggenheim teacher

With resources becoming scarcer, the Junior Great Books program ended in the early 2000s, and the partnerships with the Chicago Urban League and the Chicago Dance Company ended in the late 1990s. Teachers tried to still incorporate art and music into their lessons, but with the increased emphasis on standardized testing—especially with the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001—and limited funding for supplemental resources, many Guggenheim educators did not have the resources or time to educate the whole child.
Inadequate Learning Materials

By the 2010s, quality textbooks and supplemental learning materials had become a luxury at Guggenheim. Teachers were forced to use outdated or low-quality textbooks to teach their students. Generally, teachers got new textbooks only through the Network’s free pilot programs with publishing companies, which eliminated any teacher input in the selection process. Some teachers attempted to bypass the administrative chaos by using Donors Choose, which allows people to donate money directly to specific programs at specific schools, and applying for funds from the Chicago Foundation for Public Education to purchase new textbooks for their classes, but these grants could not fully replace the money that teachers had once received for textbooks and materials.93

“**The textbooks were horrible. I had to bring my own textbooks and teach. When I was hired, I told [Hubbird], let me sit with you and let’s choose books for the students. He didn’t even bother to respond.”** – Henry Pera, Guggenheim teacher

Supplemental materials, such as reading books, lab equipment and journals were often not available or not supplied in sufficient quantities for the entire class. A veteran teacher stated that she had to start dipping into her own pocket for supplemental resources as early as 1995, with her personal expenses increasing through the 2000s. She would purchase a large selection of fiction books so her students could sharpen their reading skills. The teacher even bought extra textbooks when her class did not have enough for all students. Not having enough resources became the norm at Guggenheim, the veteran teacher reported. She would use her income from summer school classes to purchase the materials that her students needed to succeed.94

“I bought books from the companies that supply schools, doing what I had to do for the students to get scores up [and] give those kids enough confidence to make it.” – Freda Davis, Guggenheim teacher

Other teachers felt the pain of reduced supplemental supplies as well. The school’s science teacher described her science lab as a “hodgepodge” of incomplete and inadequate equipment.95 Reading kits that were used to evaluate a student’s skill level were not purchased in large enough quantities to be used for all children. The 3rd-through-5th graders were unable to use videos that accompanied their math textbooks because there was no money for repairs to the laptop that played these videos.96 Even basic classroom materials such as pencils, paper, tape, chalk, rulers and calculators, were in short supply. As years passed, teaching became more and more difficult as CPS disinvested in the academic materials that could have allowed teachers to better instruct their class and guide their students for improvement.

“There was no money for supplementals. If you didn’t buy them yourself, you didn’t have them. There was not enough money or materials to really help the students. ... I spent a great deal of money to make sure my kids learned. That was the only option. That was my job.” – Freda Davis, Guggenheim teacher
The Assistant Principal’s Attempted Disposal of Academic Materials

The new Guggenheim administration also played a role in the supply shortage. Insisting that the classrooms were “cluttered,” then-Assistant Principal Hubbird began entering teachers’ classrooms and throwing away textbooks and supplemental materials. Multiple teachers and staff reported that starting in August 2010, Hubbird went into classrooms and grabbed textbooks, lab equipment, books from classroom libraries, supplemental CDs and videos, classroom decorations, bulletin board materials, drama costumes and teachers’ personal items and threw them in a dumpster. Teachers tried to retrieve their materials but were not always able to recover everything. Teachers and staff stated that throughout the year, Hubbird continued snatching materials out of the classroom. One teacher mentioned she had to pack away the books from her classroom library each time Hubbird did observations to prevent him removing them her classroom. Office staff reported that he eventually started selling Guggenheim materials to book stores. These events did further damage to the level of trust and respect between teachers and the administration. [When interviewed by CTU for this report, Hubbird had no comment on these allegations, only saying that he believed that the teachers needed help with classroom organization and that he and Stokes focused professional development sessions on the issue.]

The elimination of learning materials had a profound impact on student achievement. Teachers did not have enough materials to teach their lessons. The middle-grades science teacher had an incomplete set of textbooks from the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year to November (students had to share the textbooks that were recovered from the dumpster). Even when a publishing company’s pilot program allowed teachers to have new science textbooks, the accompanying lab materials—essential for a well-rounded science education—were not purchased. The science teacher had to purchase new lab materials so that her students could apply their knowledge through experimentation.

“In August of 2010, Mr. Hubbird threw away the school books: math, science, reading. Brand new National Geographic magazines, lab equipment, he threw them away.” – Kimberly Walls, Guggenheim teacher

“He went into my classroom and threw away my personal items, my books, CDs, things that I had for the classroom that I wanted to utilize. He went into the desk drawers, the bulletin board, [and] tore down everything that I had handmade. I had same masks that parents from my previous school had made for me when I was doing theater with the kids; he threw them away. He threw away the costumes, costumes that I got imported from Africa.” – Ifeoma Nkemdi, Guggenheim teacher
When Stokes and Hubbird came in to the school, they were able to bring a new computer lab to Guggenheim. Teachers used these refurbished computers for testing and supplemental programs but the students did not get the opportunity to use these computers for research. Without a technology coordinator, it was difficult to maintain the computers, which led to frequent outages. Guggenheim also did not have a technology class where students could learn how to use the machines. While having the computer lab certainly was a positive, Guggenheim was not fully utilizing the resource.

While Guggenheim was lucky enough to have a library, the librarian, who worked at Guggenheim for 19 years, described it as “insufficient” in recent years. Since 2007, Guggenheim librarian Rosie Burns stated that she received no money from the school’s budget for books and supplies for her library. During that time, Burns purchased simple supplies such as tape, paper, pencils, crayons, glue, staplers and printer ink mostly out of her own pocket. Most of the library’s encyclopedias were more than seven years old, and with limited computer access, Guggenheim students found it difficult to complete any research projects without visiting the public library. Because of these shortcomings, Burns ensured that her students could easily apply for Chicago Public Library cards.

Burns had to be creative to get the necessary supplies for her library. For the first few years after the devastating budget cuts, she took advantage of $500 grants from the Chicago Public Library—with an additional $500 matching grant from CPS—but this $1,000 was a sharp decline from the $5,000 a year she received prior to 2007. When the Chicago Public Library stopped giving these grants, however, it became even more difficult to keep the library current. Burns also utilized the Scholastic Book Fairs, where the company would sell books and supplies to students, parents, and faculty, with a portion of the profits going to the school’s library.

“My last six years at Guggenheim, I didn’t receive any money for books and materials to go into the library. Ms. Baldwin [principal until 2007] would give me a budget of at least $5,000. After that, I couldn’t get any money out of anybody. The only way I would get money [was through] the Chicago Public Library. [which] awarded grants of $500, and if I got that $500, CPS would match it. So, I would get $1,000. I didn’t have a budget to get tape, pocket, or labels for me to keep up. Everything that I had, I had to always buy myself: crayons, glue, paint. I had to beg for ink. There was no ink for printers.” – Rosie Burns, Guggenheim librarian

Supplementing the School Day: After-School and Summer Programming

Guggenheim staff believed that after-school activities were essential to a well-rounded education. These activities, the staff stated, kept the students off the dangerous Englewood streets and helped solidify the school’s connection to the community. The faculty was able to learn more about their students’ lives and help them through their personal and familial problems, acting almost as pseudo-social workers. Academically, the students benefited from after-school programs that provided extra time to practice reading and math. The students also had the opportunity to enrich their education through arts and sports—programs that CPS did not offer at Guggenheim during the school day. Despite the successes of these programs at
Guggenheim, CPS did not give the school any money for after-school programming for the 2011-2012 school year.\textsuperscript{103}

### Bringing Fine Arts, Athletics, Home Economics and Technology Back to Guggenheim: After-School All-Stars, CCAP and SMART Club

Prior to school closing attempts, After-School All-Stars (ASAS) was one of Guggenheim’s most popular after-school programs. Younger students played board games with their classmates and did arts and crafts under the direction of the school’s librarian. Older students participated in sewing, dance, drama, photography or technology. With physical education rarely offered at Guggenheim and the athletic program discontinued, students took advantage of ASAS’s sports clubs, competing in basketball, baseball, tennis and Double Dutch. Sherri Parker, coordinator of the program, believed that ASAS was an invaluable addition to the school’s programming.\textsuperscript{104}

Guggenheim participated in the ASAS program from 2007 to 2011. For the program’s first four years, Parker received $1,000 for ASAS supplies. When the new administration took over for the 2010-2011 school year, however, the budget was cut in half. A year later, Parker, who had already purchased supplies out of her own pocket, was shocked when the ASAS office informed her that Principal Stokes had not completed her portion of the paperwork before the renewal deadline.\textsuperscript{105} Despite Parker’s lobbying, Guggenheim would not have ASAS for the 2011-2012 school year.

With the ASAS administrative blunder and the lack of funding allocated by CPS, Guggenheim had to get creative to provide their students with supplemental programming. During the 2011-2012 school year, Guggenheim was accepted in Columbia College’s Center for Community Arts Partnerships (CCAP) program.\textsuperscript{106} CCAP served about 100 Guggenheim students, participating in drama, music and art activities. The new administration also applied for a grant from the Chicago Children First Fund to implement SMART Club, which provided similar activities as CCAP. Unlike CCAP, however, SMART Club employed Guggenheim teachers and staff to instruct the after-school classes. Since CPS closed the school in June 2012, these programs could not reach their full potential; the school did not have time to “work out the kinks.” Teachers indicated that CCAP and SMART Club were handcuffed by discipline problems at the school; just as agitated students began to take control of the classroom, they became more difficult to manage after school. The students knew that the end was near for Guggenheim, and they struggled to contain their emotions.

