



YOUR USER GUIDE TO THE CPS

# ANNUAL REGIONAL ANALYSIS

The Annual Regional Analysis (ARA) is a report produced by Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in partnership with Kids First Chicago. It is designed to aid in district planning by providing communities with the same information as district leadership.

It is a consistent collection of data on enrollment, student demographics, school quality, school choice, and program offerings, organized by region. It shows improvements over time as well as illuminating areas for district intervention and collective action. The report presents data, but does not make recommendations or action steps, rather serving as an input to community engagement and joint solution development.

Having access to the same information is an important first step in ensuring that our schools are providing an equitable education for **all** students, and that we are collectively providing the resources and opportunities necessary to close the achievement gap for our highest-need students.

This user guide was designed to help educators, community members, and parents, dissect and analyze the information included in the ARA.

## 2020 EDITION

[KIDSFIRSTCHICAGO.ORG](http://KIDSFIRSTCHICAGO.ORG)

# CONTENTS

GETTING STARTED	3
WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW BEFORE I BEGIN?	4
PRE-READING QUESTIONS	5
DIGGING DEEPER: DISTRICT OVERVIEW	6
DIGGING DEEPER: MY REGION	9

## DR. JANICE JACKSON, CPS CEO

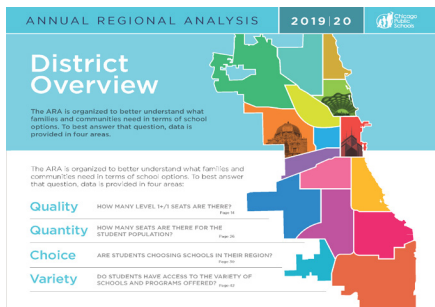
“I believe that it’s our job as a district to connect the dots and make sure that parents and community members — as well as educators, who are the best people suited to make decisions about what should happen in their schools and community — have all of that information in one spot so that they can make decisions with the district, and not have the district make decisions for them.”<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> CPS analysis shows 150,000 seats unfilled; black and Latino students have less access to top programs, [Chicago Tribune](#)

# GETTING STARTED



## AS A PARENT OR COMMUNITY MEMBER, HOW CAN I USE THE ARA INFORMATION?

You can use the information in the report to better understand what is going on in and around your community area when it comes to education, to compare school performance across the district, and to participate in community planning around education.

## HOW IS IT ORGANIZED?

The report includes a district overview section along with an analysis of each of 16 regions. CPS used the 16 regions aligned to the city planning department's Chicago Neighborhoods Now initiative.

Each section of the Annual Regional Analysis (ARA) is organized around four main questions:

- **QUALITY:** How many high-quality seats (Level 1+/1) are there?
- **QUANTITY:** Are there enough seats to serve students?
- **CHOICE:** Are students choosing schools in their region?
- **VARIETY:** Do students have access to the variety of schools and programs offered?

## READING THE ARA

Although the ARA was not designed to provide recommendations or *opinions* about the information presented, we find that most people naturally ask critical questions while they are reviewing the information. As you read the ARA, you may become curious about the quality of schools in your region, or in your specific community. You might begin to wonder if there are high-quality schools with unfilled seats nearby or even if there are specific programs available in your area.

In this guide to the ARA, we've included critical questions to consider that parents, students, and community partners have found useful when exploring the ARA. We invite you to use and share these questions as you explore the rich information included in the report. P

Above Photo | Front Cover of the 2020 Annual Regional Analysis



# WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW BEFORE I BEGIN?

## HOW IS SCHOOL PERFORMANCE & QUALITY MEASURED IN CHICAGO?

In the quality section the report uses CPS' School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) to define a high-quality school.

Under this policy, each school receives:

- A number score (like a GPA)
- A level rating based on their numbered score
- An accountability status

Each of these three indicators are based on their performance in the previous school year. One way to think about this is if you won the World Series last year, your team would be “world champs” based on their performance last season—no matter what their current year’s performance is like. In Chicago, school measurement is similar.

A school is rated on a 5 level scale of very high performance, a **Level 1+**, to very low performance, a **Level 3**, based on last school year. If you aren’t familiar with SQRP already, it might help to familiarize yourself with school level ratings by visiting [kidsfirstchicago.org/SQRP](https://kidsfirstchicago.org/SQRP).

