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

August 18, 2010
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
PRESENT:

MS. DIANA FERGUSON,
Chief Financial Officer;

MS. CHRISTINA HERZOG,
Budget Officer

MS. JORY SIMMONS,
Moderator

Reported by: Janice Smith
License No. 084-001346
MS. FERGUSON: Good evening, everyone.

The hour is just past 7:00 o'clock, so we would like to get started.

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

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

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

This year, in the interest of allocating the maximum amount of time to listening and hearing your feedback, we are dismissing the
presentation or dispensing the presentation, and
dedicating virtually all of our time tonight to
hearing from you.

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

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

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

   MS. HERZOG: All right. Thanks.

   I want to also echo Diana's
comments about your commitment to Chicago Public
Schools and our students, and my appreciation that
you are here tonight to share with us your
feedback. I am certainly looking forward to it,
and I know -- I want to thank and acknowledge some
of the other members of the budget office team who
are here as well, looking forward to what you have
to say. And I want to thank them for their time
and commitment as well that went into putting this
budget book together in a very challenging year.

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

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

So we are here tonight, and our job
tonight is to listen to you, ensure that your
questions and concerns are put onto a record, and
take those questions and concerns back to our
larger team and the Board of Education.

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

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

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

    UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Spanish.

    MS. HERZOG: Spanish. Okay.

    Thank you.

    We have a list of registered

speakers for the evening and when your name or
organization is called, please proceed to the
microphone. Each speaker will be given two
minutes to speak and will be notified when those
two minutes are up and nearing completion.

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

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

    The public comments are scheduled
to conclude at 9:00 p.m. If you have a cell
phone, we ask that you turn it off so that we are
not interrupted. And on behalf of the Chicago
Public Schools, the finance team, and the budget
office, the Board of Education thanks you for
taking the time to participate in the hearing tonight and we definitely look forward to hearing your feedback.

All right. Let's get started.

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

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

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

But the other commentary I would like to do, I would like to find out at 55th and St. Louis down there, the new high school, that --
Mr. Duncan was there, he promised me it would be open to the community. When Paul Vallas was here years ago, I got all kind of promises. But one thing I don't like is not speaking the truth. I give a little wiggle room because I don't want to call anybody a liar. Let them hang themselves.

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

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

    MS. SIMMONS: Mr. Rodgers, please
conclude.

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

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

MS. SIMMONS: Chris Didato.

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

It just seems kind of interesting how it went from one billion to close to, you know, however it is. And the fact that there is a budget crisis and there is a TIF program which is made up of property tax dollars that should be going to Chicago Public Schools that our leadership hasn't determined that this crisis that is of such importance that they would even try to claim there would be a surplus so that it could be
used by Chicago Public Schools, the park districts and the other entities that would be getting the TIF monies.

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

Thank you.

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

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

Looking at the budget under Capital Projects Funds, there is one part for Phase III ADA Improvements. And I would like to cite page 392, where under Building Renovation it says, a primary goal of renovation is to add at least 25 years to the useful life of every building.
And then it says further, to ensure safe and efficient learning environments.

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

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

Now, there is nothing, I noticed, under that particular need. There is, you know, Phase I, the Building Envelope; Phase II,
Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing; Phase III, Building Interior; Phase IV, Facility Site Improvements. I do notice under Phase III it says ADA improvement.

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

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

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

There is one classroom at Foreman
where there's a --

MS. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, please conclude.

MR. SAFERO: Okay.

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

Thank you.

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

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

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

Half that $1.2 billion, if I am
correct -- if I'm incorrect, somebody let me know -- should be going back to the public schools, which would be more than enough to wipe out the deficit that, you know, that you say that you got to cut on the backs of our teachers.

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

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

My buddy Al just talked Westinghouse in terms of construction costs. North Grand High School, if I'm correct, had a budget of 35 to $40 million when it was built. This school right here, folks, because I know, because I was involved and my wife worked hard to get it built, had a final budget of $120 million.
A brand new school in Chicago, if you go to pbc.com or.org, you see that the starting price for a new high school in Chicago is $100 million. And as Al said, he is correct, you get a gymatorium.

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

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

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

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

MS. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, please conclude.

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

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

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: Good evening. Maybe you
should have the --

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

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

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

    Very glad that we have 428 pages of
budget available here, but it is necessary to
point out two things. The total budget is 2,010
pages. This document, if you download it online,
the page numbers disappear. So that, if you add
into that the 1,500 pages that come off the CD,
which includes every school by school, this is one
example, you have 2,010 to 2,100, depending upon
what your total is of unpaged pages. Makes it
impossible for any reasonable person to discuss
this budget with a straight face.

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

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

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

I have only one other thing.
Please go to page 97 in your budget book. This is
Expenditures. As you know, as budget people, it is
better to track a five or ten-year trend than a one-year trend, although this year the compulsion was to talk about one-year trends.

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

When you claim to have a deficit, whether it is as a family or as a school district, you don't go on spending money like Santa Claus just came in with a bag of it. Those numbers on page 97 trace back five years, indicate the actual priorities and the way the Board of Education has been spending money freely.
As you know better than I do, all three of the bond rating agencies are now looking critically at the City of Chicago because of its debt. And as you know better than I do, if the Board of Education makes the same mistake by continuing to waste money the way Al was talking about, and other people, and the Board of Education's bond ratings are lowered, that will be the trigger upon which the derivatives and swaps become due before their 2030 due dates.

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

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

Thank you.

(Applause.)
MS. SIMMONS: Kristine Mayle. And following Kristine is Ganae McAlpin.

