

**July 20 and 21, 2021 FY22 Budget Hearings Written Comments
Received between Thursday, July 15th and Thursday, July 22nd
Submitted via Written Comments Form**

1	<p>I am a parent of an incoming Kindergartner at Scammon Elementary. I am very concerned about the safety of the campus at Scammon Elementary. The modular units are deteriorating, the blacktop is cracking, uneven, and sinking in places. There is no playground at the school, so children currently run and play on the broken blacktop. I am worried that my child is going to be injured while playing at the school during recess. This is a liability for Chicago Public Schools. I want my child and all of the students at Scammon to have a safe, warm, and dry place to learn.</p> <p>I am surprised that CPS has allowed the campus to fall into such disrepair, especially considering the school has such a strong academic program. Disinvestment in Scammon is an equity issue. This school serves 92% low-income students, and 88% Latino students. Scammon is the only CPS elementary school in the area that doesn't have a playground.</p> <p>CPS's neglect of Scammon's campus is deterring families who have the social capital to make another choice from enrolling their students at the school. More importantly, it is harming Scammon students, teachers, and staff. I want the teachers who work at Scammon and make it the school that it is to have a safe, warm, and dry place to teach. I am worried that if they don't, they will leave Scammon Elementary for a school that has been invested in by the district.</p> <p>I am grateful that Chicago Public Schools has included a playground for Scammon in its FY 2022 capital plan but the safety concerns are more urgent than the lack of a playground. I urge the district to direct sufficient funds to demolish all of the modular classrooms, replace the blacktop, and build an age-appropriate playground for the students at Scammon by the start of the 2023 school year.</p>
2	<p>Use funding to hire more staff & decrease class size. Prioritize investment in current CPS relationships with staff & students, instead of hiring disconnected strangers to "tutor."</p>
3	<p>My daughter went to scammon for kindergarten. During recess she hurt herself in the lot simply playing. Tripped on one of the many holes. She was not severely hurt but enough for a phone call to me that she was hurt. This school along with the lot is severely in need of updates. She attended class in one of the mobile classrooms and it was atrocious.</p>
4	<p>2020 highlighted what many already knew: that there is an incredible disparity in educational equity among our schools. Scammon is an example of that fact. Modular classrooms are crumbling and far from ideal for safe and productive learning environments. There is No playground for children to safely play. Asphalt pavements that are weathered and crumbling so that children may not even safely play on that, at the very least. Research has overwhelmingly shown that playgrounds are directly correlated to learning, as they give learners an outlet to burn energy, reduce stress,</p>

and therefore improve attention so that they are ready to learn. They reduce the burden on teachers and staff to facilitate play for children. They provide safe opportunities for unstructured play, which provides countless benefits: improved cognitive development, as well as improved social and emotional development. The physical benefits are obvious. There is no excuse for any school in this city not to have a playground. Scammon needs a playground NOW.

5 Would you send your kindergartener to a school with no playground, unsafe modulars & crumbling blacktop? My neighborhood school, Scammon Elementary is 92% low income. Parents have been begging for improvements for years, been ignored and placated. Their children have been disappointed over & over again as nothing gets repaired & they continue to play on pot-hole ridden blacktop with no play structure. Scammon is a level 1+ school. Their middle schoolers beat Magnet school kids in Math competitions. Yet enrollment keeps declining.

My entire block in Old Irving Park, including myself, do not send our children to Scammon because Scammon's Campus is not appropriate for Children. It does not have a playground. Its modulars are 15+ years old & falling apart. Their black top has sinkholes that are unsafe for kids to play on.

But much of the community does not have have the same privilege of time to either drive their kids to other CPS schools, or money to send their kids to the local Catholic school. This is NOT equity.

CPS: stop ignoring these Scammon's families. Fund the FULL PROJECT – demo the modulars, repair the blacktop and build them a playground, finally.

6 I am a parent of an incoming second grader at Scammon Elementary. I am very concerned about the safety of the campus at Scammon Elementary. The modular units are deteriorating, the blacktop is cracking, uneven, and sinking in places. There is no playground at the school, so children currently run and play on the broken blacktop. I am worried that my child is going to be injured while playing at the school during recess. This is a liability for Chicago Public Schools. I want my child and all of the students at Scammon to have a safe, warm, and dry place to learn.

