

In The Matter Of:
*2010-2011 PROPOSED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
AT WESTINGHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL*

August 18, 2010



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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011 PROPOSED BUDGET
PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday
AUGUST 18, 2010
7:00 P.M.

Held at:
WESTINGHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL
3223 West Franklin Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois

1 **PRESENT:**

2
3 **MS. DIANA FERGUSON,**
4 **Chief Financial Officer;**

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7 **MS. CHRISTINA HERZOG,**
8 **Budget Officer**

9
10 **MS. JORY SIMMONS,**
11 **Moderator**

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20 **Reported by: Janice Smith**

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1 MS. FERGUSON: Good evening, everyone.
2 The hour is just past 7:00 o'clock, so we would
3 like to get started.

4 My name is Diana Ferguson. I am
5 the Chief Financial Officer for Chicago Public
6 Schools. I am joined by Christina Herzog, who is
7 the budget officer for the school district.

8 First, we would like to thank the
9 team here at Westinghouse for welcoming us into
10 their facility. And I would like to thank each of
11 you for being here. We appreciate the effort and
12 the time that you take to come and give us your
13 comments and feedback. And the demonstration of
14 commitment, it is evidence of your commitment and
15 dedication for our schools, so we appreciate that.

16 And we have a process tonight for
17 soliciting your input. In the past, if you
18 attended budgets hearings, you might have seen the
19 format a little differently. In the past we have
20 given a brief presentation and then solicited
21 feedback.

22 This year, in the interest of
23 allocating the maximum amount of time to listening
24 and hearing your feedback, we are dismissing the

1 presentation or dispensing the presentation, and
2 dedicating virtually all of our time tonight to
3 hearing from you.

4 And while Christina and I are here
5 in front of you tonight, we are here representing
6 the Board of Education to hear your comments and
7 input, and take those comments back to the Board,
8 so they can incorporate that into their
9 deliberation and consideration of our budget.

10 We also represent a much larger
11 cross functional team of people across the
12 district who had input into developing this
13 budget, including the principals of our 680
14 schools across our city and in our communities.

15 So, again, thank you for being here
16 tonight, and I will now turn it over to Christina
17 for logistics.

18 MS. HERZOG: All right. Thanks.

19 I want to also echo Diana's
20 comments about your commitment to Chicago Public
21 Schools and our students, and my appreciation that
22 you are here tonight to share with us your
23 feedback. I am certainly looking forward to it,
24 and I know -- I want to thank and acknowledge some

1 of the other members of the budget office team who
2 are here as well, looking forward to what you have
3 to say. And I want to thank them for their time
4 and commitment as well that went into putting this
5 budget book together in a very challenging year.

6 Speaking of a challenging year like
7 this one and putting together a budget in this
8 kind of year, we know that there will be people
9 who agree with some of the decisions that we have
10 had to make and there will be people who disagree.
11 And that is why we are here tonight, to get that
12 feedback and input from you.

13 We know that you've had an opportunity
14 to examine the budget that is online. We have
15 made some available tonight. If you haven't had a
16 chance to get a budget book and there are no more
17 here tonight for you to grab, let us know and we
18 will be glad to send you one. So just give us
19 your information and we will send you one as soon
20 as possible.

21 So we are here tonight, and our job
22 tonight is to listen to you, ensure that your
23 questions and concerns are put onto a record, and
24 take those questions and concerns back to our

1 larger team and the Board of Education.

2 So tonight one of my colleagues
3 here is going to be capturing all of your
4 questions, all of your comments. You know, we are
5 recording them to be able to have as well and
6 share. So we will have those available. And we
7 will definitely follow up with those questions
8 online. And so, within the next day we should be
9 starting to post those online as we get the
10 responses to them and they will be available on a
11 specific link. It should be obvious on the front
12 page.

13 And if you have a comment about a
14 specific school, or a specific program, or a
15 specific position that is not appropriate to share
16 on the larger context online, we will get your
17 individual information too and follow up as
18 appropriate. So make sure we have that if you
19 need an individual response back.

20 That being said, let's go over a
21 few logistics before we begin. For the evening we
22 provided a Spanish translator, as well as sign
23 language interpreter. And if anyone needs
24 assistance, can you let us know now? Sign

1 language or Spanish?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Spanish.

3 MS. HERZOG: Spanish. Okay.

4 Thank you.

5 We have a list of registered
6 speakers for the evening and when your name or
7 organization is called, please proceed to the
8 microphone. Each speaker will be given two
9 minutes to speak and will be notified when those
10 two minutes are up and nearing completion.

11 We would ask that you adhere to the
12 time limit to afford opportunities to hear from
13 everyone who is registered tonight to speak.

14 Ms. Simmons has graciously accepted
15 the moderator job and role for the evening, and
16 will notify the speakers of when to conclude and
17 when time is up. She will also announce who are
18 the next speakers in line when someone is called.

19 The public comments are scheduled
20 to conclude at 9:00 p.m. If you have a cell
21 phone, we ask that you turn it off so that we are
22 not interrupted. And on behalf of the Chicago
23 Public Schools, the finance team, and the budget
24 office, the Board of Education thanks you for

1 taking the time to participate in the hearing
2 tonight and we definitely look forward to hearing
3 your feedback.

4 All right. Let's get started.

5 MS. SIMMONS: Alfred Rodgers. And
6 following Alfred Rodgers is Chris Didato.

7 MR. RODGERS: My name is
8 Alfred Rodgers. I am a local school council
9 member of Merrill Elementary in area 11 and
10 area 23 local school council advisory board.

11 But I am very pleased to see this
12 facility right here. This is a good example of
13 monies well spent, not like the newer ones they
14 are building like on 77th and Kedzie, and then
15 installing a gymatorium. You can see how our
16 voices carry. You didn't even have a mike just
17 now, and I think -- I didn't hear anybody -- no
18 complaints. So, that is my point. You can sit
19 over here, your butts can be nice and cushioned
20 down over there. And that gymatorium, the
21 acoustics are terrible.

22 But the other commentary I would
23 like to do, I would like to find out at 55th and
24 St. Louis down there, the new high school, that --

1 Mr. Duncan was there, he promised me it would be
2 open to the community. When Paul Vallas was here
3 years ago, I got all kind of promises. But one
4 thing I don't like is not speaking the truth. I
5 give a little wiggle room because I don't want to
6 call anybody a liar. Let them hang themselves.

7 I want to know why a new school could
8 be identified later on in the terminology, this is
9 a turn-around school. They took an assistant
10 principal from my Gage Park, made him and as a new
11 principal. And I asked certain questions and I
12 made inquiry. The bottom line, I said yeah, okay,
13 well, I will just keep an eye on things.

14 Then at the last Board meeting down
15 over there, they pulled my drawers down and they
16 left naked and exposed, and they changed it from
17 the -- a regular public high school, the ASUL
18 school down over there, and already I am hearing
19 comments from the new person that is going to be
20 in charge over there, has got no respect in the
21 language, communication with the parents of the
22 children in the feeder schools. So that is what
23 you call, and I tell you, dirty pool.

24 MS. SIMMONS: Mr. Rodgers, please

1 conclude.

2 MR. RODGERS: And I would tell that to
3 Mayor Daly himself if he was here right now. I
4 don't play dirty pool. Thank you.

5 Give me the cost of the money of
6 that new school too, by the way, 55th and St.
7 Louis. That high school. Thank you.

8 MS. SIMMONS: Chris Didato.

9 MR. DIDATO: Chris Didato. Just wanted
10 to say that starting last year there was this
11 whole cry that there would be a one billion dollar
12 shortfall for Chicago Public Schools. And then
13 during the summer, it turned to \$370 million. And
14 I am not sure what it is right now, given all
15 these different numbers being bandied about.

16 It just seems kind of interesting
17 how it went from one billion to close to, you
18 know, however it is. And the fact that there is a
19 budget crisis and there is a TIF program which is
20 made up of property tax dollars that should be
21 going to Chicago Public Schools that our
22 leadership hasn't determined that this crisis that
23 is of such importance that they would even try to
24 claim there would be a surplus so that it could be

1 used by Chicago Public Schools, the park districts
2 and the other entities that would be getting the
3 TIF monies.

4 It seems like this is a crisis and
5 that those monies rightfully belong in the
6 schools. As well, given the fact that, you know,
7 now that there is this money for the federal
8 government, we should try our best to hire back
9 all the teachers who have tenure, who had
10 positions, who know the schools, who know the
11 students, and who have a good rapport with the
12 other teachers, as well as the parents, that those
13 teachers should be hired back to their positions.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. SIMMONS: Thank you. Scott Safero.
16 And following Scott Safero is Dwayne Truss.

17 MR. SAFERO: Hello, Scott Safero.
18 Chicago Public School teacher of over 29 years.

19 Looking at the budget under Capital
20 Projects Funds, there is one part for Phase III
21 ADA Improvements. And I would like to cite
22 page 392, where under Building Renovation it says,
23 a primary goal of renovation is to add at least
24 25 years to the useful life of every building.

1 And then it says further, to ensure safe and
2 efficient learning environments.

3 I have worked in buildings, Manley
4 High School, currently Foreman High School, those
5 two buildings for over 21 years. And they have
6 very high ceilings. And I am a special educator,
7 and I will be in the back of the room, and I know
8 what my colleague is talking at the front of the
9 room. And because sound waves bounce, the
10 acoustics in the majority of these older buildings
11 in Chicago, the acoustics are terrible. The sound
12 is garbled because there is no carpeting, there is
13 no acoustical tiles and there is no drop
14 acoustical ceiling.

15 And I feel it is a wonderful
16 school. I toured a few classrooms here and
17 Westinghouse has got acoustical ceilings. It is
18 beautiful. I could sit in the back of the class
19 and clearly hear somebody speaking at the front.
20 But if you want to do your best to improve
21 academics, that is a problem.

22 Now, there is nothing, I noticed,
23 under that particular need. There is, you know,
24 Phase I, the Building Envelope; Phase II,

1 Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing; Phase III,
2 Building Interior; Phase IV, Facility Site
3 Improvements. I do notice under Phase III it says
4 ADA improvement.

5 So today I bring you an article
6 from today's Chicago Tribune and it says study
7 save teens -- more teens suffer from hearing loss.
8 So, you know, we say in special education, what is
9 good for the kids with special needs is good for
10 all students; you know, good teaching.

11 Well, we need a good situation.
12 Facilities determine so much.

13 And it says now -- the research
14 says that one in five teens now has at least a
15 slight hearing loss, one in 20 has a more severe
16 hearing loss. Of course, we can probably blame
17 the things that the kids stick in their ears and
18 that is what the study suggests is a possibility.
19 But, nonetheless, even before this, for many years
20 I say we need improved classroom acoustics. And I
21 would hope you put some money in the budget to
22 investigate how efficiently we do that for all of
23 these classrooms throughout the city.

24 There is one classroom at Foreman

1 where there's a --

2 MS. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, please
3 conclude.

4 MR. SAFERO: Okay.

5 There is one classroom at Foreman
6 where years ago before I got there, they put
7 carpeting on the floor, and they lowered
8 acoustical tile ceilings so you can see the -- you
9 can easily do a study at Foreman and do a
10 comparison of a classroom with and a classroom
11 without.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. SIMMONS: Thank you. Dwayne Truss.
14 And following Dwayne Truss will be George Schmidt.

15 MR. TRUSS: Good evening. How are you
16 doing there?

17 The one thing I want to say in
18 terms of the budget, I am with the west side
19 branch of the NAACP. And the issues that somebody
20 just brought up and is something that you should
21 be doing if you are going to be budget stewards is
22 to disclose how many dollars are being drained
23 from the schools into the Mayor's TIF funds.

24 Half that \$1.2 billion, if I am

1 correct -- if I'm incorrect, somebody let me
2 know -- should be going back to the public
3 schools, which would be more than enough to wipe
4 out the deficit that, you know, that you say that
5 you got to cut on the backs of our teachers.

6 States like Wisconsin, for
7 instance, they have what they call tax expenditure
8 budgets where they show exactly how many dollars,
9 particularly government entities, are losing
10 because of tax breaks that go to businesses and
11 what have you.

12 Now, one of the reasons that people
13 also have to look at when it comes to why Chicago
14 Public Schools seems to always be in the deficient
15 is because of corruption and mismanagement. That
16 is a significant reason that we don't talk about.

17 My buddy Al just talked
18 Westinghouse in terms of construction costs.
19 North Grand High School, if I'm correct, had a
20 budget of 35 to \$40 million when it was built.

21 This school right here, folks,
22 because I know, because I was involved and my wife
23 worked hard to get it built, had a final budget of
24 \$120 million.

1 A brand new school in Chicago, if
2 you go to pbc.com or.org, you see that the
3 starting price for a new high school in Chicago is
4 \$100 million. And as Al said, he is correct, you
5 get a gymnasium.

6 My wife and I was able to go ahead
7 and negotiate saving the auditorium. Because if
8 you notice in this building versus North Grand, it
9 is built with a lot of cylinder block versus
10 brick, and with some of the architectural atrium
11 and metal stuff that is gone.

12 But those are some of the things we
13 have to look at in terms of CPS.

14 Also, the fact that they spent a
15 million dollars for a consultant to develop a new
16 selective enrollment policy that, you know,
17 impacted this school a million dollars. And if
18 you all have been keeping up with it, the policy
19 didn't work, so they established a blue ribbon
20 commission of educators, rather than noneducators,
21 who are coming up with all these different
22 policies and getting paid all this money, to
23 redevelop a new policy.

24 Also for comparison, if you all are

1 not familiar with Hampshire High School, in
2 Hampshire, Illinois, built a new school, 2,500
3 seats, new auditoriums, all the bells and
4 whistles, ball field, for a total cost of
5 \$75 million with union labor. A 2,500 seat high
6 school was built for \$75 million. But CPS can't
7 build a new school for less than \$120 million that
8 only seats 1,200 students.

9 MS. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, please
10 conclude.

11 MR. TRUSS: CPS should be investing
12 into our kids by keeping these teachers and not
13 cutting teacher staff, because that is what you
14 call true economic development versus lining the
15 pockets of the contractors who seem to run up the
16 cost of all these different construction projects.
17 That is what you all, if you're going to be budget
18 experts or gurus, should do.

19 My question, final question is, how
20 many of you all came over from CTA? Because if
21 that is how the CTA was operating, now we see why
22 CPS is in the mess that it is in right now.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. SCHMIDT: Good evening. Maybe you

1 should have the --

2 MS. SIMMONS: George Schmidt. And
3 following George Schmidt is Kristine Mayle.

4 MR. SCHMIDT: Maybe you should have
5 that little stand here, because this is going to
6 be show and tell, too.

7 My name is George Schmidt. I am a
8 former editor of Substance. I'm a -- still a
9 reporter with Substance and we publish the news
10 every day at substancenews.net. Also, the parent
11 of children in Chicago Public Schools and a
12 consultant, proudly, for the Chicago Teachers
13 Union, and new leadership, who is dedicated to
14 changing the mess that we are going to discuss
15 tonight.

16 Very glad that we have 428 pages of
17 budget available here, but it is necessary to
18 point out two things. The total budget is 2,010
19 pages. This document, if you download it online,
20 the page numbers disappear. So that, if you add
21 into that the 1,500 pages that come off the CD,
22 which includes every school by school, this is one
23 example, you have 2,010 to 2,100, depending upon
24 what your total is of unpagged pages. Makes it

1 impossible for any reasonable person to discuss
2 this budget with a straight face.

3 However, there are improvements.
4 And I promised some members of my family that I
5 would always start with a smile. And the biggest
6 improvement this year is that we have details
7 about the charter schools, although not enough.

8 For the first time we get a look at
9 the charter schools and their performance. Of 44
10 elementary charter schools that are listed in the
11 budget, 20 of them performed at or above the
12 district average on the ISAT, 16 performed below,
13 and six have no data.

14 Of the 34 charter high schools,
15 only four performed at or above on the PSAE. 12
16 performed below and 17 have no data. That means
17 that the charter school experiment in Chicago
18 should be suspended until further notice, and
19 until there is an enormous look at what has
20 happened in the past ten years since this
21 experiment began.

22 I have only one other thing.
23 Please go to page 97 in your budget book. This is
24 Expenditures. As you know, as budget people, it is

1 better to track a five or ten-year trend than a
2 one-year trend, although this year the compulsion
3 was to talk about one-year trends.

4 If you look at Contractual
5 Services, Tuition, Capital Outlay and most
6 egregiously Debt Service, and go back to Fiscal
7 2006, you have four categories where we have
8 almost doubled the costs in the past five years.
9 These are all dangerous additions to our expenses
10 and unnecessary, especially at the time when
11 people are being told that teachers can be cut.
12 But our contractual services can increase from 155
13 million to 201 million. Our tuition payments can
14 increase from 181 million to 376 million. And
15 most dangerously, as one of my colleagues is going
16 to discuss, our debt service goes from 214 million
17 to 477 million.

18 When you claim to have a deficit,
19 whether it is as a family or as a school district,
20 you don't go on spending money like Santa Claus
21 just came in with a bag of it. Those numbers on
22 page 97 trace back five years, indicate the actual
23 priorities and the way the Board of Education has
24 been spending money freely.

1 As you know better than I do, all
2 three of the bond rating agencies are now looking
3 critically at the City of Chicago because of its
4 debt. And as you know better than I do, if the
5 Board of Education makes the same mistake by
6 continuing to waste money the way Al was talking
7 about, and other people, and the Board of
8 Education's bond ratings are lowered, that will be
9 the trigger upon which the derivatives and swaps
10 become due before their 2030 due dates.

11 We can't afford to continue wasting
12 money on mindless experiments that have failed, or
13 on borrowing money to build things that we have
14 just got to say we can't afford right now.

15 I live in a modest home in Chicago,
16 as most of the people who pay attention to this
17 do. We would have loved to have six bedrooms and
18 six baths for our children, but we didn't do
19 anything that foolish. And yet, when I look at
20 these expenditures for CPS, what we are seeing
21 here is that kind of foolishness and it should end
22 this year.

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

1 MS. SIMMONS: Kristine Mayle. And
2 following Kristine is Ganae McAlpin.

3 MS. MAYLE: Hello. My name is
4 Kristine Mayle. I am the financial secretary for
5 the Chicago Teachers Union.

6 We have just recently won this
7 election and one of our platform themes was
8 transparency, accountability, decency. These are
9 the things that we are striving for. And I don't
10 know why CPS cannot do the same thing.