Sherri Parker also coordinated the school’s Supplemental Educational Services (SES) program. SES, mandated and funded by No Child Left Behind, was intended for all students who qualified for free or reduced lunch at schools that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years or more.\textsuperscript{107} The school only had to pay for security during the time SES tutors were at the school. The SES provider onsite at Guggenheim supplied trained tutors (some of whom were Guggenheim teachers), giving struggling students an extra four hours of reading and math per week. An employee of the SES supplier who testified at the 2010 closing hearings stated that cuts in federal funding limited the number of students who could participate in SES.\textsuperscript{108} Parker reported that in 2011 and 2012, participation in the program was further reduced simply because the CPS-appointed administration would not provide the security necessary to expand the program.\textsuperscript{109}
Financial Struggles, Questionable Spending and the Budget

Under the new administration, Guggenheim had difficulty paying for even the most basic supplies. Front office staff reported that the school went through four different bank accounts due to insufficient funds. One bank even refused to issue the school more checks because of a large number of uncovered payments. When teachers and staff attempted to purchase vital supplies for their classroom, after-school programs or special events, the school’s debit card was often rejected. Guggenheim developed a reputation in Englewood for bouncing checks and not paying for services, so when goods or services were absolutely necessary, they would have to visit different stores outside the community. Since Guggenheim did not have the money to buy the supplies, teachers and staff would have to pay for them out of their own pocket, often without any reimbursement from the school.}\(^{112}\)

\[\text{“We couldn’t go to anything in the neighborhood anymore. We extended ourselves and went across Stony Island [Avenue] to get stuff, because they didn’t know about us over there.”} \quad – \text{Alisha Atwater, Guggenheim staff}\]

But was the cash shortage really so severe that the school’s administration could not allocate at least some more money for the library, textbooks, supplemental materials, or the homeless education program? While there was supposedly no money available for these essential supplies, programs or the countless of other things detailed in the SIPAAA and Action Plan, funds were used to pay for a DJ $800 for two hours of work. A Michael Jackson impersonator
was hired for Halloween celebrations. Staff reported that the school’s administration told security personnel that they could stay as long as they wanted, because the school had to “get rid of the money anyway,” despite supposedly being unable to get the necessary security for after-school enrichment programs.\textsuperscript{113}

\begin{quote}
“[The SIPAAA money] didn’t come to my science lab, it wasn’t used for science materials. It didn’t come to Guggenheim students. It didn’t come to the teachers in the classroom.” – Kimberly Walls, Guggenheim teacher
\end{quote}
A Closer Look at the Budget

The CPS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) sheds some light on Guggenheim’s financial situation. As teachers’ testimony would indicate, Guggenheim spent less money per student on regular expenditures—those spent directly by the school on things such as instruction—than the CPS average for elementary schools in four of Guggenheim’s last six years, including $1,302 less in 2012. This regular expenditure spending gap increased over time, with Guggenheim using $1,313 less than average per elementary pupil from 2010 to 2012, compared to only $407 less from 2007 to 2009. Given that an estimated one-third of the student body was homeless, the school’s high mobility rate, and the community’s limited access to wraparound services, Guggenheim needed more assistance than the average CPS elementary school to educate its students, not less.

During the 2012 closing hearings, CPS stated that it spent an additional $1.5 million from 2010 to 2012 to help improve student achievement at Guggenheim. The CAFR, however, disputes this claim. CPS actually spent $2,198 less per pupil on regular expenditures—and $639,566 less across the school—on Guggenheim in 2012 than in 2010. CPS spent nearly $1,000 less per student on regular expenditures at Guggenheim in 2012 than it did in 2009, the year before the SIPAAA went into effect. If Guggenheim was receiving less money the year it was closed than it was previously, how can CPS claim that it “invested” in Guggenheim?

The school’s budget is determined by more than just the funding allocated by CPS; schools can also increase their budget through fundraising. While schools in wealthy neighborhoods can raise tens of thousands of dollars from parents and donors in the community for additional academic supplies and supplementary programming, impoverished areas like Englewood have to rely mostly on funding provided by CPS. Parents and community leaders in wealthy neighborhoods also tend to have more political power, allowing them to influence their elected officials to find new streams of funding for their schools. Politically connected charter school leaders also benefit from this often-overlooked advantage.

CPS also neglected to fund the long overdue capital projects. According to the Guggenheim Capital Improvement Program report, $4.1 million of the $5.4 million requested for construction and renovation was not funded as of December 2010, the most recent report available on the CPS website. Maintenance or full replacement was needed for a variety of projects, including windows, water pipes, the water heater, ventilation, the security system, fire alarms, fencing, the parking lot and lighting. Classrooms, the library, restrooms, the kitchen, and the lunchroom were among the rooms awaiting maintenance. No renovation or construction project had been completed since 2004. A full six years went by without any of these projects funded by CPS. This may give some credence to teachers’ speculation that CPS had for long been planning to close Guggenheim.

“If we think there’s a chance that a building is going to be closed in the next five to 10 years, if we think it’s unlikely it’s going to continue to be a school, we’re not going to invest in that building.” – Tim Cawley, CPS Chief Administrative Officer, as reported by Noreen Ahmed-Ullah of the Chicago Tribune, December 15, 2011
Community Disengagement: 2012 Closing

In 2012, CPS completed what it could not do in 2010: close Guggenheim. CPS claimed that it had given Guggenheim the resources and supports necessary to improve, but the school was still “failing its students.” Guggenheim students, CPS argued, could get a better education at Bond Elementary, despite the proposed receiving school having similar test scores (See Appendix E more information). CPS failed to mention the numerous resources and programs that it neglected to provide the school (despite promising many of them in the SIPAAA): up-to-date textbooks for each student, sufficient supplemental materials, complete science lab equipment, modern and operable technology, fine arts and music instruction, physical education, foreign languages, cultural education, small class sizes, focused parental involvement and education, and fully resourced after-school activities. Despite consistent testimony from parents and teachers during the hearings, the district also did not address the damage inflicted on Guggenheim by the administration that CPS selected to lead the school.

On November 30, 2011, Guggenheim parents received notice via a three-page template letter from CEO Jean-Claude Brizard that he intended to recommend the school for closure. The letter contained the exact same phrasing and format as the notice to parents of Florence B. Price Elementary, another school closed in 2012. There would be two community hearings, held not at the school but at Shiloh Baptist Church, so parents, students, teachers and staff could “share feedback” on the proposed closing and “provide alternate proposals or other suggestions.” Unlike Administrators McNair and Clay during the 2010 hearings, Stokes and Hubbird were not among those to “share feedback” on the school that they managed. At the hearings (the second of which took place despite a severe snow storm that led to the cancellation of all other CPS activities), CPS presented its argument to an undereducated community through a statistic-heavy PowerPoint presentation. No questions or comments were permitted during the presentation. Members of the community were then allowed to speak for two minutes, assuming that they signed up early enough. CPS representatives would occasionally provide talking point responses to community members, but questions and concerns presented by the speakers usually went without a direct answer and without further discussion. There was no real dialogue between CPS and community; the hearings were rigidly structured, clearly placing CPS as the judge, jury and executioner.

Guggenheim teachers and staff admitted that they used the hearings as venue to express anger, feeling that it was impossible to fight off CPS again. Guggenheim “had new teachers who did not have strong connections to the school, and those that did [have strong connections] were exhausted” from the 2010 fight, science teacher Kimberly Walls recalled. Teachers and parents chastised CPS for failing to fulfill the SIPAAA and for neglecting to provide the school with the resources it needed to succeed, but the district had already broken the morale of the school. Parents were furious by the administration’s mishandling of the school and the attempted transfer...
of Guggenheim’s homeless students (see next section) and presented a petition to remove Hubbird as principal. Hubbird, of course, did not attend the hearings to address these concerns.

**Transferring the Homeless**

Under the Illinois School Code, schools are required to provide students suffering from homelessness with free transportation, free uniforms and waivers from all other school fees. Schools receive Title I funds specifically for this purpose. According to staff, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and correspondence from the CPS Students in Temporary Living Situations network coordinator, newly-promoted Principal Hubbird was not honoring these rights. [See Appendix F for an email from STLS to Hubbird informing him of the rights of homeless students. In an interview with CTU, Hubbird alleged that he did not have any problems getting these items for his students. The email and testimony from Guggenheim staff dispute this claim.] Sherri Parker, Guggenheim paraprofessional and the school’s homeless liaison, did her best to ensure that homeless families had the resources guaranteed to them under the law by calling regular meetings of homeless parents, where she served meals and distribute bus cards. Since CPS failed to provide the legally required uniforms, Parker also inquired with community organizations about donating school uniforms for the students.

“[Sherri Parker] and the principal were really night and day. We never had a friendly feeling about [Hubbird’s] concern for homeless students. Nothing he did ever made us feel that he was embracing them or services to them. All the things [Parker] was doing to keep people together were, I think, being undermined by the principal.” – Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

The Illinois School Code also states that homeless families have the right of “continuing the child’s education in the school of origin”—the school where the child was enrolled when he/she had permanent housing—"for as long as the child remains homeless or, if the child becomes permanently housed, until the end of the academic year during which housing is acquired.” During the 2011 Winter Break, however, Guggenheim homeless parents began receiving phone calls demanding that they provide proof of address. Hubbird told the office staff there were many homeless students attending the school that did not reside within Guggenheim’s attendance boundaries. These students, Hubbird alleged, needed to prove their address to remain at the school.

“We were contacted by people who said, ‘Hey, they’re forcing us to leave.’ We’re getting these transfer forms taped to our door or slid under our door or we stepped up to the [front] desk and they tell us, ‘You should go now, there’ll be no teachers left when you get back.’ Others were saying, ‘You don’t belong in this school and you have to leave.’ Because they had a handy list of the kids experiencing homelessness, and they had a liaison who knew all those families, they heavily concentrated on homeless families. Under the Illinois School Code, that violates their rights; [they] have a right to stay and can’t be made to go.” – Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Hubbird gave office staff a script to follow when calling the families. The principal also requested additional teachers and staff to come into the school over break and “encourage” parents to transfer their students. According to letters from parents and the testimony of parties involved, Hubbird and the office staff called Guggenheim homeless parents and said that it was in the families’ “best interest to transfer [their] kids” because “the teachers were not showing up at the school” after Winter Break. Shortly after receiving the call, Hubbird or the office staff delivered an official CPS transfer form to the students’ home, listing the child’s contact and enrollment information. There was a blank for the families to fill in the school where they wished to be transferred. See Appendix G for parent letters and email correspondence regarding the attempted transfers.

Concerned parents contacted the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and Guggenheim teachers and parents organized a meeting at a local laundromat so the Coalition could inform homeless parents of their rights. The Coalition also agreed to set up a legal clinic outside the school and to contact all homeless parents and offer assistance.

Meanwhile, Hubbird attempted to cover up the push to transfer students. In an emergency Saturday meeting, Hubbird told the front office staff not to speak with any Central Office or Network employees but rather to direct all questions to him. He also tried to confiscate the script used when contacting parents. When parents without identification later attempted to testify

“Alisha Atwater, Guggenheim staff

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about the transfers at a Board hearing, Hubbird instructed office staff not to fax the information they needed to enter the building. [Many of the parents did not have official state identification, so the school needed to confirm their status.]\(^{133}\)

Rather than focusing on strategies to educate students in temporary living situations, Guggenheim’s principal spent his time—as well as occupying the time of others—encouraging, (at best) or threatening homeless families to transfer to another school (at worst). Despite a myriad of problems facing the school, Hubbird chose to pay his employees not to find solutions but rather to counsel out the most difficult-to-educate students. This action not only violated the law but also attempted to fracture and destabilize the community.

During an interview with Hubbird for this report, he stated that he had no comment on his role in the attempted transferring of homeless students.

> “People there expressed a feeling that he was there to kill the school, that it’s a foregone conclusion that [Guggenheim was] going to close. Some people thought that was his motivation to push everyone out early, before there was even a proper process.” – Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

### Transitioning for the End

On February 22, 2012, the Board of Education approved the closure of Guggenheim.\(^{134}\) The school was now in transition mode. CPS laid out its plan to “make specific investments in additional instructional programming and personnel support at Guggenheim.”\(^{135}\) Sadly, Guggenheim had to wait until it was marked for closure for CPS to institute and fulfill a plan for investment.

