

What can WE DO about it?

- Support community-based school transformation so those most affected and knowledgeable-parents, community members, students and teachers- are part of decision-making process.
- Support and Demand an Elected School Board. The board of education should be a representative board, not appointed by the Mayor. (See www.Codechicago.org)
- Call Mayor's office and demand him to return the TIF money to our schools.
- Organize in the community and be informed about any changes occurring.
- Let's educate one another about the reality and the effect schools closing have on our children and community.
- Call governor Quinn and tell him to not bite on UNO's fake shake up: 312-814-2121 or 217-782-0244



Walk into your neighborhood public school... what should you see?

Students are engaged in meaningful learning using well-stocked libraries and technology. Parents work with administrators and teachers to guide the school. Courses are diverse, challenging, and culturally relevant. Teachers collaborate to encourage critical thinking and creativity. Classes are small and teachers are able to give each student individual attention. Social workers, nurses, psychologists and learning specialists help students reach their potential.

Chicago has great neighborhood public schools, but CPS policies shortchange many of our children, particularly African Americans and Latinos in schools that CPS has starved of resources and rich curriculum. Teachers and principals struggle with CPS's mania for more and more standardized testing, over-sized classes, lack of materials/books. Instead of supporting neighborhood schools, CPS closes them.

We need to defend public education AND transform public schools. CPS must provide all schools with equitable resources and support a school-community process of positive change that builds on shared knowledge, wisdom, and mutual respect of teachers, parents, students, and community members.

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WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

- Go to a school closing hearing or an LSC meeting in your neighborhood, talk to your Alderperson, contact your legislators, write a letter to the editor... and SPEAK OUT!
- Support community-based school transformation so those most affected and knowledgeable—parents, community members, students and teachers—are part of the decision-making process.
- Support the campaign for an Elected Representative School Board. The Board of Education should be a representative board, not appointed by the Mayor. (See www.codechicago.org)
- Chicagoans have protested CPS policies including school closings for years, and yet CPS carries out their plans without pause. We demand a moratorium on school closings until we know our voices are part of the school transformation process! **Join the growing protest movement!**

For more information please visit:

Teachers for Social Justice (TSJ)

<http://www.teachersforjustice.org>

teachersforjustice@hotmail.com

THE RACISM OF CPS POLICIES

School Closings & “Turn-Arounds” Are Aimed at Low-Income Black and Latina/o Students

- Since 2001, 103 of the 105 school actions have been in schools overwhelmingly serving low-income Black and Latina/o students, with the 49 more school closings for 2013-2014, this trend continues.
- While 42% of CPS students are Black, 88% of those affected by school actions are Black, almost all from low-income families.
- Most closed schools were in gentrifying communities and former public housing areas, displacing low-income Black and Latino communities.

School Closings & “Turn-Arounds” Do Not Benefit Students

- A 2009 University of Chicago study of 44 closed elementary schools found that only 6% of displaced students went to what CPS calls “high-performing schools.”
- 80% of the displaced students transferred to “under-performing ones.”

The CPS Probation Policy Was Supposed to Improve Schools – It Did the Opposite!

- The number of schools on probation soared from 109 in 1997 to 248 today.
- Almost two thirds of today’s probation schools are over 90% Black.
- Is the probation policy a way to label schools in order to get rid of them?

Getting Rid of Black Teachers

- From 2000 to today, the percent of Black CPS teachers dropped from 41% to 30%, with the additional 50 Schools to be closed this will drop even lower.
- Veteran Black teachers knew community/students’ families—and had taught them.
- They were replaced by younger, whiter, less experienced, less credentialed teachers who don’t stay long—their turnover rate is much higher, especially in charters, where many end up.

Spiked Violence in Black & Latino Communities After School Actions

- Similar stories across district—spiked violence in the receiving schools:
 - CPS closed Austin HS, students went to Clemente & Wells

- Since No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the testing industry has boomed. In 2009, K-12 testing companies in the U.S. made \$2.7 billion.

What’s the Alternative?

- Assessment IS important to let students know how well they are learning, inform teaching, and let the public know how schools are doing.
- BUT...Real assessment uses multiple sources of information on student learning (student projects, student work over time, writing and presentations, meaningful tests) keyed to a rich curriculum. This is how Mayor Emanuel’s children are assessed.



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rigorous, engaging education all children deserve.