I am surprised that CPS has allowed the campus to fall into such disrepair. Families and staff at Scammon have been asking CPS to invest in the Scammon campus for decades. Disinvestment in Scammon is an equity issue. This school serves 92% low-income students, and 88% Latino students. Scammon is the only CPS elementary school in the area that doesn't have a playground.

Scammon has a strong academic program but the campus does not reflect that. The neglect of the campus is harming Scammon students, teachers, and staff. I want the teachers who work at Scammon and make it the school that it is to have a safe, warm, and dry place to teach. I am worried that if they don't, they will leave Scammon Elementary for a school that has been invested in by the district.

I am grateful that Chicago Public Schools has included a playground for Scammon in its FY 2022 capital plan but the safety concerns are more urgent than the lack of a playground. I urge the district to direct sufficient funds to demolish all of the modular classrooms, replace the blacktop, and build an age-appropriate playground for the students at Scammon by the start of the 2023 school year.

Thank you

7 My name is Marta Wray and I am a parent of second grader at Scammon Elementary. Based on my research Scammon has not been getting the same resources that the surrounding schools have gotten over the years. It is the only school in the area with no playground. I am aware that an unknown amount of money was allocated for a playground purpose but I want to shed some light on other campus issues that are of a serious safety concern and are related to the playground project but are not on the FY2022 CPS budget. The campus is lacking a safe, warm and dry environment for our children. They are deprived of safe pathway to and from class. Modular units that hold preschool children are literally falling apart. I hold a parent position on Scammon Local School Counsel and I was inside the modular units a few weeks ago when it was reported to LSC that CPS is not planning on replacing the units and deemed them safe. I strongly disagree with this recommendation. My 2 year old is supposed to go to preschool at Scammon next year and I sure would not like him inside the smelly, moldy, leaking interior. Teachers voiced concerns about additional issues such lack of heat, running water, no internet, doors that do not close etc. Placing a siding on the outside walls, as it was recommended by CPS is not a solution to this problem. Another important issue is our black top. There are multiple holes all over the campus surface and the sewer drains are sinking. This needs to be addressed before kids are back on the school grounds. At this time there is no plan to replace the unsafe modular units and I demand that funds are allocated to replace them with a more permanent structures. Given that our student body is comprised of 92% low income I don't see how this budget allocation in reflecting equitable investment in Scammon elementary. Please, allocate funds and make a plan to fix the surface and demolish modular units by the end of summer. At this time it is not safe, warm or dry. Thank you.

8 I am a parent of a kindergartner at Scammon Elementary. I am very concerned about the safety of the campus at Scammon Elementary. The modular units are deteriorating, the blacktop is cracking, uneven, and sinking in places. There is no playground at the school, so children currently run and play on the broken blacktop. I am worried that my child is going to be injured while playing at the school during recess. This is a liability for Chicago Public Schools. I want my child and all of the children at Scammon to have a safe, warm, and dry place to learn. It is shameful that they don't currently have that.

I am surprised that CPS has allowed the campus to fall into such disrepair. Families and staff at Scammon have been asking CPS to invest in the Scammon campus for decades. Disinvestment in Scammon is an equity issue. This school serves 92% low-income students, and 88% Latino students. Scammon is the only CPS elementary school in the area that doesn't have a playground. If the parents, school staff, and community members are the people responsible for speaking up when something is unsafe at a neighborhood school why has it taken this long to get CPS administration to pay attention to the issues on the Scammon campus?

Scammon has a strong academic program but the campus does not reflect that. The neglect of the campus is harming Scammon students, teachers, and staff. I want the teachers who work at Scammon and make it the school that it is to have a safe, warm, and dry place to teach. I am worried that if they don't, they will leave Scammon Elementary for a school that has been invested in by the district.

I am grateful that Chicago Public Schools has included a playground for Scammon in its FY 2022 capital plan but the safety concerns are more urgent than the lack of a playground. I urge the district to direct sufficient funds to demolish all of the modular

classrooms, replace the blacktop, and build an age-appropriate playground for the students at Scammon by the start of the 2023 school year.