CPS scheduled two open houses at Bond, one at the end of the 2011-2012 school year and a “welcome back night” at the beginning of the next year. These were intended to “give Guggenheim students an opportunity to become familiar with their new school and meet their teachers and administrators.”\(^{136}\) Given the high mobility at Guggenheim, two open houses hardly seem like enough time for students to assimilate to their new school. CPS’s misunderstanding of this problem could explain why only a third of Guggenheim students actually enrolled at Bond for the 2012-2013 school year. This frightening number is discussed in further detail later in this section.
CPS dedicated only two paragraphs of the ten-page Transition Plan to handling the transition of homeless students. Representatives of CPS’s Educational Supports for Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) program were made available at Guggenheim “at set times two days per week from March 1, 2012, until the end of the school year.”\textsuperscript{139} STLS employees worked personally with the families, forming relationships with them and figuring out what assistance they would need to transition successfully to their new school. Independent from STLS, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless also provided regular assistance to Guggenheim families.

With STLS and the Coalition giving special attention to this vulnerable group, it appeared that the homeless students may make a successful transition. Over the summer, however, STLS was “reorganized.” The manager of the STLS program, Tabatha Koylass, terminated most of the staff and brought in new employees. The transition of STLS resulted in lost information and a disruption of the personal connections that homeless families desperately need. The people who knew which services the families needed and how to get in contact with those families were gone. CPS reported at the August 23, 2012, meeting of Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force that, at that time, the enrollment status of a majority of former Guggenheim students was a mystery. The district did not even have current contact information for more than half of the former Guggenheim students.\textsuperscript{140}

Transitional Academic Resources for Guggenheim Students

CPS declared that it would add an “instructional leader, such as a retired principal, to ensure that students are receiving the instruction they need to progress and accelerate their learning” and that “classroom quality remains high so that students that do not lose any momentum or fall behind in the transition process.”\textsuperscript{137} Hubbird selected the principal for this role from Kershaw Elementary, where he once taught. Teachers reported, however, that the “instructional leader” rarely interacted with them. If the instructional leader noticed areas of possible improvement in teaching style or classroom management, she did not notify the teachers so these changes could be made and students could benefit more from their last months at Guggenheim. Teachers in the most difficult teaching situations, like Nkemdi in her 38-student class, did not receive the feedback or suggestions from the instructional leader that she needed to manage her classroom.\textsuperscript{138}

“I guess she was Mr. Hubbird’s mentor. All I saw her doing was walking, standing, looking, and then typing something into a laptop. I never knew what she was writing, because she never came to me about anything.” – Rosie Burns, Guggenheim librarian
Continued Chaos at STLS

Until mid-March 2013, Tabatha Koylass’s six months leading STLS marked the only time during Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s administration that the top position in the CPS homeless education program has been filled with a permanent employee. In March 2013, CPS finally replaced Koylass, who was promoted to a “city wide school improvement” position before the start of the 2012-2013 school year. CPS promoted Amber Damerow, who previously worked as STLS resource coordinator. The resource coordinator position is now vacant, just as CPS proposes to close 54 schools, affecting 2,865 homeless students at closing and receiving schools.

“[STLS staff is] sitting and talking to families and making requests, and figuring out who needs what, etc. And then, more or less, she decided to fire all the people who had direct contact working with us and with homeless people at Guggenheim. And in the fall, Tabatha Koylass leaves on the eve of the start of the new school year. So what happens is [CPS] can’t find half these families. They don’t have the phone numbers, just what you would predict would happen! People in [temporary living] situations, they need personal relationships. They need people who know that even if Tamika’s family is moved, she stays in touch with grandma, and those people know how to get a hold of grandma. You don’t just call old phone numbers and mail things to old addresses, that doesn’t work.... That whole Guggenheim thing is a perfect example of what not to do.” – Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

The Task Force, incredibly disturbed that CPS had made no attempt to track these students, demanded that CPS locate them. After the Task Force requested this vital information for months, CPS finally presented the data at the Task Force’s February meeting. The data reflected the community’s accounts of the disastrous transition at Guggenheim. Only 36.7 percent of non-graduating Guggenheim students enrolled at the designated receiving school, Bond Elementary. Ten percent of non-graduating Guggenheim students dropped out, left the district or could not be located. CPS did not provide definitive information for another 23 former Guggenheim students. Combined, these figures equal 19 percent of Guggenheim’s student body. If CPS could not handle the transition of about 250 Guggenheim students in four months, how can it properly plan for the transfer of the approximately 16,000 students at schools proposed for closure in 2013 in only one month? CPS is attempting to close 50 more schools in three less months and the amount of students unaccounted of at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year—or whenever CPS decides to actually track these displaced students—will be exponentially higher. CPS is either suffering from delusions of grandeur or it has not even taken the time to consider the logistics of its irresponsible actions. During the last few weeks at Guggenheim, reality began to sink in for the students. Learning became a secondary concern with nearly all attention fixated on the school’s imminent closure. Students became increasingly edgy and belligerent, making it practically impossible for teachers to control their classrooms. The students struggled to deal with their emotions and expressed their frustration through violence. Fights broke out between the students. The students even conveyed their anger at the principal himself. With Principal Hubbird watching, a student threw a brick through his car...
window. In a community where hardship and adversity are the norm, the students felt neglected and no longer cared about the consequences of their actions.\textsuperscript{143}

“It was a really dangerous situation. The kids, it hit them about a week before, and then they started crying and became angry, Mr. Hubbird’s car window was broken into. The kids let him see them do it. ... They had been together since kindergarten. They fought, they made up and then it kind of hit them. ‘Not only are we graduating, but we’re the last class.’” – Sherri Parker, Guggenheim paraprofessional

**The CPS Blueprint for School Destabilization**

The story of Guggenheim’s demise is truly reprehensible. It started as far back as the 1990s when CPS began limiting teachers’ access to supplemental materials. Reduced resources, as well as the overwhelming amount of standardized testing that accelerated in the 2000s with No Child Left Behind, forced teachers to alter their curricula and schools to eliminate enrichment programs. At Guggenheim, the school cut fine arts and ended partnerships with organizations that provided supplemental Multiple Intelligence instruction, linking different subject areas into the same lesson. Later in the decade, Guggenheim had to cancel or condense its after-school programming because of limited resources.

Despite a large homeless population, high mobility rates, limited access to wraparound services and inability to fundraise for additional resources, CPS did not provide Guggenheim with extra materials and supports. Not having enough resources became the norm for Guggenheim teachers; they routinely had to make-do with incomplete sets of materials. Textbooks were scarce and students had to share them with their classmates. Teachers had to spend even more of their own money on classroom resources because, as a tenured teacher explained, “If you didn’t buy them yourself, you didn’t have them.”

Rather than having small classes, which have been proven to improve student performance, CPS created split-level classrooms full of students at drastically different levels of educational and emotional development. With their limited resources and often without a paraprofessional, teachers were expected to balance their instruction to reach each individual student. CPS allowed class sizes to balloon out of control, exemplified by a 42-student 3rd grade class. Still, no new teachers or PSRPs were brought in; rather, the administration only addressed the teacher’s “nightmare” by simply shifting a handful of the students to the 2 or 4th grade classrooms.

Guggenheim had a revolving door of administrators with three principals heading the school in only two years. This instability severely hindered Guggenheim’s chance to cultivate any legitimate, school-based plan for improvement. CPS, however, pushed forward with its own plan, setting up the school for closure. To lead the school from the brink of closure in 2010, CPS selected a principal with no connection to Guggenheim and only one year of experience as an assistant principal. Guggenheim’s new administrators implemented strategies that defied research on school improvement. The new administration proceeded to destabilize the school, disregarding the SIPAAA and teacher-devised Action Plan. They pressured experienced teachers out, and even more egregiously, left their positions vacant for months. The 3rd graders lost five months of productive academic time. Fourth graders lost two months of sustained learning.
Middle grade students lost two months of proper math instruction. The failure to replace teachers and leaving more than 100 students without a trained teacher—at a school that is supposed to be receiving extra supports—is completely unacceptable.

The new administration methodically detached Guggenheim from the community by restricting parent access to the building and making it more difficult for families to schedule meetings with the principals. LSC meeting dates were no longer posted in visible locations. This lack of awareness essentially killed the LSC, which only met three times from 2010 to 2012. The CPS-picked administration treated parents and teachers not as partners for improvement, but rather as enemies that needed to be destabilized.

When the school was announced for closure, Stokes, who did not respond to CTU’s request for an interview, “bailed” on Guggenheim. Rather than testifying that he wanted to keep his school open, newly-promoted Principal Hubbird accelerated the closing process by masterminding a plan to “encourage” homeless families to transfer their students to another school, marking the beginning of a disastrous transition. Despite leading the school for two years, neither Hubbird nor Stokes even attended the community hearings on the proposed closing of Guggenheim in 2012.

Where was CPS when all of this chaos and disarray was happening at Guggenheim? At the 2012 closing hearings, CPS proclaimed that it had given Guggenheim all the supports it needed to succeed, but the district made no significant attempt to intervene during this tumultuous time at the school. The turbulence at Guggenheim should have triggered alarm at 125 South Clark Street, but the district remained aloof, allowing the school and its administration to spiral further out of control.

Despite CEO Brizard and Mayor Emanuel’s perfunctory visit to the school, CPS did not understand the internal and external struggles that the Guggenheim community faced. Guggenheim had overcrowded classrooms, an incomplete curriculum, inadequate instructional materials and a detached and unavailable administration. These factors were clear indicators that in order to improve student achievement at Guggenheim, CPS needed to invest in proven solutions such as small class sizes, ambitious and enriched curriculum, increased parental involvement and collaborative and visionary administrators. Brizard and Emanuel got their photo-op, but the students of Guggenheim never received the assistance and investment they needed.

While only 42 percent of 2011-2012 Guggenheim teachers have full-time jobs in CPS, Stokes and Hubbird were both “rewarded” for their “progress” at Guggenheim with new administrative jobs—both at schools on probation—leaving the community voiceless in the decision. In their short careers, Stokes and Hubbird have been administrators at four different schools. Stokes started as an assistant principal at Alfred David Kohn Elementary and is now principal at Garrett A. Morgan Elementary in Auburn Gresham. Guggenheim was Hubbird’s first school as an administrator; he is now principal at Mahalia Jackson Elementary, less than a mile from Morgan. If this year’s proposed closings are approved, all four of the schools run by Stokes and Hubbird—Guggenheim, Kohn, Morgan and Mahalia Jackson—will be closed to students in the fall of 2013.