- Mayor Emanuel’s children attend a school whose director stated, “Measuring outcomes through standardized testing and referring to those results as the evidence of learning and the bottom line is, in my opinion, misguided and, unfortunately, continues to be advocated.”
- *Students are learning in bubbles, but can they really think? Are they learning to be leaders and informed participants in society?*
- Schools should be places of joy and discovery—not places where the tyranny of high-stake tests creates a fear-based culture in our schools, especially in Black and Latino communities.

Who’s Behind All the Testing?

- Politicians, conservative think-tanks, and corporate philanthropies who want to privatize education and break teacher unions have pushed more and more standardized testing to sort and measure students and teachers. They are using these tests as an excuse to close public schools.

- CPS closed Englewood HS, students went to Hirsch, Dyett, Hyde Park, & Robeson
- CPS closed Price Elementary, students went to NTA
- And many others!

Charter Proliferation

- Overwhelmingly located in low-income Black and Latino communities.
- Charters strip neighborhoods of public schools and create *public education deserts*.

CPS polices and the tragic death of Derrion Albert

In 2000, CPS began privatizing Carver Area HS, making it *selective enrollment*, and turned it into the first military HS in the nation. Carver is in Riverdale, a low-income Black community including the huge Altgeld Gardens public housing development. By 2003, all Carver students were “cadets,” and CPS made Fenger HS the new “neighborhood” high school for Riverdale youth, 5 miles and 2 bus rides away in Roseland—across gang lines. Then, in summer 2009, CPS turned around Fenger and rehired only 10 of its teachers. Three weeks into the 2009 school year, after almost daily fights, a large after-school brawl broke out between Riverdale and Roseland students, and Derrion Albert was tragically killed. Gone were the experienced Black teachers who *might* have been able to defuse tensions and save his life.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: HOW CPS CREATED THE CRISIS

Teachers originally created charter schools to experiment with new educational practices, which could then be implemented in other public schools. They were never meant as a permanent substitute for public schools or a way to turn our public schools into a competitive market. Charter schools came to Chicago over a decade ago and their original purpose was quickly warped. Today, charter schools are being used to privatize public education. They give taxpayer dollars to private and often unaccountable hands. They pit parent against parent and school against school as if that will somehow improve our public schools.

What Does This Have to do with School Closings?

- Since 2001, CPS closed or “turned around” over 100 public schools, but opened as many charters.
- Many schools under threat for closure today are labeled “underutilized.” But CPS is closing neighborhood schools while opening charter schools in the same areas, draining students from the neighborhood public schools and contributing to the “underutilization.”

TESTING: TOO MUCH OF A BAD THING

HIGH-STAKES STANDARDIZED TESTING IS AN UNFAIR ASSESSMENT TOOL TO DETERMINE STUDENT LEARNING AND TO CLOSE SCHOOLS OR TURN THEM AROUND.

Testing as a Weapon For School Closings

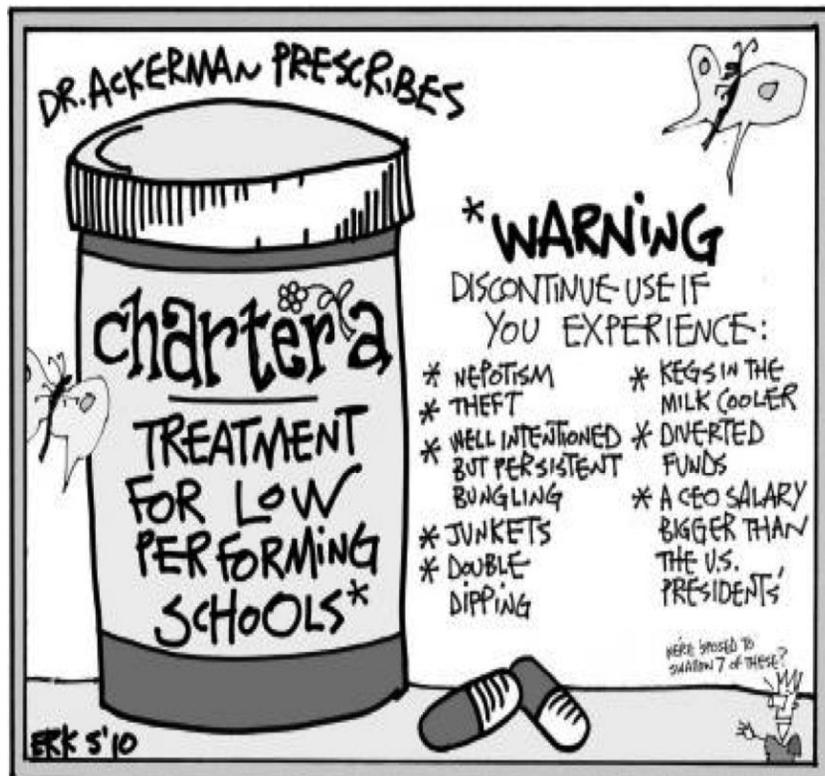
- Testing is a weapon used especially against Black and Latina/o students.
- Standardized test scores are used to close and turnaround schools. As a result, teachers, schools and communities live in fear of not making test score benchmarks.

