

April 30, 2018

BROOKS ACADEMIC CENTER GATHERS STEAM

Chicago, IL –In the most recent round of Academic Center admissions, mean scores for Brooks Academic Center moved up an impressive 19 points as Brooks became the most competitive Academic Center on the south side. Brooks, just one year old, is the newest addition to Chicago’s Academic Center family. Last year, its quiet opening seemed to escape notice – clearly this is no longer the case. One of Brooks Academic Center’s attractions is its association with a solid Selective Enrollment High School. In addition to edging out Kenwood Academy, Brooks grabbed academically talented students who may have chosen Lindblom in prior years – helping Lindblom mean scores tumble by 31 points, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Academic Center Admissions Scores (2018-2019)

	2018-2019 mean admission scores	2017-2018 mean admissions scores	change in points
Young	875	867	+8 points
Lane Tech	847	846	+1 point
Taft	792	774	+18 points
Brooks	748	729	+19 points
Kenwood	740	743	- 3 points
Lindblom	699	730	-31 points
Morgan Park	622	632	-10 points

¹In calculating the average score, we assumed the ratio of seats as determined by the Tier admissions formula, e.g., 30% for Rank and 17.5% for each Tier. All numbers are rounded to the nearest point.

Average scores for the top two Academic Centers, Young and Lane Tech, were relatively flat, increasing 8 points and 1 point respectively. At the same time, Taft edged up 18 points. This move was propelled by increases in scores for lower Tier students. Mean scores for admitted Taft students from Tier 1 and Tier 2 rose 30 and 52 points respectively. Despite this rise in lower Tier scores, huge gaps in academic achievement remain between admitted Taft students from different Tiers. For example, there is a gap in the mean score for admitted Tier 4 and Tier 1 Taft students of 170 points and a gap in

the cut-off scores of admitted Tier 4 and Tier 1 students of 275 points as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Taft Academic Center Admissions Scores (2018-2019)

2018-2019 Taft mean admission scores		change in points
Tier 1	654	+30 points
Tier 2	778	+52 points
Tier 3	816	+14 points
Tier 4	824	+ 7 points
Rank	848	+2 points
Spread between Tier 1 and Tier 4 mean		170 points
Spread between Tier 1 & Tier 4 cut-off		275 points

Like Taft, Lane Tech is also located in an area far from most Tier 1 students and continues to have difficulty attracting high scoring Tier 1 applicants. This issue is primarily responsible for the persistent difference between mean Lane Tech and Young admissions scores. This can be seen in the spread within the lower Tier scores and gaps between Tier 4 and Tier 1 admissions scores. In the most recent admissions round, there was a 95-point gap between mean Tier 4 and Tier 1 Lane Tech scores and a 124-point gap between Tier 4 and Tier 1 cut-off scores.

Required Tier 4 scores at both Young and Lane Tech remain extremely high, demonstrating strong demand for these schools among middle class students. A Tier 4 cut-off of 861 for Lane Tech may not seem like such a high score since it's on a 900-point admissions scale. However, because of the way the Academic Center Test is scored – it is extremely high. Students who score at this level have received all A's in 5th grade (for 300 points), are in the top 1% on both the Reading & Math 5th grade MAP test (for an additional 300 points) --- and score in the top 1% on the Academic Center Admissions Test. Having a cut-off score of 861 means that Lane Tech is excluding some students in the top 1% across all admissions components who reside in Tier 4 neighborhoods.

Similarly, a cut-off score of 874 at Young for Tier 4 students, means that a measurable portion of students who scored in the top 1% on all components, but who had the misfortune to reside in a Tier 4 neighborhood were rejected by Young. The fact that students whose scores put them in the top 1% are being rejected underscores both the

high level of demand for seats at top Academic Centers among middle class students and the rigid constraints of the Tier system.

Morgan Park, continues to struggle to attract academically advanced students. Its average score this year of 622 (-10 points) puts it on the bottom of the Academic Center heap once again. Academic Centers are increasingly seen as six-year programs with the high school component an important part of the student's admissions decision. Academic Centers associated with high schools that are perceived as weak (e.g., Morgan Park) have continued to flounder.

According to Matthew Greenberg, partner of educational services firm SelectivePrep, "Brooks has emerged as the top choice for students from the south side of Chicago. It will be interesting to see if Brooks maintains its position or if Lindblom's association with a respected Selective Enrollment School will help it rebound."

Greenberg continued, "Strong demand for seats at the top Academic Centers continues unabated. Unfortunately, where students reside plays an outsized role in the admissions process for these top schools. Some highly qualified students, scoring in the top 1%, are being excluded. A significant increase in the number of seats at the top schools --- or a new Academic Center conveniently located to these students, are much needed changes to serve talented middle class Chicago families."

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 all of the standardized tests needed to gain admission to a Selective Enrollment High School or Academic Center. SelectivePrep knows what it takes to train and motivate students who are intent upon gaining admission to one of the eleven 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.