

**Contact:**  
**Matthew Greenberg (312) 409-8411**

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**OGDEN INTERNATIONAL GIFTED CENTER: SLATED FOR TERMINATION**

**Chicago, IL** –Over the summer the Chicago Board of Education “recommended” that Ogden close its International Gifted (IG) program since it is “redundant” with the International Baccalaureate (IB) middle years program and announced its intentions not to accept new student applications for the Ogden IG program.

International Gifted programs are accelerated middle school programs that accept the most advanced students city wide who apply as 5<sup>th</sup> graders. IB middle year programs admissions are determined by a combination of neighborhood boundaries and lottery. To describe Ogden IG as “redundant” to an IB program is simply incorrect. While it is true that Ogden Elementary is overcrowded and that eliminating its IG program will help free up some space, ending one of the top middle school programs in the City of Chicago to ease overcrowding is short sighted. Moreover, this decision was made very quietly with little discussion, no notice and no community input.

At the same time, accelerated middle school programs, particularly those associated with an excellent high school, are in intense demand. Students who are successful in gaining admission to Whitney Young Academic Center (WYAC) and Lane Tech Academic Center (LTAC) score in the top several percentiles on the admissions tests to get in. In fact, given the intensity of the demand for seats at the top accelerated middle schools, spots could easily be *doubled* at these schools while still maintaining a high standard of academic excellence.

No accelerated middle school program has been surfaced as an alternative to Ogden IG. Ending this highly regarded middle school program that serves academically talented students city wide without offering up any other comparable accelerated middle school program in its place reduces student choice and poorly serves the needs of academically advanced students. There is clearly a high demand for such an option given the strong demonstrated demand for accelerated middle school programs like WYAC and LTAC.

Despite the strong demand from students – and these schools’ excellent results, it is sometimes difficult to get an accelerated middle school program off the ground within

the CPS system – and all too easy to kill one. For example, it took two years for Lane Tech to get approval for its Academic Center. Surrounding elementary schools, afraid that LTAC would siphon off some its best students, fiercely fought the launch of LTAC.

According to Matthew Greenberg, Partner of SelectivePrep, “Eliminating Ogden IG, a high caliber academic program, is a poorly considered decision. Hopefully CPS will reevaluate this move – or announce its intention to open a new nearby accelerated middle school program as a replacement.” Greenberg continued, “Maybe it won’t take two years to get this right.”

### **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.

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