Testing Damages Education

- High-stakes standardized tests are inaccurate, hurtful, and inequitable. All these tests crowd out real learning. We can’t measure children’s potential through standardized measures.
- Teachers are forced to narrow down the curriculum, skim the surface of the subjects, and “Teach to the Test.” This is dumbed-down, “one-right-answer” schooling—not the

- any school. Juan Rangel's salary is higher than the mayor's.

In an effort to get more public funds and sustain their operations, UNO projects its student enrollment to increase 5,425 to 9,248 in the next 2 years. Otherwise, **UNO will face possible bank repossession and bankruptcy. WHY IS UNO RECEIVING \$35 MILLION FOR 13 SCHOOLS WHEN KEEPING 70 PUBLIC SCHOOLS OPEN WILL COST THE SAME AMOUNT.**



- CPS claims they lost 145,000 students over the past ten years. In reality, CPS lost 28,289 students since 2000 while opening 120 NEW schools, many of them charters, with 55,000 new “seats.”

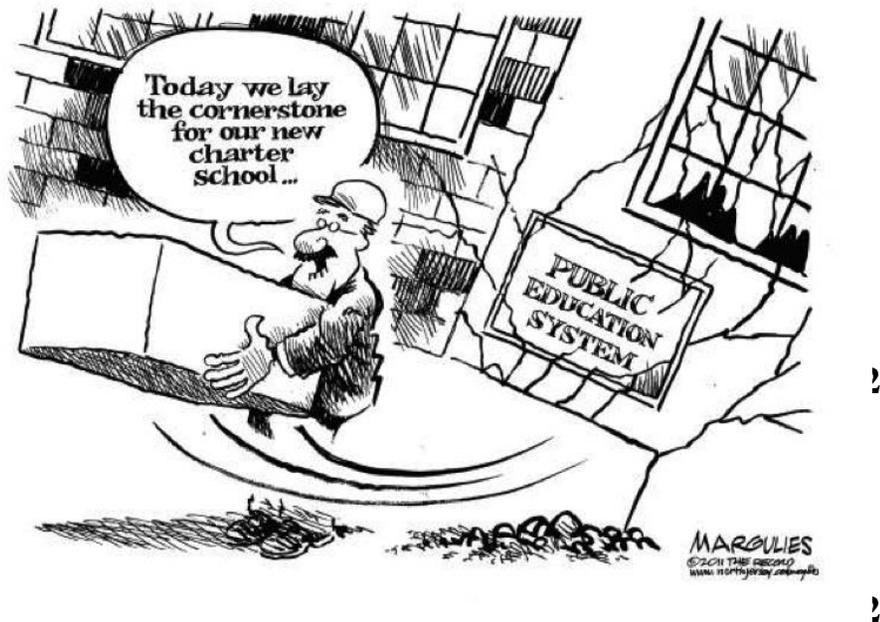
Why is This a Bad Thing?

- Charters are generally not “higher-performing” schools, and many actually “perform” worse than the neighborhood schools they replace.
- School closings destabilize communities already ravaged by years of divestment, racism and gang violence. School closings do not take place in middle class white communities.
- Charter schools do not have Local School Councils (LSCs). Parents and community members have no say in how the school is run.
- Most charter schools employ less-experienced teachers at lower pay and benefits. Teachers in Chicago charters average 7.2 fewer years of experience, are less likely to hold a Masters degree, earn an average of 15% less, and work longer days with less time for preparation than teachers in traditional public schools. Is this who we want teaching our children?
- Most charter schools are non-unionized. Teachers without due process or collective

bargaining rights cannot safely speak out for what is best for students.

- Charter schools serve far fewer special education and ELL/ESL learners.
- Many charters employ “no excuses” discipline policies which push-out students with behavioral challenges and special needs who are then “dumped” back into neighborhood schools.
- CPS has essentially created a tiered and segregated system instead of quality schools for ALL.

AN EQUITABLE, HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION IS A HUMAN RIGHT!



bonds, the state has put our

children’s education in the hands of these millionaires.

- UNO is asking for another \$35 million in state grants/bonds, even though there is an ongoing investigation for misuse of funds.

