OPEN FOR BUSINESS:
Chicago Public Schools and it's Neoliberal *Renaissance 2010* Policy

BACKGROUND

In June 2004, the Chicago Board of Education proposed the *Establish Renaissance Schools* policy (now, often referred to as *Renaissance 2010*). The program initiated a push to widen school choice by closing "failing" schools and aimed to open 100 new schools between the 2004-2005 and 2010-2011 school years, at the urge of for-profit education companies. The preceding *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002) scaled up the federal role of school accountability for overall student outcomes. This Act increased the use of standardized testing, which resulted in early data produced by Chicago Public Schools (CPS) that indicated a significant number of schools were providing students an insufficient level of education. Therefore, *Renaissance 2010* aimed to grow the amount of "higher-quality educational options" for those in Chicago in order to serve the "diverse needs of students."

CPS already provided a variety of schooling options for their students, Pre-K through 12th grade. In the 2004-2005 school year, CPS served a total of 426,812 students in 613 schools. These opportunities ranged from general neighborhood schools (granting admissions based on home address) to options like magnet, achievement, vocational, military, technical, and more. Therefore, students may have opted out of direct enrollment into their neighborhood school and attended a school within a further distance. The *Renaissance 2010* policy projected to produce mainly charter schools in the hopes of disseminating responsibility away from CPS to the individual, independent governing bodies for student success.
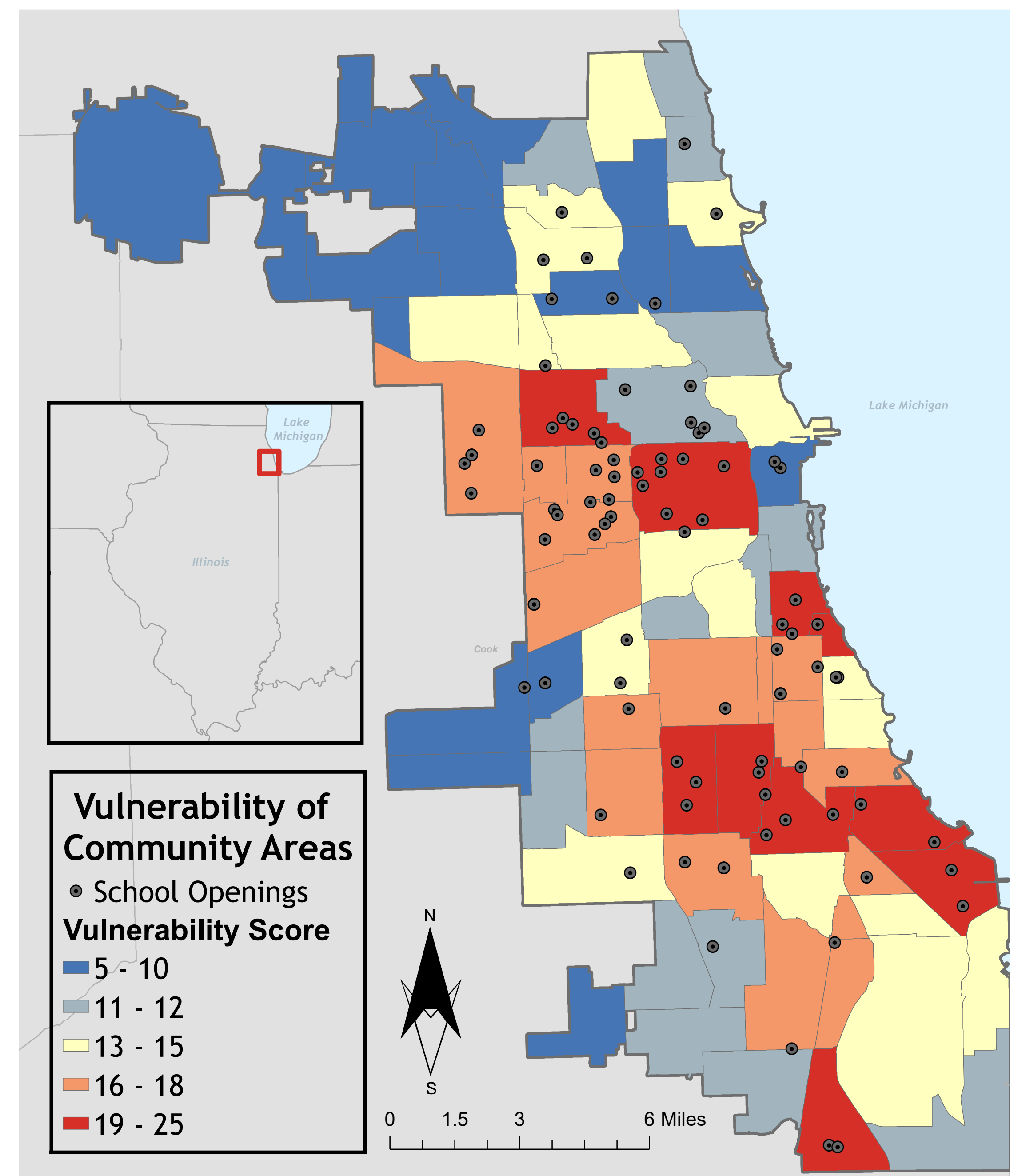
Since the policy approval in 2004 until the intended goal for conclusion in 2010, 90 schools have closed and 87 schools opened. Using demographic data from the 2010 American Census Survey and school location data (schools closed, opened, and unaffected) during the *Renaissance 2010* policy, this project analyzes the strategy behind the school openings and closings regarding to the condition of each "community area," a spatial unit dividing the city into 77 areas with geographic significance as well as consistency over time for data purposes.