11 Just a quick question. Christina
12 said when we got here that some people would agree
13 with the decisions in this book. Can I see a show
14 of hands how many people actually agree with the
15 decisions made in this book? Oh, okay. Sorry.
16 Just wanted to check.

17 I don't agree. I am just
18 demonstrating, as a teacher, you know.

19 One of the things that has been
20 most troubling to me is, I know you heard from one
21 of my colleagues and friends last night who was
22 reduced to tears because he was being fired from
23 his job at a school that he has dedicated his life
24 to for the last few years. And the thing that is

1 troubling to me is that we were on a conference
2 call with Arne Duncan last week and he told us
3 this money that came through from the Senate, we
4 are going to have approximately \$100 million
5 coming to Chicago Public Schools. It should be
6 hitting the bank next week.

7 That day was the day that CPS sent
8 off layoff notices to 1,200 of our teachers. We
9 think that is the number. We haven't gotten an
10 accurate number back from you, but we believe
11 that. That person that was here crying last night
12 because he lost his job was one of four of my
13 friends that texted me that night saying, I got my
14 letter.

15 These are dedicated teachers. They
16 deserve these jobs. They have worked their butts
17 off. Why are -- the timing is off. I don't
18 understand. So it looked like this money wasn't
19 going to come through on the Senate. And then all
20 of a sudden all this -- all these layoff letters
21 go out, and then the next day the bill passes.

22 So, are we firing experienced
23 teachers right now so that we can rehire cheap
24 first-year teachers at a lower salary?

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. MAYLE: That is the only reason I
3 can think of doing that. I mean, if we know that
4 we have a \$100 million coming in, and we were
5 sitting with the Board's lawyers in negotiations,
6 and they were saying \$100 million is our magical
7 number, we just got to have a million dollars.
8 Why are we firing anybody? It doesn't make sense
9 to me.

10 This is -- this whole process has
11 been disrespectful. This not answering questions
12 is disrespectful. We are taxpayers. We are
13 citizens. This is our money. We should be able
14 to ask questions and get answers in a timely
15 manner.

16 MS. SIMMONS: Ms. Speaker, please
17 conclude.

18 MS. MAYLE: If a student were to ask me
19 a question in class and I said to him, oh, well, I
20 will post it on the website next week, that is
21 disrespectful and I am not doing my job. And not
22 to mention that online access is very limited for
23 our students.

24 You know the percentages of

1 students that we have on free lunch. They don't
2 have access to the Internet, so their questions
3 cannot be answered.

4 I think this whole process is
5 disrespectful. You are gambling with our money.
6 You are gambling with our kids' lives. You are
7 gambling with our teachers' livelihoods, and it
8 just needs to stop. We need to put our priorities
9 in the right place. Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. SIMMONS: Ganae McAlpin. And
12 following Ganae is Georgetta Davis.

13 MS. MCALPIN: Hi. My name is
14 Ganae McAlpin. And in about five days I will be a
15 former CPS teacher.

16 I went to school in CPS. Both my
17 parents were teachers in CPS. And all my life I
18 wanted to be a teacher. I went to school to be a
19 teacher, and I wanted to teach in my community.
20 This budget deficit has destroyed that for me.

21 At the end of this year our
22 principal said we do not know if you are going to
23 have a job. And because of this economic
24 situation our county is in, my husband lost his

1 job. And so I am put in the situation where I am
2 the only breadwinner in the household. And CPS is
3 saying well, I don't know if you are going to have
4 a job next year. That is putting your teachers in
5 a really bad situation.

6 I also just finished my national
7 board candidacy with the Chicago Teachers Union.
8 And now I am going to have to pay them back all of
9 the money that they -- and I am going to have to
10 pay back all of the money that the Chicago
11 Teachers Union invested in me. Because now I have
12 to go find another job somewhere else, because
13 there is no job security here.

14 This is going to destroy the future
15 of CPS. You are not going to have teachers that
16 want to come and work here because of the things
17 that happen. People just lost their jobs last
18 week and school is starting in two weeks. You
19 cannot put people in those types of situations.

20 And I am just afraid that the
21 district that I grew up in, and wanted to work in
22 and loved so much is going to be destroyed by
23 these horrible financial situations and these
24 horrible financial decisions that people are

1 making.

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. SIMMONS: Georgetta Davis.

4 MS. DAVIS: Hello. My name is
5 Georgetta Davis.

6 MS. SIMMONS: Georgetta Davis. And
7 after Georgetta Davis is Nathan Goldbaum.

8 MS. DAVIS: I was asked by the Teachers
9 Union to come in tonight to give my testimony
10 about the situation that I was put in.

11 I received a letter that was dated
12 July 20th. I actually got it maybe the 22nd. And
13 it said that I didn't have a job after August 3rd,
14 which was like nine days before I was supposed to
15 start work. Without -- and not only that, it said
16 that I could not be a cadre, I could not be a
17 reassigned teacher, and that my benefits would end
18 at the end of the month.

19 So they gave me less than
20 30 days -- well, less than nine days to find a new
21 job; less than 30 days of benefits. And then I
22 had to realize that I wasn't getting the
23 contracted agreement about the salary for ten
24 months.

1 And I would just like to say that
2 the timing was horrible and it was very
3 disrespectful. Because you asked for professional
4 teachers, but you are not treating us in a
5 professional manner. Nor are you treating your
6 teacher as an adult or as a citizen in a
7 respectful manner, and considering the fact that
8 they have a life they have to live.

9 Now, I did make a career change
10 from corporate, and even corporate is not this
11 cutthroat. They do give you severance and a
12 way -- you know, a training before they lower the
13 boom on you. And they also try to give you some
14 notice. I have never been in a corporation that
15 they give you nine days that you didn't get any
16 hint that you weren't going to be there.

17 I also wanted to mention that the
18 questions I had to ask was, they say that it
19 happened because of reallocation of funds. I want
20 to know when did the reallocation take place that
21 you didn't know before nine days before I was
22 supposed to return to work. That -- what was the
23 reallocation? And that if that is the case, then
24 you are managing yourself worse than I manage

1 myself, because I should have got more than nine
2 days.

3 Then the other thing I was really
4 concerned about and I felt that it was a
5 deliberate sabotage of our life. Now, you may not
6 like it that there are so many teachers and that
7 the enrollment is down, but to deliberately give
8 somebody nine days' notice sabotages not only
9 their life, their finances, their career,
10 devastate their family.

11 And also I saw a lot of seasoned
12 teachers being devastated right out of their
13 pension.

14 MS. SIMMONS: Ms. Speaker, please
15 conclude.

16 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

17 Basically my thing is that the way
18 that it was handled was so disrespectful. And I
19 still would like the answer about the
20 reallocation. And what benefit is it to be -- to
21 be honorably dismissed and be disrespected at this
22 degree?

23 Those are my final two questions.
24 Okay.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. SIMMONS: Nathan Goldbaum. And
3 after Nathan is Marcia Baltas.

4 MR. GOLDBAUM: Hi. My name is
5 Nathan Goldbaum. I am a teacher at Whittier
6 Elementary School and I am a member of CORE.

7 And last night I asked a question
8 about the TIF's, the approval that CPS is asked to
9 make for TIF. And I understand I was slightly
10 mistaken, that the -- CPS has an advisory vote as
11 to whether TIF's will be allowed.

12 I guess, so my question is, how
13 many times have we advised the city not to accept
14 a TIF district when that will draw funds away from
15 our schools? And will CPS insist that the surplus
16 from the TIF's be brought back in to expand our
17 schools?

18 I also -- I wanted to -- I did ask
19 this last night. I want to be a little more
20 specific. I would like to know, of the position
21 numbers that were closed due to budgetary reasons,
22 how many of them or what percentage? Basically, I
23 want to see that all of them are reopened under
24 the same budget numbers, with the same

1 qualifications. Because I believe that there was
2 actually a plan in place to create a tide that
3 would wash out teachers that were inconvenient for
4 CPS. Inconvenient because they advocated too much
5 for their students, or inconvenient because they
6 were veteran teachers who were making more money
7 than the teachers that CPS would like to hire.
8 And I would like to see some proof to the
9 contrary.

10 And I think that, you know, it is
11 important that we see this -- that actually this
12 is part of a process that has been going on all
13 around the country. We know that CPS has been a
14 place where a lot of these techniques were -- the
15 prototypes for these techniques were worked out.
16 A lot of the tricky things that principals do to
17 try to drive out teachers without actually giving
18 them their due process rights.

19 And I see this as just another
20 opportunity that CPS has taken to deny teachers
21 their due process rights when it comes to being
22 hired and fired.

23 And I would like to see -- I would
24 also -- here is the other question I thought of.

1 With all the chaos that this is going to cost,
2 that this is going to cause within schools, in
3 terms of teachers having to be hired back just
4 days prior to schools reopening, in terms of
5 teachers who will not be able to come back because
6 they have chosen to leave the system that is too
7 destabilizing for them, what is the projected cost
8 in dollars for taking care of all of the chaos
9 that this is going to cause?

10 Because it is clear that this is
11 going to cause the students a lot of chaos and it
12 is going to be very costly, even monetarily.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. SIMMONS: Marcia Baltas. And
16 following Marcia is David Robbins.

17 MS. BALTAS: Good afternoon. My name
18 is Marcia Baltas. I teach English at Julian High
19 School. I am a National Board certified teacher.

20 I guess I will start off with my
21 burning questions.

22 There is an \$800 million line of
23 credit, and I am not sure if that gets allocated
24 to the schools, or if that gets allocated to city

1 services. But it would be kind of interesting to
2 see where these funds get allocated once this line
3 of credit, which I don't know where it is coming
4 from, where they are actually going to go.

5 Several teachers in my school, both
6 veteran teachers and teachers who did not have
7 tenure yet, were dismissed and received their
8 letters. This to me -- it has been happening in
9 all the schools, every teacher that I talk to. It
10 is very disappointing. The students don't
11 benefit.

12 I know one of these teachers was
13 two years away from retirement. And he worked
14 closely -- he has been at the school all his life.
15 He is a special education teacher. He was
16 connected to the students in every single way,
17 shape and form you can imagine. And all of the
18 teachers respected him. He did so much for the
19 staff, and like I said, for the students. He ran
20 a Special Olympics program, and I can't see anyone
21 replacing him.

22 I cannot see these Teach for
23 America teachers who -- you know, if you read the
24 background and the statistics on these teachers

1 who come in from the business backgrounds, they
2 are out the door in two years. They don't stay to
3 teach in the inner city schools.

4 And I was teaching summer school
5 this year and I got a first rate look and
6 observation at how these teachers managed.
7 Because that is what they do, they managed their
8 classrooms. They are from a business background.
9 And it is -- you know, they have it down when it
10 comes to, you know, engaging students and so
11 forth. But they are not going to be spoon fed
12 these resources that they receive. They are going
13 to walk into a school, like Julian High School,
14 and they are not going to get access to copies.
15 And, you know, what is a \$100 going to buy for
16 your teaching? So they did not get a real slice
17 of teaching. They don't really know what they are
18 in for.

19 The way they taught and ran their
20 classes was absurd. You know, you don't teach a
21 standard, an objective, and move on to the next
22 thing the next day. How is that supposed to
23 improve student mastery and growth? That to me,
24 just -- it just boggles my mind how that whole

1 program is run, and how these teachers can come in
2 and replace the special education teacher who lost
3 his position.

4 31 years -- 32 years, I don't know
5 how many years, 30-something years, and someone
6 else is going to take his job who has only been
7 teaching a classroom for what? Eight weeks? Not
8 even that.

9 MS. SIMMONS: Ms. Speaker, please
10 conclude.

11 MS. BALTAS: Thank you for your time.
12 I guess my burning question, if you can address it
13 is, this \$800 million line of credit, where is it
14 going to go? Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. SIMMONS: David Robbins. And
17 following David will be Kurt Hilgendorf.

18 MR. ROBBINS: My name is David Robbins.
19 I am a CPS teacher for six years.

20 I am concerned about the loss of
21 revenue with the tax increment financing
22 districts. And I am concerned about the loss of
23 revenue with the tax increment financing
24 districts. I would like to know what steps has

1 the Board taken to reduce that loss of revenue?

2 Has the Board identified how much
3 revenue has been lost to the schools because of
4 going to the tax increment financing districts?

5 And can CPS ask the city to declare
6 a TIF surplus and ask that money to be given to be
7 used for the schools? And if they can, has that
8 been done and will it be done? Those are my
9 questions.

10 MS. SIMMONS: Kurt Hilgendorf. And
11 following Kurt will be Susan Zupan.

12 MR. HILGENDORF: My name is
13 Kurt Hilgendorf. And I want to thank you for
14 allowing me to address you again tonight. I also
15 look forward to having my questions, my multiple
16 questions about derivatives answered. Sorry, if I
17 was speaking too fast last night.

18 I have two issues for tonight. The
19 first involves CPS's budgeting of contingency
20 lines for various district units. And let me
21 explain.

22 On page 31 of the budget there are
23 three separate reserve funds. And on page 32
24 there is an outline of how the Board intends to

1 replace these reserve funds with one time revenues
2 and so that they actually are rebuilt. And that
3 seems like prudent financial management.

4 However, in the extension files,
5 which are in the CD in the back, there are
6 line-by-line accounting, or there is line-by-line
7 accounting of different district units, a variety
8 of units. And in practically every unit, in fact,
9 twice in the area offices, by my math, and I allow
10 that it could be wrong, depending on the column
11 used, the total contingency amount, or the total
12 contingency allocation is \$98 million higher in FY
13 2011, than it was in FY 2010.

14 \$100 million pays for a lot of
15 teachers, a lot of district programs, and a lot of
16 other support that could be used to improve the
17 process of learning for our students across this
18 city.

19 My question is, why is there so much in
20 these multiple contingency funds if we have three
21 separate reserve funds, which are used in the
22 event of some kind of contingency?

23 My second point has to do with debt
24 issues. This morning Bloomberg printed a mess --

1 or printed an article titled, "Chicago borrows
2 \$160 million for schools as USA halts teacher
3 firings." In the first line of this article, says
4 that Chicago, whose credit rating was cut by two
5 companies this month, plans to issue debt-to-data
6 fund of \$1.25 billion capital plan for the Chicago
7 Public School system.

8 The article continues to say that
9 Fitch lowered Chicago's rating because the city's
10 accelerated use of reserves to balance its budget.
11 Fitch maintained a negative outlook on the city's
12 \$6.8 billion of debt.

13 I have several questions. First
14 and pretty straight to the point: Has the
15 district's bond rating been cut, or is this a
16 separate city bond rating?

17 My second question: In the 2009
18 Comprehensive Annual Financial Review total
19 district debt was \$4.56 billion. This article
20 says the city has a \$6.8 billion debt, which by my
21 quick calculations works out to just under \$12
22 billion.

23 Is this article's number correct
24 for the district, or are these two separate debts

1 totals, meaning the city owes almost \$12 billion
2 right now?

3 Either way, the district needs to
4 slow down its debt issues. When there is a
5 financial crisis, maxing out the credit card is
6 not a prudent method of fiscal responsibility.
7 And given my testimony on the derivatives training
8 from last night, this is a particularly important
9 subject that we consider, what the district's debt
10 service picture is going to be in future years.

11 Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. SIMMONS: Susan Zupan. And
14 following Susan will be Cezar Simeon.

15 MS. ZUPAN: Okay. Susan Zupan. I am a
16 teacher in CPS. I am a proud member of CORE and a
17 member of the staff of Substance.

18 I know from yesterday's hearing
19 that no one up here is going to speak, answer a
20 question, barely acknowledge our existence here.
21 I think that they might have saved some money with
22 cardboard cutouts, or possibly mannequins.

23 I am an elementary school teacher
24 so I brought some props. And if I might take two

1 and a half minutes.

2 (Pause.)

3 MS. ZUPAN: I have a baggie with four
4 quarters in it. Really, if you see it helps. As
5 a tax payer in the City of Chicago, I could put
6 this in a parking meter and I might be able to
7 park my car for a half an hour someplace downtown.
8 Let's just say for argument sake, one dollar would
9 be for one hour.

10 Now, on the other hand, if I'm a
11 charter school, this same dollar will buy one
12 month's rent -- one year's rent in a public
13 elementary school. They have these dollar deals
14 for the charter schools where they pay one dollar
15 rent for a year.

16 In February five such deals were
17 cut by the Board of Education, and I would
18 actually like an accounting of this. It is not in
19 the budget. It is not in here. Everybody should
20 add someplace \$5 to offset the CPS budget crisis.
21 From there, we might call it CPS, Mayor Daly
22 anti-revenue generating rentals.

23 There is more than just those five.

24 I would like to see Arne Duncan, as

1 Barrack Obama and everyone in Washington D.C., all
2 the politicians, to offer this one dollar a year
3 rent, and please change it off to one dollar a
4 year mortgage fees for everyone that lost their
5 jobs right now in CPS. Can we have that deal,
6 too?

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. ZUPAN: Or maybe that's in the Edu
9 jobs bill and I just missed it. I would like to
10 see it extended to the ten percent of the nation
11 that is on the unemployment ranks as well.

12 This budget, I need to ask: To get
13 the numbers this year, did they throw darts, roll
14 dice, or put the numbers in a hat and pull them
15 out, or D, all of the above?

16 One more minute.

17 (Pause.)

18 MS. ZUPAN: Our agreement with the
19 Chicago Teachers Union. This is the book of rules
20 by which we live and work in CPS. This agreement,
21 as well as other rules, laws, contracts might be
22 called Rules to Try to Make a More Civilized
23 World.

24 Yet, the noneducators in this

1 educational system, with Mayor Daly and the
2 state's blessing, have demonstrated that they
3 don't respect these rules, as well as many other
4 rules. Because these teachers who have lost jobs,
5 they shouldn't have lost jobs by the rules in this
6 book.

7 So, I have a very scary question I
8 want to ask. In the context of living in a city
9 where children are shooting children more than in
10 any other American city, what kind of example are
11 you setting when you flagrantly ignore and break
12 rules like this contract yourself?