- 9 Hello, my name is John Karnuth. I'm speaking in support of Scammon Elementary. I'm a graduate of Scammon, as was my brother. My father also attended Scammon, as did two of my children. I was raised in the community, and briefly moved away while attending college and graduate school, but decided to come back and plant my roots here. The neighborhood has changed from when I was growing up. Back then it was primarily a white ethnic neighborhood. When I moved back some 20 plus years ago, the neighborhood demographics changed to primarily Latinx. My wife and I were LSC members when our oldest children were in attendance at Scammon. All of us who attended would be proud of how Scammon has persevered over the decades. However, the physical needs of the campus are dire. The children have no playground. That's not only unfair, in comparison to every other school in the area, but it's a slap in the face to the students, parents, and community. To add insult to injury, the modular learning units are in serious disrepair, and the blacktop is a crumbling and dangerous mess. As I mentioned before, this neighborhood has changed since the days I was a child. In my opinion, it has changed for the better. The younger generations of families moving in are creating a positive and can do energy around the community. It's exciting to witness and play a small role in the efforts to better this diverse community. In order to progress, getting Scammon the resources it needs to properly educate children in a safe and pleasant environment is critical. Please give us your complete support to get these essential, but simple needs met. Thank you.

ATTACHMENTS



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My name is David Wu, Executive Director of the Pui Tak Center and Board President of the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community.

Chinatown has been advocating for a neighboring high school for decades as there are no nearby high school in the Armour Square and Bridgeport communities, the area where most of our community members reside.

Historically, there are no high schools in the area as many residents sent their children to Catholic high school. But now, the situation is much different and families want a nearby high school. As there is no nearby high school, Chinatown area high school students are scattered into nearly 50 different high schools. There are two detrimental effects: long commutes – CPS has confirmed that high school students from our area have some of the longest commutes in the district – AND few bilingual supports for our immigrant students.

While it has been Chinatown that has been advocating for a near south high school, we know and want it to include students from other racial groups living in the surrounding communities. When CPS was considering a high school for our area, they developed a boundary that would create the first diverse neighborhood high school on the south side with a large number of Asians, African Americans, Latinos and Whites in the same school.

Two years ago, State Rep Theresa Mah successfully advocated for \$50 million from the state's capital bill for a high school. CPS' FY2021 capital plan includes these funds along with the following website statement that is still online today: "This funding has been directed to CPS for the construction of a new high school to service the Chinatown, Bridgeport, and South Loop communities."

These funds were re-appropriated in the state's FY2022 budget. CPS should budget for this needed high school, work with the City of Chicago to find a source for the remaining funds needed, and work closely with the community in making this high school a reality. Thank you.

CPS Budget Hearing Public Comments 7/21/21

Congratulations CEO Torres on your appointment, and I wish to thank the Board for the opportunity to speak.

I am Dr. Angel Alvarez, a Research Assistant Professor at Northwestern University. I want to speak to issues of equity and accountability with respect to the allocation of our upcoming budget. There are plenty of areas that need to be addressed, ranging from the impact of the pandemic on our students, investing in cybersecurity defenses, and developing more equitable and sustainable funding models for our schools. During my brief time, I want to focus on concerns based on results from my analysis, some of which I have already sent to the Board and additional data that I will share. There is a significant achievement gap that exists with our low-income students, students of color, and children with disabilities, an achievement gap that has perpetuated itself because of the unintended consequences of CPS policies. Schools that serve primarily students of color have instructional outcomes significantly below schools that serve primarily White students, and the disparities increase the longer students remain enrolled in CPS.

I have shared my concerns with CPS officials and my local neighborhood school, Goudy Elementary, for years. However, schools routinely fail to incorporate strategies to specifically address these disparities in their CIWP, with schools serving marginalized students being rewarded for setting lower educational goals. That highlights the problem. There are no incentives to reward schools that close their achievement gap and no real consequence for schools with long-standing disparities in achievement. There needs to be a mixture of universal, scalable factors, in combination with school-developed plans to be used for accountability. The investments that are being made need to include plans for accountability. I would like the Board to share what they will do with schools that maintain significant achievement gaps after you make this once-in-a-generation investment?... I interpret your silence as not having fully-developed solutions yet, so I hope we can work together to solve these serious problems. Thank you.