The project seeks to identify:

- Which "community area" did the "Renaissance 2010" policy, and the subsequent school closures, leave vulnerable?
- Were the school openings strategic in aiding suitable "community areas"?

Vulnerability Score	Vulnerability Rank	Schools Closed	Percent Closed	Schools Opened	Percent Opened
5-10	Low	0	0%	7	8.05%
11-12		16	17.78%	7	8.05%
13-15	Moderate	12	13.33%	11	12.64%
16-18		44	48.89%	29	33.33%
19-25	High	18	20%	33	37.93%

DATA SOURCES: City of Chicago Data Portal, The Chicago Reporter, 2010 American Community Survey via Rob Paral, WBEZ Chicago, Tufts M Drive

LITERATURE SOURCES: Chicago Public Schools, City of Chicago, Policy Brief 04-0922-PO4, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, SRI International, Lipman + Hursh (2007) in *Policy Futures in Education*
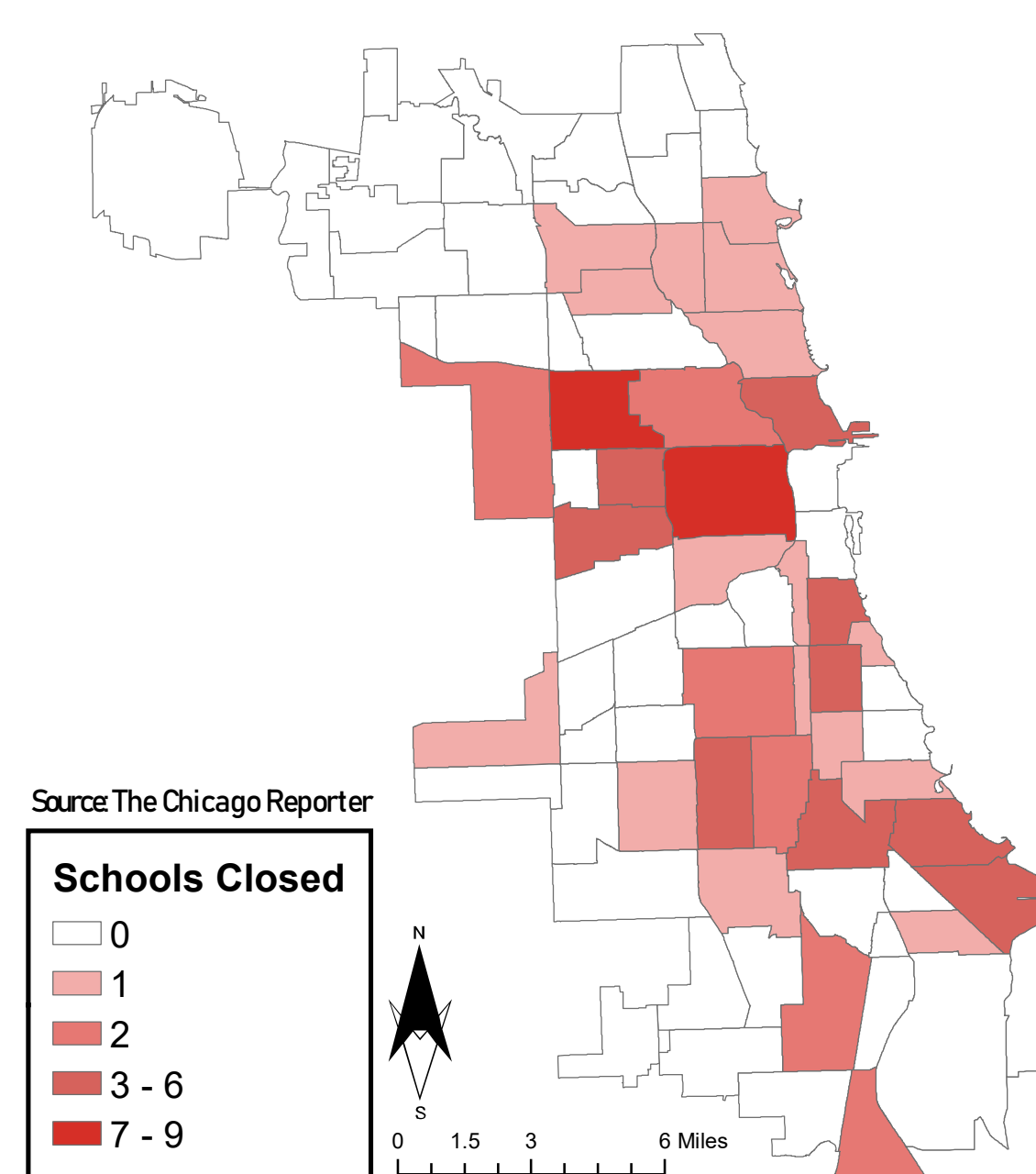
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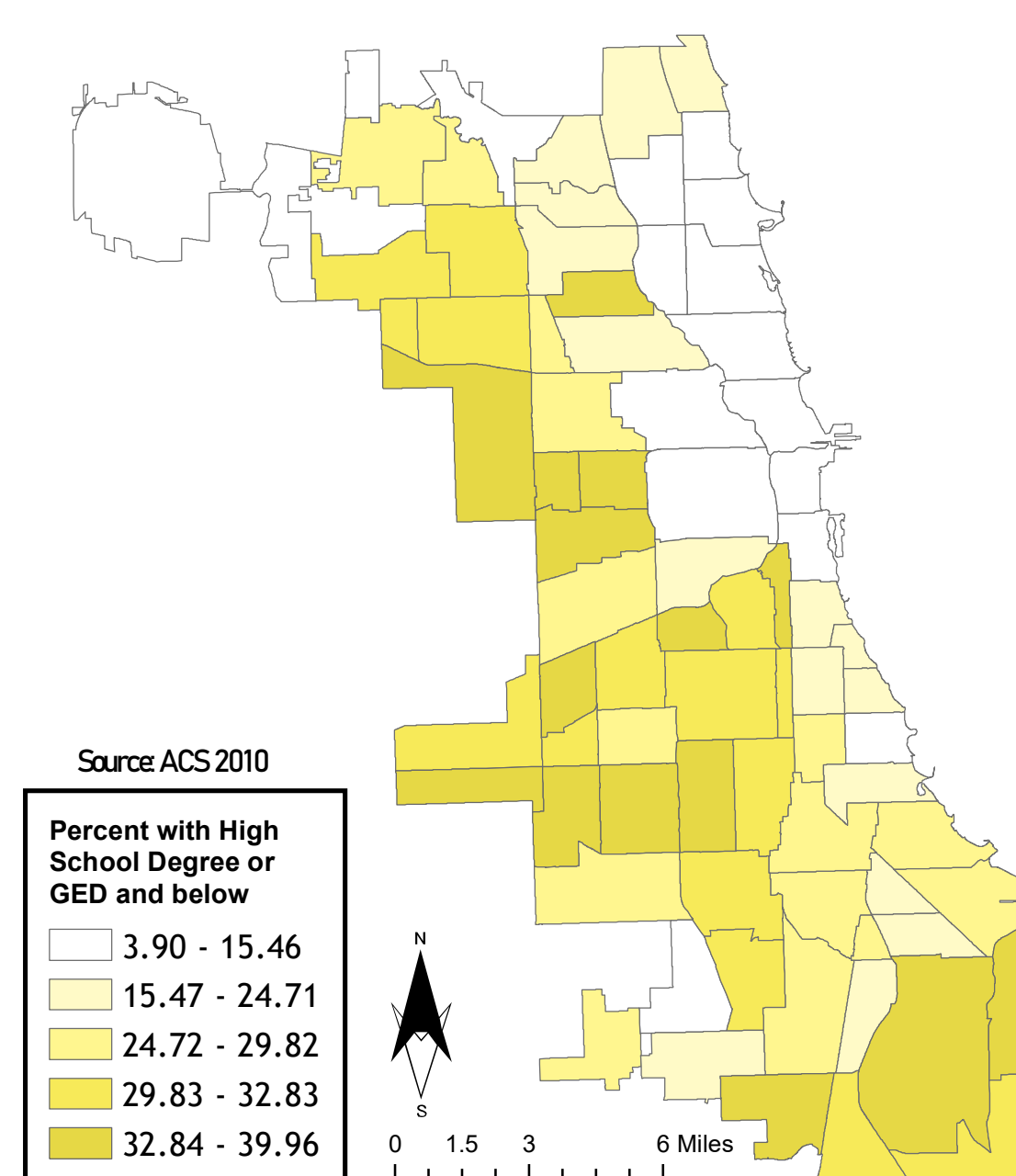NAD_1983_StatePlane_Illinois_East_FIPS_1201_Feet
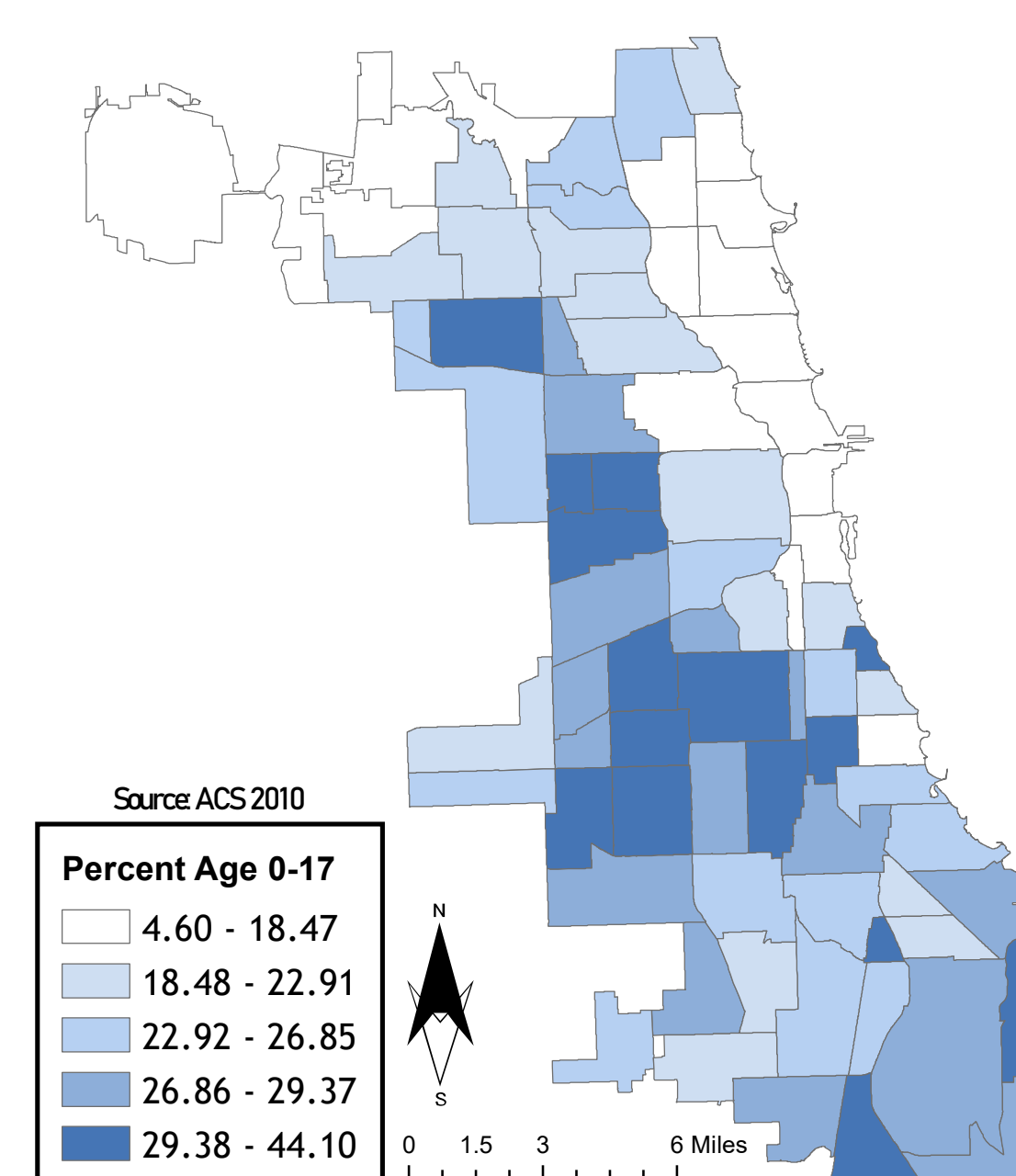
COORDINATE SYSTEM:
GCS_North_American_1983