We cannot allow CPS to continue systemically dismantling and destabilizing neighborhood schools like the district did at Guggenheim. Luckily, educators such as Sherri Parker, Kimberly Walls, Ifeoma Nkemdi, Henry Pera, Cassandra Love-Vaughn, Freda Davis, Alisha Atwater and Rosie Burns; and community leaders like Rene Heybach, are still advocating for the schools Chicago’s students deserve. We must reach out to these educators, listen to their stories, and fight with them as they demand resources and a stable school climate so their students can reach their full potential.
References

2 William H. Prescott Elementary School was the exception, serving 68.5 percent Latino students and 9.1 percent African-American. Prescott was the only school on the 2010 school actions list that had a student body that was over 10 percent white (17.3 percent). Prescott was left off the final closing list. For more information on the targeting of African-American schools for closure, please see: Caref, C., Hainsd, S., Hilgendorf, K., Jankov, P., & Russell, K., (2012, November 30). The Black and White of Education in Chicago’s Public Schools. Chicago Teachers Union. Accessed at http://www.ctunet.com/quest-center/research/black-and-white-of-chicago-education.pdf.
5 According to CPS Position Files, Principal Vikki Stokes spent one year as assistant principal at Alfred David Kohn Elementary School while Assistant Principal Robert Hubbird had no administrative experience.
13 2012 CPS Mobility Rates.
17 For more information, see http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/student-mobility/.
18 CPS presentation on closing of Guggenheim. Obtained through FOIA request.
22 Testimony from Jonathan Jackson at the January 28, 2010, community hearing. Transcript obtained through FOIA request.
23 Testimony from Latasha Thomas at the February 3, 2010, community hearing. Transcript obtained through FOIA request. In 2012, Thomas also opposed the closing but supported making Guggenheim a turnaround school.
24 Testimony from Jacqueline Jones at the January 28, 2010, community hearing.
28 Testimony from Student Number 7 at the January 28, 2010, community hearing.
29 Testimony from Student Number 4 at the February 3, 2010, community hearing.
30 No Child Left Behind requires schools that fail to meet Annual Yearly Progress create an improvement plan. The Illinois School Code also mandates a school improvement plan. Until 2013, CPS used the SIPAAA, which was built on research from the University of Chicago’s Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) to meet this requirement. CPS now uses the Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP).
31 One planning committee member mentioned as a “classroom teacher,” Cherita Isom, is not listed on CPS Position Files or the ISBE Teacher Service Records and was unknown to any of the staff spoken with for this report.
32 For more on the SIPAAA process, see: http://stratplan.cps.k12.il.us/sipaaa_process.shtml.
33 Testimony from Adrian Willis at January 20, 2012, community hearing.
35 Clay spoke at both the January 28th and February 3rd hearings, as did Principal Mary McNair. Neither Stokes, Hubbird, nor the assistant principal who served after Hubbird was promoted spoke at the 2012 hearings. Hubbird admitted in an interview that he did not even attend the community hearings.
36 CPS presentation on closing of Guggenheim. Obtained through FOIA request.
38 Evaluations of Freda Davis.
40 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
41 For more on the 5Essentials, see: http://uchicagoimpact.org/5essentials/.
42 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
43 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
45 2010 & 2011 Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) reports.
46 Third graders do not take the science section of the ISAT.
47 In the interview, Hubbird first stated that he restructured the grades because the school lost staff members. This did not match with any previous testimony from Guggenheim staff, and when asked to clarify, Hubbird said that he did not remember the reason for the shift from departmentalization to self-contained classrooms. Interview by Kevin Russell.
48 2010 & 2011 Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) reports.
49 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
50 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
58 Nkemdi, Ifeoma. Interview by Kevin Russell.
59 Nkemdi, Ifeoma. Interview by Kevin Russell.
61 Love-Vaughn, Cassandra. Interview by Kevin Russell.
62 Love-Vaughn, Cassandra. Interview by Kevin Russell.
63 Hubbird, Robert. Interview by Kevin Russell; Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
64 Guggenheim teachers’ Action Plan, presented to CPS hearing officer on January 28, 2010. Obtained through FOIA.
65 Guggenheim Action Plan; Guggenheim 2010-2012 SIPAAA.
66 Davis, Freda. Interview by Kevin Russell.
67 Testimony from Mary McNair at the February 3, 2010, community hearing.
68 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
69 Guggenheim 2010-2012 SIPAAA.
73 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
74 Hubbird, Robert. Interview by Kevin Russell.
75 Love-Vaughn, Cassandra. Interview by Kevin Russell.
76 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
77 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
80 Testimony from Jacqueline Jones at the February 3, 2010, community hearing.
81 2010 & 2011 ISAT reports.
82 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
83 Love-Vaughn, Cassandra. Interview by Kevin Russell.
84 2004 & 2010 ISAT reports.
86 2009-2012 ISBE Teacher Service Records.
87 Hubbird, Robert. Interview by Kevin Russell.
91 Davis, Freda. Interview by Kevin Russell.
92 Davis, Freda. Interview by Kevin Russell; Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
93 Walls, Kimberly. Interview by Kevin Russell.
94 Davis, Freda. Interview by Kevin Russell.
95 Walls, Kimberly. Interview by Kevin Russell.
96 Nkemdi, Ifeoma. Interview by Kevin Russell.
97 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
98 Hubbird, Robert. Interview by Kevin Russell.
99 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
100 Burns, Rosie. Interview by Kevin Russell.
101 Burns, Rosie. Interview by Kevin Russell.
102 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
104 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
105 Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
106 CCAP had received a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers program that allowed the program to expand to three new schools, including Guggenheim.
107 For more information of Supplemental Educational Services, see: http://www.cps.edu/Programs/Pathways_to_success/Pages/Tutoring.aspx
A Tale of Two Schools

Testimony from Scott Lovero at the February 3, 2010, community hearing.

A tenured teacher mentioned that the school did have window air conditioners for a few years, but they rarely worked properly.

Parker, Sherri. Interview by Kevin Russell.

A tenured teacher mentioned that the school did have window air conditioners for a few years, but they rarely worked properly.

Davis, Freda. Interview by Kevin Russell.

Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell

Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell


January 20, 2012, community hearing

2009 and 2010 amounts adjusted for inflation.


Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.


Parker, Sherri. Interview by Kevin Russell.; Heybach, Rene. Interview by Kevin Russell.

Illinois School Code.

Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.


Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.; Email from Sherri Parker to Shelly Brim, STLS coordinator

Letters from Guggenheim parents.

Heybach, Rene. Interview by Kevin Russell.

Atwater, Alisha. Interview by Kevin Russell.

Atwater, Alisha. Interview by Kevin Russell.


CPS Transition Plan for Guggenheim.

CPS Transition Plan for Guggenheim.

CPS Transition Plan for Guggenheim.

CPS Transition Plan for Guggenheim.

Heybach, Rene. Interview by Kevin Russell.

CPS presentation to the Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force on February 11, 2013.

Karp, S., (2013, April 3). Losing track. Catalyst Chicago. Accessed at http://www.catalyst-chicago.org/news/2013/04/03/20943/losing-track.; In a response to Catalyst, CPS claimed that the 23 unaccounted for children were “Grade 20” students, “a limited-use code that denotes “profoundly disabled” students for whom a grade-level assignment is inappropriate.” Grade 20 students only make up 1 percent of the entire district population, however. Guggenheim staff also indicates that the school “did not have any students who were profoundly disabled.”

Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.

Hubbird, Robert. Interview by Kevin Russell; Guggenheim staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
The Culture of Fear Continues: Beidler Elementary

August 13, 2012, was a prime day for another photo-op. On the first day of classes for Track E schools, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, accompanied by TV cameras and newspaper reporters, visited Jacob Beidler Elementary School in East Garfield Park. Emanuel mingled with teachers, and students, posing for photos with cheerful children eager to start the new school year. After addressing the school, Emanuel rang the bell, ceremoniously starting the school year at Beidler. Exactly six months later, Emanuel’s new CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett placed Beidler, which had been proposed for consolidation two years and three CEOs earlier, on a hit list of 129 schools that she would consider for closure. Sound familiar?

Located at 3151 West Walnut Street, just steps from the Kedzie Green Line station, Beidler Elementary has been a staple of the East Garfield Park community for nearly 100 years. East Garfield Park, much like Englewood, has suffered from massive disinvestment over the past half-century. Like Englewood, East Garfield Park faces high crime and high poverty. East Garfield Park’s murder rate and percentage of residents living poverty are about 2.5 times higher than the city average. Finding affordable housing has become increasingly difficult because of gentrification efforts, as well as high foreclosure rates. Students in East Garfield Park schools were three times more likely to be suffering from homelessness than the CPS average in January 2013.

Chicago is continuing to disinvest in East Garfield Park through the proposed 2013 school actions, taking away neighborhood schools for 1,355 students, 98.5 percent of whom are African-American. On February 13, 2013, CPS placed almost half of East Garfield Park’s non-charter elementary schools—Beidler, Bethune, Calhoun, Ericson and Garfield Park—on a hit list of 129 so-called “underutilized” schools that were being considered for closure or
consolidation. Four schools in East Garfield Park are among the 54 schools CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett has targeted in her final school actions recommendations: Bethune, Calhoun, Ericson and Garfield Park. When factoring in co-locating and receiving schools, all but two of the 11 non-charter CPS elementary schools in East Garfield Park are directly affected by the recommendations. Beidler and Kellman students were among the few on the West Side to avoid direct impact from the largest proposed school closings in American history.

Recommended School Actions in East Garfield Park: 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Proposed Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethune</td>
<td>Close into Gregory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calhoun</td>
<td>Close into Cather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ericson</td>
<td>Close into Sumner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garfield Park</td>
<td>Close into Faraday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cather</td>
<td>Receiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faraday</td>
<td>Receiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>Receiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jensen</td>
<td>Receiving (King)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>Co-Locate with Morton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beidler</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellman</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although it will not be closed or designated a receiving school in 2013, Beidler is still affected by school actions. Fighting off closure threats two times in three years has created a culture of fear at Beidler as teachers, students, and parents believe that CPS will continue to target the school for closing. CPS has consistently neglected to provide Beidler with essential resources, leading the community to believe the district does not have long-term plans for the school. The destruction of other East Garfield Park neighborhood schools only amplifies this fear. The 2013 proposed school actions prove that CPS is targeting East Garfield Park. Beidler avoided CPS’s wrath in 2013, but what about next time?

Teachers have become increasingly concerned about the impact of closing threats on their students. The school’s precarious status affects student performance, forcing children to worry not only about their lessons but also where they will be attending school the next year. Beidler is in “constant limbo,” and students must worry about losing the familial relationships that they have developed with teachers, staff and their peers at Beidler. Living in an unstable community, children in East Garfield Park deserve a stable school climate.