UNO’s Misuse of Taxpayer Funds

- UNO is almost \$70 million in debt and they have a \$1.7 million operating deficit—the biggest of any charter school.
- UNO spends the smallest amount of their budget for instruction and support services than any school system in Chicago (public and charter).
- A recent investigation found nepotism and corruption in UNO’s multi-million contracts with friends and family friends.
- UNO’s “corporate management fee” for the parent organization is 10 percent of the revenue of UNO charter school network, one of the highest fees for

Uno Investigation

- The new chair of the board, Martin Cabrera Jr., is the underwriter/investor who helped to sell the \$35 million in state bonds for UNO, and he replaced Rangel in the Public Building commissions even though Rangel himself recognized there was a conflict of interest to be in his commission.
- After recognizing that there was corruption and fraud in the UNO administration, they were still given the millions of dollars to finish building their schools.

JUAN & RAHM'S CHARTER SCHOOL DRAMA

United Neighborhood Organization (UNO) Charter School Network is a key example to show how the spread of charters in the midst of school closings and turnarounds takes public money and puts it in private hands. Juan Rangel (UNO's CEO) was co-chairman of Rahm's campaign. UNO charter network is one of the state's largest charter school networks, with 13 schools serving 5,500 students in mostly Latino neighborhoods across Chicago. Four of their schools were placed on probation, but they continue to receive state grants and bonds.

Using Taxpayer Funds

- UNO is bankrolled by taxpayer/public funds. Any increase in money to charters means a decrease in funding available for traditional public schools.
- UNO received a \$98 million school-construction grant from the state, the largest taxpayer subsidy to a single charter network in U.S history.
- UNO is using \$70 million in state approved tax-exempt bonds. These funds are used to pay off private loans instead of funding education. Since

WHO'S AFFECTED, WHO DECIDES?

Closing Schools to Save Them: A Failed Policy

- Since 2001 over 100 neighborhood schools. 99% of these schools were in low-income African American and Latino communities. In 2013 CPS is closing 50 in the same communities.
- School closings are disruptive and destabilizing to communities that are already under great stress. These closings have also produced little or no savings to taxpayers.
- The vast majority – nearly 90% - of students who leave a closing school attend another school where “academic performance” is the same or worse.
- CPS is using a flawed “utilization” formula that ignores how schools are actually used, and would lead to more overcrowding.
- Schools that receive large numbers of students from closing schools often show decreased “academic performance” and increases in discipline issues, crime and violence—but *without* extra resources.
- Why is CPS closing so many neighborhood schools while opening many new privately run charter schools – even though charters don't generally perform better?
- If the school closing strategy has been such a failure, why does Mayor Emanuel and his hand-picked Board of Education want to expand this damaging policy to closing up to 129 schools in a single year?

- In summary: CPS has tried closing schools to improve them for over a decade—but it has not worked for the students, parents, communities or taxpayers of Chicago.

CPS Holds Hearing to “Get Feedback” from the Community, But Who Really Decides?

- The CPS Board of Education, appointed by the mayor, is primarily made up of CEOs, bankers and real estate developers who do not understand how important neighborhood schools can be to communities. Many CPS Board members have close ties to charter school organizations and groups like AUSL, which have, as their mission, to replace neighborhood schools.
- CPS is being sued because it didn't follow the recommendations of the judges it hired as hearing officers at the closing hearings. Even when these judges found that schools should remain open, CPS closed them. The hearings were just “for show”. The voices of parents and students were not heard.
- Chicago is the only city in IL that doesn't elect its school board. Only 4% of U.S. school boards are appointed versus elected – mostly in largely Black and Latino cities. This is unacceptable.
- Why do bankers, CEOs and real estate developers get to decide for Chicago families, communities and taxpayers? 87% of Chicagoans voting in a recent referendum supported an Elected Representative School Board. We need a school board accountable to the people—not just to the mayor.

- Our unelected board has closed schools to “improve” them for nearly 20 years, and it has not worked for students, parents, communities or taxpayers. Mayor Emanuel's appointees have continually changed the criteria for closing schools and are currently using a bogus formula to determine ideal school utilization, which doesn't consider a class overcrowded until it has over 36 students.
- Any radical action such as closing a school should have to be approved by a board that is elected by, and accountable to, the people of Chicago. Communities and individuals throughout Chicago agree that we need an Elected Representative School Board. In 2012, many precincts throughout Chicago voted on a referendum about the Elected School Board. Of the 327 precincts that voted, nearly 90% voted in favor of an Elected Representative School Board!