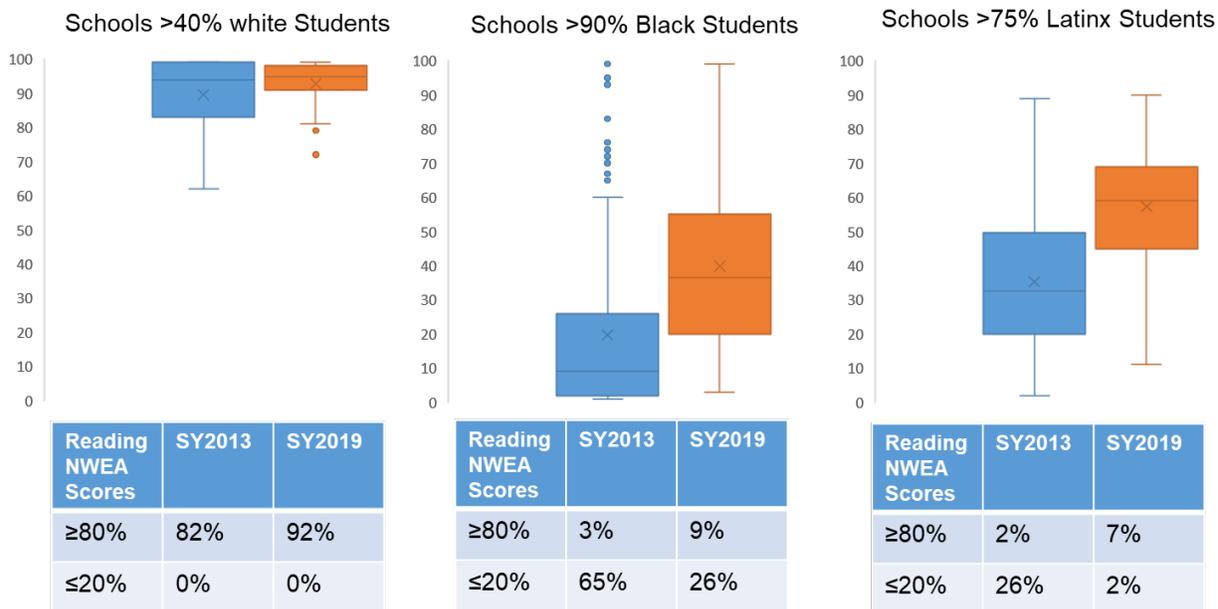
Summary of data:

Using NWEA results for grades 2-8, I analyzed schools based on performance changes between the 2013 and 2019 school years. I aggregated CPS data based to run separate analyses for school performance based on racial demographics. The city of Chicago is approximately 1/3rd white, 30% Black, 29% Latinx, and 7% Asian while CPS students are 10.5% white, 37% Black, 47% Latinx, and 4% Asian. Moreover, historical inequities are reflected in the performance of our schools that remain largely segregated with respect to race.

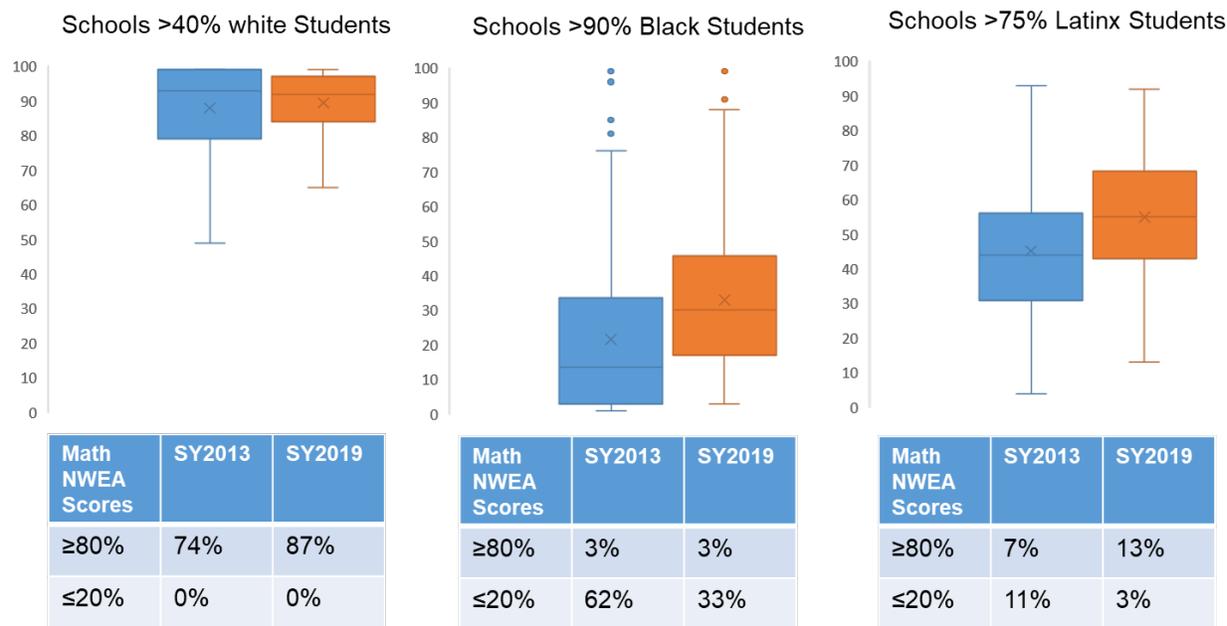
My analysis reveals that 9 out of 10 schools serving primarily white students in CPS perform in the top quintile of schools nationwide. Schools that serve predominantly students of color perform below average. However, significant improvements have been observed in many of our under-resourced schools. In 2013, approximately 2 out of 3 schools serving predominately Black students and 1 out of 4 schools serving