13 So in the City of Chicago we
14 basically have a culture of calm brought to us by
15 crisis management. One more prop.

16 (Pause.)

17 MS. SIMMONS: Ms. Speaker, please
18 conclude.

19 MS. ZUPAN: I'm about to.

20 People, we don't need to read this,
21 we are in the middle of living it. For those who
22 can't see it, it is 1984, by George Orwell.

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

1 MS. SIMMONS: Cezar Simeon. And
2 following Cezar Simeon is Rolando Vazquez.

3 MR. SIMEON: Hello. My name is
4 Cezar Simeon. I am a voter. I am a property
5 owner, because as a CPS teacher, or as a
6 former CPS teacher, I was required to reside in
7 the city. So, I actually have a home here. And
8 so my money, my property taxes contribute to the
9 revenue that CPS collects.

10 First, I would like to express my
11 concern that members of the Board who will be
12 voting on this proposed budget are not actually
13 present at these public hearings. I wonder about
14 the sincerity of their concern for the public and
15 the school children of CPS.

16 It is my hope and request that in
17 the future, at least four members of the Board
18 appear at any public hearings, budget or
19 otherwise, which impact Chicago's children.

20 Second, I remember a couple of
21 months ago, maybe even just a month ago, how on
22 the radio and other media there were stories about
23 a car or livery service for Ron Huberman. I don't
24 know if anyone else heard that. But it is just

1 funny I didn't see that in any line item in the
2 budget. Just an aside.

3 I just -- I mean I wonder how
4 people get that information. Because as a
5 public -- as a member of the public, I would like
6 to see that. I would like to see if there is
7 waste there. And I can't really find it because I
8 am not really an expert on those matters.

9 Third, I know that there is a trend
10 in teacher management and it is the use of
11 something called the value added metrics. And
12 under a value added metrics, teachers will now be
13 evaluated and rated based on the incremental
14 increase on a student's test score.

15 I find it very strange that this
16 business management tool, which is inappropriately
17 applied to cognitive development of children, is
18 not used to measure the impact of CPS officers'
19 decisions on purchases, contracts and hirings. If
20 we are to use value added metrics to student
21 learning, shouldn't we actually use it for
22 measuring CPS management decisions?

23 Before Mr. Ron Huberman and CPS
24 proceeds to cut more experienced teachers from its

1 schools or hire consultants, should it not also
2 evaluate those decisions with value added, or more
3 appropriately, value subtracted metrics?

4 Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. SIMMONS: Rolando Vazquez. And
7 following Rolando is Ms. Ortiz, Zulma.

8 MR. VAZQUEZ: Hi. My name is
9 Rolando Vazquez. I am a sixth-grade teacher at
10 Brighton Park School.

11 Can I just say it is really good to
12 see a lot of young people here. I think that is
13 amazing. Your presence here is important. And I
14 want to thank you personally for coming out.

15 I just want to be sure I have this
16 correct. The purpose of this hearing is not just
17 to hear us, right? I mean, it is -- this is being
18 recorded and the transcript is going to be sent?
19 I was at a meeting last night. Was that
20 transcript sent to the Board?

21 MS. FERGUSON: It will be.

22 MS. HERZOG: It will be.

23 MR. VAZQUEZ: It will be. All right.

24 Okay. When?

1 MS. FERGUSON: As soon as we receive it
2 from the court reporter.

3 MR. VAZQUEZ: Yeah. And I am not
4 trying to be difficult. The thing is, I know it
5 is going to be up in a week, right? The budget is
6 going to be voted on in one week. It makes it
7 difficult to really, you know, have an honest vote
8 on the budget when there is no dialogue. So I
9 just want to sure that that is communicated to the
10 Board that it is really tough.

11 I am trying to understand it. I
12 really am, but I am having a hard time. But hey,
13 sometimes people have commitments, right?

14 And I am curious, is there anybody
15 else who works for the Board of Education here in
16 this room? If you could just identify yourself by
17 raising your hand?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes. I did
19 until last Thursday .

20 MR. VAZQUEZ: Okay. Teachers, or
21 administrators, Board of Education?

22 (No response.)

23 MR. VAZQUEZ: No. Okay. All right.
24 Cool.

1 I guess my present concern was this
2 time constraint. We have one week left. And if
3 the vote is to be authentic, I mean really
4 authentic, then it would behoove all of us, right,
5 to have some meaningful dialogue. I am done.

6 MS. SIMMONS: Ms. Ortiz. And following
7 Ms. Ortiz is Rose Mary Finnegan.

8 MS. ORTIZ: (Speaking through Spanish
9 interpreter.)

10 Greetings to everyone. My name is
11 Violeta Ortiz, Zulma Violeta Ortiz. You need to
12 spell it? Z like zebra, u-l-m-a. Violeta Ortiz.
13 I am a teacher, active member of CORE.

14 I want to know what is the purpose
15 of the Board of Education not to publish or print
16 the budget in Spanish, given the high percentages
17 of students and parents in the public education
18 speaking Spanish?

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. ORTIZ: Is that something that
21 never cross your mind, having so many people
22 having so high salaries, especially the
23 consultants? I forget that you don't answer my
24 question. Are just sitting there like mummies.

1 It is a shame that we don't have a
2 dialogue in something so important like this, like
3 the budget for our economy and for our society.

4 A bigger shame is that the public
5 education in the country so developed like the
6 U.S. is on the floor like a third world country.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. ORTIZ: What is the respect, the
9 education, the progress? Why the Board's not
10 printing enough books so people have the time,
11 have the resources to study the budget and discuss
12 in these hard times? Why don't you give to
13 schools 100 to 200 copies to send to the public
14 libraries? What is the link, the web page, when
15 we can read everything that has been said these
16 nights in the public hearings?

17 MS. FERGUSON: I don't have the link
18 now, but it will be available.

19 MS. ORTIZ: Any date for that? No
20 dates?

21 MS. HERZOG: Starting tomorrow.

22 MS. ORTIZ: Tomorrow.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. SIMMONS: Rose Mary Finnegan. And

1 following Rose Mary is Norine Gehokanst.

2 MS. FINNEGAN: Good evening. I am
3 Rosemary Finnegan. I am a school psychologist for
4 the Chicago Public Schools.

5 I am hearing rumors about cuts in
6 both school psychologists and school social
7 workers. And we both play an important role in
8 maintaining and supporting and enhancing student
9 mental health, which is an important part of
10 learning. Are there cuts? And how many? And who
11 decided how many?

12 Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. GEHOKANST: Good evening. My name
15 is Norine Gehokanst. And I am a veteran teacher
16 in Chicago Public Schools, and I am working now
17 for the Chicago Teachers Union.

18 And as many people here know, we
19 know that there are about -- at least about 1,300
20 people who have been fired. Fired. Put out on
21 the street. Their health insurance cut off. And
22 they are suffering obviously. You heard from some
23 of them. But their students are suffering too.

24 And what I want to know is why you

1 don't start looking at some areas in the budget
2 where you can be cutting? And I am going to give
3 an example of testing.

4 I am a third grade teacher. And
5 third grade is the year that the kids have to take
6 the -- three benchmark exams and an ISAT test.
7 This year the Board of Education is rolling out
8 the Scantron computer exams. So that means a huge
9 expenditure in computers for all 600 plus Chicago
10 Public Schools.

11 So, I would submit that this is an
12 excellent place to make a cut, because tests do
13 not teach. Computers do not teach. Teachers
14 teach. Teacher assistants teach. So these 1,300
15 people that you are throwing out on the street,
16 they can't teach now. Because somewhere, some
17 bright light at the Board of Education decided
18 that it was more important to give them a Scantron
19 assessment and to roll this out inside CPS.

20 Another area that I can think of is,
21 there -- I know that the Board of Education -- and
22 I don't have the figure because I wasn't able to
23 do enough studying of the budget, there is a huge
24 budget item for debt. Debt to the banks. And

1 what I wonder is, shouldn't the Board of Education
2 say to those bankers, I am pretty sure those banks
3 and those bankers are not suffering right now, but
4 I know that our schools are suffering. Why should
5 those banks be making billions and millions of
6 dollars when our students are losing their
7 teacher, or my third graders are going to have to
8 have -- instead of going to a fourth grade, they
9 were going to a third/fourth split, or a
10 fourth/fifth split. Now, how fair is that?

11 Now, the Board of Education can go
12 to the banks and say hey, you know what? We got
13 to renegotiate the terms of these loans. And you
14 just have to do it because we are a good customer,
15 and because the students of Chicago are more
16 important than your billion dollars. So those are
17 a couple of areas I am thinking of.

18 The third thing that I want to say is
19 that, obviously, we have already talked about the
20 TIF's and we have already talked about the hundred
21 million dollars from the Edu jobs bill. We
22 know -- everybody sitting in this room knows that
23 the Board of Education can be finding the funds,
24 the \$100 million in the Edu job bill. And also,

1 declaring a surplus in the TIF areas of the
2 blighted areas. Because there are plenty --
3 excuse me -- of the not blighted areas.

4 The Board of Education is being
5 iced out of money that really -- that is being
6 generated in rich areas, property tax areas such
7 as the central city, the loop, the north side and
8 the near west side. And everybody -- I think
9 there is a huge consensus of agreement that in the
10 nonblighted areas of the city, that a surplus must
11 be declared and those funds redirected back to the
12 taxing authority, which includes the Chicago
13 Public Schools.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. SIMMONS: Angela Mordacai.

16 MS. MORDACAI: My name is
17 Angela Mordacai. And I kind of think that a lot
18 of people here may not like me. But I want to say
19 something as a parent.

20 I have two children that has gone
21 through the public school system. And I have 18
22 nephews, and nieces, and about five great nephews
23 and nieces, and I heard you say two things.
24 Originally, I didn't sign up, but I heard two

1 things that I feel like I should speak about. And
2 that is, you are talking about your tenured
3 teachers.

4 One of the things is, it
5 disappoints me to hear, or think what I am hearing
6 here as finger pointing.

7 When my daughter was in grammar
8 school, she had a senior teacher and that teacher
9 was just unbelievably terrible for her. The
10 things that they did and the things that I saw, a
11 lot of, in listening to the teachers, both at my
12 children's school and at the summer school that my
13 children had to -- had to attend, those teachers
14 were horrible in the way they treated those
15 children and the things that they did.

16 And I had always defended the
17 teachers, always defended the senior teachers,
18 always defended the gray-haired teachers. But
19 then it took one young Chinese teacher to get in
20 that classroom and for me to see the creative ways
21 that she worked to manage, as I heard some people
22 saying, managing the class. I felt bad because
23 children were getting kicked out. Their parents
24 were asking to transfer their children. From the

1 class, they moved out of the district over on
2 North Avenue -- north of North Avenue, west of
3 Ridgeland, is what I will say.

4 And I felt bad for my daughter. I
5 felt like I failed her as a mother. But when I
6 went to see this teacher and she told me what she
7 -- the things she did and the creative ways that
8 she worked with those children and my specific
9 daughter, putting her with a group of children
10 that was disappointing and hard to teach, it
11 really made me feel bad -- feel good.

12 When I went and told my daughter
13 what had happened, it changed her, changed her
14 personality. My daughter was motivated to get B
15 honor rolls and things of that sort.

16 What I am saying here is, for me --
17 then another thing. I hear you criticizing the
18 charter schools. My children now attend a charter
19 school. I heard someone out in the hallway saying
20 that the charter schools are performing at
21 four percent and low percentage rates. They are
22 talking about the children not being successful.

23 I know one little boy that my son
24 -- one of his best friends. When I met this

1 little boy, he had 3.67 GPA. And yes, this is the
2 charter school systems. Who is to say their
3 grading skills is right? But this boy's GPA was
4 3.67, 3.62, 3.49. And he told me that time, the
5 reason it was so low was because I studying for
6 the ACT test, and his scores were 3 point maybe
7 five. When I looked at his cum, he was a junior.
8 When I looked at his cum, my face hit the floor.
9 His GPA was like a two point something. And I am
10 thinking, honey, what happened? He told me he
11 came from a terrible grammar school.

12 And the purpose of me saying this,
13 now this little boy scored very high on his ACT's.
14 I don't know, but my children told me he got rave
15 reviews. I looked at the school that he is going
16 to; 41,000 a year, and all he has to pay is 8,000
17 out of his pocket. He did excellent in getting
18 scholarships and things of that nature.

19 The point is, for me I think it's
20 unfair to pick a -- pick certain people and accuse
21 them of being the reason for the budget cuts and
22 things of that sort, to talk about the new
23 teachers that is coming in for them to be the
24 reason. You need to point your finger at the

1 people who really are causing these problems, in
2 which I don't think it is new teachers and I don't
3 think it is the charter schools.

4 I think you need to find another
5 place. Because if you look you will see the
6 numbers of people that is going to these different
7 schools and looking at these younger -- younger
8 and newer teachers, these people are helping us.
9 And it may not be just education, but it is a lot
10 of different areas. I personally think that you
11 should look at another area.

12 And another thing I do know for my
13 own self, when you criticize the underdog, you
14 make people want to be attracted to them. That
15 draws people to them. And that is all I have to
16 say.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. SIMMONS: Carmella Miller. And
20 following Carmella is Donielle Lawson.

21 MS. MILLER: I have been with the Board
22 since '04. My name is Carmella Miller and I have
23 been with the Board since '04. I am a teacher
24 assistant. And I am just going to give you a

1 little synopsis of the year, this past year.

2 I was diagnosed with leukemia -- I
3 mean, with lymphoma in '09. I did several months
4 of treatment, and was eager to go back to work.
5 So my doctor finally gave me a medical, you know,
6 clearance to go back to work. I received a
7 clearance, went back -- you know, to go back to
8 work, and was told I no longer had a position.

9 That day I was really upset. I was
10 shocked. And I walked -- I remember going into
11 125. It said Children First. And when I was
12 struggling with my chemo treatments, a lot of my
13 students had my phone numbers. They would call
14 me. And they were my inspirations to fighting the
15 cancer. So I just think that today, are the
16 children first? Who is first?

17 And that is all I have to say.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. SIMMONS: Donielle Lawson. And
20 following Donielle is Melissa Turner.

21 MS. LAWSON: Good evening. I am
22 Donielle Christina Lawson. And I didn't have
23 anything prepared. I just came just to observe
24 the meeting.

1 But in hearing other people speak,
2 I must share something with you guys. I came from
3 a teaching alternative program, one of the best
4 and actually has the highest retention rate, which
5 is a program called Teachers for Chicago. Back in
6 early 90's most of you never heard of it.

7 But anyway, I have had an awesome
8 experience with CPS. And it is just kind of
9 bittersweet. I am a union delegate. And last
10 Wednesday we voted the concessions down not to
11 take the four percent pay cut. And I knew when I
12 was voting, I knew my job was going to be gone. I
13 knew it. But I said, you know what, I have to do
14 the right thing.

15 I've currently been running for
16 alderman of the 24th ward, Lawson for Lawndale,
17 for the past six months. I have been on the news
18 and everything. So I know everything happens for
19 a reason.

20 But anyway, we voted that
21 Wednesday. And I am sitting there, and I said,
22 man, I got to do the right thing. I got to do the
23 right thing. But I know it is going to be my job.
24 My job is going to be gone.

1 And I didn't tell you, I am single
2 with six children. My oldest is at Morehouse.
3 And I don't qualify for a grant.

4 I have three degrees. I opened up
5 National Teachers Academy. I wrote the special ed
6 program for the Cook County Juvenile Detention
7 Center ten years ago and got CPS out of many
8 lawsuits being over there, because I was a case
9 manager as well. We are not going to talk about
10 all that and the various programs that I developed
11 for Chicago Public Schools.

12 So, anyway, I get to work Thursday.
13 I didn't tell you where I work. I work where most
14 teachers wouldn't dare to work. You've got to be
15 called to work where I work. I work at York
16 Alternative High School, located inside Cook
17 County jail, on 26th and California. That is
18 where I work. 46.6 weeks school.

19 So that Thursday I am at work, and
20 the principal comes and she reads me a script.
21 And she read me a script saying I am gone. And I
22 said wow, I knew when I voted the day before, with
23 my brothers and sisters, I knew then, even though
24 Board of Education got their hundred million

1 dollars, they got \$126 million, I knew I was out.

2 And lo and behold, the script gets read to me.

3 And I said wow, I am gone. Isn't this amazing?

4 But isn't it a great opportunity?

5 I have been running for alderman for six months.

6 I've been on the news. I've been on Check Please.

7 I've been in North Town News Magazine. I mean,

8 this would be great. This will even be better for

9 the story. Because now, I am not only the jail

10 teacher with six kids, a son at Morehouse and that

11 I've got to pay tuition for. Oh, I forgot to tell

12 you, I got a child here. She is in a college

13 careers program here.

14 And how humiliating was it for me

15 yesterday to ask for a waived month. Because the

16 student fees here is \$155. So I had to submit my

17 paycheck, which, believe me, I was making some

18 good money because I deserved it. So I had to

19 submit my pay check. And then I had to write

20 down, principal read me a script and I am laid

21 off.

22 You know. It is funny. But it

23 gets worse. And I just know that there are great

24 things coming. I don't care about the budget.

1 Tell Ron Huberman I am coming. I am coming after
2 him because I'm going to be the next alderman of
3 the 24th ward.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. LAWSON: Oh, yeah, and I am going
6 to get my ten months. So the beauty of it is, I
7 get my ten months. I take a 20 percent pay cut.
8 I don't have any responsibilities. I get to go
9 walk around and be a substitute. And guess what I
10 am going to be thinking about? The Chicago Public
11 School students, how I am going to advocate down
12 to city hall. Ron Huberman did me a great favor,
13 I don't have to write no more IEP's. And I used
14 to start on 85 to 125 a year. And the Board had
15 the audacity to say, we are not doing enough work
16 over at the jail. Oh, well.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. SIMMONS: Melissa Turner. And
19 following Melissa Turner is Kaila Peterson.

20 MS. TURNER: Hi. I've held these
21 thoughts and emotions in my head for the last two
22 years. I would be a 12-year veteran teacher this
23 year. Ten years in what is considered a
24 hard-to-staff school.

1 Last year -- this past year I
2 worked in another hard-to-staff school. Nothing
3 but excellent and superior performances. Do jobs
4 that no one else, or not a lot of people wanted to
5 do. Came out of the classroom because I had the
6 qualifications to work with Magnet Cluster
7 Program, bringing it to the neighborhoods.