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GIS 101 - FALL 2019

RESULTS

Lake Michigan

Vulnerability of Community Areas
- School Openings
Vulnerability Score
- 5 - 10
- 11 - 12
- 13 - 15
- 16 - 18
- 19 - 25

0 1.5 3   6 Miles

DISCUSSION

METHODOLOGY: The spatial unit chosen, "community area", divides Chicago into 77 areas. These boundaries do not change over time, which preserves the standardization of spatial analysis. Further, these boundaries are socially meaningful to citizens, nodding to neighborhood divisions. The vulnerability of each "community area" was estimated using five factors. These five factors were: (1) percent of population in community area age 0-17, (2) percent of population non-white, (3) percent of population with High School Degree, General Education Development (GED), or below, (4) percent of population living under poverty line, and (5) the schools closed in the community area under the *Renaissance 2010* policy. These five factors were chosen as significant indicators of educational success, among many others not included. Each community area was ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 based on these factors. The breaks were between quantiles, therefore, the bottom 20% received a score of 1, the top 20% received a score of 5, and so on. This ensured that each score contained an equal number of community areas, between the five breaks. These scores were then mathematically reclassified using quantitative data attached to the vector layers to create a final scale, with scores ranging from 5 as least vulnerable to 25 as most vulnerable.

FINDINGS: The results of this project indicate that the school openings correlated with the community areas that were most vulnerable to the *Renaissance 2010* policy. over 70% of school openings were built in the 40% of community areas deemed most vulnerable. Specifically, the Near West Side had 9 schools close and then 9 schools open over the course of *Renaissance 2010*. However, it is apparent that schools were still being built in community areas already being served (of note, five schools opened in the "community area," West Town, ranked among the least vulnerable to the policy). Overall, though, school openings by "community area" indicate clear strategic efforts to serve vulnerable areas, particularly those left vulnerable subsequent to the *Renaissance 2010* policy.

LIMITATIONS: Beyond the ability of this study, the types of schools remained unmentioned. Most schools that closed down were traditional schools that admitted students based on the geographic location of one's home, often called "neighborhood" schools. In replacement of these schools, the 90 schools opened schools under this policy, a majority of them charter schools, were given looser restrictions as to both administrative and admissions policies. That complicates the analysis by disregarding the fact that not all students go to school in their direct "community area."

Further, it is difficult to reach conclusive evidence, as students are the sum of their educational experiences. Therefore, the generation of students enrolled in schools in Chicago post-2010 and on are the ones who will most entirely feel the affects of the policy. This project only discusses school achievement as a factor in pushing forth *Renaissance 2010*, not as a result of the policy. Therefore, the results are indeterminate of the how the schools improve the vulnerable "community areas," as the assumption is they would.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Source The Chicago Reporter
Schools Closed
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3 - 6
- 7 - 9

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Source ACS 2010
Percent with High School Degree or GED and below
- 3.90 - 15.46
- 15.47 - 24.71
- 24.72 - 29.82
- 29.83 - 32.83
- 32.84 - 39.96

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Source ACS 2010
Percent Age 0-17
- 4.60 - 18.47
- 18.48 - 22.91
- 22.92 - 26.85
- 26.86 - 29.37
- 29.38 - 44.10

POVERTY

Source ACS 2010
Percent Below Poverty Line
- 0.029 - 0.12
- 0.13 - 0.19
- 0.20 - 0.25
- 0.26 - 0.32
- 0.33 - 0.58

PEOPLE OF COLOR

Source ACS 2010
Percent Non-White
- 11.50 - 47.19
- 47.20 - 68.20
- 68.21 - 90.59
- 90.60 - 97.75
- 97.76 - 100.00