While Beidler will remain open for the 2013-2014 school year, the school still has many of the same disadvantages of those subject to school actions. Beidler has long struggled with insufficient resources, limited wraparound services and an incomplete curriculum. Beidler also shares demographic similarities with Guggenheim and the schools proposed for closure in 2013. Like 87 percent of the schools proposed to be closed, Beidler is an “Apartheid school”—schools with 99 percent students of color—in the 2013 school year. Eighty-eight percent of Beidler students qualify for free or reduced lunch, slightly less than Guggenheim in 2012, where 94.5 percent qualified. While not as extreme as Guggenheim, Beidler’s student body is also highly mobile, with a mobility rate higher than the district average in 10 of the last 12 years. These demographics and resource deficiencies are incredibly similar to Guggenheim and the 54 schools on the 2013 closing list, adding to Beidler’s fear the CPS will continue to target the school.
Despite these societal barriers, Beidler, according to the University of Chicago’s 5 Essential Supports, is “organized” for improvement. Based on teacher and student responses to the 2012 CPS My Voice, My School Survey, Beidler received a “strong” evaluation in two categories, Supportive Environment and Ambitious Instruction. In schools with a Supportive Environment, teachers identify and intervene when students are struggling academically. Even using CPS-supported metrics, Beidler has had success reaching low-performing students, significantly raising ISAT scores. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) recognized Beidler with the Academic Improvement Award in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2011. Beidler also has four full-time special education teachers with a combined 86 years of experience on staff for the 2012-2013 school year, as well as two classroom assistants.

Beidler also excelled on Course Clarity (very strong) and Math Instruction (strong), subcategories of Ambitious Instruction, which indicates a full and engaging curriculum. The school’s teacher retention rate helps explain the high scores in Ambitious Instruction. While only 57 percent of Guggenheim’s 2009-2010 year teachers were still at the school two years later, 75 percent of Beidler’s teachers remained at their school over the same time period. Given the increased retention at Beidler, teachers could collaborate consistently with their colleagues and formulate challenging, engaging lesson plans.

Beidler was rated as “weak” in Effective Leaders, which measures the level of collaboration between administrators and teachers toward the implementation of a “clear and strategic vision for school success.” However, was the first school year for Beidler’s new principal, which may explain the below-average score (which was still only one point away from “neutral”). It is not unexpected that it takes more than one year for a new administration develop and execute a plan for improvement. The Effective Leaders score notwithstanding, based on teachers’ engaging curriculum and the school’s hard work with struggling students, the University of Chicago’s holistic approach to school evaluation determined that despite of the school’s limited resources, Beidler is on the correct path.

Through testimony from teachers and staff, the following case study explores the barriers to learning for Beidler students. This case study will also highlight how Beidler’s teachers and administrators have attempted to compensate for school’s resource shortage and compare the school’s learning environment, resource allocation, and other elements of performance to Guggenheim. Through threats of school actions, CPS created a culture of fear at both schools, but Beidler, although still woefully under-resourced, appears to have a clearer direction than the CPS-inflicted chaos that overwhelmed and divided Guggenheim.

Creating a Culture of Fear

Beidler is no stranger to threats of school actions. Like Guggenheim, the school was forced to fight two potential closings in just three years. On March 23, 2011, CPS Interim CEO Terry Mazany announced his proposal to consolidate Beidler in Willa Cather Elementary School, a half-mile southeast of the school. When announcing the plan for consolidation, CPS expressed its true reasoning for wanting to clear out Beidler—Mazany wanted to give the building to Urban Prep’s East Garfield Park Campus, allowing the charter high school to increase its enrollment. The new campus, which opened to ninth and tenth graders in the fall of 2010, had been occupying Cather’s second floor but would need more space to add 11th and 12th grade. Even though the Board estimated that it would cost $5.5 million to convert Beidler
into a high school, CPS apparently thought that handing over a neighborhood school to a charter was the best course of action.17

“Everyone was sad because the teachers were working so hard and getting the test scores up; we kept making improvements. But then all of a sudden, [Mazany] comes in and decides that this would be a good school for Urban Prep.” – Beidler staff

Here’s Your Park, Now Give It to Urban Prep

Under CPS’s proposal, Beidler students would not be able to enjoy their new campus park, which was to be built in 2011. Without any safe and clean outdoor areas for the students to have recess, practice athletics and hold field days and graduation, teachers, parents and community leaders advocated for a park to be constructed at Beidler. After 15 years of pleading, the Board approved an Intergovernmental Agreement with the city of Chicago to replace part of the vacated alley behind Beidler with a new campus park. CPS would only have to pay an estimated $10,910 for the park, with rest of the $2.2 million project paid with TIF funds and a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.18 The Board approved the agreement on March 23, 2011, the same day that CPS announced its proposal to consolidate Beidler into Cather. As soon as CPS and the Board provided Beidler with a long-awaited societal resource—a resource unrivaled in East Garfield Park—the district announced that it wanted to kick the students out and gift-wrap the building and the TIF money spent on the park for a politically-connected charter school. It was a perfect microcosm of CPS’s priorities and its vision for privatized education on the West Side.

"The students were saddened. They stopped working on the playground. I had to put my shade down, because it was too depressing, just looking at it and seeing the trucks out there. It was a sad time for everybody.” – Beidler staff

Beidler Campus Park, built in 2011. Photo by Kevin Russell
Determined to prevent CPS from surrendering their school to a charter, the Beidler community quickly rallied against the proposed consolidation. Beidler held enthusiastic protests, packed the community hearings and threatened to march on the Board if the proposal was approved. Much like Guggenheim in 2010, Beidler showcased the passion of their students and emphasized the school’s role in the community. At the April 11, 2011, hearing at the CPS Central Office, held only a week after the meeting was announced, CPS backed down, telling the attendees at the beginning of the meeting that the district was withdrawing the consolidation proposal.

“[The students] were shocked and concerned. What would happen to their sisters and brothers? They were eager to fight.” – Beidler staff

“The community has such a relationship with the school because a generation of students has gone here. This is home to them.” – Beidler staff

Mirroring Guggenheim, CPS targeted Beidler for school actions again in 2013, just two years after fighting off the consolidation attempt. On February 13, 2013, CPS placed Beidler on its hit list of potential closings, citing “underutilization.” The announcement renewed fear and anger in the community that they would lose their neighborhood school. Teachers expressed frustration and despair over the school being forced into “constant limbo” by CPS’s reckless policies. This culture of fear and uncertainty continues to persist even though Beidler was not included in CPS’s final recommendation for closure. After CPS’s repeated plotting to close the school and the district’s failure to provide vital resources (see next two sections), the Beidler community still believes that they will have to face-off against CPS again in the future.

“People are sort of adapting to [attempted closings]. We know that it’s coming again, because it’s happening so frequently. [CPS] is searching to close a school [and] displace teachers.” – Beidler staff

CPS’s habitual threats of closure make it even more difficult to develop long-term plans for improvement or to keep students engaged academically. The school’s precarious status has had notable impact on the students. The culture of fear creates more instability in the children’s already-unstable lives; children in a chaotic community cannot even rely on the constancy of their school. Worried students find it difficult to concentrate on school work. At the February 27, 2013, utilization committee meeting, a Beidler student testified: “To continue to focus on my learning is really hard, when every two years I’m concerned about my school closing.” CPS’s threats of school action have intruded into lives of students and created a permanent state of insecurity for the community.
When asked about the resources available at their school, Beidler staff consistently mentioned the shortage of functioning technology as a major impediment to educational progress. The SIPAAA planning committee recognized the need for new computers and “increased access to technology equipment.” The committee also wanted to use technology to educate parents and provide GED and job training workshops for the community. Beidler wanted to hire a technology coordinator to maintain the equipment and teach a computer class. The school did have a technology teacher for a few months in the fall and winter of 2012, but the teacher has since left Beidler and has not been replaced. The students still attend a weekly technology class, but without a trained instructor, teachers lamented the wasted course’s wasted potential.

While the school does have a computer lab, staff reported that the obsolete machines regularly break down, severely limiting access to the internet and other computer-based learning programs. Staff estimated that most of the computers, including the machines in the teachers’ classrooms, are nearly a decade old and inadequate for proper instruction or planning. Rather than purchasing up-to-date computers, CPS has only done small repairs, such as replacing full or unusable hard drives. The school has some laptops available for teachers, but they suffer from the same malfunctions as the desktop computers. Many teachers use laptops for interactive programs and differentiated instruction; not having working equipment restricts their ability to deliver creative lessons. Needing operable technology for their classrooms, a few teachers have even purchased laptops out of their own pocket. ELMO projectors and interactive SMART whiteboards, which give teachers more flexibility in their instruction, are a rarity at Beidler; the school has only a couple of these modern educational tools. Most teachers with access to this equipment took advantage of grants, because CPS has not supplied the school with enough for widespread use at Beidler. Technology is obviously a necessary resource in modern classrooms, and it is CPS’s responsibility to ensure that all schools have operable, up-to-date technology to educate their students. CPS has failed to provide this at Beidler.

“It’s distracting to the students when you are constantly talking about school closings, school closings, school closings. I think that kids need a stable environment, and this is one of the few stable environments that many of these kids have, where they have familiar faces and people who care about them. It’s going to be a traumatic situation for them to lose many of the people who have been their support system, in addition to their home.” – Beidler staff

“They gave us some laptops that were literally non-functioning. It was something that should have been thrown in the garbage. We couldn’t even use the CD-ROM drive. That’s how old they were.” – Beidler staff
Testing Madness

Beidler’s computer lab is primarily used for testing and test preparation, further reducing its benefits. The primitive computers often fail during testing as well. When the machines freeze, teachers have to ensure the child has exited the test so the results are not affected, reboot the computer and have the student re-enter the testing program. Teachers even struggled to acquire the resources required for the new computerized tests. After not receiving the headphones needed for the Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measures of Academic Progress exam (NWEA MAP), one teacher had to go to the store the night before the test and buy 31 headphones out of her own pocket just so her students could take the assessment. These types of preventable technological mistakes and resource shortages not only skew results for students, but with teacher evaluation now tied to test scores, can also influence a teacher’s supposed effectiveness.

“We have the hardest time with testing. [The computers] freeze up, and then I have to go in and maneuver to get the kid offline, to remove them from the test, and then try to put them back into the test. ... We’re in a situation where the technology that is supposed to be used in our evaluation is working against us.” – Beidler staff

“I knew that first thing the next morning, I was supposed to be doing that test. I had to go out that evening and buy 31 headphones out of my own pocket.” – Beidler staff

Teachers denounced the overwhelming amount of testing they are forced to integrate into their classroom planning. Administering and preparing for standardized testing occupies so much of the teachers’ time that it is difficult to find room for creative lesson plans, incorporate fine arts into instruction or nurture critical thinking skills. Offering unique units, such as poetry, is nearly impossible, especially in “benchmark grades” (3rd, 6th, and 8th), because of the frequency of testing. Benchmark-grade teachers estimated that they must give their students a CPS-mandated test every five weeks. Because of the increasing high-stakes nature of these tests, the week or two before testing is spent almost entirely on reviewing material on the assessments.