8 And so last year my school was
9 closed. My school barely had working drinking
10 fountains, barely had anything. Fall brought in
11 the brand new school, brand new everything. My
12 students were put out. They crossed the road into
13 -- crossed the road to a nondesirable place for
14 them. I worked -- I finally found -- so was put
15 in the reassignment -- sorry -- was put in the
16 reassignment pool, worked my butt off, found a job
17 the first day of school, still with the Magnet
18 Cluster Program.

19 Guess what? Now, we are closing
20 the Magnet Cluster Program.

21 So, give me my letter from my
22 principal telling me that I'm out of a job. Have
23 done nothing but superior and excellent work.
24 Have done nothing but work at hard-to-staff

1 schools. But yet, in 12 days I absolutely have
2 nothing and I just don't understand. (Crying.)

3 MS. SIMMONS: Kaila Peterson. And
4 following Kaila is Maurice Day.

5 MS. PETERSON: Hello, everybody. My
6 name is Kaila Peterson. And I wanted to comment on
7 what the other young lady said a little bit
8 earlier about the special needs program. How she
9 said how can you get rid of the special needs
10 teacher that has been there for so long in
11 bringing in under qualified teachers?

12 Well, in my case, I had -- my niece
13 she is really special needs. So I would like to
14 know if her teacher gets cut, how do I know that
15 the next teacher that is coming in is going to be
16 patient with her, is going to love her, and going
17 give her the care that she needs? Or is it just
18 going to be like we are just going to throw
19 somebody in there who said they worked with
20 special needs kids before? So that is just all I
21 wanted to know.

22 Another thing, am I worthy of an
23 answer right now?

24 MS. FERGUSON: Certainly you are

1 worthy. That is not the intention. The forum
2 here is designed to hear your input, and is about
3 listening to you, not talking, and talking at you.
4 So we are trying to solicit your input and note
5 your questions, and respond in a timely manner so
6 that everyone has the benefit of the answer.
7 Clearly you are worth it and we look forward to
8 responding to you.

9 MS. PETERSON: Okay. That is all.

10 MS. FERGUSON: Thank you for your
11 input.

12 (Applause.)

13 MINISTER DAY: Good evening. My name
14 is Minister Day. And I am from Newburg Christian
15 Center. And we are here tonight to see what is
16 going to happen with the charter schools. We
17 believe that the charter schools are a very
18 intricate part of the CPS network. And as CPS
19 tries to find ways to best educate our kids, we
20 need to be opening more charter schools.

21 Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. SIMMONS: Thank you.

24 Tiasha Baggor. I apologize. Please say your name

1 when you come to the podium. Followed by
2 Jacquay Carr.

3 MS. BAGGOR: Hi. I'm Tiasha Baggor.

4 Really I just wanted to express a
5 concern that I have, as well as one of my friends.
6 We are both going to school to be educators. And
7 both of us -- one of them is going to be a special
8 needs teacher.

9 So I guess my concern is, in my
10 senior year of college when I am planning a
11 certain career path, and I am planning on going
12 back to CPS schools and teaching at the schools,
13 how can I be given any job security? I have gone
14 to school all this time. I have accumulated all
15 these students loans because my parents don't
16 qualify for certain funding, and then I graduate
17 and I get a job, and then the next year I am laid
18 off. Like, what kind of job security is that?

19 Also, another thing I wanted to say
20 was, in my case the community that I grew up in,
21 one of my schools that I went to was shut down
22 because of funding. Another school that I went to
23 the tuition was too high, so we moved out of, you
24 know, our neighborhood to move somewhere else, so

1 I can go to a community school where I didn't have
2 to pay anything and things like that. So I just
3 feel like charter schools are a better
4 alternative, so that you don't have to go to a
5 Chicago Public School. And then the next thing
6 you know, either your teacher, who you have known
7 since you were in kindergarten -- because most
8 kids who go to Chicago Public Schools, they are
9 used to seeing the same teachers in the halls or
10 cafeteria, and this teacher has been patient with
11 you all this time and then they are fired. And
12 then after that, your school is shut down. You
13 are left to go to another school, new people, new
14 teachers who don't know you, who aren't patient
15 with you, who don't know your family background,
16 who don't know what kind of home you come from,
17 and then you are expected to adapt to them when
18 they are not even adapting to you. Because most
19 of them are coming in for year or two years to do
20 whatever they need to do to get their loans paid
21 back, and then they leave. So that is all I
22 wanted to say.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. SIMMONS: Jacquay Carr.

1 MR. CARR: Hi. How are you all doing?

2 My name is Jacquay Carr.

3 My question -- it was really just
4 that, okay, I know that we here to talk about the
5 charter schools. And my thing was this. It was
6 not so much as the charter schools, but the budget
7 for the teachers, the teachers that you all are
8 letting go.

9 And the thing about it to me is,
10 because I am not a teacher or, you know, I am not
11 affected by, you know, the money that they won't
12 give. I am not affected by that. But I am just a
13 past student.

14 But some way or the other you all
15 going to have to spend that money, whether it be
16 for them teachers that you all are firing, or for
17 some extra correctional officers. One way or the
18 other you all are going to spend that money, you
19 know what I'm saying? So, I'm just keeping it
20 honest. You might as well spend it now or you are
21 going to spend it later along with extra lives.
22 So, I mean, that was it.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. SIMMONS: Do we have any additional

1 speakers?

2 MS. FERGUSON: At this time we don't
3 have anyone else interested in speaking?

4 MR. SAFERO: I do.

5 MS. FERGUSON: Another turn? Welcome
6 back.

7 MR. SAFERO: I didn't want to cloud the
8 first one with the second issue.

9 MS. SIMMONS: State your name.

10 MR. SAFERO: Scott Safero. Former high
11 school member of CORE, Chicago Teachers Union,
12 delegate for about 13 of the 29 years I have been
13 a teacher, union member for 29 years.

14 And I remember meeting some -- I
15 would see them about every four or five years,
16 these union workers who their sole job was to put
17 window shades in the windows. And now those
18 people are gone.

19 When I was at Manley High School
20 about 15 years ago, they put in new windows. And
21 the old windows used to open from the top. And
22 the shades I just referred to, the people whose
23 job it was to maintain them, the shades were an
24 integral part, because they were a two-phase

1 shade -- a two-part shade, where you could open
2 with a chain, the top shade, and let heat out.

3 Now, when Manley put in the new
4 windows, they put in one part shades. And they
5 also put in windows that didn't open up at the
6 top. So -- but we had transoms over the doors
7 that opened. Now, these buildings were built
8 75 years ago.

9 Ten years ago I transferred to
10 Foreman High School. And when the principals said
11 we are putting in new windows, I said hey, make
12 sure the windows open from the top. They did.
13 They put in windows that open from the top. They
14 are a little more expensive than the cheap ones I
15 guess Manley bought. But the window shades are
16 one part, so that when the sun is blasting in the
17 sun's heat, you have no choice, you have to have
18 the window shade closed, which means you cannot
19 open from the top, so you have no heat escaping on
20 that.

21 There is no ventilation, because
22 all the transoms have been screwed shut. I don't
23 know whatever caused that. Probably some, I am
24 guessing, some lawsuit in the past or something.

1 But the windows used to articulate -- the transoms
2 used to articulate with little brass rods and you
3 would be able to open up the windows above the
4 doors, open up the windows at the top, and you
5 would have a nice breeze going through.

6 And now what we are forced to have
7 is, we are basically teaching in an Easy Bake
8 oven. And so it is health and safety. It is a
9 terrible situation.

10 I mean 75 years ago there were no
11 air conditioning, but there was hot days. But
12 there was a ventilation, a flow-through
13 ventilation. And now through ignorance, insanity,
14 lawsuits, I don't know what, we have no
15 ventilation. It is really hot and terrible.


16 Thank you.

17 MS. FERGUSON: Okay. We thank you
18 again for your attendance tonight, and your
19 interest and commitment in Chicago Public Schools.
20 That concludes our hearing for this evening.

21 (Which were all the proceedings
22 had in the above-entitled
23 matter.)
24

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2 COUNTY OF C O O K) ss:

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6
7 I, Janice Smith, being first duly sworn,
8 on oath says that she is a Registered Professional
9 Reporter, License No. 084-001346, and Notary
10 Public in and for the County of Cook, State of
11 Illinois, and that she reported in shorthand the
12 foregoing report of proceedings, and that the
13 aforementioned proceedings are a true and correct
14 transcript of her shorthand notes so taken as
15 aforesaid, and contains the proceedings given at
16 said hearing.

17
18 
19 Janice Smith, RPR
20 LIC. NO. 084-001346
21
22
23
24

	61:22		77th (1) 8:14	55: 6
\$	13 (1) 68:12	3		active (1) 47:13
\$1.2 (1) 14:24	15 (1) 68:20	3 (1) 55: 6	8	ACT's (1) 55:13
\$1.25 (1) 38: 6	155 (1) 20:12	3.49 (1) 55: 4	8,000 (1) 55:16	actual (1) 20:22
\$100 (7) 16: 4;23: 4;24: 4, 6; 34:15;37:14;51:24	16 (1) 19:12	3.62 (1) 55: 4	85 (1) 61:14	actually (12) 22:14;27:12;31: 2,11, 17;33: 4;37: 2;40:18; 43: 7,12;44:21;58: 4
\$12 (2) 38:21;39: 1	17 (1) 19:16	3.67 (2) 55: 1, 4	9	ADA (2) 11:21;13: 4
\$120 (2) 15:24;17: 7	18 (2) 1: 9;52:21	30 (2) 27:20,21	9:00 (1) 7:20	adapt (1) 66:17
\$126 (1) 60: 1	181 (1) 20:14	30-something (1) 35: 5	90's (1) 58: 6	adapting (1) 66:18
\$155 (1) 60:16	1984 (1) 42:22	31 (2) 35: 4;36:22	97 (2) 19:23;20:22	add (3) 11:23;18:20;40:20
\$160 (1) 38: 2	2	32 (2) 35: 4;36:23	A	added (4) 44:11,12,20;45: 2
\$370 (1) 10:13	2,010 (2) 18:18,23	3223 (1) 1:18	able (7) 6: 5;16: 6;24:13;32: 5; 40: 6;50:22;70: 3	additional (1) 67:24
\$4.56 (1) 38:19	2,100 (1) 18:23	34 (1) 19:14	above (4) 19:11,15;41:15;70: 3	additions (1) 20: 9
\$40 (1) 15:20	2,500 (2) 17: 2, 5	35 (1) 15:20	above-entitled (1) 70:22	address (2) 35:12;36:14
\$5 (1) 40:20	20 (3) 13:15;19:11;61: 7	376 (1) 20:14	absolutely (1) 63: 1	adhere (1) 7:11
\$6.8 (2) 38:12,20	200 (1) 48:13	392 (1) 11:22	absurd (1) 34:20	administrators (1) 46:21
\$75 (2) 17: 5, 6	2006 (1) 20: 7	3rd (1) 27:13	academics (1) 12:21	adult (1) 28: 6
\$800 (2) 32:22;35:13	2009 (1) 38:17	4	Academy (1) 59: 5	advised (1) 30:13
\$98 (1) 37:12	201 (1) 20:13	41,000 (1) 55:16	accelerated (1) 38:10	advisory (2) 8:10;30:10
0	2010 (2) 1: 9;37:13	428 (1) 18:16	accept (1) 30:13	advocate (1) 61:11
04 (2) 56:22,23	2010-2011 (1) 1: 2	44 (1) 19: 9	accepted (1) 7:14	advocated (1) 31: 4
084-001346 (1) 2:21	2011 (1) 37:13	46.6 (1) 59:18	access (3) 24:22;25: 2;34:14	affected (2) 67:11,12
09 (1) 57: 3	2030 (1) 21:10	477 (1) 20:17	accountability (1) 22: 8	afford (3) 7:12;21:11,14
1	20th (1) 27:12	5	accounting (3) 37: 6, 7;40:18	afraid (1) 26:20
1,200 (2) 17: 8;23: 8	21 (1) 12: 5	55th (2) 8:23;10: 6	accumulated (1) 65:14	afternoon (1) 32:17
1,300 (2) 49:19;50:14	214 (1) 20:16	6	accurate (1) 23:10	again (3) 4:15;36:14;70:18
1,500 (1) 18:21	22nd (1) 27:12	600 (1) 50: 9	accuse (1) 55:20	agencies (1) 21: 2
100 (1) 48:13	23 (1) 8:10	680 (1) 4:13	acknowledge (2) 4:24;39:20	ago (9) 9: 3;14: 6;43:21,21; 59: 7;68:20;69: 8, 9; 70:10
11 (1) 8: 9	24th (2) 58:16;61: 3	7	acoustical (4) 12:13,14,17;14: 8	agree (4) 5: 9;22:12,14,17
12 (2) 19:15;63: 1	25 (1) 11:24	7:00 (2) 1:10;3: 2	acoustics (4) 8:21;12:10,11;13:20	agreement (4) 27:23;41:18,20;52: 9
125 (2) 57:11;61:14	26th (1) 59:17	75 (2) 69: 8;70:10	across (3) 4:11,14;37:17	ahead (1) 16: 6
12-year (1)	29 (3) 11:18;68:12,13		ACT (1)	

air (1) 70:11	appreciate (2) 3:11,15	1: 9;27:13	Basically (4) 29:17;30:22;42:14; 70: 7	52: 2, 3
Al (3) 15:17;16: 4;21: 6	appreciation (1) 4:21	authentic (2) 47: 3, 4	baths (1) 21:18	block (1) 16: 9
alderman (3) 58:16;60: 5;61: 2	appropriate (2) 6:15,18	authority (1) 52:12	beautiful (1) 12:18	Bloomberg (1) 37:24
Alfred (3) 8: 5, 6, 8	appropriately (1) 45: 3	available (5) 5:15;6: 6,10;18:17; 48:18	beauty (1) 61: 6	blue (1) 16:19
allocated (3) 32:23,24;33: 2	approval (1) 30: 8	Avenue (2) 54: 2, 2	become (1) 21:10	Blvd (1) 1:18
allocating (1) 3:23	approximately (1) 23: 4	average (1) 19:12	bedrooms (1) 21:17	Board (33) 4: 6, 7;6: 1;7:24;8:10; 9:14;20:23;21: 5, 7; 26: 7;32:19;36: 1, 2,24; 40:17;43:11,17;45:20; 46:10,15,21;47:15;50: 7, 17,21;51: 1,11,23;52: 4; 56:21,23;59:24;61:14
allocation (1) 37:12	architectural (1) 16:10	away (2) 30:14;33:13	began (1) 19:21	Board's (2) 24: 5;48: 9
allow (1) 37: 9	area (5) 8: 9,10;37: 9;50:20; 56:11	awesome (1) 58: 7	begin (1) 6:21	boggles (1) 34:24
allowed (1) 30:11	areas (9) 50: 1;51:17;52: 1, 2, 3, 6, 6,10;56:10	B	behalf (1) 7:22	bond (4) 21: 2, 8;38:15,16
allowing (1) 36:14	argument (1) 40: 8	back (26) 4: 7;5:24;6:19;11: 8, 13:12: 7,18;15: 2;20: 6, 22;23:10;26: 8,10; 30:16;32: 3, 5;37: 5; 52:11;57: 4, 6, 7, 7; 58: 5;65:12;66:21;68: 6	behold (1) 60: 2	book (7) 5: 5,16;19:23;22:13, 15;41:19;42: 6
almost (2) 20: 8;39: 1	Arne (2) 23: 2;40:24	background (3) 33:24;34: 8;66:15	behoove (1) 47: 4	books (1) 48:10
along (1) 67:21	around (2) 31:13;61: 9	backgrounds (1) 34: 1	bells (1) 17: 3	boom (1) 28:13
alternative (3) 58: 3;59:16;66: 4	article (5) 13: 5;38: 1, 3, 8,19	backs (1) 15: 5	belong (1) 11: 5	borrowing (1) 21:13
although (2) 19: 7;20: 2	article's (1) 38:23	bad (4) 26: 5;53:22;54: 4,11	below (2) 19:12,16	borrows (1) 38: 1
always (5) 15:14;19: 5;53:16,17, 18	articulate (2) 70: 1, 2	bag (1) 20:21	benchmark (1) 50: 6	Both (7) 25:16;33: 5;49: 6, 7; 53:11;65: 6, 7
amazing (2) 45:13;60: 3	aside (1) 44: 2	baggie (1) 40: 3	benefit (3) 29:20;33:11;64: 6	bottom (1) 9:12
America (1) 33:23	assessment (1) 50:19	Baggor (3) 64:24;65: 3, 3	benefits (2) 27:17,21	bought (1) 69:15
American (1) 42:10	assistance (1) 6:24	Bake (1) 70: 7	best (5) 11: 8;12:20;54:24; 58: 3;64:19	bounce (1) 12: 9
amount (2) 3:23;37:11	assistant (2) 9: 9;56:24	balance (1) 38:10	better (5) 20: 1;21: 1, 4;60: 8; 66: 3	boy (3) 54:23;55: 1,13
Angela (2) 52:15,17	assistants (1) 50:14	ball (1) 17: 4	bigger (1) 48: 4	boy's (1) 55: 3
announce (1) 7:17	ASUL (1) 9:17	Baltas (5) 30: 3;32:15,17,18; 35:11	biggest (1) 19: 5	branch (1) 14:19
Annual (1) 38:18	atrium (1) 16:10	bandied (1) 10:15	bill (4) 23:21;41: 9;51:21,24	brand (3) 16: 1;62:11,11
answered (2) 25: 3;36:16	attend (2) 53:13;54:18	bank (1) 23: 6	billion (10) 10:11,17;14:24;38: 6, 12,19,20,22;39: 1;51:16	brass (1) 70: 2
anti-revenue (1) 40:22	attendance (1) 70:18	bankers (2) 51: 2, 3	billions (1) 51: 5	breadwinner (1) 26: 2
apologize (1) 64:24	attended (1) 3:18	banks (4) 50:24;51: 2, 5,12	bit (1) 63: 7	break (1) 42:11
appear (1) 43:18	attention (1) 21:16	barely (3) 39:20;62: 9,10	bittersweet (1) 58: 9	breaks (1) 15:10
Applause (25) 17:23;21:24;24: 1; 25:10;27: 2;30: 1;32:14; 35:15;39:12;41: 7; 42:24;45: 5;47:19;48: 7, 23;49:13;52:14;56:18; 57:18;61: 4,17;64:12,22; 66:23;67:23	attracted (1) 56:14	Barrack (1) 41: 1	blame (1) 13:16	breeze (1) 70: 5
applied (1) 44:17	audacity (1) 61:15	based (1) 44:13	blasting (1) 69:16	brick (1) 16:10
	auditorium (1) 16: 7		blessing (1) 42: 2	
	auditoriums (1) 17: 3		blighted (2)	
	AUGUST (2)			