### LEVEL KEY



**TIP:** To help us remember the system, levels are color coded like a traffic light.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIGH-QUALITY SCHOOLS AND HIGH-QUALITY SEATS? ARE THEY THE SAME?

In Chicago, we use the word “seat” to refer to an enrollment spot at a school. Every school in Chicago is able to serve a different number of students based on their physical space and number of teachers.

The ARA looks at both the quality of schools, but also at the number of seats—or spots—available for the number of students living in a community area, region, or the city as a whole.

As you read, you will be able to understand whether high-quality schools and seats are available and also how many students are enrolled in schools. You’ll see that some schools have more students than space and others have more space than students.

## WHAT IS SCHOOL CHOICE?

School choice refers to being able to enroll in many options for education. In Chicago, every student is assigned or “zoned” to a neighborhood school, based on their address, but they may decide, with their families, to enroll in another type of public school.

Students and families choose schools for many reasons including: quality, access to a specific program, because it is close to home or a parent’s workplace, or that it’s the right fit for the student. When the ARA refers to choice it’s talking about students who are choosing to go another school option vs. their zoned school.

# PRE-READING QUESTIONS

For some, having a framework for what you believe the school landscape should look like will help you to digest this information included in the report and compare the reality to your ideal.

## MY NOTES:

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- DO I THINK THERE ARE ENOUGH HIGH-QUALITY SEATS IN THE DISTRICT? WHAT INFORMATION DO I ALREADY KNOW THAT INFLUENCED MY RESPONSE?
- IN FIVE YEARS, WHAT PERCENT OF SEATS DO I THINK COULD REASONABLY BE LEVEL 1+/1 IN EACH REGION? WHAT ABOUT IN 10?
- IN MY OPINION, HOW FAR IS TOO FAR FOR STUDENTS TO TRAVEL? IS DISTANCE MORE IMPORTANT OR THE AMOUNT OF TIME THAT IT TAKES TO TRAVEL? DOES MY ANSWER CHANGE WHEN I THINK ABOUT ELEMENTARY STUDENTS VS. HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS?
- WHAT PERCENT OF STUDENTS SHOULD IDEALLY BE IN THEIR REGION VS. OUT OF REGION (FOR ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL)?
- WHAT PROGRAMS DO I THINK SHOULD EXIST IN EACH REGION AND WHICH DO NOT NEED TO BE IN EVERY REGION?
- HOW MANY SCHOOLS IN EACH REGION SHOULD BE OPEN ENROLLMENT VS. HAVE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA?

DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE

# DISTRICT OVERVIEW

QUALITY

**ARE THERE ENOUGH  
HIGH-QUALITY SEATS  
FOR THE STUDENT  
POPULATION?**

QUANTITY

**HOW MANY SEATS ARE  
THERE FOR THE STUDENT  
POPULATION?**

CHOICE

**ARE STUDENTS  
CHOOSING SCHOOLS IN  
THEIR REGION?**

VARIETY

**DO STUDENTS HAVE  
ACCESS TO THE VARIETY  
OF SCHOOLS AND  
PROGRAMS OFFERED?**

MY NOTES

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## QUALITY

- How does school quality compare across regions? Which regions have the highest percentage of quality seats; which have the lowest percentage?
- How does my region compare to other regions?
- How much does school quality vary across regions? (I.e., what's the range in percentage of high-quality seats?) How does this differ between elementary and high school?

## QUANTITY

- How does enrollment in quality schools compare across regions? Are quality seats being filled up by students? Is there space to serve more students?
- When I look at the number of high-quality seats available vs. the number of students... are there enough high-quality seats for all students?

## CHOICE

- In which regions are more students attending school in region vs. out of region?
- How does choice for elementary school differ from high school?
- Are students in my region traveling more or less than most students in the district? What could be some reasons for differences in these numbers?

## VARIETY

- Does each region have the same programs?
- Do I think my region needs any programs that are lacking?
- Even if a program does not exist in my region, do students still have "access" to it (does it exist nearby, etc)?

### BRINGING IT TOGETHER

Now that you've reviewed some the District Overview section you might consider:

- Is there any additional information that I wish I had, to help me understand?
- Do I notice any relationships between the information presented?

