



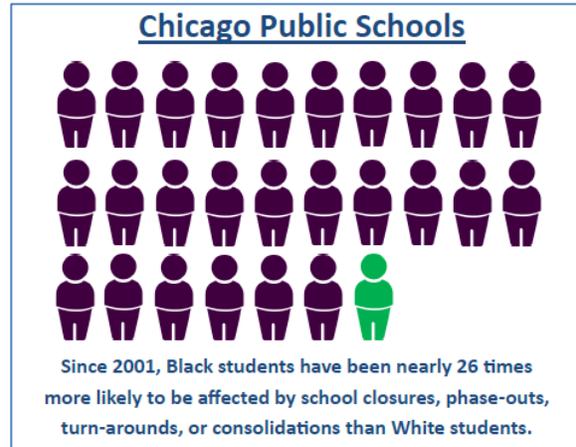
## Chicago Public Schools Title VI Complaint Summary

African-American communities in Chicago have been the primary targets of public school closings<sup>1</sup> for well over a decade as Chicago Public Schools (“CPS”) has promoted an aggressive policy of closing and privatizing public schools. Over the past thirteen years, CPS has closed, phased-out, turned around or consolidated 159 neighborhood schools and adopted policies that have fostered a proliferation of charter and contract schools in the West and South Sides of Chicago, which are neighborhoods with high concentrations of African-American families and students. In May 2013 alone, CPS closed 49 elementary schools and one high school, an unprecedented and drastic mass closure. The consequences of these closures are severe, causing additional hardship to already under-resourced communities, primarily African-American communities. However, organized Black and Brown communities are fighting back.

One of those organized groups is the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO), which represents hundreds of members who reside in the greater Bronzeville area—an area heavily populated by African-American families and rich with significance for the African-American community tied to the Great Migration. The Bronzeville neighborhood has disproportionately suffered the devastating consequences of CPS’s policies. CPS has closed, phased-out, turned around, or consolidated nearly 30 public schools in Bronzeville alone over the last twelve years. The majority of these actions were of schools that served student populations that were over 90 percent African-American, and all but one of the schools had drastically higher percentages of African-American students than the District average at the year of the school action.

One school in particular has been the focal point of organizing efforts in the South Side. In February 2012, CPS designated Dyett High School for phase-out and strangled the school of its resources and morale until there were only 15 students left in the

<sup>1</sup> “Closed” schools include schools that have been permanently closed, resited, phased-out, or converted to charter schools. A resiting occurs when a neighborhood school facility is closed and students are required to attend a different facility with the same or similar name.



2014-15 school year. Before its closure, students were pushed out or coached out, classrooms and entire hallways were closed, Advanced Placement courses were cut, students were forced to take physical education and art classes online, and in symbolic gesture of discrimination, the remaining students were forced to enter and exit every day through a back door. It was the particularly devastating experiences of Dyett students that prompted the filing of a civil rights complaint.

In May 2014, KOCO filed a complaint with the Educational Opportunities Section of the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division and the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education under Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The complaint, which was brought on behalf of African-American students enrolled at Dyett High School and Mollison Elementary School and all similarly situated African-American students living in Bronzeville, alleged that African-American students were disproportionately harmed of school closings.

The complaint was opened and is currently under investigation, but parents and students are not waiting to see what happens. On August 17, 2015 a group of 12 parents and activists began a 34 day hunger strike demanding Dyett High School reopen as a neighborhood school with a green technology curriculum. Protestors won a number of demands, but continue to struggle for a community-based curriculum that will position students in Bronzeville to become leaders of tomorrow.