<p>brief (1) 3:20</p> <p>bright (1) 50:17</p> <p>Brighton (1) 45:10</p> <p>bring (1) 13: 5</p> <p>bringing (2) 62: 7;63:11</p> <p>brothers (1) 59:23</p> <p>brought (5) 14:20;30:16;39:24; 42:14;62:10</p> <p>buddy (1) 15:17</p> <p>BUDGET (47) 1: 1, 2;2: 8;3: 7;4: 9, 13;5: 1, 5, 7,14,16;7:23; 10:19;11:19;13:21; 14:18,21;15:20,23; 17:17;18:17,18;19: 2,11, 23,24;25:20;30:24; 36:22;38:10;40:19,20; 41:12;43:12,18;44: 2; 46: 5, 8;47:16;48: 3,11; 50: 1,23,24;55:21;60:24; 67: 6</p> <p>budgetary (1) 30:21</p> <p>budgeting (1) 36:19</p> <p>budgets (2) 3:18;15: 8</p> <p>build (2) 17: 7;21:13</p> <p>building (6) 8:14;11:22,24;12:24; 13: 2;16: 8</p> <p>buildings (4) 12: 3, 5,10;69: 7</p> <p>built (6) 15:20,23;16: 9;17: 2, 6;69: 7</p> <p>burning (2) 32:21;35:12</p> <p>business (3) 34: 1, 8;44:16</p> <p>businesses (1) 15:10</p> <p>butt (1) 62:16</p> <p>butts (2) 8:19;23:16</p> <p>buy (2) 34:15;40:11</p>	<p>66:10</p> <p>calculations (1) 38:21</p> <p>California (1) 59:17</p> <p>call (7) 9: 6,23;15: 7;17:14; 23: 2;40:21;57:13</p> <p>called (6) 7: 7,18;41:22;44:11; 58: 5;59:15</p> <p>calm (1) 42:14</p> <p>came (7) 17:20;20:21;23: 3; 55:11;57:23;58: 2;62: 5</p> <p>can (29) 4: 8;6:24;8:15,18,19; 13:16;14: 8, 9;20:11,12, 13;22:13;23:23;24: 3; 33:17;35: 1,12;36: 5, 7; 41: 5;45:11;48:15;50: 2, 20;51:11,23;63: 9; 65:13;66: 1</p> <p>cancer (1) 57:15</p> <p>candidacy (1) 26: 7</p> <p>Capital (3) 11:19;20: 5;38: 6</p> <p>capturing (1) 6: 3</p> <p>car (2) 40: 7;43:23</p> <p>card (1) 39: 5</p> <p>cardboard (1) 39:22</p> <p>care (3) 32: 8;60:24;63:17</p> <p>career (3) 28: 9;29: 9;65:11</p> <p>careers (1) 60:13</p> <p>Carmella (3) 56:19,20,22</p> <p>carpeting (2) 12:12;14: 7</p> <p>Carr (4) 65: 2;66:24;67: 1, 2</p> <p>carry (1) 8:16</p> <p>case (4) 28:23;59: 8;63:12; 65:20</p> <p>categories (1) 20: 7</p> <p>cause (3) 32: 2, 9,11</p> <p>caused (1) 69:23</p> <p>causing (1) 56: 1</p>	<p>CD (2) 18:21;37: 5</p> <p>ceiling (1) 12:14</p> <p>ceilings (3) 12: 6,17;14: 8</p> <p>cell (1) 7:20</p> <p>Center (2) 59: 7;64:15</p> <p>central (1) 52: 7</p> <p>certain (4) 9:11;55:20;65:11,16</p> <p>certainly (2) 4:23;63:24</p> <p>certified (1) 32:19</p> <p>Cezar (4) 39:14;43: 1, 2, 4</p> <p>chain (1) 69: 2</p> <p>challenging (2) 5: 5, 6</p> <p>chance (1) 5:16</p> <p>change (2) 28: 9;41: 3</p> <p>changed (3) 9:16;54:13,13</p> <p>changing (1) 18:14</p> <p>chaos (3) 32: 1, 8,11</p> <p>charge (1) 9:20</p> <p>charter (18) 19: 7, 9,10,14,17; 40:11,14;54:18,18,20; 55: 2;56: 3;64:16,17,20; 66: 3;67: 5, 6</p> <p>cheap (2) 23:23;69:14</p> <p>check (3) 22:16;60: 6,19</p> <p>chemo (1) 57:12</p> <p>Chicago (41) 1:19;3: 5;4:20;7:22; 10:12,21;11: 1,18;12:11; 13: 6;15:13;16: 1, 3; 18:11,12;19:17;21: 3,15; 22: 5;23: 5;26: 7,10; 38: 1, 4, 6;40: 5;41:19; 42:13;49: 4,16,17;50: 9; 51:15;52:12;58: 5; 59:11;61:10;66: 5, 8; 68:11;70:19</p> <p>Chicago's (2) 38: 9;43:19</p> <p>Chief (2) 2: 4;3: 5</p> <p>child (1)</p>	<p>60:12</p> <p>children (21) 9:22;18:11;21:18; 42: 9, 9;43:15,19;44:17; 52:20;53:13,15,23,24; 54: 8, 9,18,22;55:14; 57:11,16;59: 2</p> <p>children's (1) 53:12</p> <p>Chinese (1) 53:19</p> <p>choice (1) 69:17</p> <p>chosen (1) 32: 6</p> <p>Chris (3) 8: 6;10: 8, 9</p> <p>Christian (1) 64:14</p> <p>CHRISTINA (6) 2: 7;3: 6;4: 4,16; 22:11;57:22</p> <p>cite (1) 11:21</p> <p>citizen (1) 28: 6</p> <p>citizens (1) 24:13</p> <p>city (19) 4:14;13:23;21: 3; 30:13;32:24;34: 3;36: 5; 37:18;38:16,20;39: 1; 40: 5;42: 8,10,13;43: 7; 52: 7,10;61:12</p> <p>city's (2) 38: 9,11</p> <p>Civilized (1) 41:22</p> <p>claim (2) 10:24;20:18</p> <p>class (4) 12:18;24:19;53:22; 54: 1</p> <p>classes (1) 34:20</p> <p>classroom (8) 13:20,24;14: 5,10,10; 35: 7;53:20;62: 5</p> <p>classrooms (3) 12:16;13:23;34: 8</p> <p>Claus (1) 20:20</p> <p>clear (1) 32:10</p> <p>clearance (2) 57: 6, 7</p> <p>clearly (2) 12:19;64: 7</p> <p>close (1) 10:17</p> <p>closed (3) 30:21;62: 9;69:18</p> <p>closely (1)</p>	<p>33:14</p> <p>closing (1) 62:19</p> <p>cloud (1) 68: 7</p> <p>Cluster (3) 62: 6,18,20</p> <p>cognitive (1) 44:17</p> <p>colleague (1) 12: 8</p> <p>colleagues (3) 6: 2;20:15;22:21</p> <p>collects (1) 43: 9</p> <p>college (2) 60:12;65:10</p> <p>column (1) 37:10</p> <p>coming (11) 16:21;23: 5;24: 4; 33: 3;45:14;55:23; 60:24;61: 1, 1;63:15; 66:19</p> <p>comment (2) 6:13;63: 6</p> <p>commentary (1) 8:22</p> <p>comments (7) 3:13;4: 6, 7,20;6: 4; 7:19;9:19</p> <p>commission (1) 16:20</p> <p>commitment (5) 3:14,14;4:20;5: 4; 70:19</p> <p>commitments (1) 46:13</p> <p>communicated (1) 46: 9</p> <p>communication (1) 9:21</p> <p>communities (1) 4:14</p> <p>community (4) 9: 2;25:19;65:20;66: 1</p> <p>companies (1) 38: 5</p> <p>comparison (2) 14:10;16:24</p> <p>complaints (1) 8:18</p> <p>completion (1) 7:10</p> <p>Comprehensive (1) 38:18</p> <p>compulsion (1) 20: 2</p> <p>computer (1) 50: 8</p> <p>computers (2) 50: 9,13</p> <p>concern (5)</p>
---	---	--	---	---

43:11,14;47: 1;65: 5, 9 concerned (3) 29: 4;35:20,22 concerns (2) 5:23,24 concessions (1) 58:10 conclude (9) 7:16,20;10: 1;14: 3; 17:10;24:17;29:15; 35:10;42:18 concludes (1) 70:20 conditioning (1) 70:11 conference (1) 23: 1 connected (1) 33:16 consensus (1) 52: 9 consider (1) 39: 9 consideration (1) 4: 9 considered (1) 61:23 considering (1) 28: 7 constraint (1) 47: 2 construction (2) 15:18;17:16 consultant (2) 16:15;18:12 consultants (2) 45: 1;47:23 context (2) 6:16;42: 8 contingency (5) 36:19;37:11,12,20,22 continue (1) 21:11 continues (1) 38: 8 continuing (1) 21: 6 contract (1) 42:12 contracted (1) 27:23 contractors (1) 17:15 contracts (2) 41:21;44:19 Contractual (2) 20: 4,12 contrary (1) 31: 9 contribute (1) 43: 8 Cook (2) 59: 6,16	Cool (1) 46:24 copies (2) 34:14;48:13 CORE (4) 30: 6;39:16;47:13; 68:11 corporate (2) 28:10,10 corporation (1) 28:14 correctional (1) 67:17 corruption (1) 15:15 cost (5) 10: 5;17: 4,16;32: 1, 7 costly (1) 32:12 costs (2) 15:18;20: 8 council (2) 8: 8,10 country (3) 31:13;48: 5, 6 county (3) 25:24;59: 6,17 couple (2) 43:20;51:17 course (1) 13:16 court (1) 46: 2 CPS (39) 16:13;17: 6,11,22; 21:20;22:10;23: 7; 25:15,16,17;26: 2,15; 30: 8,10,15;31: 4, 7,13, 20;35:19;36: 5;39:16; 40:20,21;41: 5,20;43: 5, 6, 9,15;44:18,22,23; 50:19;58: 8;59: 7;64:18, 18;65:12 CPS's (1) 36:19 create (1) 31: 2 creative (2) 53:20;54: 7 credit (5) 32:23;33: 3;35:13; 38: 4;39: 5 crisis (6) 10:19,22;11: 4;39: 5; 40:20;42:15 critically (1) 21: 3 criticize (1) 56:13 criticizing (1) 54:17 cross (2) 4:11;47:21	crossed (2) 62:12,13 cry (1) 10:11 crying (2) 23:11;63: 2 CTA (2) 17:20,21 culture (1) 42:14 cum (2) 55: 7, 8 curious (1) 46:14 currently (2) 12: 4;58:15 cushioned (1) 8:19 customer (1) 51:14 cut (11) 15: 5;20:11;38: 4,15; 40:17;44:24;49:21; 50:12;58:11;61: 7;63:14 cutouts (1) 39:22 cuts (3) 49: 5,10;55:21 cutthroat (1) 28:11 cutting (2) 17:13;50: 2 cylinder (1) 16: 9	6: 8;18:10;23: 7, 7,21; 34:22;57: 9;59:22; 62:17;63: 4;64:13,14 days (11) 25:14;27:14,20,20,21; 28:15,21;29: 2;32: 4; 63: 1;70:11 days' (1) 29: 8 DC (1) 41: 1 deal (1) 41: 5 deals (2) 40:13,16 Debt (11) 20: 6,16;21: 4;37:23; 38:12,19,20;39: 4, 9; 50:24,24 debts (1) 38:24 debt-to-data (1) 38: 5 decency (1) 22: 8 decided (2) 49:11;50:17 decisions (7) 5: 9;22:13,15;26:24; 44:19,22;45: 2 declare (1) 36: 5 declared (1) 52:11 declaring (1) 52: 1 dedicated (3) 18:13;22:23;23:15 dedicating (1) 4: 2 dedication (1) 3:15 defended (3) 53:16,17,18 deficient (1) 15:14 deficit (3) 15: 4;20:18;25:20 definitely (2) 6: 7;8: 2 degree (1) 29:22 degrees (1) 59: 4 delegate (2) 58: 9;68:12 deliberate (1) 29: 5 deliberately (1) 29: 7 deliberation (1) 4: 9 demonstrated (1)	42: 2 demonstrating (1) 22:18 demonstration (1) 3:13 deny (1) 31:20 depending (2) 18:23;37:10 derivatives (3) 21: 9;36:16;39: 7 deserve (1) 23:16 deserved (1) 60:18 designed (1) 64: 2 destabilizing (1) 32: 7 destroy (1) 26:14 destroyed (2) 25:20;26:22 details (1) 19: 6 Detention (1) 59: 6 determine (1) 13:12 determined (1) 10:22 devastate (1) 29:10 devastated (1) 29:12 develop (1) 16:15 developed (2) 48: 5;59:10 developing (1) 4:12 development (2) 17:14;44:17 diagnosed (1) 57: 2 dialogue (3) 46: 8;47: 5;48: 2 DIANA (2) 2: 3;3: 4 Diana's (1) 4:19 dice (1) 41:14 Didato (4) 8: 6;10: 8, 9, 9 different (6) 10:15;16:21;17:16; 37: 7;56: 6,10 differently (1) 3:19 difficult (2) 46: 4, 7 dirty (2)
		D		
		Daly (3) 10: 3;40:21;42: 1 dangerous (1) 20: 9 dangerously (1) 20:15 dare (1) 59:14 darts (1) 41:13 data (2) 19:13,16 date (1) 48:19 dated (1) 27:11 dates (2) 21:10;48:20 daughter (5) 53: 7;54: 4, 9,12,14 David (4) 32:16;35:16,17,18 Davis (8) 25:12;27: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8;29:16 day (12)		

**2010-2011 PROPOSED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
AT WESTINGHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL**

August 18, 2010

<p>9:23;10: 4 disagree (1) 5:10 disappear (1) 18:20 disappointing (2) 33:10;54:10 disappoints (1) 53: 5 disclose (1) 14:22 discuss (4) 18:14;19: 1;20:16; 48:11 dismissed (2) 29:21;33: 7 dismissing (1) 3:24 dispensing (1) 4: 1 disrespected (1) 29:21 disrespectful (6) 24:11,12,21;25: 5; 28: 3;29:18 district (13) 3: 7;4:12;19:12;20:19; 26:21;30:14;36:20; 37: 7,15;38:19,24;39: 3; 54: 1 districts (4) 11: 1;35:22,24;36: 4 district's (2) 38:15;39: 9 doctor (1) 57: 5 document (1) 18:19 dollar (7) 10:11;40: 8,11,13,14; 41: 2, 3 dollars (11) 10:20;14:22;15: 8; 16:15,17;24: 7;32: 8; 51: 6,16,21;60: 1 done (5) 36: 8, 8;47: 5;62:23,24 Donielle (4) 56:20;57:19,20,22 door (1) 34: 2 doors (2) 69: 6;70: 4 doubled (1) 20: 8 down (13) 8:20,24;9:14,15,18; 29: 7;34: 9;39: 4;58:10; 60:20;61:11;65:21; 66:12 download (1) 18:19 downtown (1)</p>	<p>40: 7 drained (1) 14:22 draw (1) 30:14 drawers (1) 9:15 draws (1) 56:15 drinking (1) 62: 9 drive (1) 31:17 drop (1) 12:13 due (5) 21:10,10;30:21;31:18, 21 Duncan (3) 9: 1;23: 2;40:24 during (1) 10:13 Dwayne (3) 11:16;14:13,14</p>	<p>21: 8 educator (1) 12: 6 educators (2) 16:20;65: 6 efficient (1) 12: 2 efficiently (1) 13:22 effort (1) 3:11 egregiously (1) 20: 6 Eight (1) 35: 7 Either (2) 39: 3;66: 6 election (1) 22: 7 Electrical (1) 13: 1 Elementary (5) 8: 9;19:10;30: 6; 39:23;40:13 else (7) 26:12;35: 6;43:24; 46:15;62: 4;65:24;68: 3 emotions (1) 61:21 end (4) 21:21;25:21;27:17,18 engaging (1) 34:10 English (1) 32:18 enhancing (1) 49: 8 enormous (1) 19:19 enough (5) 15: 3;19: 7;48:10; 50:23;61:15 enrollment (2) 16:16;29: 7 ensure (2) 5:22;12: 1 entities (2) 11: 2;15: 9 Envelope (1) 12:24 environments (1) 12: 2 escaping (1) 69:19 especially (2) 20:10;47:22 established (1) 16:19 evaluate (1) 45: 2 evaluated (1) 44:13 even (10)</p>	<p>8:16;10:23;13:19; 28:10;32:12;35: 8; 43:21;59:23;60: 8;66:18 evening (11) 3: 1;6:21;7: 6,15; 14:15;17:24;49: 2,14; 57:21;64:13;70:20 event (1) 37:22 Everybody (4) 40:19;51:22;52: 8; 63: 5 everyone (6) 3: 1;7:13;41: 1, 4; 47:10;64: 6 evidence (1) 3:14 exactly (1) 15: 8 examine (1) 5:14 example (4) 8:12;18:23;42:10; 50: 3 exams (2) 50: 6, 8 excellent (4) 50:12;55:17;62: 3,23 excuse (1) 52: 3 existence (1) 39:20 expand (1) 30:16 expected (1) 66:17 expenditure (2) 15: 7;50: 9 Expenditures (2) 19:24;21:20 expenses (1) 20: 9 expensive (1) 69:14 experience (1) 58: 8 experienced (2) 23:22;44:24 experiment (2) 19:17,21 experiments (1) 21:12 expert (1) 44: 8 experts (1) 17:18 explain (1) 36:21 exposed (1) 9:16 express (2) 43:10;65: 4 extended (1)</p>	<p>41:10 extension (1) 37: 4 extra (2) 67:17,21 eye (1) 9:13</p>
	E			F
	<p>eager (1) 57: 4 earlier (1) 63: 8 early (1) 58: 6 ears (1) 13:17 easily (1) 14: 9 Easy (1) 70: 7 echo (1) 4:19 economic (2) 17:14;25:23 economy (1) 48: 3 ed (1) 59: 5 editor (1) 18: 8 Edu (3) 41: 8;51:21,24 educate (1) 64:19 Education (24) 4: 6;6: 1;7:24;13: 8; 20:23;21: 5;33:15;35: 2; 40:17;46:15,21;47:15; 17:48: 5, 9;50: 7,17,21; 51: 1,11,23;52: 4;56: 9; 59:24 educational (1) 42: 1 Education's (1)</p>			<p>face (2) 19: 2;55: 8 Facilities (1) 13:12 facility (3) 3:10;8:12;13: 2 fact (5) 10:18;11: 6;16:14; 28: 7;37: 8 failed (2) 21:12;54: 5 fair (1) 51:10 Fall (1) 62:10 familiar (1) 17: 1 family (4) 19: 4;20:19;29:10; 66:15 fast (1) 36:17 favor (1) 61:12 February (1) 40:16 fed (1) 34:11 federal (1) 11: 7 feedback (6) 3:13,21,24;4:23;5:12; 8: 3 feeder (1) 9:22 feel (5) 12:15;53: 1;54:11,11; 66: 3 fees (2) 41: 4;60:16 felt (4) 29: 4;53:22;54: 4, 5 FERGUSON (11) 2: 3;3: 1, 4;45:21; 46: 1;48:17;63:24; 64:10;68: 2, 5;70:17 few (3) 6:21;12:16;22:24 field (1) 17: 4 fighting (1) 57:14 figure (1)</p>