“You do so much testing that you barely have any time for learning. Every time you pull out a sheet of paper, the kids are saying, ‘Is that a test?’” – Beidler staff

“Maybe I want to do more with poetry in my class, but I really can’t because I have to make sure they hit these mandates from the Network. ... A week or two before test time, most of your instruction is review for the test. ... We’re focusing so much on test, test, test [rather than] teaching those creative thinking skills that they can use outside of the test.” – Beidler staff
Insufficient Academic Resources

Similar to Guggenheim, Beidler teachers and staff reported that supplemental resources have declined to unacceptable levels over the past few years. Since the teachers still need many of these materials to implement their lesson plans, staff has to spend increasingly absurd amounts of their own money on supplies for their classrooms. While the Board of Education reimburses teachers up to $250, each teacher interviewed for this report has already surpassed this insufficient amount, with most interviewees purchasing more than half of their supplemental resources out-of-pocket.

"Each year it seems you have to spend more and more. You have to budget yourself as a teacher, but at the same time, you need certain things to help your students." – Beidler staff

Estimated Out-of-Pocket Spending by Beidler Staff in 2012-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/Position</th>
<th>Out-of-Pocket Expenditures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-5 teacher</td>
<td>75-80 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-5 teacher</td>
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<td>K-5 teacher</td>
<td>50 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-5 teacher</td>
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<td>K-5 teacher</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Teachers and PSRPs spend money on a plethora of crucial classroom materials, purchasing even the most basic supplies such as pencils, paper, dry erase markers, staplers, scissors, rulers and calculators, out-of-pocket. To encourage their students to perform to the best of their abilities, many Beidler teachers buy stickers, prizes, awards and other incentives to reward students for exceptional work. Staff purchases decorations for their classrooms, hallways and bulletin boards to enhance the learning environment and develop a sense of camaraderie at the school. Much like the Guggenheim staff, Beidler teachers strive to motivate their students and aspire to make their school a safe and stable second home for the children.

The shortage of printer ink at Beidler demonstrates how small, often-forgotten materials can make teaching much more difficult. Through the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, Beidler had no ink for their copier. Teachers had to take their lesson plans, supplemental reading materials and anything else they wanted to print or copy to a local store. Teachers spent exorbitant sums of money on these copies, especially for social studies lessons. Because Beidler does not have social studies books, teachers must print documents to replace material that a textbook would usually provide. Beidler occasionally receives Scholastic and Time for Kids magazines, but these are hardly enough to teach students the complexities of social science. The lack of textbooks also emphasizes the consequences of not having sufficient technology; because of the inadequate technology, teachers cannot substitute textbook material with creative, interactive lessons that utilize computer-based programs and information. These resources...
deficiencies create unnecessary barriers to teaching, tying the hands of trained educators and restricting their ability to reach their students.31

“\textit{I have to spend a lot on copying and materials. You have to have supplemental resources to do certain things. \dots So, if I know that the materials may not be available when I need to teach them, I have to go out and get some things myself, and it’s very costly. And you only get reimbursed $250 from the Board of Education. 85 percent of supplemental materials I had to purchase myself.}” – Beidler staff

Beidler experiences similar learning material shortages as Guggenheim. Teachers stated that Beidler does not have enough textbooks or learning materials for all its students, forcing students to share the limited resources. Many grade levels did not even have math textbooks for the first two months of the 2012-2013 school year.32 For years, science textbooks were out-of-date, and rather than getting new books, CPS gave Beidler science kits, which contained limited materials for various experiments. When teachers were reviewing practice materials for the ISAT, however, they discovered the kits did not cover all of the sections tested on the science portion of the assessment. Because of the emphasis on test scores, teachers went back to using the old textbooks until new editions were purchased. Despite stressing standardized testing, CPS also did not supply Beidler with enough ISAT reading practice books for all students. One teacher reported that she only received 30 practice books for her two classes, which have a combined 48 students. These practice books did not arrive until late January, less than two months before the ISAT.33

“\textit{[A K-5 teacher] fought to get [science] textbooks, and they told us to use these kits, but these kits were not enough information to teach the full science curriculum for them to pass the ISAT science test. It’s not a full science program. It’s supposed to be an additional resource, not the entire science program, but [CPS] promoted to us as a standalone science program.}” – Beidler staff

The inadequate supply of ISAT practice books is not the only resource shortage hindering Beidler’s push for improved literacy. Lower-grade teachers expressed a need for phonics books. Teachers viewed these materials as vital resources in teaching children to read and to catch students up to grade level. Unstable family situations are common among Beidler students and many children enter the school without parents who read to them—many parents cannot read themselves—or have the time and ability to help them with their homework. These supplemental workbooks help bridge this learning gap. Teachers reported that they have spent hundreds of dollars on sets of workbooks. Teachers also supply short stories, such as Dr. Seuss books, for the students to spark an interest in reading.34 For Beidler to make substantial gains in literacy, CPS needs to provide the school with more classroom resources such as short stories, novels and supplementary workbooks.

While Beidler has a fairly well-resourced library, the school does not have librarian on staff. For the first time in recent memory, Beidler had a part-time librarian for part of the 2011-2012 school year, but that position is currently vacant.35 Recalling the testimony of Guggenheim
librarian Rosie Burns, it is unrealistic to expect a library to function efficiently without a librarian to guide students and maintain its many resources.

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**“We’re pushing literacy, but we don’t have a librarian. We do not have enough reading [text]books for all of our students. We don’t even have enough ISAT practice books. We didn’t get our math books until three weeks after the strike. ... We are literally begging for resources at this point.” – Beidler staff**

---

**“I don’t see the finances being put forth in as far as resources are concerned. I would like to see more books, up-to-date books, [and] more phonics materials at the lower grade level. I would like to see more hands-on things, like a science lab and art. I’d like to see a librarian, more things for our parents, and an emphasis on computer literacy.” – Beidler staff**

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**Striving to Educate and Nurture the Whole Child**

While Beidler does boast a CPS-sponsored Comprehensive Gifted Program, the school does not have the resources to provide a full curriculum for all of its students. Beidler has weekly music and physical education classes for students but no official art program. To help compensate for the lack of an art class, Beidler sometimes recruits volunteer art teachers, but the school would certainly benefit from a regular art instructor. Research has found that arts education correlates with high class attendance, low dropout rates and improved student motivation and aspiration. Fine arts programs can also enhance students’ self-awareness and self-confidence, stimulate the acceptance of others, develop interpersonal skills, promote teamwork, increase creativity and improve abstract reasoning skills. The value of Beidler’s weekly music class in developing these skills and qualities should not be dismissed, but an art class during the regular school day, along with theater and drama, would allow students to benefit even more from their education.

Beidler teachers and staff offered a sharp critique of the school’s wraparound services, describing them as “limited” and “horrible.” A social worker visits Beidler twice a week while a psychologist and nurse see students once a week. The instability in the home lives of many Beidler students, as well as the school’s high mobility rates, warrants more visits from social workers and psychologists. With the rising costs of health care preventing families from regular doctor visits, a once-a-week nurse is hardly sufficient. Appointments with these Essential Support Personnel (ESPs) often must be scheduled in advance because of their excessive case loads. Because of limited access to these support services, the teachers and staff “become doctors, nurses, mothers, and psychologists.” The Beidler staff work to gain their students’ trust and attempt to guide students through difficult times and “keep them a whole person.”

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**“There’s so much violence and chaos in our students’ lives that is has almost become the norm, but it still gets to them. We really become doctors, nurses, mothers and psychologists. [When evaluating schools] CPS isn’t thinking about the things that keep a student a whole person.” – Beidler staff**
Adapting to CPS-created Deficiencies and Building a Stable School Climate

Beidler attempts to teach the whole child through mentoring programs: Girls for Destiny, Boys to Men, and partnerships with the Chicago Police Department. These programs, coordinated by members of the Beidler staff, focus on character education, grooming the whole child and preparing students for adulthood. In these programs, students and staff discuss drugs, relationships and other vital elements of a complete education that are neglected in the standard CPS curriculum. Beidler also organizes Proud Men Read Aloud, a program that recruits professionals from the community—lawyers, doctors and ministers, for example—to visit Beidler and connect with male students. The professionals are free to do whatever they feel is most productive for the children; some read with the students, but others have group discussions about non-academic topics, much like in the Boys to Men program.39

The school has also organized partnerships with the Greater Chicago Food Depository, Mobile C.A.R.E. Foundation and the Norwegian American Hospital to address health concerns in the community. The Greater Chicago Food Depository provides nutritious snacks for students and hosts workshops to educate families on healthy-eating habits. The Mobile C.A.R.E. Foundation provides free asthma treatment through its Asthma C.A.R.E. Van that visits Beidler once a week. The Norwegian American Hospital also sends representatives to Beidler once a week to administer free vaccines for children.40 Despite the meager wraparound services provided by CPS, Beidler’s teachers and administration have been proactive, finding other ways to accommodate their students.

These programs are not the only rays of hope for the Beidler community. The campus park gives Beidler a truly unique resource that can be used for a multitude of events and programs. Students enjoy the playgrounds during recess and the school utilizes the green space for field days, graduation and athletic training. Teachers use the park’s open spaces and greenery to enhance their science lessons. Staff suggests that having a resource rarely seen on the West Side also provides Beidler students with a sense of pride and self-worth. After years of advocacy, CPS finally made a noticeable investment in Beidler; the students feel valued, and they can now profit from the academic and personal benefits of a modern and safe park.

“[The campus park] gives the children freedom. There’s no place like this park on the West Side. It gives them a sense of value.” – Beidler staff

“The kids have an actual playground to play in. They rarely experience that; most areas on the West Side don’t have parks where the kids can go to play. .. We can use it with our teaching as well. We were learning about solar energy, and we had a safe area outside to do instruction. When we had field days, [the students] had a guarded area for activities where they don’t have to worry about glass or other things on the ground.” – Beidler staff

Beidler is also making strides in the Involved Families Essential Support. To educate and engage the community, Beidler delegated a room for parent education. In this “parent room,” members of the community can access the internet to conduct research, complete GED or college
homework, or search for jobs. Parents can also use a fax machine and printer in the room. The school occasionally hosts educational workshops in the room as well. Like the rest of the school, the parent room suffers from outdated, inconsistent technology, but teachers still view it as an important asset. Beidler’s parent room is a perfect example of a school using an empty classroom for the benefit of the community. CPS may claim that this room is not being utilized but having this extra space has clearly been useful at Beidler.

To increase parental involvement, Beidler holds many of the same events requested by Guggenheim teachers in their 2010-2012 SIPAAA. Beidler hosts family activity nights 2-3 times a month, as well as literacy nights, math nights and movie nights. The school prepares newsletters for parents, and Principal Charles Anderson calls parents with a recorded message that informs them of upcoming school events. These strategies have helped increase the number of parent volunteers; Beidler usually has 10 to 15 volunteers at the school each day, more than double what Guggenheim had when in closed in 2012. Parent involvement in the LSC is still a struggle, but staff hopes that increased community engagement at the school will eventually trickle over to LSC meetings.

