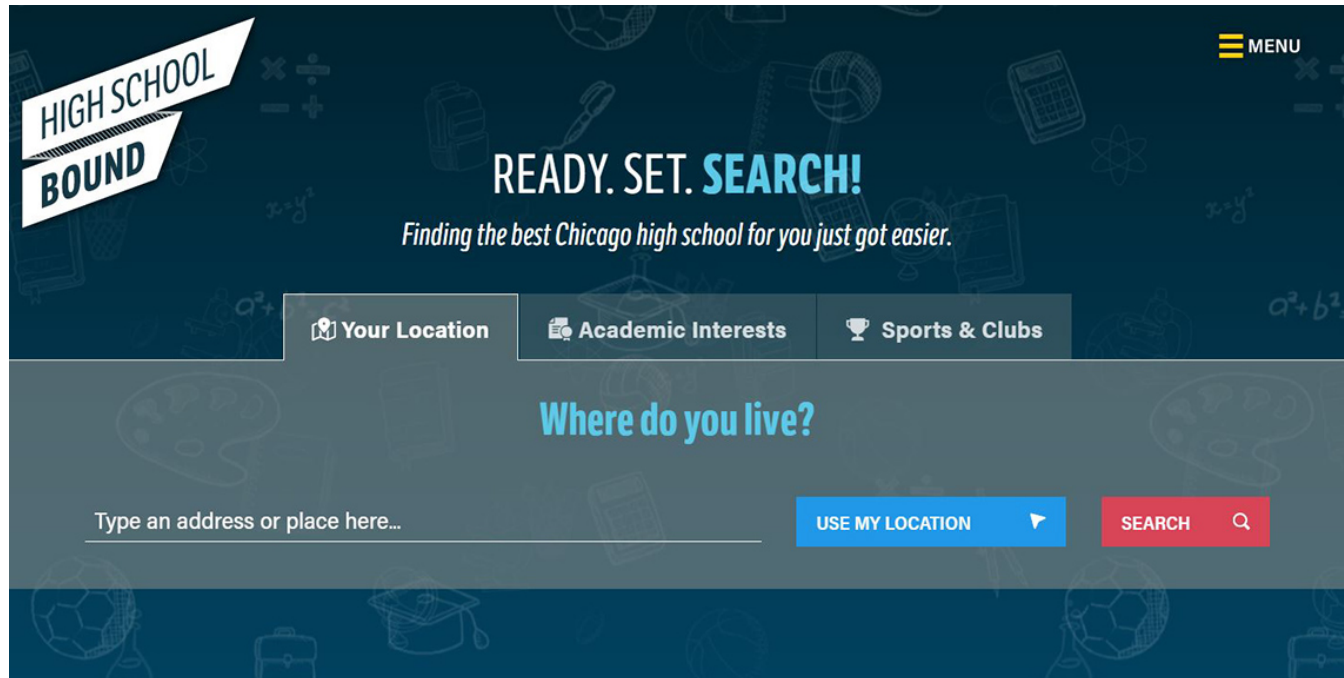


EDUCATION (/EDUCATION)

CPS Helping Students Explore High School Options With New Website

Matt Masterson (/stories-by-author/matt-masterson) | December 5, 2016 4:54 pm

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(HSBound.org)

A new tool announced this week by Chicago Public Schools is set to help students sort through scores of local high schools to find the right one for them based on their academic and extracurricular interests.

The district on Monday unveiled High School Bound (<https://hsbound.org/>), a new website that gives students access to information on clubs, programs and academic progress at each of the 170-plus CPS high schools all in one place.

