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SELECTIVE ENROLLMENT ADMISSIONS SCORES SOFTEN AS SEATS ARE ADDED – BUT HIGHER TIER STUDENTS STILL FEEL THE SQUEEZE

Chicago, IL – Average admissions scores declined across the board as nearly 400 seats were added to Selective Enrollment High Schools. Scores fell very slightly at the top schools (Northside, Payton and Young), a bit more noticeably at Jones and Lane and even more elsewhere. The drop in scores at Jones (+140 seats) and Lane (+100 seats) appear to be caused by the larger number of spots offered at both schools. Other schools adding seats included Westinghouse (+95 seats), and Payton (+21 seats) and a new school, South Shore (+165 seats) opened its doors.

Figure 1. Average Admissions Scores (2013-2014)

	2013-2014	change in points	change in seats
Brooks	765	-11	+0
Jones	852	-10	+140
King	701	-15	- 67
Lane	825	-8	+100
Lindblom	806	-18	+0
Northside	879	-1	+5
Payton	881	-6	+21
South Shore	699	NA	+165
Westinghouse	755	-13	+95
Young	871	0	-70

Two Selective Enrollment schools reduced their number of seats: King (where not enough qualified Tier 4 students applied) and Whitney Young.

South Shore, the newest Selective Enrollment High School, debuted with low overall scores – only 699 on average. To put this score in perspective, a student with a 699 score could have 2Bs, 2Cs and only average test scores. While it’s understandable that South Shore as an unproven commodity would have low initial admissions scores, it should be noted that Westinghouse posted significantly higher scores its first year.

Despite the additional seats, Tier 4 students felt little relief from intense pressure at the more competitive Selective Enrollment High Schools. Average Tier 4 scores at Jones, Lane Tech, Northside, Payton and Young remained high – ranging from 842 at

Lane to 895 at Payton. Significant score “gaps” between admitted Tier 4 and Tier 1 students persisted at more competitive schools as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Score Gaps at Competitive Schools (2012-2013 through 2013-2014)

	Tier 4 average score	13-14 score “gap” between Tier 4 and Tier 1	year-to-year change in “gap”	decline in Tier 1 average score
Jones	872	85	+13	-21
Lane Tech	842	87	+11	-20
Northside	894	60	+15	-7
Payton	895	54	+24	-21
Young	882	49	-2	-1

The “gap” between the average score of an admitted Tier 4 and Tier 1 student ranged from 49 points (Young) to 87 points (Lane Tech) as the academic caliber of admitted students at the more competitive schools continued to vary widely. The “gap” increased this year, particularly at Payton. Most of this “gap” increase can be attributed to a decline in Tier 1 average scores, especially at Jones, Lane Tech and Payton.

Northside and Payton continue to be the most competitive Selective Enrollment High Schools. Virtually perfect scores are needed to get in at the Rank, Tier 3 and Tier 4 levels. Significant numbers of Tier 4 -- and to a lesser extent Tier 3 students -- with nearly perfect scores continue to be rejected at these schools. The average score of an admitted Tier 4 and Tier 3 student at Northside was 894 and 887 respectively and for Payton 895 and 886. This meant that some Tier 4 and Tier 3 students in the top 2-3% in total possible points were not admitted. The compression in scores among higher Tier students applying to these schools also means that some students with identical scores were admitted and some were not as CPS continues to look at “tie breakers” to choose between students with the same point totals.

According to Matthew Greenberg, partner of educational services firm SelectivePrep, “While it’s commendable that CPS is adding Selective Enrollment seats, too many promising Tier 3 and 4 students are still being rejected at competitive Selective Enrollment High Schools. For example, a student from Portage Park with 3As, 1B and all test scores in the 90% range would still not get a spot at Lane Tech – let alone any of the other competitive Selective Enrollment High Schools. It should be remembered that

nearly all Tier 3 and 4 students come from lower middle class families and cannot afford private school tuition.”

About SelectivePrep

SelectivePrep was founded by test prep veterans with over 25 years of test preparation experience – and extensive backgrounds in both classroom teaching and curriculum development. SelectivePrep offers the *only* classroom program that prepares students for both of the standardized tests needed to gain admission to a Selective Enrollment High School and Academic Center. SelectivePrep knows what it takes to train and motivate students who are intent upon gaining admission to one of the nine Chicago Selective Enrollment High Schools or one of seven Academic Centers. SelectivePrep’s programs provide a thorough and rigorous review of test content, so students can approach these competitive admissions processes with confidence.

For additional information and registration go to www.selectiveprep.com or call (312) 409-8411.