Principal Anderson, who replaced the well-respected Shirley Ewing when she retired after the 2010-2011 school year, represents perhaps the biggest difference between Beidler and Guggenheim. Similar to Guggenheim, the administrative change happened during a time of uncertainty after fighting off a proposed closure. Unlike Guggenheim, however, Beidler was not on probation, allowing the LSC to select the school’s new principal. Since Anderson was interviewed and thoroughly evaluated by the LSC before being hired, the Beidler community did not feel as if CPS was forcing a new administration on them, contrary to CPS’s unchecked selection of Principal Stokes at Guggenheim.

To have Effective Leaders, one of the 5Essentials, principals must collaborate with teachers and staff, working together to create a coherent, strategic vision for student success. While Guggenheim teachers did not believe that the administration respected their ideas, most Beidler teachers expressed genuine appreciation for Anderson, reporting that he listens to the staff and advocates for support they need. Teachers stated that Anderson will always consider a thorough proposal for a new program or idea for school improvement. The teachers, LSC, and administration all seem to operate as a team at Beidler, unlike the contentious relationship that the administration created at Guggenheim. Despite Beidler’s “weak” rating for Effective Leaders in 2012, teachers’ testimony indicates that the mutual trust and respect between teachers and the administration is improving. At Guggenheim, however, it only seemed to get worse over time.

Like Principal Ewing before him, Principal Anderson has prioritized the Collaborative Teachers Essential Support. To encourage collaboration among the teachers and to increase staff morale, Anderson lets staff lead professional development sessions and plans team-building activities. Teachers reported that Anderson also encourages them to create action plans with their colleagues and attempts to implement the aspects of these plans into the school, important aspects of both Effective Leaders and Collaborative Teachers.

“Even though Mr. Anderson’s only been here two years, he really values our input. Most times, nine times out of ten, if we give him an idea, he’ll ask what we need from him [to implement it]. He’s very supportive and ... [has] an open-door policy. He lets us lead professional development, come up with ideas for different programs and come up with action plans for the school climate and the neighborhood.” – Beidler staff
Beidler teachers and staff, much like at Guggenheim, understand that, without many safe places in the neighborhood, the school must be a nurturing place for students. Focusing on the Supportive Environment and Involved Families Essential Supports, the teachers work tirelessly to form relationships with their students and their families, ensuring that there is a sincere level of mutual trust and respect between all parties involved in each child’s education. Since multiple generations have attended Beidler, the school has truly become an institution in East Garfield Park—an institution that provides some necessary stability in an unstable community.

“**It’s really incredible the way the staff cares for the students. It’s really moving.**” – 2012 addition to the Beidler staff

**The Power of Collaboration and a Holistic Approach**

CPS has not made it easy for Beidler. The school’s technology is archaic. Textbooks are scarce, incomplete and out-of-date. Staff must purchase most of their supplemental materials. Testing occupied much of teachers’ instructional time. CPS has created a culture of fear, with students and staff constantly bracing for the wrath of school actions and distracting the school community from its goal: educating students academically and cultivating their socio-emotional development. Through concentrating their limited resources on a holistic education that emphasizes teacher and family input, however, the Beidler community has organized the school for improvement.

Why did Beidler bounce back from the first closing attempt while Guggenheim struggled? The most obvious difference is the school leadership. At Beidler, a well-respected principal was replaced with an LSC-selected administrator that, for the most part, treats teachers, staff and parents as partners for school improvement. Guggenheim’s LSC, however, had no role in the selection of a new principal, and, as the teachers’ testimony makes blatantly clear, the staff and new administration did not share mutual trust or respect, key aspects of the Effective Leaders support. The inexperience of the Guggenheim administration showed, as it failed to collaborate with teachers and parents to create a coherent and consistent plan for improvement.

Both institutions had Collaborative Teachers that were committed to their schools, but unlike Guggenheim’s staff, most Beidler teachers believe that they are partners for school improvement. Beidler and Guggenheim struggled to get the resources needed for Ambitious Instruction, but Beidler received a “strong” evaluation for this Essential Support in 2012. At both schools, excessive testing also limited teachers’ creativity and lesson plans from stimulating critical thinking. Since the Guggenheim staff had to spend much of their time on classroom discipline, it was difficult to focus on the qualities of Ambitious Instruction.

Earning a rating 18 points above the CPS average on 2012 My Voice, My School Survey, Beidler excels at making the school a Supportive Environment, offering newly-created mentoring programs and housing a campus park that gives students a safe place to learn, play and practice for sporting events. According to CPS Position Files, Beidler has four full-time special education teachers, as well as two classroom assistants. Guggenheim only had two full-time special education teachers for the 2011-2012 school year, one of whom became assistant principal in December 2011, leaving only one full-time instructor. Multiple Guggenheim teachers also claimed that the special education case manager would often delay or even refuse to evaluate students recommended by parents and teachers for servicing. This caused struggling students to
fall even further behind. At schools with a strong *Supportive Environment*, these students are identified and given proper interventions, ensuring that they receive the proper resources and attention to obtain a high-quality education.

Beidler is making strides in *Involved Families*. The school has 10 to 15 parent volunteers at the school each day and hosts family activity nights, literacy nights, math nights and movie nights. Beidler parents receive newsletters and regular recorded phone calls from Principal Anderson to inform them of upcoming school events. The school’s parent room provides the community an opportunity to use the internet, especially for job searches and research for parents taking GED or college classes.

Some teachers still expressed frustration over parents not taking an active role in their child’s education. Homework and documents sent home often are not returned and parental involvement in the LSC is minimal. Beidler still needs to make some improvements to strengthen the *Involved Families* support, but it does seem that the teachers and administration have developed a reasonable plan to increase community engagement. Guggenheim, however, appeared to be going in the wrong direction. Guggenheim parents, especially those who advocated against the closing, had an exceptionally difficult time securing a meeting with the principal. The school’s homeless liaison faced restrictions from the administration on when she could hold meetings for homeless parents. Guggenheim parents were not partners for school improvement.

Schools that serve economically distressed communities and educate a significant number of homeless children must be fully resourced and supported. These schools need modern technology, diverse supplemental materials, high-quality textbooks, complete wraparound services, after-school programming and a full curriculum. CPS doomed Guggenheim by providing the school with inadequate resources and poor supports, especially considering its high mobility rate. Beidler has avoided the CPS guillotine thus far, but because it has been deprived of resources for many years, the school must face the uncertainty of possible closure every school year. Administrators and the district thwarted staff efforts to strengthen the *5 Essential Supports* at Guggenheim, but (no thanks to CPS), Beidler staff was able to strengthen them, focusing on collaboration and creating a productive learning climate. The solution for students in schools like Guggenheim and Beidler is to support them with a holistic, well-funded education. Rather than spending $76 million for “New [Charter] School Development” and diverting millions of tax dollars into TIFs that benefit rich businessmen, this money should be used to resource and support our schools. Closing schools is not the solution; it is a cut-and-run approach that destabilizes neighborhoods and fails to address the real problem of education inequity in Chicago.
References

2 CPS Data on Students in Temporary Living Situations.
4 There are 11 non-charter CPS elementary schools in East Garfield Park: Beidler, Bethune, Calhoun, Cather, Dodge, Ericson Magnet, Faraday, Garfield Park, Gregory, Jensen Magnet, and Kellman.
5 2013 CPS Racial/Ethnic Survey.
8 For Beidler’s full 5Essentials report, see: https://cps.5-essentials.org/2012/s/609797/.
9 The criteria for the Academic Improvement Award has changed slightly from year to year, but schools winning the award have to show significant improvement on the ISAT.; ISBE Academic Improvement Award. Accessed at http://www.ilhonorroll.niu.edu/scripts/school_info.asp?schoolID=150162990252080&awtype=I&year=2011.
11 For Beidler’s full 5Essentials report, see: https://cps.5-essentials.org/2012/s/609797/.
13 For more information on the 5Essentials, see: http://uchicagoimpact.org/5essentials/
16 This was the second time that Cather was forced to share its building with a charter school. ACT Charter School was also located at Cather for the 2007-2008 school year.
19 Rossi, R., 2011.
22 Demonstrating the sporadic nature of so-called "underutilization," CPS claimed that Beidler had a capacity of 1,005 students in 2011 but revised the number to 750 in 2013, a 24 percent drop.
25 Beidler 2010-2012 SIPAAA.
26 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
27 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
28 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
29 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
30 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
31 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
32 CPS blamed the teachers’ strike for the delay in ordering math textbooks, but teachers claim that the books were ordered before the beginning of the year for Track E schools.
33 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
34 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
35 2011 & 2012 CPS Position Files; Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.

37 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
38 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
39 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
40 Beidler 2010-2012 SIPAAA; Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
41 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
42 Beidler staff. Interview by Kevin Russell.
Conclusion: Lessons to Learn and Policies to Eliminate

CPS has dangerously under-resourced schools in poor, African-American communities. Unlike many North Side schools with wealthy families who can pressure politicians and provide schools with money for additional supplies, schools in poor neighborhoods rely on CPS to provide them with the necessary resources to educate the whole child. Rather than stepping up to help struggling schools, CPS has decided to give up, shuttering the schools and removing yet another resource from already-disadvantaged communities. CPS must stop this destructive policy and start supplying schools with the resources that teachers need to educate their students. It is not schools that are failing students; it is CPS’s failure to invest in schools—schools like Beidler and Guggenheim—that truly harms our children.

CPS should have learned an important lesson at Guggenheim. During the disastrous transition, students were told once again that their school was failing and that they would have to find a new second home. The students became increasingly agitated and demoralized, leading to fights and violence as the school year wound down. CPS thought that it only needed to devote two paragraphs of its 10-page transition plan to Guggenheim’s large homeless population. Out-of-touch Central Office bureaucrats thought two open houses would integrate homeless students into their new school. Guggenheim’s principal promptly devised a plan to transfer the school’s homeless students to another school, even before holding community hearings on the closing. When CPS Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) case managers were making progress arranging necessary transitional supports for the school’s homeless population, CPS erased all its gains by replacing most of the STLS staff over the summer, firing the people who had personal connections with Guggenheim’s homeless students. Because of this “restructuring,” CPS lost contact with more than half of these families. It took CPS until February 2013, six months after the start of the new school year, to even find out where former Guggenheim students were now enrolled. (And CPS only did this investigation after being pressured by the Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force.) Only 37 percent of Guggenheim’s non-graduating student body actually went to the designated receiving school, Bond Elementary. Nineteen percent dropped out, left the district or have not been accounted for by CPS.

CPS now proposes to close an astonishing 54 schools in 2013, the most at one time in American history. The Chicago Board of Education will not vote on these school actions until at least late May; CPS expects parents to go into the last month of school without even knowing where they will send their children next August. Despite the resounding failures at Guggenheim in 2012, CPS believes that it can responsibly close 54 schools and prepare students for the transition with only one month left in the school year. Last year, CPS had four months to execute the closure of four schools but still had serious problems handling the transition of the affected students. CPS now wants to close 50 more schools in a fourth of the time. There is simply no precedent—and mountains of evidence to the contrary—proving that CPS can do what CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett has requested. The volume of school actions proposed by Byrd-Bennett is reckless and irresponsible. If CPS could not handle the 467 students in schools closed in 2012, then how can it possibly guarantee a smooth transition for 16,000 students in the schools proposed to be closed in 2013?

