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THE JONES “NEIGHBORHOOD” OPTION: AN OPPORTUNITY WASTED

Chicago, IL –Jones College Prep’s long awaited 100 million dollar plus multi-year expansion effort is finally at an end, enabling the school to add 300 additional seats in this year’s admissions cycle. However, these spots will *not* be given to high caliber students across the City of Chicago – but to lower achieving students who live within certain “neighborhood boundaries” and have minimum seventh grade test scores.

Jones’ neighborhood seats will be in a “pre-law” or “pre-engineering” program that specifies that students take one class at a time in these career programs – while the rest of the time they’ll be in the same accelerated classes as other Jones students who are admitted under the rigorous Selective Enrollment admissions system.

Last year average admissions scores at Jones College Prep were 862 on the 900 point scale, making it one of the most competitive Selective Enrollment schools in Chicago. In addition, its central location makes Jones one of the few Selective Enrollment schools accessible to students city-wide. This decision effectively shuts out higher achieving students across Chicago at a time of intense competition and favors lower scoring students lucky enough to live within certain neighborhood boundaries.

CPS has justified this decision by claiming that students who live within these neighborhood boundaries do not have good neighborhood high school options. Of course the same could be said for most neighborhood high schools throughout the City of Chicago. What is particularly puzzling is why CPS is squandering the opportunity to add Selective Enrollment seats that are accessible to students city-wide at a time when Selective Enrollment admissions scores have reached stratospheric levels.

According to Matthew Greenberg, partner of educational services firm SelectivePrep, “Clearly the losers of this new scheme are high achieving students city-wide – and if they lose --the City of Chicago loses. It would seem that CPS would want to build on a successful system by adding seats in a convenient location – rather than taking them away.” Mr. Greenberg continued, “The addition of students with lower credentials has the potential to diminish the academic caliber of Jones – and if applied elsewhere – other Selective Enrollment High Schools.”

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 the Academic Center Admissions Test. 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.