



School District of Philadelphia School Closings: An Analysis of Student Achievement

Prepared by Research for Action

February 27, 2013

For any school closing policy to minimize adverse effects on student achievement, students from closed buildings should be placed in [higher performing](#) ones.^{1 2}

To provide a more in-depth analysis of the potential academic impacts of the School District of Philadelphia's proposed school closure plan, RFA compared 32 schools [recommended for closure or consolidation](#) with the 51 planned receiving schools. Our analysis focused on two measures:

1. Building-level performance on the state's reading and math assessments for the 2011-12 school year; and
2. The building's 2011-12 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) rating, which accounts for PSSA scores as well as factors such as attendance and graduation rate.

1. PSSA: Percent Proficient or Above in Math and Reading

Of the possible 58 transfer options, data was available to conduct analysis on 56 RFA conducted a district-wide analysis of school-level proficiency on the 2011-12 PSSA and then evaluated transfer options by comparing both closing schools and potential receiving schools to the district average. Assessing the extent to which potential receiving schools are above, similar, or below the district average relative to closing schools allows us to categorize transfer options. In our analysis, scores within one standard deviation (approximately 15 percentage points) of each other (recommended closing vs. receiving) represent schools with similar achievement levels. Receiving schools with scores greater than one standard deviation were noted as noticeably better options. Receiving schools with scores more than one standard deviation below were noted as lesser options.³ In the tables below, standard deviations are noted in parentheses beneath the school-level proficiency.

2. Adequate Yearly Progress

The majority of schools in both the closing and receiving groups were designated in Corrective Action I or II for the 2011-12 schools year. Two receiving schools made AYP; no schools recommended for closure met AYP.

¹ de la Torre, M. & Gwynne, J. (2009, October). When schools close: Effects on displaced students in Chicago Public Schools. Consortium on Chicago School Research: Research Report, Retrieved from <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/CCSRSchoolClosings-Final.pdf>

² Engberg, J. Gill, B., Zamarro, G., Zimmer, R. (March, 2012). Closing schools in a shrinking district: Do student outcomes depend on which schools are closed? Journal of Urban Economics, Volume 71, Issue 2. Pgs. 189-203.

³ The cut-off scores used are equivalent to one standard-deviation in the distributions for percentage of students proficient or above in PSSA Math (standard deviation= 16.4) and PSSA Reading (standard deviation= 15.6).







Comparison of Previous and Current District Recommendations

The following table compares the transfer options for the revised (February 2013) closing/consolidating and receiving school list against the original recommendations, announced in December 2012. There are mixed results based on the academic measures as for whether the new recommendations enhance educational opportunities for relocated students.

Table 1. Comparing Transfer Options based on 2011-12 Math and Reading PSSA Percent Proficient or Above and Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status: Old and New Recommendations for Closure									
	Math PSSA			Reading PSSA			Current Adequate Yearly Progress		
	Better	Same	Worse	Better	Same	Worse	Better	Same	Worse
Revised Recommendations, Feb. 2013	29%	68%	4%	16%	80%	4%	38%	34%	28%
Original Recommendations, Dec. 2012	28%	66%	7%	18%	79%	3%	43%	33%	23%

















Comparison: Schools Recommended for Closure and Receiving Options

















The table below compares closing and receiving schools outlined in the School District's revised recommendations using two sets of data: the percent proficient or above on the 2011-12 PSSA and the current AYP determination for each school. Underlined schools are new recommendations based on the plan released in February 2013.⁴

Key for Proposed Receiving Schools Comparisons			
	Comparison of % Proficient or Above (Math Reading)	Comparison of AYP Status	
	Schools one standard deviation higher	Schools in a more advanced corrective cycle	
	Schools one standard deviation lower	Schools in a less advanced corrective cycle	
	Schools within ± one standard deviation	Schools in similar corrective cycles	

















Note: A split circle signifies the receiving school that performs better or worse in one subject only.





















⁴ For a tally of all transfer options that are better, similar, or worse, for the overall set of recommendations and by region, see Appendix A.