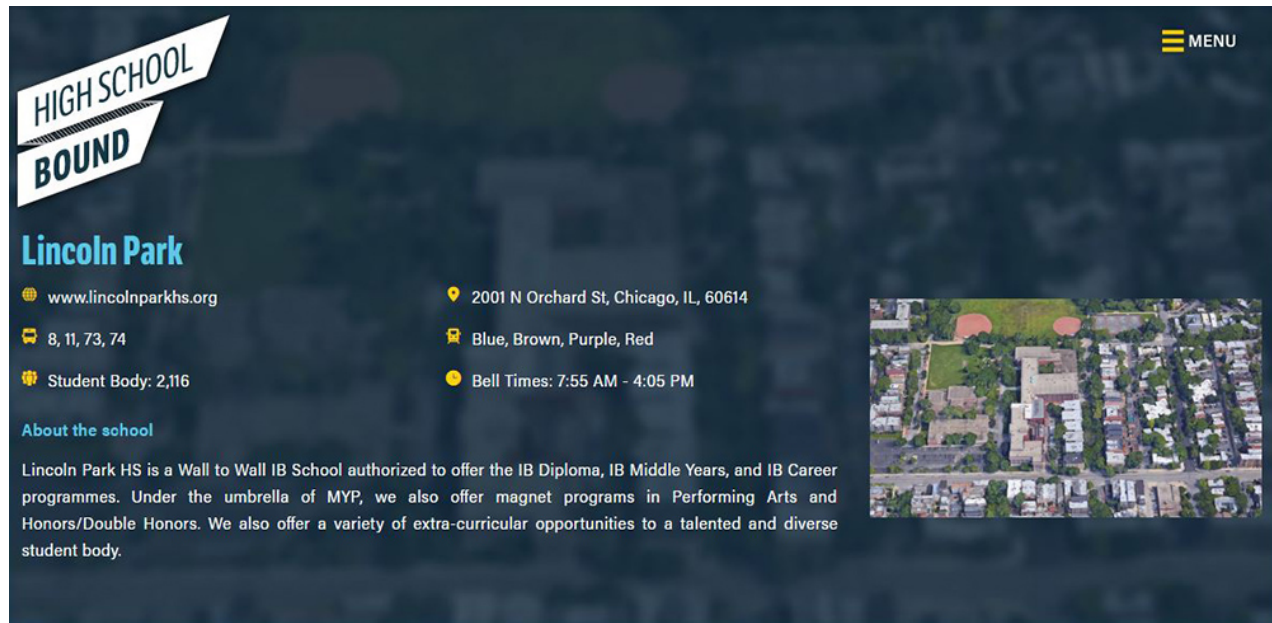
“We’ve been looking forward to something like this for a long time,” said Barton Dassinger, principal at the Chavez Multicultural Academy (<http://schoolinfo.cps.edu/schoolprofile/schooldetails.aspx?SchoolId=610148>), an elementary school in the Back of the Yards neighborhood.

The website – created in conjunction with UChicago Impact, the Urban Education Institute’s nonprofit organization – includes dropdown menus to sort schools by dozens of academic interests (including courses in business, medicine and foreign languages) or sports and activities (from running and football to photography and glee clubs).

Students can also use a map tool to sort schools based on distance from a specific address, or review individual profiles that break down the nuts and bolts of each school by enrollment, class hours and academic progress.

Dassinger has served at Chavez since 2010 and said he made high school enrollment a focus early on during his time at the school. But he felt that process could become exceedingly time-consuming as kids would have to go from the CPS website to the Illinois Report Card to the Chicago Transit Authority site just to get all the information they needed on a given school.

“We understand that applying for high school can be a complicated process, which is why we are proud to partner on the High School Bound website that can help simplify choices,” CPS Chief Education Officer Janice Jackson said in a press release. “High School Bound will help increase accessibility and transparency in the high school application process, as well as help ensure all students from every neighborhood have access to the same information as they make a decision on where to go to high school.”

A screenshot of the High School Bound website for Lincoln Park High School. The page features a dark blue background with a white banner in the top left corner that reads "HIGH SCHOOL BOUND". In the top right corner, there is a "MENU" button with three horizontal lines. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains the school's name "Lincoln Park" in a light blue font, followed by its website "www.lincolnparkhs.org", bus routes "8, 11, 73, 74", and student body size "Student Body: 2,116". The right column lists the address "2001 N Orchard St, Chicago, IL, 60614", colors "Blue, Brown, Purple, Red", and bell times "Bell Times: 7:55 AM - 4:05 PM". Below this information is a section titled "About the school" with a paragraph describing the school's offerings. To the right of the text is an aerial photograph of the school campus, showing a large brick building, a green field, and surrounding residential areas.

A snapshot of Lincoln Park High School included on the new High School Bound website. (HSBound.org)

CPS offers several different types of high schools, including neighborhood, charter, magnet, dual credit and dual enrollment, STEM, International Baccalaureate, selective enrollment and more.

Using High School Bound, students can access data on academic metrics including student attendance, graduation and Freshman On-Track rates, as well as a snapshot view of their student cultures. They can also map out various routes to schools to figure out how long it will take for them to travel to and from their homes.

“I can see on a map how far away it is,” Dassinger said. “I can see what kind of programs it has, I can see how they select different selective enrollment schools, IB, military – all the different components and aspects of the schools, it’s right there.”

By helping students identify high school possibilities earlier, CPS hopes the site can help cut down on transfer rates, which it says can disrupt education and leave long-term effects on school funding and graduation rates.

Beginning this week, Dassinger plans to set aside time for his school counselor to meet with sixth-graders at Chavez and begin exploring different high schools they may be interested in.

“I really think this tool will help our students and families make better decisions,” he said, “and they’ll be more empowered with this kind of access and hopefully we’ll see better graduation rates in the future because of it.”

The application period for CPS schools with academic criteria for the 2017-18 school year ends Friday. Students may continue applying to all other CPS high schools and programs through next spring.

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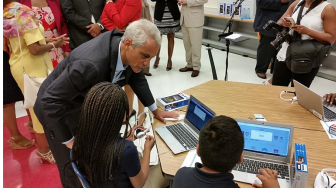
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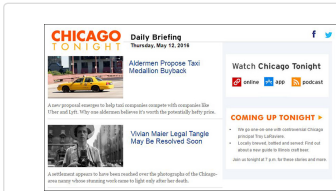
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