**School overcrowding and multi-track year-round schedules**

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Legislative Hearing on the Overcrowding Crisis

Overview of select research submitted in support of plaintiffs in *Williams v California* case and related Chicago Public School issues.

**The Williams case:** In August 2004, the state of California agreed to settle *Williams v. California*, a landmark civil rights case which challenged the state to ensure quality learning conditions for millions of low-income students of color. The Williams settlement is an important victory for students, parents and their communities in California. It creates new *standards* for measuring whether schools have the *basic conditions students need to learn* such as textbooks, well-trained teachers and clean and safe school facilities.

Under the Williams settlement, California agreed to spend up to $1 billion in capital funds which will be added to the current $14 billion construction budget of the LA Unified School District.

The goal of the LAUSD’s school construction program is to build enough schools to return all its students to neighborhood schools operating on traditional calendars.

The research papers cited in the next pages may be found at [www.decentschools.com/whatsnew.php](http://www.decentschools.com/whatsnew.php)
Related CPS issues

7 out of 8 CPS schools on the multi-track system are predominantly Latino, Limited English-speaking, and low-income (see PURE Fact Sheet, “Discriminatory Impact of CPS Policy”, attached)

Parents have staged a school boycott at Hurley, slated to go on multi-track July 2, 2007; the LSC and community are totally opposed to the schedule.

Research for Williams case

A. Prof. Emeritus Glen I. Earthman, Virginia Polytechnic: 
The Effect of the Condition of School Facilities on Student Academic Achievement.

- Overcrowded schools have been found to be a negative influence upon student performance, especially for minority/poverty students. Students in overcrowded schools and classrooms do not score as high on achievement tests as students in non-crowded schools and classrooms. (p. 3, 12)
- Overcrowding results in higher absenteeism among teachers and students. (p. 12)
- Teachers report that overcrowding creates stressful and unpleasant working conditions, that these schools are noisier, create more non-instructional duties and paperwork, and inhibit teaching and learning. (p. 12)
- Teacher burnout is more common in overcrowded schools. (p. 13)
- 40% of students in overcrowded schools who were studied said they had trouble concentrating on their classes when learning something new; teachers in these schools said they only had time to cover the basics and did not have time for further exploration. (p. 13)

B. Prof. Jeannie Oakes, UCLA: Multi-Track, Year-Round Calendar and Busing to Address Overcrowding

- Multi-track, year-round education, which began as a stopgap effort to cope with severe overcrowding, has only exacerbated the inequities between and among California’s schools. (p. 2)
- Multi-track schools disproportionately enroll students of color. (p. 6)
- Disadvantages of busing to relieve overcrowding include reduced parental involvement, incentive to skip kindergarten, limited access to after-school programs, and poorer academic performance. (p. 3)
- Multi-tracking is a (financial) response to overcrowding, not an educational innovation or reform. “There’s no school in California that would choose to do multi-track.” (pp.7-8)
In contrast, smaller class sizes have significant, measurable benefits that overcrowded classes do not: superior student academic performance, enhanced student-teacher interaction, increased personalization and individualized instruction, and less disruption. Studies show that the positive benefits of smaller class size are even greater for disadvantaged and minority students. (pp. 14-15)

Multi-track calendars do not necessarily relieve overcrowding. (p.16)

Multi-tracking can actually exacerbate the negative effects of overcrowding. Students classes are sometimes held in gymnasiums, libraries, and computer labs instead of classrooms as a result of overcrowding; these makeshift settings not only fail to provide adequate instructional spaces, but prevent other students from benefitting from the services those locations are designed to provide. Multi-tracking adds to that problem- with all classrooms in use during the regular school year, schools have no space to provide makeup or enrichment classes, test preparation, and other academic intervention programs. (p. 18)

Research on school size indicates that student achievement is higher, along with attendance and graduation rates, while the rates of violence and disruptive behavior are lower, at small schools as compared to large schools. (p.18)

Small schools are particularly beneficial for low-income students.

Tracking can and does become explicit in multi-track schools as students and course offerings are clearly differentiated between tracks, such as one specific track for English Language Learners. (pp. 27-28)

Students at multi-track schools cannot obtain summer internships and jobs or participate in seasonal sports or other extracurricular activities. (p.31)

There is a “painful” shortage of programs to keep schoolchildren busy during non-summer vacations. (p. 32)

Multi-track schools scored below predicted levels even after controlling for socioeconomic status.

CPS schools using the multi-track system remain overcrowded.

None of the tracks of the multi-track schedule offers the same opportunity for uninterrupted preparation for the ISAT exams as the traditional calendar. This puts students on the multi-track system at a disadvantage since the test is used to make promotion decisions. This is consistent with the experience of year-round schools across the nation (see PURE fact sheet: “Track schedules and the ISAT” and article on Nevada schools, attached).

Parents report that Track B at Hurley, which is to start July 2, will be “the bilingual track”.

“B Track” Hurley students who were required to attend remedial summer school under the CPS promotion policy will only be able to attend for a week and a half and then will go back to Hurley to begin the “regular” school year.
C. Dr. Ross Mitchell, Gallaudet U.: “Segregation in California’s K-12 Public Schools: Biases in Implementation, Assignment, and Achievement with the Multi-track Year-round calendar

- Found that Hispanic, English Language Learners, and low-income students were disproportionately represented in multi-track schools. (p. 5)
- Found that there were fewer fully credentials and more emergency credentialed teachers in multi-track schools as compared with traditional schools. (p. 6)
- “The multi-track calendar is independently associated with an additional achievement penalty” beyond individual student and family characteristics and teacher qualifications. (p. 6)
- Educational opportunity is curtailed for multi-track students since, for example, they do not have access to summer school. (p. 8)
- The multi-track calendar normally requires some grade combination classes which lower overall achievement and teacher morale. (p. 8)

Related Chicago issues, cont’d

See PURE Fact Sheet, “Discriminatory Impact of CPS Policy”, attached

See, additionally, “Hurley Elementary School: Oppose Multi-track Year-round Calendar”, attached