Recommended for Closure	Receiving School	Math % Proficient or above (SD)	Reading % Proficient or above (SD)	Comparison of % Proficient or Above	Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status	Comparison of AYP Status
NORTH-CENTRAL						
Fairhill		21.70%	18.80%		Corrective Action II	
	Potter-Thomas	33.80% (+.74)	25.00% (+.40)		Corrective Action II (9 th year)	
	Deburgos	61.80% (+2.45)	47.40% (+1.83)		Made AYP	
Ferguson		43.90%	38.00%		Corrective Action II (7th year)	
	John Hartranft	41.90% (-.12)	32.60% (-.35)		Warning	
	Mckinley	42.50% (-.09)	35.10% (-.19)		School Improvement I	
Leslie Hill		32.30%	19.10%		Warning	
	Blaine	64.00% (+1.93)	49.60% (+1.96)		Warning	
	Ethel Allen	37.80% (+.34)	34.30% (+.97)		Corrective Action II (3 rd year)	
Reynolds		35.20%	26.80%		Corrective Action I	
	<u>Robert Morris</u>	52.70% (+1.07)	35.60% (+.56)		School Improvement I	
	<u>W.D. Kelley</u>	35.40% (+.01)	31.90% (+.33)		Corrective Action II (3 rd year)	
Pratt		38.50%	29.90%		Warning	

Recommended for Closure	Receiving School	Math % Proficient or above (SD)	Reading % Proficient or above (SD)	Comparison of % Proficient or Above	Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status	Comparison of AYP Status
	William Dick	56.00% (+1.07)	37.50% (+.49)		Warning	
*Based on the District's proposal, students attending this school will attend a new school with expanded grades in an existing building.						
M.H. Stanton		29.20%	21.20%	Corrective Action I	Corrective Action I	
	<u>Duckrey</u>	32.90% (+.23)	26.90% (+.37)		Corrective Action II	
Carroll		15.60%	21.80%		Corrective Action II (7th year)	
	Kensington Business, Finance ⁵	19.30% (+.23)	18.30% (-.22)		Corrective Action II	
	Kensington Health Sciences	22.60% (+.43)	16.00% (-.37)		Corrective Action II	
	Kensington Urban Ed	N/A	N/A		School Improvement I	
	<u>Penn Treaty</u>	53.00% (+2.28)	34.60% (+.82)		Corrective Action II (9 th year)	
Stephen Douglas		9.40%	26.50%		School Improvement II	
	Kensington Business	19.30% (+.60)	18.30% (-.53)		Corrective Action II	
	Kensington Health Sciences	22.60% (+.80)	16.00% (-.67)		Corrective Action II	
	Kensington Urban Ed	N/A	N/A		School Improvement I	

















⁵ Some schools such as Kensington Business, Finance were prescribed as receiving school for multiple schools recommended for closure. In our overall tallies, these schools were counted each time since their relationship to the different closing schools is unique.

Recommended for Closure	Receiving School	Math % Proficient or above (SD)	Reading % Proficient or above (SD)	Comparison of % Proficient or Above	Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status	Comparison of AYP Status
	Jules Mastbaum	30.60% (+1.29)	18.40% (-.52)		School Improvement I	
	<u>Penn Treaty</u>	53.00% (+2.66)	34.60% (+.52)		Corrective Action II (9 th year)	
	<u>Frankford</u>	12.90% (+.21)	19.70% (-.44)		Corrective Action II (7 th year)	
Sheridan West		29.90%	29.20%		Corrective Action II (2nd year)	
	Penn Treaty	53.00% (+1.41)	34.60% (+.35)		Corrective Action II (9 th year)	
Roberts Vaux		10.80%	12.30%		Corrective Action II (10th year)	
	Benjamin Franklin	16.50% (+.35)	20.90% (+.55)		Corrective Action II	
	Randolph Technical	17.80% (+.43)	25.50% (+.85)		Corrective Action I	
	<u>Strawberry Mansion</u>	9.00% (-.11)	13.70% (+.09)		School Improvement II	
T.M. Peirce		34.80%	25.90%		Corrective Action I	
	<u>Kenderton</u>	26.00% (-.54)	25.20% (-.04)		Corrective Action II (9 th year)	
	Based on the District's proposal, students attending this school will attend a new school with expanded grades in an existing building.					
Whittier	Based on the District's proposal, students attending these five schools will attend new schools with expanded grades in existing schools.	43.50%	27.90%		School Improvement I	
Taylor		46.50%	25.20%		Corrective Action II (3rd year)	