50:22 files (1) 37: 4 final (3) 15:23;17:19;29:23 finally (2) 57: 5;62:14 finance (1) 7:23 finances (1) 29: 9 Financial (8) 2: 4;3: 5;22: 4;26:23, 24;37: 3;38:18;39: 5 financing (3) 35:21,23;36: 4 find (7) 8:23;26:12;27:20; 44: 7,15;56: 4;64:19 finding (1) 51:23 finger (2) 53: 6;55:24 finished (1) 26: 6 Finnegan (4) 47: 7;48:24;49: 2, 3 fired (5) 22:22;31:22;49:20,20; 66:11 firing (3) 23:22;24: 8;67:16 firings (1) 38: 3 First (12) 3: 8;19: 8;34: 5;36:19; 38: 3,13;43:10;57:11,16, 16;62:17;68: 8 first-year (1) 23:24 FISCAL (3) 1: 2;20: 6;39: 6 Fitch (2) 38: 9,11 five (10) 13:14;20: 1, 8,22; 25:14;40:16,23;52:22; 55: 7;68:15 flagrantly (1) 42:11 floor (3) 14: 7;48: 6;55: 8 flow-through (1) 70:12 folks (1) 15:21 follow (2) 6: 7,17 Followed (1) 65: 1 following (18) 8: 6;11:16;14:14; 18: 3;22: 2;25:12;32:16;	35:17;36:11;39:14; 43: 2;45: 7;47: 6;49: 1; 56:20;57:20;61:19;63: 4 foolish (1) 21:19 foolishness (1) 21:21 forced (1) 70: 6 Foreman (5) 12: 4;13:24;14: 5, 9; 69:10 forget (1) 47:23 forgot (1) 60:11 form (1) 33:17 format (1) 3:19 former (4) 18: 8;25:15;43: 6; 68:10 forth (1) 34:11 forum (1) 64: 1 forward (5) 4:23;5: 2;8: 2;36:15; 64: 7 found (2) 62:14,16 fountains (1) 62:10 four (8) 19:15;20: 7;23:12; 40: 3;43:17;54:21; 58:11;68:15 fourth (1) 51: 8 fourth/fifth (1) 51:10 Franklin (1) 1:18 free (1) 25: 1 freely (1) 20:24 friends (4) 22:21;23:13;54:24; 65: 5 front (4) 4: 5;6:11;12: 8,19 functional (1) 4:11 fund (1) 38: 6 funding (2) 65:16,22 Funds (11) 11:20;14:23;28:19; 30:14;33: 2;36:23;37: 1, 20,21;51:23;52:11	funny (2) 44: 1;60:22 further (2) 12: 1;19:18 future (3) 26:14;39:10;43:17 FY (2) 37:12,13 G Gage (1) 9:10 gambling (3) 25: 5, 6, 7 Ganae (4) 22: 2;25:11,12,14 garbled (1) 12:12 gave (2) 27:19;57: 5 Gehokanst (3) 49: 1,14,15 generated (1) 52: 6 generating (1) 40:22 George (5) 14:14;18: 2, 3, 7;42:22 Georgetta (5) 25:12;27: 3, 5, 6, 7 gets (5) 32:23,24;60: 2,23; 63:14 given (8) 3:20;7: 8;10:14;11: 6; 36: 6;39: 7;47:16;65:13 giving (1) 31:17 glad (2) 5:18;18:16 goal (1) 11:23 goes (1) 20:16 Goldbaum (4) 27: 7;30: 2, 4, 5 Good (18) 3: 1;8:12;11:11;13: 9, 9,10,11;14:15;17:24; 32:17;45:11;49: 2,14; 51:14;54:11;57:21; 60:18;64:13 government (2) 11: 8;15: 9 GPA (3) 55: 1, 3, 9 grab (1) 5:17 graciously (1) 7:14 grade (3) 50: 4, 5;51: 8	graders (1) 51: 7 grading (1) 55: 3 graduate (1) 65:16 grammar (2) 53: 7;55:11 Grand (2) 15:19;16: 8 grant (1) 59: 3 gray-haired (1) 53:18 great (5) 52:22;60: 4, 8,23; 61:12 Greetings (1) 47:10 grew (2) 26:21;65:20 group (1) 54: 9 growth (1) 34:23 guess (8) 30:12;32:20;35:12; 47: 1;61: 9;62:19;65: 9; 69:15 guessing (1) 69:24 gurus (1) 17:18 guys (1) 58: 2 gymatorium (3) 8:15,20;16: 5 H Half (3) 14:24;40: 1, 7 hall (1) 61:12 halls (1) 66: 9 hallway (1) 54:19 halts (1) 38: 2 Hampshire (2) 17: 1, 2 hand (2) 40:10;46:17 handled (1) 29:18 hands (1) 22:14 hang (1) 9: 6 happen (2) 26:17;64:16 happened (4)	19:20;28:19;54:13; 55:10 happening (1) 33: 8 happens (1) 58:18 hard (4) 15:23;46:12;48:12; 54:10 hard-to-staff (3) 61:24;62: 2,24 hat (1) 41:14 head (1) 61:21 health (3) 49: 9,21;70: 8 hear (8) 4: 6;7:12;8:17;12:19; 45:17;53: 5;54:17;64: 2 heard (8) 22:20;43:24;49:22; 52:23,24;53:21;54:19; 58: 6 HEARING (15) 1: 3;3:24;4: 3;8: 1, 2; 9:18;13: 7,15,16;39:18; 45:16;49: 5;53: 5;58: 1; 70:20 hearings (4) 3:18;43:13,18;48:16 heat (3) 69: 2,17,19 Held (2) 1:16;61:20 Hello (5) 11:17;22: 3;27: 4; 43: 3;63: 5 helping (1) 56: 8 helps (1) 40: 4 HERZOG (6) 2: 7;3: 6;4:18;7: 3; 45:22;48:21 hey (3) 46:12;51:12;69:11 Hi (6) 25:13;30: 4;45: 8; 61:20;65: 3;67: 1 HIGH (22) 1:17;8:24;9:17;10: 7; 12: 4, 4, 6;15:19;16: 3; 17: 1, 5;19:14;32:18; 34:13;47:16,22;55:13; 59:16;65:23;68:10,19; 69:10 higher (1) 37:12 highest (1) 58: 4 Hilgendorf (4) 35:17;36:10,12,13
--	--	---	---	---

<p>himself (1) 10: 3</p> <p>hint (1) 28:16</p> <p>hire (3) 11: 8;31: 7;45: 1</p> <p>hired (3) 11:13;31:22;32: 3</p> <p>hirings (1) 44:19</p> <p>hit (1) 55: 8</p> <p>hitting (1) 23: 6</p> <p>home (3) 21:15;43: 7;66:16</p> <p>honest (2) 46: 7;67:20</p> <p>honey (1) 55:10</p> <p>honor (1) 54:15</p> <p>honorably (1) 29:21</p> <p>hope (2) 13:21;43:16</p> <p>horrible (4) 26:23,24;28: 2;53:14</p> <p>hot (2) 70:11,15</p> <p>hour (3) 3: 2;40: 7, 9</p> <p>household (1) 26: 2</p> <p>Huberman (4) 43:23;44:23;61: 1,12</p> <p>huge (3) 50: 8,23;52: 9</p> <p>humiliating (1) 60:14</p> <p>hundred (2) 51:20;59:24</p> <p>husband (1) 25:24</p>	<p>Illinois (2) 1:19;17: 2</p> <p>imagine (1) 33:17</p> <p>impact (2) 43:19;44:18</p> <p>impacted (1) 16:17</p> <p>importance (1) 10:23</p> <p>important (8) 31:11;39: 8;45:13; 48: 2;49: 7, 9;50:18; 51:16</p> <p>impossible (1) 19: 1</p> <p>improve (3) 12:20;34:23;37:16</p> <p>improved (1) 13:20</p> <p>improvement (2) 13: 4;19: 6</p> <p>Improvements (3) 11:21;13: 3;19: 3</p> <p>inappropriately (1) 44:16</p> <p>includes (2) 18:22;52:12</p> <p>including (1) 4:13</p> <p>inconvenient (3) 31: 3, 4, 5</p> <p>incorporate (1) 4: 8</p> <p>incorrect (1) 15: 1</p> <p>increase (3) 20:12,14;44:14</p> <p>increment (3) 35:21,23;36: 4</p> <p>incremental (1) 44:13</p> <p>indicate (1) 20:22</p> <p>individual (2) 6:17,19</p> <p>information (3) 5:19;6:17;44: 4</p> <p>inner (1) 34: 3</p> <p>input (7) 3:17;4: 7,12;5:12; 64: 2, 4,11</p> <p>inquiry (1) 9:12</p> <p>insanity (1) 70:13</p> <p>inside (2) 50:19;59:16</p> <p>insist (1) 30:15</p> <p>inspirations (1) 57:14</p>	<p>installing (1) 8:15</p> <p>instance (1) 15: 7</p> <p>instead (1) 51: 8</p> <p>insurance (1) 49:21</p> <p>integral (1) 68:24</p> <p>intends (1) 36:24</p> <p>intention (1) 64: 1</p> <p>interest (2) 3:22;70:19</p> <p>interested (1) 68: 3</p> <p>interesting (2) 10:16;33: 1</p> <p>Interior (1) 13: 2</p> <p>Internet (1) 25: 2</p> <p>interpreter (2) 6:23;47: 9</p> <p>interrupted (1) 7:22</p> <p>into (10) 3: 9;4: 8,12;5: 4; 14:23;17:12;18:21; 34:13;57:10;62:12</p> <p>intricate (1) 64:18</p> <p>invested (1) 26:11</p> <p>investigate (1) 13:22</p> <p>investing (1) 17:11</p> <p>involved (1) 15:22</p> <p>involves (1) 36:19</p> <p>ISAT (2) 19:12;50: 6</p> <p>issue (2) 38: 5;68: 8</p> <p>issues (4) 14:19;36:18;37:24; 39: 4</p> <p>item (2) 44: 1;50:24</p> <p>IV (1) 13: 2</p>	<p>2:20</p> <p>job (24) 5:21;7:15;22:23; 23:12;24:21;25:23; 26: 1, 4,12,13;27:13,21; 35: 6;51:24;58:12,23,24; 62:16,22;65:13,17,18; 68:16,23</p> <p>jobs (8) 23:16;26:17;41: 5, 9; 42: 4, 5;51:21;62: 3</p> <p>joined (1) 3: 6</p> <p>JORY (1) 2:10</p> <p>Julian (2) 32:18;34:13</p> <p>July (1) 27:12</p> <p>junior (1) 55: 7</p> <p>Juvenile (1) 59: 6</p>	<p>lady (1) 63: 7</p> <p>laid (2) 60:20;65:17</p> <p>language (3) 6:23;7: 1;9:21</p> <p>larger (3) 4:10;6: 1,16</p> <p>last (17) 9:14;10:10;22:21,24; 23: 2,11;26:17;30: 7,19; 36:17;39: 8;45:19; 46:19;58: 9;61:21;62: 1, 8</p> <p>later (2) 9: 8;67:21</p> <p>Lawndale (1) 58:16</p> <p>laws (1) 41:21</p> <p>Lawson (6) 56:20;57:19,21,22; 58:16;61: 5</p> <p>lawsuit (1) 69:24</p> <p>lawsuits (2) 59: 8;70:14</p> <p>lawyers (1) 24: 5</p> <p>layoff (2) 23: 8,20</p> <p>leadership (2) 10:22;18:13</p> <p>learning (4) 12: 2;37:17;44:21; 49:10</p> <p>least (4) 11:23;13:14;43:17; 49:19</p> <p>leave (2) 32: 6;66:21</p> <p>left (3) 9:16;47: 2;66:13</p> <p>less (4) 17: 7;27:19,20,21</p> <p>letter (3) 23:14;27:11;62:21</p> <p>letters (2) 23:20;33: 8</p> <p>letting (1) 67: 8</p> <p>leukemia (1) 57: 2</p> <p>liar (1) 9: 6</p> <p>libraries (1) 48:14</p> <p>License (1) 2:21</p> <p>life (7) 11:24;22:23;25:17; 28: 8;29: 5, 9;33:14</p> <p>light (1)</p>
<p>I</p>			<p>K</p>	
<p>iced (1) 52: 5</p> <p>identified (2) 9: 8;36: 2</p> <p>identify (1) 46:16</p> <p>IEP's (1) 61:13</p> <p>ignorance (1) 70:13</p> <p>ignore (1) 42:11</p> <p>II (1) 12:24</p> <p>III (3) 11:20;13: 1, 3</p>			<p>Kaila (4) 61:19;63: 3, 4, 6</p> <p>Kedzie (1) 8:14</p> <p>keep (1) 9:13</p> <p>keeping (3) 16:18;17:12;67:19</p> <p>kicked (1) 53:23</p> <p>kids (8) 13: 9,17;17:12;50: 5; 60:10;63:20;64:19;66: 8</p> <p>kids' (1) 25: 6</p> <p>kind (11) 5: 8;9: 3;10:16;21:21; 33: 1;37:22;42:10; 52:17;58: 8;65:18;66:16</p> <p>kindergarten (1) 66: 7</p> <p>knew (6) 58:11,12,13;59:22,23; 60: 1</p> <p>known (1) 66: 6</p> <p>knows (1) 51:22</p> <p>Kristine (4) 18: 3;22: 1, 2, 4</p> <p>Kurt (4) 35:17;36:10,11,13</p>	
		<p>J</p>	<p>L</p>	
		<p>Jacquay (3) 65: 2;66:24;67: 2</p> <p>jail (3) 59:17;60: 9;61:16</p> <p>Janice (1)</p>	<p>labor (1) 17: 5</p>	

