

Jenner Ogden Merger FAQ's

Is the NextLevel NPO report the final plan for merging?

The NextLevel NPO report is not the final plan for merging. NextLevel NPO is a 3rd party consultant that was hired by the Jenner/Ogden Community Steering Committee to engage parents, community members, teachers, Aldermen, CPS and research experts in an effort to represent all voices in this process. NextLevel conducted a data-driven three-month community engagement process which included listening sessions with members of the Jenner and Ogden communities. They also delved into the analysis of data and relevant research findings and, together with the community feedback, developed a report that was provided to the Steering Committee in September 2016. Their report included recommendations for how to make the merger successful.

What is the next step?

CPS is now charged with developing a plan for merging the two schools that would show the Board of Education what a merger could look like in practice. If the Board of Education chooses to approve the merger, CPS would then use the implementation plan to guide the process of merging the two schools. Additional consultants could be incorporated into the process.

What is an implementation plan and who creates it?

The Jenner/Ogden Community Steering Committee made the recommendation to CPS to merge the two schools. The NextLevel report also recommends the two schools merge. CPS is now charged with developing a plan for merging the two schools. CPS will guide the final implementation process if they decide to present the recommendation for merging to the Board of Education. Topics would include safety and security, supports for students, a cultural integration plan, academic/curriculum support plan, and transportation/logistics, among other topics.

How would the grade levels be split between each building?

Determination of grade level locations in each building and how to best utilize the facilities would be part of the implementation plan.

What happens to the IB curriculum?

Remaining as an IB full-continuum school with an IB curriculum is a condition for a merged school. Teachers would be offered IB professional development training according to IB certification guidelines.

Would all three buildings be overcrowded from day one of a merger? As redevelopment continues in the Near North Cabrini Green area, will there be enough room in a new combined school for these new students/returning families?

All student enrollment numbers are based on estimated projections. The initial research shows that there is room to grow if a merger occurs. More planning by CPS needs to be done to determine efficient facility usage. They will internally guide the final implementation process if they decide to present the recommendation for merging to the Board of Education.

Would the merged school become Selective Enrollment?

Ogden and Jenner are currently neighborhood schools without a selective enrollment component and the combined school would remain a neighborhood school.

Would there be transportation between the two buildings?

Currently, CPS provides limited busing in the city. If CPS recommends the two schools merge they would determine if and how they would shuttle students back and forth between the two buildings. Currently, Ogden transfers their middle school students from East to West Campus via a shuttle bus.

If a merger were to occur, would the current students that attend Jenner (but who live outside of the boundaries and are allowed to attend due to the Options for Knowledge status of Jenner) be allowed to continue attending the merged school or would they have to attend another school?

Based on initial conversations with CPS, all current students enrolled at Jenner would be grandfathered in and allowed to stay through their 8th grade graduation if they so choose. If a merger occurs, NEW students living outside the school boundaries will not be allowed. It is not the intention that an Ogden/Jenner merger results in a Selective Enrollment school environment where students have to apply and test to attend.

Do the principals from each school support a merger?

Per CPS' directive, neither Principal Croston nor Principal Beyer are able to actively participate in any merger conversations. If the BOE votes to approve this School Action to merge the schools, both principals would be involved in the transition and implementation planning. Both principals made a public statement last Fall.

Do the Local School Councils from both schools support a merger?

Both LSC boards have been kept abreast of the work the Jenner/Ogden Community Steering Committee has been doing with NextLevel NPO. They received monthly updates as to the progress of the 3rd party consultant, NextLevel NPO, and their community outreach. LSC boards do not have authority to approve a merger, but can signal their support.

Did the purpose of the merger shift away from overcrowding (at Ogden) and under-enrollment (at Jenner)?

Yes, while overcrowding and under-enrollment of the schools were the catalyst for the initial conversations to merge Jenner and Ogden in the fall of 2015, during the course of extensive research and discussions with education thought leaders regarding successful integration of schools, the data revealed broad benefits for ALL students exposed to a diverse learning environment. These benefits include strong academic outcomes, improved cognitive skills (including critical thinking and problem solving) and strengthening the skills needed in the next generation workforce for living in a more diverse society. It also became clear that a successful merger can be used as a blueprint for public education here in Chicago and around the nation.

What opportunities did people have to provide input into the NextLevel NPO report?

Next Level NPO completed extensive community outreach over a three-month period. Opportunities for providing input/concerns/suggestions for what a successful merger would look like consisted of: One-on-one interviews, surveys (both paper based and online), small group meetings, 24/7 access via phone and email, and flyers that had their website and contact information.

Additional information can be found at: www.jenner-ogden-merger.com