Recommended for Closure	Receiving School	Math % Proficient or above (SD)	Reading % Proficient or above (SD)	Comparison of % Proficient or Above	Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status	Comparison of AYP Status
NORTHWEST						
Robert Fulton		24.90%	11.50%		Warning	
	Emlen	35.60% (+.65)	23.50% (+.77)		Warning	
	John Wister	33.10% (+.50)	23.30% (+.76)		School Improvement I	
	Leeds	65.80% (+2.49)	55.20% (+2.80)		Warning	
John Kinsey		32.00%	32.90%		Corrective Action I	
	William Rowen	60.80% (+1.76)	39.80% (+.44)		Warning	
	Prince Hall	36.10% (+.25)	34.20% (+.08)		Corrective Action I	
	<u>Pennypacker</u>	44.70% (+.77)	42.80% (+.63)		Warning	
	Pastorius	20.20% (-.72)	19.40% (-.87)		Corrective Action II (9 th year)	
	Joseph Pennell	33.80% (+.11)	27.70% (-.33)		Corrective Action II (5 th year)	
	Wagner	45.90% (+.85)	46.90% (+.90)		Warning	
Theodore Roosevelt		26.00%	23.70%		School Improvement I	
	Leeds	65.80% (+2.43)	55.20% (+2.02)		Warning	

Recommended for Closure	Receiving School	Math % Proficient or above (SD)	Reading % Proficient or above (SD)	Comparison of % Proficient or Above	Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status	Comparison of AYP Status
Germantown		15.20%	17.70%		Corrective Action II (7th year)	
	Martin Luther King	14.10% (-.07)	16.30% (-.09)		Corrective Action II (7 th year)	
	Roxborough	18.00% (+.17)	32.10% (+.92)		Corrective Action II (4 th year)	
Philadelphia Military Academy at Leeds⁶		53.90%	53.8%		Warning	
	Philadelphia Military Academy at Elverson	25.6% (-1.73)	55.8% (+.12)		Warning	
SOUTH-CENTRAL						
Bok		25.90%	31.60%		School Improvement I	
	South Philadelphia	34.10% (+.50)	12.10% (-1.25)		Corrective Action II (10 th year)	
Walter Smith		29.70%	24.10%		School Improvement I	
	George Childs	58.90% (+1.78)	48.90% (+1.59)		Warning	
	Edwin Stanton	62.70% (+2.01)	58.90% (+2.23)		Warning	
	Arthur	51.30% (+1.32)	51.40% (+1.75)		Warning	
George Washington		41.50%	55.50%		Corrective Action II (7th year)	







⁶ Philadelphia Military Academy at Leeds will merge as one high school at the Elverson building.

Recommended for Closure	Receiving School	Math % Proficient or above (SD)	Reading % Proficient or above (SD)	Comparison of % Proficient or Above	Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status	Comparison of AYP Status
	George Nebinger	57.60% (+.98)	53.20% (-.15)		Warning	
Abigail Vare⁷		69.90%	49.40%		Warning	
SOUTHWEST						
George Pepper		25.80%	30.50%		Corrective Action II (8th year)	
	Penrose	53.90% (+1.71)	49.10% (+1.19)		Warning	
	Tilden	25.30% (-.03)	25.50% (-.32)		School Improvement I	
Anna Shaw		39.40%	35.10%		Corrective Action II (7th year)	
	Tilden	25.30% (-.86)	25.50% (-.62)		School Improvement I	
	Longstreth	25.00% (-.88)	30.40% (-.30)		School Improvement I	
University City		9.80%	18.10%		Corrective Action II (10th year)	
	West Philadelphia	13.00% (+.20)	18.70% (+.04)		Corrective Action II (9 th year)	
	High School of the Future	35.40% (+1.56)	61.70% (+2.79)		Corrective Action II	
	Sayre	4.60% (-.32)	21.50% (.22)		Corrective Action II (8 th year)	

⁷Vare's program will relocate to the George Washington Elementary School building.



