



FACT SHEET: Civil Rights, Transparency and Accountability at Chicago Charter Schools

“Every Noble campus has outperformed every traditional high school serving the same kids in the same communities.” - *Dr. Garland Thomas, Principal, Noble Network of Charter Schools*

The Problem

- Expulsions are the most severe form of punishment that a student can receive and should only be reserved for the most serious offenses.
- However, the growing sector of charter schools in Chicago and Illinois have turned to this extreme punishment as a way to “push out” students, often for extremely minor behaviors.
- Original research by VOYCE shows that **the Noble Network’s expulsion rate is 7.6 times higher than Chicago Public Schools (CPS)**, while Perspectives Charter Schools’ expulsion rate is almost 16 times higher than CPS.

Expulsion Rates, SY 2011		
	Expulsions per 1000 students	Network : CPS Ratio
CPS	1.1	-
Noble	8.4	7.6 : 1
Perspectives	17.5	15.9 : 1

Are they really “serving the same kids in the same communities”?

- Charter schools, and the Noble Network in particular, claim that they are “non-selective” public schools and that they deliver better outcomes than neighborhood schools with the same student population. However, **charter schools in Chicago have an expulsion rate that is seven times higher than CPS’ expulsion rate.**
- Charter schools serve fewer special education students, **particularly the highest-need (LRE 3) students.**
- At the same meeting where the Chicago Board of Education voted to shutter 50 neighborhood schools—including some serving student populations that are 30% special ed—the **Board voted to expand Noble despite its higher expulsion rate and lower rate of enrolling and supporting special education students.** The two neighborhood high schools where Noble will be co-located have a special education enrollment rate that is twice as high as Noble’s.

% of Special Education Students, SY 2012		
	District	Charter
Students w/Disabilities	13.7	12.9
LRE 1	5.9	8.0
LRE 2	3.9	2.7
LRE 3	2.2	0.4

Student and Parent Solutions

- This is an issue of civil rights, transparency and public accountability. **Charter schools can’t claim to be “non-selective” and “higher-performing” public schools while relying on expulsion to systematically choose which students they will educate with taxpayer dollars.**
- As charter school authorizers, the Chicago Board of Education and the Illinois State Charter School Commission have failed to hold charter schools like Noble to basic standards for enrolling and retaining all students, particularly high-need students who need more support.
- **It is time for the Illinois General Assembly to intervene, and to hold all publicly-funded schools accountable for educating all students.** This means placing stronger limits on the use of expulsions and other push-out measures, and requiring districts and charter networks to report on the school-level use of exclusionary measures, particularly on disproportionately impacted student populations.

% of Special Education Students, SY 2012	
Bowen High School*	28.1
Corliss High School*	24.2
Noble Network	12.0
* Site of 2013 co-location with Noble	

Sources: Dr. Garland Thomas quote from a 10/31/12 appearance on WBEZ at <http://www.wbez.org/programs/morning-shift-tony-sarabia/2012-10-31/morning-shift-38-something-wicked-way-comes-103551>. Charter expulsion rates calculated from SY11 Noble and Perspectives expulsion data from original FOIA requests and SY11 CPS expulsions from the Aug. 2011 CBOE report at http://www.cpsboe.org/content/actions/2011_08/11-0824-ED1.pdf, divided by Illinois State Board of Education SY11 enrollments at http://www.isbe.state.il.us/charter/pdf/biennial_rpt_09-10_10-11.pdf. Comparative Chicago charter expulsion rate reported by *Education Week* at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/infographics/charter-discipline-infographic.html>. LRE enrollment from http://cps.edu/NewSchools/Documents/Chicago_District_Charter_Compact.pdf (pp.10). Special education enrollment for Bowen, Corliss and Noble from the Illinois Interactive Report Card, <http://iirc.niu.edu/>