



Date: July 8, 2016

Re: Proposed Expansion of Skinner West Elementary School/Brown Elementary STEM Program

Representatives of Neighbors of West Loop (NOWL) were on hand for Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Alderman Walter Burnett's announcement that Skinner West Elementary School will receive a new 15-classroom annex and that nearby Brown Elementary will be converted to become a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) school.

For many years NOWL, along with other West Loop organizations, has advocated for additional capacity at overcrowded Skinner West, a Blue Ribbon Award winning school. NOWL is pleased to learn of this proposed expansion, which would increase the number of classrooms in the main building by over 45%. We are also happy to hear of the reported 1.5 year project schedule, since it would limit the impact to school and park activities caused by construction of the annex. In addition, we welcome the new funding for Brown Elementary, which will receive additional resources and teachers for their STEM program.

Based on initial feedback, a large majority of Skinner families and other neighborhood residents realize the significant benefits that this expansion would bring, including relief to the current and projected school overcrowding and new rooms to support art, science, and computing classes. NOWL and its resident membership fully appreciate that this expansion would support the continued growth of student-age population in the neighborhood, thereby increasing the West Loop's capacity to support more families for years to come.

Considering all of these factors, NOWL is strongly supportive of the proposed expansion of Skinner West and the introduction of a STEM program at Brown Elementary. We look forward to working with the Alderman and other City Officials to learn more about these projects, including the funding sources and schedule for design and construction.

We want to thank Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Mayor Emanuel, Alderman Burnett, and all of our other aldermen in the West Loop for their support in expanding Skinner West.

[Neighbors of West Loop](#) (NOWL) is a neighborhood organization formed by residents to bring together people in the West Loop who want to make a positive impact on our vibrant community. Our goal is to empower residents who wish to volunteer their time for the West Loop. We believe in transparency and the idea that every resident should have the opportunity to be informed and to be heard on issues that affect their community.

Neighbors of West Loop Board of Directors