And even if CPS could handle the mass closings, shuttering neighborhood schools is still a faulty policy. Closing schools creates chaos for inner-city children already struggling to attain stability in their lives. Children switching schools are forced to make new friends, find new adult mentors, learn a new curriculum and adapt to a new school culture. Research shows that all of
this change has a profound and negative impact on students. Children moving schools lose up to a year of academic time. Closing schools takes an important resource away from a community, accelerating disinvestment in already downtrodden neighborhoods. By closing neighborhood schools, CPS gives families less of a reason to remain in the community, which, in turn, gives businesses and government less incentive to invest time and resources. CPS is establishing a vicious cycle of disinvestment and population flight that severely hinders African-American communities. The district must recognize the permanent damage it is inflicting and eliminate these destructive policies.
Appendices

Appendix A: Guggenheim mobility rates trumped both the network and district averages

From 2000 to 2012, Guggenheim had a higher mobility rate than the district average each year and a higher rate than the schools in the current Englewood-Gresham Elementary Network in all but two years. In 2012, Guggenheim’s mobility rate was three times higher than the district average, yet no extra resources were provided to Guggenheim to ameliorate the impact of this high mobility. (Source: CPS Mobility Rates)

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>53.9%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>28.4%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
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Appendix B: Guggenheim’s ISAT performance was on par with other schools in Area 14

Opponents of the 2010 closure argued that in 2008 and 2009, Guggenheim ranked fifth in Area 14 (a predecessor to the Englewood-Gresham Elementary Network) in the percentage of students who met or exceeded state standards on the ISAT. Guggenheim ranked eighth in ISAT composite and seventh in ISAT science in 2008. Guggenheim’s lowest subject in 2008 was math, where the school ranked 15th in the network, but this score was still within 1 percent of the Area’s median score. While scores dipped slightly in 2009, Guggenheim was still no worse than 15th—this time in science—and the school was still within 2 percent of the Area’s median. The analysis excludes magnet schools and regional gifted centers. (Source: CPS School Data)

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guggenheim</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>(24 total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISAT Composite Meets/Exceeds</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISAT Reading Meets/Exceeds</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
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<td>ISAT Math Meets/Exceeds</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISAT Science Meets/Exceeds</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
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Appendix C: Guggenheim’s 2010 Action Plan

Guggenheim’s Action Plan

I. What’s Working
   A. Before/After School Tutoring
   B. Weekly Attendance Incentives
      1. Individual Classrooms
      2. School-wide
   C. Block Reading/Math Schedules
   D. Bi-Monthly Assessments (Scantron-Driven Grades 2-8)
   E. Vertical Planning Time
   F. School Base Problem Solving to Identify Students for F.I.E.
   G. Balanced Literacy & Guided Reading
   H. Scholastic Reading Counts & RAZ Kids to Increase Volume of Reading
   I. Community Partnerships
      1. Interfaith Temple
      2. South-side Tabernacle Church
      3. Gang Prevention Unit
      4. Chicago State University
      5. University of Illinois
      6. By-the-Hand
      7. Chicago Police Department
      8. River North Dance
   J. Parent Volunteers
   K. Quarterly Incentives for Students without Disciplinary Infractions
   L. Phone/Conference Logs
   M. Small Classroom Sizes

II. A Work in Progress...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas Needing Improvement</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. CSMI</td>
<td>1. PD Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sport’s Programs</td>
<td>2. Re-establishing Sport’s Programs &amp; Recruit Neighborhood Coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Involving ALL Stakeholders in Educational Process</td>
<td>6. Allow Lunchroom Staff, Parent Volunteers, Counselor, Crossing Guards, Custodians, Clerks, etc. to volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lead Literacy Teacher</td>
<td>7. Hire Reading Teacher to Structure &amp; Execute Plan for Struggling Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Suspension Alternatives</td>
<td>9. In-School Suspension or After-School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Remove Current Principal &amp; Identify a New Principal</td>
<td>10. LSC has documentation that was submitted to Area 14’s AIO’s (Torres &amp; Willis)—Several Staff Members with Type 75—Select Acting Principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Future Plans
   A. Attendance Monitor
   B. Drama Club
   C. Reading Night
   D. Math/Science Night
   E. Community Talent Show
   F. Monthly Planning Meeting: 1 Saturday per Month
   G. B-B-Q Meet & Greet for Parents & Community Network
   H. Math Resource Teacher
   I. Reading Resource Teacher
   J. Hire New Principal
   K. Writing Fair
   L. Parent/Student Homework Center
   M. Re-establish Male & Female Mentoring Programs
Guggenheim Action Plan

Overview: This Action Plan is being designed to implement School Based Management (SBM) where all stakeholders actively take part in the decision making process at Guggenheim School. Our School personnel has taken the necessary steps to learn the local and state criteria, we are prepared to work with the Area to meet the required criteria's.

Parent:

Increase Parent involvement:
1. Increase the utilization of parent volunteers
2. Monthly school wide news letter
3. Increase the number of grade report card to three (3).
4. Train parents on how to use IMPACT system

Testing:
1. Implement school wide mandatory test prep for all students in grades 1 thru 8.
2. Continue BAS and STEP
3. Continue Scan-tron as a tool for vertical (bimonthly) assessment for grades 3-8.
4. Begin test prep program in September

Bulletin Board Feature

Use a specific bulletin board to highlight individual students, their families, and cultural heritage on a one or two week rotating basis. Encourage the parents to help the student plan the board.

Send each family a note about it with suggestions (that they aren't limited to) and a sign up schedule. Be prepared with plans to assist students that have parents who don't get involved.

Attendance:

1. Continue to increase student attendance (through school wide initiative. How:
   a. student recognition weekly (perfect attendance), monthly (95% or higher), perfect and quarterly.
   b. recognize staff members with 95% or higher
   c. visit homes of all families/students with low attendance
   d. document and file 5 and 10 day notices of all chronically absent students (area)

Area Highlights:

1. Continue to implement all area 14 initiatives.
2. Work closely with Area 14 team member

School:

1. Develop fundraising and Grant writing teams,
2. Develop and fully implement a leadership team that consist of members from the following stakeholders: Upper and Primary teachers, security, career service, lunchroom, special education, community, and student to assist with keeping school informed about the daily operations of the school.
3. Reestablish our athletic program,
4. Partnership with former Guggenheim staff, community leaders, universities, and businesses,
5. Reinforce our uninterrupted Reading and Math Blocks,
6. Allow for area coaches to work with teachers to implement area initiatives,
7. Implement Book Club,
8. Involve all staff members in academic mentoring,
9. First day of school activities for students, parents, and teachers
10. Increase our technology usage.

Teacher Accountability:

1. All staff involved in the hiring process of new teachers by creating a committee
2. Increase parent contact report
Appendix D: Guggenheim was consistently overcrowded

For each year until 2008, Guggenheim enrolled more students than its CPS-determined capacity. Guggenheim’s enrollment never dipped below 80 percent, CPS’s current benchmark for “underutilized” schools. CPS considers 100 percent to be “ideal.” 80 to 120 percent is “efficient,” and 121 percent and above is “overcrowded.” CPS’s utilization uses a class size of 30. (Source: 20th Day Enrollment Figures)

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Capacity (CPS ideal capacity=300)</td>
<td>143%</td>
<td>154%</td>
<td>144%</td>
<td>134%</td>
<td>138%</td>
<td>128%</td>
<td>129%</td>
<td>110%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>97%</td>
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Appendix E: Even on CPS-supported metrics, Bond was not a significantly better school than Guggenheim

Bond has been on probation each year since 2007 and had similar ISAT scores to Guggenheim. After dips in 2012 ISAT scores, Bond dropped from a Level 2 school to a Level 3. The 2011 ISAT period was Principal Stokes and Assistant Principal Hubbird’s first year and also when three teaching positions were left unfilled for months. This greatly affected ISAT scores at Guggenheim. (Source: CPS Performance Policy Results and Probation Status)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISAT Composite Meets/Exceeds: Guggenheim and Bond</th>
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<tr>
<td>Guggenheim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guggenheim</td>
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<td>Bond</td>
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Appendix F: Email from CPS STLS Coordinator to Principal Robert Hubbird

After complaints that Hubbird was not honoring the legal rights of homeless students, CPS STLS coordinator emailed this information to Principal Robert Hubbird.

Hello, Mr. Hubbird,

Please be advised that all STLS enrolled in the program is entitled to receive through Title I Funds Set-Aside for Students Experiencing Homelessness:

- Enrollment in the free lunch program
- Provision of a school uniform and school supplies
- Tutoring
- Waiver of all school fee
- Medical, dental, vision, and mental health services

Please refer to Memorandum on page 103 of the 2011-2012 STLS Training Manual.

Chicago Public Schools
Students in Temporary Living Situations
Coordinator
Appendix G: Attempted transfer of Guggenheim’s homeless students

Appendix G includes an email to the CPS Students in Temporary Living Situations program regarding correspondence with parents claiming they were asked to provide proof of address. The homeless parents also said that they were told they must transfer to a different school. This Appendix also includes written testimony from parents who received phone calls from Principal Robert Hubbard and office staff informing the families that they should transfer their students from Guggenheim. These are not the only letters from parents; Guggenheim staff provided CTU with approximately 10 testimonials. Names and contact information have been removed.

From:  
Subject:  STLS @ Guggenheim  
To:  
Cc:  

Happy Holidays!

I apologize for bothering you during this should be restful time, however, I have had a parent who is in STLS telling me that she received a call from the school and was told to transfer her children from Guggenheim ASAP! We are proposed to close, however, I also receive information from another STLS parent. She was called on December 20th, 2011 and told that she needed to have proof of her address. She has also been asked to transfer her children. I informed her that I would talk with you and see what's the deal? I was asked to "encourage" parents STLS and out of the district parents to transfer their children before January 9, 2012. I never heard of this. Now this is through word of mouth from someone else that all STLS parents must provide proof of their addresses. I never question any one about the address they provided to me. I never question the paper work, I just do my best to take care of whatever I need to make this work for our STLS parents. This was new to me last year but with your help I know what I am doing. Do these parents need to provide proof and should any parent be asked to transfer just because. Much more to tell you, but please call me and let me know what to say to these parents.

Sharing with you and you only!

Thanks,
I received a call from Guggenheim staff stated that they were dropping off my kids transfers at my home over the Christmas break due to closing of Guggenheim also stated it was in my best interest to transfer my kids due to the lack of teaching cause of school closing if you should have any question please feel to contact me @

Thank you

Mr. Hubbard called me up and told me it's best if I transfer my son to a school that's near us. He came to my home & dropped off the transfer over Christmas break I didn't agree to it.

Contract #

January 17, 2012

References

1 Excludes Guggenheim.
2 Excludes Magnet Schools and Regional Gifted Centers.
3 Excludes Magnet Schools and Regional Gifted Centers.