### MY NOTES:

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**“AS A LIFELONG CHICAGOAN WHO CARES DEEPLY ABOUT OUR CITY AND ITS FUTURE, I AM EXTREMELY PROUD OF THE WAY CPS IS REACHING OUT TO US IN THE COMMUNITY FOR SMART SOLUTIONS FOR OUR STUDENTS. THE DISTRICT CAN DO A LOT, BUT IT CAN’T DO EVERYTHING, AND BY PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS LIKE ME, TOGETHER WE CAN ENROLL MORE STUDENTS IN HIGH QUALITY SCHOOLS AND PROVIDE THEM WITH THE KIND OF SUPPORT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.”**

**-AL GREEN, SALVATION ARMY  
COMMUNITY CENTER DIRECTOR/  
PROGRAMS SUPERVISOR.**





## DIGGING DEEPER INTO **MY REGION**

### THINKING ABOUT YOUR REGION'S DEMOGRAPHICS

Some individuals find that it's helpful to think about their region's demographics as they dig into information around the quality, quantity, choice, and variety sections. Some helpful questions include:

- What are the demographics of my region? Have they changed over time?
- What does median household income look like in my region? Are any patterns visible?
- How does the income map compare to the school quality maps?

MY NOTES:

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QUALITY

- How is school quality spread across my region? Are there certain areas with concentrations of high-quality (Level 1+ or Level 1 ) schools, or areas that lack quality schools?
- Do schools without attendance boundaries, like contract or charter schools provide other strong options for families?
- Where do I live, and what high-quality schools are around me?
- Has the number of quality seats increased or decreased over time? *Note that changing seat numbers can be due to recalculating the number of classrooms or it could be due to closing or opening new schools.*
- Have more students enrolled in quality schools over time?
- How does enrollment by SQRP level compare to the seats available in the region? (Eg, are students finding high-quality schools, even if they're not available in the area?)
- Are there open/unfilled seats? Where are they, and what are their SQRP levels?
- What are the admissions criteria of the Level 1+/1 seats in the region?
- If Level 1+/1 schools don't have admissions criteria, and have unfilled seats, what other barriers may be preventing students in the region from attending these schools?
- How does this situation differ between elementary and high schools?

QUANTITY

- How is the number of students in the region changing? Is it increasing, decreasing, or remaining constant? *Note that this number only refers to students who attend CPS. Students who live in a region but attend school outside of the city or a private school are not represented here.*
- When you compare the number of available seats, to the umber of students living in the region are there more seats, more students, or are they about the same?
- What is the relationship between population and enrollment in the region?
- Is the region attracting students from outside the region or are students living in this region attracted to other regions?

### CHOICE

- Over time, are students enrolling more often in schools in their region or outside their region?
- How does this compare to the quality of schools in the region over time? How does this differ between elementary and high school?
- Are students who are choosing other schools attending higher-quality schools, on average?
- What types of programs are students in the region choosing to attend? What types of schools are they choosing in region and out of region (charter, attendance area, magnet, selective enrollment)?
- How far are students traveling compared to the district average?
- When students travel outside of their region, where do they tend to enroll?
- Do you notice patterns based on transportation lines or natural boundaries? And, on the flip side, are there transportation gaps that, if filled, could help more students attend high-quality schools?

### VARIETY

- What programs are available in this region?
- What programs are my region missing that should be offered?
- Are there any programs that are too abundant?
- When you compare your programs to other regions, do you have more, less, or about the same as most regions?
- How many seats per program are there relative to the number of students who live in the region?
- How does this compare to the program availability of other regions?

### MY NOTES:

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- SEARCH FOR SCHOOLS & DIVE DEEPER INTO SQRP  
[KIDSFIRSTCHICAGO.ORG/SCHOOLSEARCH](https://kidsfirstchicago.org/schoolsearch)
- ADDITIONAL ARA INFORMATION  
[KIDSFIRSTCHICAGO.ORG/ARA](https://kidsfirstchicago.org/ara)
- VIDEOS, HANDOUTS, & OTHER SQRP RESOURCES  
[KIDSFIRSTCHICAGO.ORG/SQRP](https://kidsfirstchicago.org/sqrp)



**WORLD-CLASS SCHOOLS.  
WORLD-CLASS CITY.**

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