predominately Latinx students were ranked in the bottom 20th percentile. In the latest data that is available, those numbers improved within the majority of our lowest-performing schools.

SY13-19 Reading Percentile Rank of Schools NWEA MAP grades 2-8



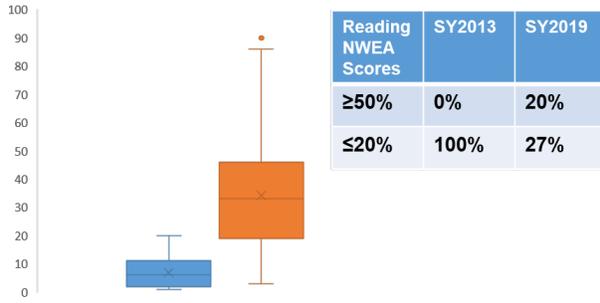
SY13-19 Math Percentile Rank of Schools NWEA MAP grades 2-8



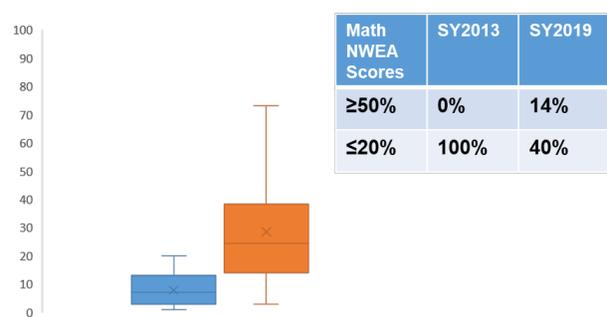
However, there is not a proper mechanism in place to reward schools that make meaningful improvements. The accomplishments for these schools should be met with accolades and additional resources to improve the return on our investment. We see 1

in 5 schools that were previously in the bottom quintile is now performing at or above the national average in reading, and 1 in 7 of these schools is meeting this metric in math. Yet, there is no accountability to the students who remain disadvantaged in underperforming schools.

Outcomes for Schools at Bottom 20% in Reading for SY13



Outcomes for Schools at Bottom 20% in Math for SY13



The new investments this year need to be studied in order to establish best practices. These best practices require well-designed tools to measure growth and metrics that do not punish schools for factors beyond their control. I disagree with attempts to remove NWEA MAP testing and argue that using a few well-validated and normalized assessments is important, especially when analyzing the performance of historically underserved students.

Schools should not be allowed to neglect their achievement gaps and must be held accountable when they fail to address them. We have a system in place where Local School Councils can simply ignore achievement gaps because other schools in the system perform worse. This creates a system of incentives to achieve a particular score without an emphasis on long-term improvements for all children. The ability of schools to maintain some degree of discretion is important, but the consequences of bad decision-making and poorly-planned investments are felt by the children that need the most support.

Be well.

Dr. Angel Alvarez