Recommended for Closure	Receiving School	Math % Proficient or above (SD)	Reading % Proficient or above (SD)	Comparison of % Proficient or Above	Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status	Comparison of AYP Status
	Overbrook	11.20% (+.09)	17.70% (-.03)		Corrective Action II (7 th year)	
Alexander Wilson		47.90%	46.50%		Warning	
	Henry Lea	44.60% (-.20)	43.20% (-.21)		Corrective Action II (6 th year)	
Communications Technology⁸		20.30%	28.40%		Corrective Action II (2nd year)	
	Bartram	10.90% (-.57)	17.40% (-.71)		Corrective Action II (9 th year)	
Robeson⁹		29.30%	43.90%		School Improvement I	
	Sayre	4.60% (-1.51)	21.50% (-1.44)		Corrective Action II (8 th year)	

WEST













Joseph Leidy		37.70%	31.80%		School Improvement I	
	Blankenburg	42.70% (+.30)	36.20% (+.28)		School Improvement II	
	Heston	38.40% (+.04)	35.80% (+.26)		Warning	
	<u>Martha Washington</u>	35.90% (-.11)	37.40% (+.36)		School Improvement I	











⁸ All Communications Technology students will transfer to Bartram unless admitted into another high school. The Commercial Art and Cinematography programs will move from Communications Technology and be relocated as citywide admission academies at Bartram High School.

⁹ All Robeson students will be relocated to Sayre unless admitted into another high school. The Health Related Technologies and Human Services programs will move from Robeson and be relocated as citywide admission academies at Sayre High School.

Recommended for Closure	Receiving School	Math % Proficient or above (SD)	Reading % Proficient or above (SD)	Comparison of % Proficient or Above	Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status	Comparison of AYP Status
Robert Lamberton		15.70%	20.00%		Corrective Action I	
	Overbrook	11.20% (-.27)	17.70% (-.15)		Corrective Action II (6 th year)	
Dimner Beeber	* Based on the District's proposal, students attending this school will attend Overbrook High Schools, which will expand to serve 7-12.					

The following rows are earlier school closure recommendations that will remain open under the district's revised plan:

Duckrey		32.90%	26.90%		Corrective Action II	
	M.H. Stanton	29.20% (-.23)	21.20% (-.37)		Corrective Action I	
Robert Morris		52.70%	35.60%		School Improvement I	
	William Kelley	35.40% (-1.05)	31.90% (-.24)		Corrective Action II (3 rd year)	
Strawberry Mansion		9.00%	13.70%		School Improvement II	
	Benjamin Franklin	16.50% (+.46)	20.90% (+.46)		Corrective Action II (2 nd year)	
Cooke		47.60%	40.20%		Corrective Action II (9th year)	
	James Logan	50.80% (+.20)	33.90% (-.40)		School Improvement I	
	Edward Steel	40.60% (-.43)	34.30% (-.38)		School Improvement II	
	Grover Washington	53.40% (+.35)	44.50% (+.28)		Corrective Action II	

Recommended for Closure	Receiving School	Math % Proficient or above (SD)	Reading % Proficient or above (SD)	Comparison of % Proficient or Above	Current Adequate Yearly Progress Status	Comparison of AYP Status
McCloskey		56.30%	52.90%		Warning	
	Franklin Edmonds	53.30% (-.18)	37.40% (-.99)		Warning	
	Leeds	65.80% (+.58)	55.20% (+.15)		Warning	
McMichael		26.30%	19.20%		Corrective Action II	
	Martha Washington	35.90% (+.59)	37.40% (+1.17)		School Improvement I	
	Middle Years Academy	72.80% (+2.84)	70.90% (+3.31)		Made AYP	
	Alain Locke	28.50% (+.13)	18.50% (-.04)		Warning	
Meade	* Based on the District's proposal, students attending these schools will attend new schools with expanded grades in existing buildings.					
Samuel Gompers						
Overbrook EM						

Appendix A.

The following table provides the frequency of transfer options that are better, same/similar, and worse for the overall set of revised recommendations (32 schools) along with a breakdown by region for all three metrics used: 2011-12 Math PSSA and Reading PSSA percent proficient or above and current AYP status.

Table 1. Academic Performance of Possible Receiving Schools as Compared to the School Recommended for Closure: 2011-12 PSSA Math and Reading Percent Proficient or Above									
	PSSA Ratings: Math			PSSA Ratings: Reading			AYP Status		
	Better	Similar	Worse	Better	Similar	Worse	Better	Same	Worse
Overall	16	38	2	9	45	2	22	20	16
North-Central	8	15	0	2	21	0	9	8	8
Northwest	3	9	1	2	11	0	4	6	3
South-Central	3	2	0	3	1	1	4	0	1
Southwest	2	8	1	2	8	1	4	5	2
West	0	4	0	0	4	0	1	1	2