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Chicago Files

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Proposed School Closings
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On March 12, 1981, the Chicago School Board published a list of 37 school closings (including parts of five campuses) to be effective next fall. A series of public hearings will be held on this proposal.

Four of the schools now provide vocational or special education; the 33 remaining (elementary) schools (all small-to-medium-sized) schools are as follows:

- a. Sixteen all-black schools which are relatively isolated (in the sense that there are substantial numbers of other all-black schools located closer to white schools and therefore more easily desegregated);
- b. Five all-black or black and Hispanic schools located within short transportation distance of white schools;
- c. Six white schools located at a distance from minority schools that places them within the acceptable busing time (30-40 minutes) which the Board at one time considered (but did not include in its "principles" of April 29, 1981).
- d. Three white schools close enough to walk to minority schools;
- e. Two multi-ethnic schools near others similarly constituted.
- f. One very small magnet school (25% white).

cc: Records
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The selection of these 33 schools for closing seems reasonable in light of their location in various parts of the city, their racial composition and size. The Board has stated that students will be reassigned to nearby schools or encouraged to make desegregative permissive transfers. Some of the closings will surely test the Board's resolve to include desegregative zone line changes this fall.

I expect the usual community outcry against most of these closings, but I am surprised the number of proposed closings is so small. The enrollment and capacity data, as well as the short distance between schools in most areas of the city indicates that the Board could close two to three times as many schools as they have proposed.