50:17 limit (1) 7:12 limited (1) 24:22 line (7) 7:18;9:12;32:22;33: 2; 35:13;38: 3;44: 1 line-by-line (2) 37: 6, 6 lines (1) 36:20 lining (1) 17:14 link (3) 6:11;48:14,17 list (1) 7: 5 listed (1) 19:10 listen (1) 5:22 listening (3) 3:23;53:11;64: 3 little (11) 3:19;9: 5;18: 5;30:19; 54:23;55: 1,13;57: 1; 63: 7;69:14;70: 2 live (3) 21:15;28: 8;41:20 livelihoods (1) 25: 7 livery (1) 43:23 lives (2) 25: 6;67:21 living (2) 42: 8,21 lo (1) 60: 2 loans (3) 51:13;65:15;66:20 local (2) 8: 8,10 located (1) 59:16 logistics (2) 4:17;6:21 long (1) 63:10 longer (1) 57: 8 look (12) 8: 2;15:13;16:13; 19: 8,19;20: 4;21:19; 34: 5;36:15;56: 5,11; 64: 7 looked (4) 23:18;55: 7, 8,15 looking (6) 4:23;5: 2;11:19;21: 2; 50: 1;56: 7 loop (1)	52: 7 losing (2) 15: 9;51: 6 loss (6) 13: 7,15,16;35:20,22; 36: 1 lost (8) 23:12;25:24;26:17; 35: 2;36: 3;41: 4;42: 4, 5 lot (14) 16: 9;29:11;31:14,16; 32:11;37:14,15,15; 45:12;52:17;53:11; 56: 9;57:12;62: 4 Louis (2) 8:24;10: 7 love (1) 63:16 loved (2) 21:17;26:22 low (2) 54:21;55: 5 lower (2) 23:24;28:12 lowered (3) 14: 7;21: 8;38: 9 lunch (1) 25: 1 lymphoma (1) 57: 3	managing (2) 28:24;53:22 Manley (4) 12: 3;68:19;69: 3,15 mannequins (1) 39:22 manner (4) 24:15;28: 5, 7;64: 5 many (15) 13:19;14:22;15: 8; 17:20;22:14;29: 6; 30:13,22;35: 5;42: 3; 47:21;49:10,11,18;59: 7 Marcia (4) 30: 3;32:15,16,18 Mary (3) 47: 7;48:24;49: 1 mastery (1) 34:23 math (1) 37: 9 matter (1) 70:23 matters (1) 44: 8 Maurice (1) 63: 4 maximum (1) 3:23 maxing (1) 39: 5 may (3) 29: 5;52:18;56: 9 Maybe (6) 17:24;18: 4;27:12; 41: 8;43:21;55: 6 Mayle (6) 18: 3;22: 1, 3, 4;24: 2, 18 Mayor (3) 10: 3;40:21;42: 1 Mayor's (1) 14:23 McAlpin (4) 22: 2;25:11,13,14 mean (8) 24: 3;44: 3;45:17; 47: 3;57: 3;60: 7;67:22; 70:10 meaning (1) 39: 1 meaningful (1) 47: 5 means (3) 19:16;50: 8;69:18 measure (1) 44:18 measuring (1) 44:22 Mechanical (1) 13: 1 media (1) 43:22	medical (1) 57: 5 meeting (4) 9:14;45:19;57:24; 68:14 Melissa (3) 57:20;61:18,19 member (8) 8: 9;30: 6;39:16,17; 44: 5;47:13;68:11,13 members (4) 5: 1;19: 4;43:11,17 mental (1) 49: 9 mention (2) 24:22;28:17 Merrill (1) 8: 9 mess (3) 17:22;18:14;37:24 met (1) 54:24 metal (1) 16:11 meter (1) 40: 6 method (1) 39: 6 metrics (4) 44:11,12,20;45: 3 microphone (1) 7: 8 middle (1) 42:21 might (7) 3:18;39:21,24;40: 6, 21;41:21;67:20 mike (1) 8:16 Miller (3) 56:19,21,22 million (28) 10:13;15:20,24;16: 4, 15,17;17: 5, 6, 7;20:13, 13,14,14,16,17;23: 4; 24: 4, 6, 7;32:22;35:13; 37:12,14;38: 2;51:21,24; 59:24;60: 1 millions (1) 51: 5 mind (2) 34:24;47:21 mindless (1) 21:12 MINISTER (2) 64:13,14 minute (1) 41:16 minutes (3) 7: 9,10;40: 1 mismanagement (1) 15:15 missed (1)	41: 9 mistake (1) 21: 5 mistaken (1) 30:10 Moderator (2) 2:11;7:15 modest (1) 21:15 monetarily (1) 32:12 money (24) 10: 5;11: 7;13:21; 16:22;20:20,24;21: 6,12, 13;23: 3,18;24:13;25: 5; 26: 9,10;31: 6;36: 6; 39:21;43: 8;52: 5;60:18; 67:11,15,18 monies (3) 8:13;11: 3, 5 month (4) 27:18;38: 5;43:21; 60:15 months (7) 27:24;43:21;57: 3; 58:17;60: 5;61: 6, 7 month's (1) 40:12 Mordacai (3) 52:15,16,17 more (19) 5:16;13: 7,15;15: 3; 29: 1;30:19;31: 6;40:23; 41:16,22;42: 9,15;44:24; 45: 2;50:18;51:15; 61:13;64:20;69:14 Morehouse (2) 59: 2;60:10 morning (1) 37:24 mortgage (1) 41: 4 most (8) 20: 5,15;21:16;22:20; 58: 6;59:13;66: 7,18 mother (1) 54: 5 motivated (1) 54:14 move (2) 34:21;65:24 moved (2) 54: 1;65:23 much (8) 4:10;13:12;26:22; 31: 4;33:18;36: 2;37:19; 67: 6 multiple (2) 36:15;37:20 mummies (1) 47:24 must (2) 52:10;58: 2
	M			
	Magazine (1) 60: 7 magical (1) 24: 6 Magnet (3) 62: 6,17,20 maintain (1) 68:23 maintained (1) 38:11 maintaining (1) 49: 8 majority (1) 12:10 Makes (3) 18:24;21: 5;46: 6 making (4) 27: 1;31: 6;51: 5; 60:17 man (1) 58:22 manage (2) 28:24;53:21 managed (2) 34: 6, 7 MANAGEMENT (6) 1: 1;37: 3;42:15; 44:10,16,22 manager (1) 59: 9			

**2010-2011 PROPOSED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
AT WESTINGHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL**

August 18, 2010

myself (1) 29: 1	18: 9;58:17;60: 6, 7	57:23	opened (2) 59: 4;69: 7	parents (6) 9:21;11:12;25:17; 47:17;53:23;65:15
N	next (12) 6: 8;7:18;23: 6,21; 24:20;26: 4;34:21,22; 61: 2;63:15;65:17;66: 5	obvious (1) 6:11	opening (1) 64:20	Park (4) 9:10;11: 1;40: 7;45:10
NAACP (1) 14:19	nice (2) 8:19;70: 5	obviously (2) 49:22;51:19	operating (1) 17:21	parking (1) 40: 6
naked (1) 9:16	niece (1) 63:12	o'clock (1) 3: 2	opportunities (1) 7:12	part (7) 11:20;31:12;49: 9; 64:18;68:24;69: 4,16
name (22) 3: 4;7: 6;8: 7;18: 7; 22: 3;25:13;27: 4;30: 4; 32:17;35:18;36:12; 43: 3;45: 8;47:10;49:14; 52:16;56:22;63: 6; 64:13,24;67: 2;68: 9	nieces (2) 52:22,23	off (11) 7:21;18:21;23: 8,17, 17;32:20;41: 3;49:21; 60:21;62:16;65:18	opportunity (3) 5:13;31:20;60: 4	participate (1) 8: 1
Nathan (4) 27: 7;30: 2, 3, 5	night (8) 22:21;23:11,13;30: 7, 19;36:17;39: 8;45:19	offer (1) 41: 2	organization (1) 7: 7	particular (1) 12:23
nation (1) 41:10	nights (1) 48:16	OFFICE (3) 1: 1;5: 1;7:24	Originally (1) 52:24	particularly (2) 15: 9;39: 8
national (3) 26: 6;32:19;59: 5	nine (6) 27:14,20;28:15,21; 29: 1, 8	Officer (4) 2: 4, 8;3: 5, 7	ororg (1) 16: 2	passes (1) 23:21
nature (1) 55:18	nonblighted (1) 52:10	officers (1) 67:17	Ortiz (11) 45: 7;47: 6, 7, 8,11,11, 12,20;48: 8,19,22	past (10) 3: 2,17,19;19:20; 20: 8;57: 1;58:17;62: 1; 67:13;69:24
near (1) 52: 8	nondesirable (1) 62:13	officers' (1) 44:18	Orwell (1) 42:22	path (1) 65:11
nearing (1) 7:10	noneducators (2) 16:20;41:24	offices (1) 37: 9	otherwise (1) 43:19	patient (3) 63:16;66:10,14
necessary (1) 18:17	nonetheless (1) 13:19	offset (1) 40:20	out (29) 8:23;15: 4;18:18; 23:21;29:12;31: 3,15,17; 34: 2;38:21;39: 5;41:15; 45:14;49:20;50: 7,15,19; 52: 5;53:23;54: 1,19; 55:17;59: 7;60: 1;62: 5, 12,22;65:23;69: 2	Paul (1) 9: 2
need (12) 6:19;12:23;13:11,20; 25: 8;41:12;42:20; 47:11;55:24;56: 4; 64:20;66:20	Nor (1) 28: 5	old (1) 68:21	Outlay (1) 20: 5	Pause (3) 40: 2;41:17;42:16
needs (10) 6:23;13: 9;25: 8;39: 3; 63: 8, 9,13,17,20;65: 8	Norine (2) 49: 1,15	older (1) 12:10	outline (1) 36:24	pay (10) 21:16;26: 8,10;40:14; 55:16;58:11;60:11,19; 61: 7;66: 2
negative (1) 38:11	North (7) 15:19;16: 8;52: 7; 54: 2, 2, 2;60: 7	oldest (1) 59: 2	outlook (1) 38:11	paycheck (1) 60:17
negotiate (1) 16: 7	note (1) 64: 4	Olympics (1) 33:20	oven (1) 70: 8	payer (1) 40: 5
negotiations (1) 24: 5	notice (5) 13: 3;16: 8;19:18; 28:14;29: 8	once (1) 33: 2	over (14) 4:16;6:20;8:19,20; 9:15,18,20;11:18,12: 5; 17:20;54: 1;59: 8;61:16; 69: 6	payments (1) 20:13
neighborhood (1) 65:24	noticed (1) 12:22	one (48) 5: 7,18,19;6: 2;9: 3; 10:11,17;11:20;13:14, 15,24;14: 5,17;15:12; 18:22;19:22;20:15; 22: 7,19,20;23:12;33:12; 37: 1;39:19;40: 8, 9,11, 12,14;41: 2, 3,16;42:15; 46: 6;47: 2;53: 4,19; 54:23,24;58: 3;62: 4; 65: 5, 7,21;67:17;68: 8; 69: 4,16	owes (1) 39: 1	pays (1) 37:14
neighborhoods (1) 62: 7	notified (1) 7: 9	ones (2) 8:13;69:14	own (1) 56:13	pbccom (1) 16: 2
nephews (2) 52:22,22	notify (1) 7:16	one-year (2) 20: 2, 3	owner (1) 43: 5	pension (1) 29:13
network (1) 64:18	number (4) 23: 9,10;24: 7;38:23	online (6) 5:14;6: 8, 9,16;18:19; 24:22	P	people (35) 4:11;5: 8,10;15:12; 19:24;20:11;21: 7,16; 22:12,14;26:17,19,24; 42:20;44: 4;45:12; 46:13;47:21;48:10; 49:18,20;50:15;52:18; 53:21;55:20;56: 1, 6, 8, 14,15;58: 1;62: 4;66:13; 68:18,22
new (23) 8:24;9: 7,10,19;10: 6; 16: 1, 3,15,23;17: 2, 3, 7; 18:13;27:20;55:22; 56: 2;62:11,11;66:13,13; 68:20;69: 3,11	numbers (9) 10:15;18:20;20:21; 30:21,24;41:13,14;56: 6; 57:13	only (9) 17: 8;19:15,22;24: 2; 26: 2;27:15;29: 8;35: 6; 60: 9	page (8) 6:12;11:22;18:20; 19:23;20:22;36:22,23; 48:14	percent (4) 41:10;54:21;58:11; 61: 7
Newburg (1) 64:14	Obama (1) 41: 1	onto (1) 5:23	pages (4) 18:16,19,21,24	percentage (2) 30:22;54:21
newer (2) 8:13;56: 8	objective (1) 34:21	open (9) 9: 2;68:21;69: 1, 5,12, 13,19;70: 3, 4	paid (2) 16:22;66:20	percentages (2) 24:24;47:16
news (4)	observation (1) 34: 6		parent (2) 18:10;52:19	
	observe (1)			

performance (1) 19: 9	53: 6	44:24	purchases (1) 44:19	28:19,20,23;29:20
performances (1) 62: 3	policies (1) 16:22	process (7) 3:16;24:10;25: 4; 31:12,18,21;37:17	purpose (3) 45:16;47:14;55:12	really (19) 26: 5;29: 3;34:17; 40: 4;44: 7, 8;45:11; 46: 7,10,12;47: 3;52: 5; 54:11;56: 1;57: 9;63:13; 65: 4;67: 3;70:15
performed (4) 19:11,12,15,16	policy (3) 16:16,18,23	professional (2) 28: 3, 5	put (19) 5:23;13:21;14: 6; 25: 8;26: 1,19;27:10; 40: 5;41:14;49:20; 62:12,14,15;68:16,20; 69: 3, 4, 5,13	reason (6) 15:16;24: 2;55: 5,21, 24;58:19
performing (1) 54:20	politicians (1) 41: 2	program (12) 6:14;10:19;33:20; 35: 1;58: 3, 5;59: 6; 60:13;62: 7,18,20;63: 8	putting (5) 5: 4, 7;26: 4;54: 9; 69:11	reasonable (1) 19: 1
person (3) 9:19;19: 1;23:11	pool (3) 9:23;10: 4;62:16	programs (2) 37:15;59:10	Q	reasons (2) 15:12;30:21
personality (1) 54:14	position (4) 6:15;30:20;35: 3;57: 8	progress (1) 48: 9		reassigned (1) 27:17
personally (2) 45:14;56:10	positions (2) 11:10,13	projected (1) 32: 7	R	reassignment (2) 62:15,16
Peterson (5) 61:19;63: 3, 5, 6;64: 9	possibility (1) 13:18	Projects (2) 11:20;17:16		rebuilt (1) 37: 2
Phase (6) 11:20;12:24,24;13: 1, 2, 3	possibly (1) 39:22	promised (2) 9: 1;19: 4	qualifications (2) 31: 1;62: 6	receive (2) 34:12;46: 1
phone (2) 7:21;57:13	post (2) 6: 9;24:20	promises (1) 9: 3	qualified (1) 63:11	received (3) 27:11;33: 7;57: 6
pick (2) 55:20,20	practically (1) 37: 8	proof (1) 31: 8	qualify (2) 59: 3;65:16	recently (1) 22: 6
picture (1) 39:10	prepared (1) 57:23	prop (1) 42:15	quarters (1) 40: 4	record (1) 5:23
place (7) 25: 9;28:20;31: 2,14; 50:12;56: 5;62:13	presence (1) 45:13	property (4) 10:20;43: 4, 8;52: 6	quick (2) 22:11;38:21	recorded (1) 45:18
plan (2) 31: 2;38: 6	PRESENT (3) 2: 1;43:13;47: 1	PROPOSED (2) 1: 2;43:12	radio (1) 43:22	recording (1) 6: 5
planning (2) 65:10,11	presentation (3) 3:20;4: 1, 1	props (1) 39:24		redevelop (1) 16:23
plans (1) 38: 5	pretty (2) 38:14;51: 2	prototypes (1) 31:15	raising (1) 46:17	redirected (1) 52:11
platform (1) 22: 7	price (1) 16: 3	proud (1) 39:16	ran (2) 33:19;34:19	reduce (1) 36: 1
play (2) 10: 4;49: 7	primary (1) 11:23	proudly (1) 18:12	ranks (1) 41:11	reduced (1) 22:22
please (12) 7: 7;9:24;14: 2;17: 9; 19:23;24:16;29:14; 35: 9;41: 3;42:17;60: 6; 64:24	principal (6) 9:10,11;25:22;59:20; 60:20;62:22	provided (1) 6:22	rapport (1) 11:11	referred (1) 68:22
pleased (1) 8:11	principals (3) 4:13;31:16;69:10	prudent (2) 37: 3;39: 6	rate (2) 34: 5;58: 4	registered (2) 7: 5,13
plenty (1) 52: 2	print (1) 47:15	PSAE (1) 19:15	rated (1) 44:13	regular (1) 9:17
Plumbing (1) 13: 1	printed (2) 37:24;38: 1	psychologist (1) 49: 3	rates (1) 54:21	rehire (1) 23:23
plus (1) 50: 9	printing (1) 48:10	psychologists (1) 49: 6	rather (1) 16:20	remember (3) 43:20;57:10;68:14
PM (2) 1:10;7:20	prior (1) 32: 4	PUBLIC (35) 1: 3;3: 5;4:20;7:19,23; 9:17;10:12,21;11: 1,18; 15: 2,14;18:11;23: 5; 38: 7;40:12;43:13,14,18; 44: 5, 5;47:17;48: 4,13, 16;49: 4,16;50:10;52:13, 21;59:11;61:10;66: 5, 8; 70:19	rating (5) 21: 2;38: 4, 9,15,16	renegotiate (1) 51:13
pocket (1) 55:17	priorities (2) 20:23;25: 8	psychologists (1) 49: 6	ratings (1) 21: 8	Renovation (2) 11:22,23
pockets (1) 17:15	probably (2) 13:16;69:23	publish (2) 18: 9;47:15	rave (1) 55:14	rent (4) 40:12,12,15;41: 3
podium (1) 65: 1	problem (1) 12:21	pull (1) 41:14	read (6) 33:23;42:20;48:15; 59:21;60: 2,20	rentals (1) 40:22
point (8) 8:18;18:18;37:23; 38:14;55: 6, 9,19,24	problems (1) 56: 1	pulled (1) 9:15	reads (1) 59:20	reopened (1) 30:23
pointing (1)	proceed (1) 7: 7		real (1) 34:16	reopening (1) 32: 4
	proceedings (1) 70:21		realize (1) 27:22	replace (2)
	proceeds (1)		reallocation (4)	

35: 2;37: 1 replacing (1) 33:21 Reported (1) 2:20 reporter (2) 18: 9;46: 2 represent (1) 4:10 representing (1) 4: 5 request (1) 43:16 required (1) 43: 6 research (1) 13:13 reserve (3) 36:23;37: 1,21 reserves (1) 38:10 reside (1) 43: 6 resources (2) 34:12;48:11 respect (3) 9:20;42: 3;48: 8 respected (1) 33:18 respectful (1) 28: 7 respond (1) 64: 5 responding (1) 64: 8 response (2) 6:19;46:22 responses (1) 6:10 responsibilities (1) 61: 8 responsibility (1) 39: 6 retention (1) 58: 4 retirement (1) 33:13 return (1) 28:22 revenue (5) 35:21,23;36: 1, 3;43: 9 revenues (1) 37: 1 Review (1) 38:18 reviews (1) 55:15 ribbon (1) 16:19 rich (1) 52: 6 rid (1) 63: 9	Ridgeland (1) 54: 3 right (25) 4:18;8: 4,12;10: 3,14; 15:21;17:22;21:14; 23:23;25: 9;29:12;39: 2; 41: 5;45:17,23;46: 5,13, 23;47: 4;51: 3;55: 3; 58:14,22,23;63:23 rightfully (1) 11: 5 rights (2) 31:18,21 road (2) 62:12,13 Robbins (4) 32:16;35:16,18,18 Rodgers (6) 8: 5, 6, 7, 8;9:24;10: 2 rods (1) 70: 2 Rolando (4) 43: 2;45: 6, 7, 9 role (2) 7:15;49: 7 roll (2) 41:13;50:19 rolling (1) 50: 7 rolls (1) 54:15 Ron (4) 43:23;44:23;61: 1,12 room (5) 9: 5;12: 7, 9;46:16; 51:22 Rose (3) 47: 7;48:24;49: 1 Rosemary (1) 49: 3 rules (7) 41:19,21,22;42: 3, 4, 5,12 rumors (1) 49: 5 run (2) 17:15;35: 1 running (2) 58:15;60: 5	sake (1) 40: 8 salaries (1) 47:22 salary (2) 23:24;27:23 same (6) 21: 5;22:10;30:24,24; 40:11;66: 9 Santa (1) 20:20 save (1) 13: 7 saved (1) 39:21 saving (1) 16: 7 saw (2) 29:11;53:10 saying (9) 23:13;24: 6;26: 3; 53:22;54:16,19;55:12; 59:21;67:19 Scantron (2) 50: 8,18 scary (1) 42: 7 scheduled (1) 7:19 Schmidt (6) 14:14;17:24;18: 2, 3, 4, 7 scholarships (1) 55:18 SCHOOL (76) 1:17;3: 7;6:14;8: 8,10, 24:9: 7, 9,17,18;10: 6, 7; 11:18;12: 4, 4,16;15:19, 21:16: 1, 3,17;17: 1, 2, 6, 7;18:22,22;19:17; 20:19;22:23;25:16,18; 26:18;30: 6;32:19;33: 5, 14;34: 4,13,13;38: 7; 39:23;40:11,13;43:15; 45:10;49: 3, 6, 6;52:21; 53: 8,12,12;54:19;55: 2, 11,15;59:16,18;61:11, 24;62: 2, 8, 9,11,17; 65: 6,14,22;66: 1, 5,12, 13;68:11,19;69:10 Schools (55) 3: 6,15;4:14,21;7:23; 9:22;10:12,21;11: 1, 6, 10;14:23;15: 3,14; 18:11;19: 7, 9,10,14; 23: 5;30:15,17;32: 2, 4, 24;33: 9;34: 3;36: 3, 7; 38: 2;40:14;45: 1;48:13; 49: 4,16;50:10;51: 4; 52:13;54:18,20;56: 3, 7; 59:11;63: 1;64:16,17,20; 65:12,12,21;66: 3, 8; 67: 5, 6;70:19	score (1) 44:14 scored (1) 55:13 scores (1) 55: 6 Scott (4) 11:15,16,17;68:10 screwed (1) 69:22 script (4) 59:20,21;60: 2,20 seasoned (1) 29:11 seat (1) 17: 5 seats (2) 17: 3, 8 second (4) 37:23;38:17;43:20; 68: 8 secretary (1) 22: 4 security (3) 26:13;65:13,18 seeing (2) 21:20;66: 9 seem (1) 17:15 seems (4) 10:16;11: 4;15:14; 37: 3 selective (1) 16:16 self (1) 56:13 Senate (2) 23: 3,19 send (3) 5:18,19;48:13 senior (3) 53: 8,17;65:10 sense (1) 24: 8 sent (3) 23: 7;45:18,20 separate (4) 36:23;37:21;38:16,24 Service (4) 20: 6,16;39:10;43:23 Services (3) 20: 5,12;33: 1 setting (1) 42:11 Several (3) 33: 5;38:13;57: 3 severance (1) 28:11 severe (1) 13:15 shade (4) 69: 1, 1, 2,18 shades (5)	68:17,22,23;69: 4,15 shame (2) 48: 1, 4 shape (1) 33:17 share (4) 4:22;6: 6,15;58: 2 shocked (1) 57:10 shooting (1) 42: 9 shortfall (1) 10:12 show (3) 15: 8;18: 6;22:13 shut (3) 65:21;66:12;69:22 side (3) 14:18;52: 7, 8 sign (3) 6:22,24;52:24 significant (1) 15:16 Simeon (5) 39:14;43: 1, 2, 3, 4 SIMMONS (36) 2:10;7:14;8: 5;9:24; 10: 8;11:15;14: 2,13; 17: 9;18: 2;22: 1;24:16; 25:11;27: 3, 6;29:14; 30: 2;32:15;35: 9,16; 36:10;39:13;42:17; 43: 1;45: 6;47: 6;48:24; 52:15;56:19;57:19; 61:18;63: 3;64:23; 66:24;67:24;68: 9 sincerity (1) 43:14 single (2) 33:16;59: 1 sisters (1) 59:23 sit (2) 8:18;12:18 Site (1) 13: 2 sitting (4) 24: 5;47:24;51:22; 58:21 situation (6) 13:11;25:24;26: 1, 5; 27:10;70: 9 situations (2) 26:19,23 six (8) 19:13;21:17,18;35:19; 58:17;59: 2;60: 5,10 sixth-grade (1) 45: 9 skills (1) 55: 3 slice (1) 34:16
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slight (1) 13:15	6:11,14,14,15;30:20; 54: 8	57:12	suspended (1) 19:18	teachers' (1) 25: 7
slightly (1) 30: 9	spell (1) 47:12	student (6) 24:18;34:23;44:20; 49: 8;60:16;67:13	swaps (1) 21: 9	teaching (8) 13:10;34: 4,16,17; 35: 7;58: 3;65:12;70: 7
slow (1) 39: 4	spend (4) 67:15,18,20,21	students (21) 4:21;11:11;13:10; 17: 8;24:23;25: 1;31: 5; 32:11;33:10,16,19; 34:10;37:17;47:17; 49:23;51: 6,15;57:13; 61:11;62:12;65:15	synopsis (1) 57: 1	team (5) 3: 9;4:11;5: 1;6: 1; 7:23
smile (1) 19: 5	spending (2) 20:20,24	stud	system (4) 32: 6;38: 7;42: 1; 52:21	tears (1) 22:22
Smith (1) 2:20	spent (2) 8:13;16:14	student's (1) 44:14	systems (1) 55: 2	techniques (2) 31:14,15
social (1) 49: 6	split (2) 51: 9,10	study (4) 13: 6,18;14: 9;48:11	T	teens (3) 13: 7, 7,14
society (1) 48: 3	spoon (1) 34:11	studying (2) 50:23;55: 5		telling (1) 62:22
sole (1) 68:16	St (2) 8:24;10: 6	stuff (1) 16:11	talk (6) 15:16;20: 3;33: 9; 55:22;59: 9;67: 4	ten (8) 19:20;27:23;41:10; 59: 7;61: 6, 7,23;69: 9
solicit (1) 64: 4	staff (3) 17:13;33:19;39:17	subject (1) 39: 9	talked (3) 15:17;51:19,20	tenure (2) 11: 9;33: 7
solicited (1) 3:20	stand (1) 18: 5	submit (3) 50:11;60:16,19	talking (6) 12: 8;21: 6;53: 2; 54:22;64: 3, 3	tenured (1) 53: 2
soliciting (1) 3:17	standard (1) 34:21	Substance (3) 18: 8, 9;39:17	taught (1) 34:19	ten-year (1) 20: 1
somebody (5) 12:19;14:19;15: 1; 29: 8;63:19	start (5) 19: 5;27:15;32:20; 50: 1;61:14	sub	tax (8) 10:20;15: 7,10;35:21, 23;36: 4;40: 5;52: 6	terminology (1) 9: 8
someone (3) 7:18;35: 5;54:19	started (2) 3: 3;8: 4	subancenewsnet (1) 18:10	taxes (1) 43: 8	terms (6) 14:18;15:18;16:13; 32: 3, 4;51:13
someplace (2) 40: 7,20	starting (5) 6: 9;10:10;16: 3; 26:18;48:21	substitute (1) 61: 9	taxing (1) 52:12	terrible (6) 8:21;12:11;53: 9; 55:11;70: 9,15
sometimes (1) 46:13	State (1) 68: 9	subtracted (1) 45: 3	taxpayers (1) 24:12	test (3) 44:14;50: 6;55: 6
somewhere (3) 26:12;50:16;65:24	States (1) 15: 6	successful (1) 54:22	teach (11) 25:19;32:18;33:22; 34: 3,20;50:13,13,14,14, 16;54:10	testimony (2) 27: 9;39: 7
son (2) 54:23;60:10	state's (1) 42: 2	sudden (1) 23:20	teacher (41) 11:18;17:13;22:18; 25:15,18,19;27:17;28: 6; 30: 5;32:19;33: 9,15; 35: 2,19;38: 2;39:16,23; 43: 5, 6;44:10;45: 9; 47:13;49:15;50: 4,14; 51: 7;53: 8, 8,19;54: 6; 56:23;60:10;61:22; 63:10,14,15;65: 8;66: 6, 10;67:10;68:13	testing (1) 50: 3
soon (2) 5:19;46: 1	statistics (1) 33:24	suffer (1) 13: 7	teachers (64) 11: 9,12,13;15: 5; 17:12;18:12;20:11; 22: 5;23: 8,15,23,24; 25:17;26: 4, 7,11,15; 27: 8;28: 4;29: 6,12; 31: 3, 6, 7,17,20;32: 3, 5; 33: 5, 6, 6,12,18,23,24; 34: 6;35: 1;37:15;41:19; 42: 4;44:12,24;46:20; 49:17;50:13;53: 3,11,13, 17,17,18;55:23;56: 2, 8; 58: 5;59: 5,14;63:11; 66: 9,14;67: 7, 7,16; 68:11	tests (1) 50:12
Sorry (3) 22:15;36:16;62:15	stay (1) 34: 2	suffering (4) 49:22,23;51: 3, 4	texted (1) 23:13	Thanks (2) 4:18;7:24
sort (2) 54:15;55:22	steps (1) 35:24	suggests (1) 13:18	texted (1) 23:13	themes (1) 22: 7
sound (2) 12: 9,11	stewards (1) 14:21	summer (3) 10:13;34: 4;53:12	thinking (3) 51:17;55:10;61:10	third (6) 44: 9;48: 6;50: 4, 5; 51: 7,18
Spanish (7) 6:22;7: 1, 2, 3;47: 8, 16,18	stick (1) 13:17	sun (1) 69:16	third/fourth (1) 51: 9	thought (1) 59:23
speak (5) 7: 9,13;39:19;53: 1; 58: 1	still (3) 18: 8;29:19;62:17	sun's (1) 69:17	thought (1) 31:24	thoughts (1) 61:21
SPEAKER (9) 7: 2, 8;14: 2;17: 9; 24:16;29:14;35: 9; 42:17;46:18	stop (1) 25: 8	superior (2) 62: 3,23	three (5) 21: 2;36:23;37:20; 50: 6;59: 4	
speakers (4) 7: 6,16,18;68: 1	stories (1) 43:22	support (1) 37:16		
Speaking (7) 5: 6;9: 4;12:19;36:17; 47: 8,18;68: 3	story (1) 60: 9	supporting (1) 49: 8		
special (12) 12: 6;13: 8, 9;33:15, 20;35: 2;59: 5;63: 8, 9, 13,20;65: 7	straight (2) 19: 2;38:14	supposed (3) 27:14;28:22;34:22		
specific (6)	strange (1) 44:15	sure (7) 6:18;10:14;32:23; 45:15;46: 9;51: 2;69:12		
	street (2) 49:21;50:15	surplus (5) 10:24;30:15;36: 6; 52: 1,10		
	striving (1) 22: 9	Susan (4) 36:11;39:13,14,15		
	struggling (1)			

throughout (1) 13:23	trace (1) 20:22	37: 9	11:24	53:20;54: 7;64:19
throw (2) 41:13;63:18	track (1) 20: 1	two (18) 7: 8,10;12: 5;18:18; 26:18;29:23;33:13; 34: 2;36:18;38: 4,24; 39:24;52:20,23,24;55: 9; 61:21;66:19	V	web (1) 48:14
throwing (1) 50:15	training (2) 28:12;39: 7	two-part (1) 69: 1	Vallas (1) 9: 2	website (1) 24:20
Thursday (3) 46:19;59:12,19	transcript (2) 45:18,20	two-phase (1) 68:24	value (5) 44:11,12,20;45: 2, 3	Wednesday (3) 1: 8;58:10,21
Tiasha (2) 64:24;65: 3	transfer (1) 53:24	types (1) 26:19	variety (1) 37: 7	week (7) 23: 2, 6;24:20;26:18; 46: 5, 6;47: 2
tide (1) 31: 2	transferred (1) 69: 9		various (2) 36:20;59:10	weeks (3) 26:18;35: 7;59:18
TIF (7) 10:19;11: 3;14:23; 30: 9,14;36: 6;52: 1	translator (1) 6:22	U	Vazquez (8) 43: 2;45: 6, 8, 9,23; 46: 3,20,23	Welcome (1) 68: 5
TIF's (4) 30: 8,11,16;51:20	transoms (3) 69: 6,22;70: 1	u-l-m-a (1) 47:12	ventilation (4) 69:21;70:12,13,15	welcoming (1) 3: 9
tile (1) 14: 8	transparency (1) 22: 8	unbelievably (1) 53: 9	versus (3) 16: 8, 9;17:14	weren't (1) 28:16
tiles (1) 12:13	treated (1) 53:14	under (8) 11:19,22;12:23;13: 3; 30:23;38:21;44:12; 63:11	veteran (4) 31: 6;33: 6;49:15; 61:22	West (4) 1:18;14:18;52: 8;54: 2
timely (2) 24:14;64: 5	treating (2) 28: 4, 5	underdog (1) 56:13	Violeta (3) 47:11,11,12	WESTINGHOUSE (4) 1:17;3: 9;12:17;15:18
times (2) 30:13;48:12	treatments (1) 57:12	unemployment (1) 41:11	virtually (1) 4: 2	whistles (1) 17: 4
timing (2) 23:17;28: 2	trend (3) 20: 1, 2;44: 9	unfair (1) 55:20	voices (1) 8:16	Whittier (1) 30: 5
titled (1) 38: 1	trends (1) 20: 3	UNIDENTIFIED (2) 7: 2;46:18	vote (3) 30:10;46: 7;47: 3	whole (4) 10:11;24:10;25: 4; 34:24
today (2) 13: 5;57:15	Tribune (1) 13: 6	union (12) 17: 5;18:13;22: 5; 26: 7,11;27: 9;41:19; 49:17;58: 9;68:11,13,16	voted (4) 46: 6;58:10,20;59:22	whose (2) 38: 4;68:22
today's (1) 13: 6	tricky (1) 31:16	unit (1) 37: 8	voter (1) 43: 4	wife (2) 15:22;16: 6
together (2) 5: 5, 7	tries (1) 64:19	units (3) 36:20;37: 7, 8	voting (2) 43:12;58:12	wiggle (1) 9: 5
told (8) 20:11;23: 2;54: 6,12; 55: 4,10,14;57: 8	trigger (1) 21: 9	unnecessary (1) 20:10	W	window (3) 68:17;69:15,18
tomorrow (2) 48:21,22	troubling (2) 22:20;23: 1	unpaged (1) 18:24	waived (1) 60:15	windows (11) 68:17,20,21;69: 4, 5, 11,12,13;70: 1, 3, 4
tonight (19) 3:16;4: 2, 5,16,22; 5:11,15,17,21,22;6: 2; 7:13;8: 2;18:15;27: 9; 36:14,18;64:15;70:18	true (1) 17:14	up (18) 6: 7,17;7:10,17;10:20; 14:20;16:18,21;17:15; 26:21;39:19;46: 5; 52:24;59: 4;65:20;69: 5; 70: 3, 4	walk (2) 34:13;61: 9	wipe (1) 15: 3
took (2) 9: 9;53:19	truth (1) 9: 4	upon (2) 18:23;21: 9	walked (1) 57:10	Wisconsin (1) 15: 6
tool (1) 44:16	try (5) 10:23;11: 8;28:13; 31:17;41:22	upset (1) 57: 9	ward (2) 58:16;61: 3	within (2) 6: 8;32: 2
top (7) 68:21;69: 2, 6,12,13, 19;70: 4	trying (3) 46: 4,11;64: 4	USA (1) 38: 2	wash (1) 31: 3	without (3) 14:11;27:15;31:17
total (6) 17: 4;18:18,24;37:11, 11;38:18	Tuition (4) 20: 5,13;60:11;65:23	use (4) 38:10;44:10,20,21	Washington (1) 41: 1	won (1) 22: 6
totals (1) 39: 1	turn (3) 4:16;7:21;68: 5	used (11) 11: 1;36: 7;37:11,16, 21;44:18;61:13;66: 9; 68:21;70: 1, 2	waste (2) 21: 6;44: 7	wonder (3) 43:13;44: 3;51: 1
tough (1) 46:10	turn-around (1) 9: 9	useful (1)	wasting (1) 21:11	wonderful (1) 12:15
toured (1) 12:16	turned (1) 10:13		waves (1) 12: 9	work (22) 16:19;26:16,21;27:15; 28:22;41:20;57: 4, 6, 8; 59:12,13,13,14,15,15,15, 18,19;61:15;62: 6,23,24
Town (1) 60: 7	Turner (4) 57:20;61:18,19,20		way (11) 10: 6;20:23;21: 6; 28:12;29:17;33:16; 34:19;39: 3;53:14; 67:14,17	worked (11) 12: 3;15:23;23:16; 31:15;33:13;53:21; 54: 8;62: 2,14,16;63:19
	twice (1)		ways (3)	

<p>workers (2) 49: 7;68:16</p> <p>working (2) 49:16;62: 9</p> <p>works (2) 38:21;46:15</p> <p>World (2) 41:23;48: 6</p> <p>worse (2) 28:24;60:23</p> <p>worth (1) 64: 7</p> <p>worthy (2) 63:22;64: 1</p> <p>wow (2) 59:22;60: 3</p> <p>write (2) 60:19;61:13</p> <p>wrong (1) 37:10</p> <p>wrote (1) 59: 5</p>				
Y				
<p>YEAR (29) 1: 2;3:22;5: 5, 6, 8; 10:10;19: 6;20: 2;21:22; 25:21;26: 4;34: 5;40:15; 41: 2, 4,13;50: 5, 7; 55:16;57: 1, 1;61:14,23; 62: 1, 1, 8;65:10,17; 66:19</p> <p>years (29) 9: 3;11:18,24;12: 5; 13:19;14: 6;19:20;20: 8, 22:22:24;33:13;34: 2; 35: 4, 4, 5, 5,19;39:10; 59: 7;61:22,23;66:19; 68:12,13,15,20;69: 8, 9; 70:10</p> <p>year's (1) 40:12</p> <p>yesterday (1) 60:15</p> <p>yesterday's (1) 39:18</p> <p>York (1) 59:15</p> <p>young (3) 45:12;53:19;63: 7</p> <p>younger (2) 56: 7, 7</p>				
Z				
<p>zebra (1) 47:12</p> <p>Zulma (2) 45: 7;47:11</p> <p>Zupan (8) 36:11;39:13,15,15; 40: 3;41: 8,18;42:19</p>				