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

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

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

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

One of the things that has been most troubling to me is, I know you heard from one of my colleagues and friends last night who was reduced to tears because he was being fired from his job at a school that he has dedicated his life to for the last few years. And the thing that is
troubling to me is that we were on a conference
call with Arne Duncan last week and he told us
this money that came through from the Senate, we
are going to have approximately $100 million
coming to Chicago Public Schools. It should be
hitting the bank next week.

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

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

So, are we firing experienced
teachers right now so that we can rehire cheap
first-year teachers at a lower salary?
(Applause.)

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

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

MS. SIMMONS: Ms. Speaker, please conclude.

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

You know the percentages of
students that we have on free lunch. They don't have access to the Internet, so their questions cannot be answered.

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

(Applause.)

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

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

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

At the end of this year our principal said we do not know if you are going to have a job. And because of this economic situation our county is in, my husband lost his
job. And so I am put in the situation where I am
the only breadwinner in the household. And CPS is
saying well, I don't know if you are going to have
a job next year. That is putting your teachers in
a really bad situation.

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

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

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

(Appplause.)

MS. SIMMONS: Georgetta Davis.

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

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

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

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

So they gave me less than 30 days -- well, less than nine days to find a new job; less than 30 days of benefits. And then I had to realize that I wasn't getting the contracted agreement about the salary for ten months.
And I would just like to say that the timing was horrible and it was very disrespectful. Because you asked for professional teachers, but you are not treating us in a professional manner. Nor are you treating your teacher as an adult or as a citizen in a respectful manner, and considering the fact that they have a life they have to live.

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

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

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

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

MS. SIMMONS: Ms. Speaker, please conclude.

MS. DAVIS: Okay.

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

Those are my final two questions.

Okay.
(Applause.)

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

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

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

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

I also -- I wanted to -- I did ask this last night. I want to be a little more specific. I would like to know, of the position numbers that were closed due to budgetary reasons, how many of them or what percentage? Basically, I want to see that all of them are reopened under the same budget numbers, with the same
qualifications. Because I believe that there was actually a plan in place to create a tide that would wash out teachers that were inconvenient for CPS. Inconvenient because they advocated too much for their students, or inconvenient because they were veteran teachers who were making more money than the teachers that CPS would like to hire. And I would like to see some proof to the contrary.

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

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

And I would like to see -- I would also -- here is the other question I thought of.
With all the chaos that this is going to cost, that this is going to cause within schools, in terms of teachers having to be hired back just days prior to schools reopening, in terms of teachers who will not be able to come back because they have chosen to leave the system that is too destabilizing for them, what is the projected cost in dollars for taking care of all of the chaos that this is going to cause?

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

Thank you.

(Appplause.)

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

MS. BALTAS: Good afternoon. My name is Marcia Baltas. I teach English at Julian High School. I am a National Board certified teacher. I guess I will start off with my burning questions.

There is an $800 million line of credit, and I am not sure if that gets allocated to the schools, or if that gets allocated to city
services. But it would be kind of interesting to see where these funds get allocated once this line of credit, which I don't know where it is coming from, where they are actually going to go.

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

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

    I cannot see these Teach for America teachers who -- you know, if you read the background and the statistics on these teachers
who come in from the business backgrounds, they
are out the door in two years. They don't stay to
teach in the inner city schools.

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

The way they taught and ran their
classes was absurd. You know, you don't teach a
standard, an objective, and move on to the next
thing the next day. How is that supposed to
improve student mastery and growth? That to me,
just -- it just boggles my mind how that whole
program is run, and how these teachers can come in and replace the special education teacher who lost his position.

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

MS. SIMMONS: Ms. Speaker, please conclude.

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

(Appause.)

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

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

I am concerned about the loss of revenue with the tax increment financing districts. And I am concerned about the loss of revenue with the tax increment financing districts. I would like to know what steps has
the Board taken to reduce that loss of revenue?  

        Has the Board identified how much 

revenue has been lost to the schools because of 

going to the tax increment financing districts? 

        And can CPS ask the city to declare 

a TIF surplus and ask that money to be given to be 

used for the schools? And if they can, has that 

been done and will it be done? Those are my 

questions. 

        MS. SIMMONS: Kurt Hilgendorf. And 

following Kurt will be Susan Zupan. 

        MR. HILGENDORF: My name is 

Kurt Hilgendorf. And I want to thank you for 

allowing me to address you again tonight. I also 

look forward to having my questions, my multiple 

questions about derivatives answered. Sorry, if I 

was speaking too fast last night. 

        I have two issues for tonight. The 

first involves CPS's budgeting of contingency 

lines for various district units. And let me 

explain. 

        On page 31 of the budget there are 

three separate reserve funds. And on page 32 

there is an outline of how the Board intends to
replace these reserve funds with one time revenues and so that they actually are rebuilt. And that seems like prudent financial management.

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

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

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

My second point has to do with debt issues. This morning Bloomberg printed a mess --
or printed an article titled, "Chicago borrows $160 million for schools as USA halts teacher firings." In the first line of this article, says that Chicago, whose credit rating was cut by two companies this month, plans to issue debt-to-data fund of $1.25 billion capital plan for the Chicago Public School system.

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

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

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

Is this article's number correct for the district, or are these two separate debts
totals, meaning the city owes almost $12 billion right now?

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

Thank you.

(Applause.)

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

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

I know from yesterday's hearing that no one up here is going to speak, answer a question, barely acknowledge our existence here. I think that they might have saved some money with cardboard cutouts, or possibly mannequins. I am an elementary school teacher so I brought some props. And if I might take two
and a half minutes.

(Pause.)

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

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

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

There is more than just those five.

I would like to see Arne Duncan, as
Barrack Obama and everyone in Washington D.C., all
the politicians, to offer this one dollar a year
rent, and please change it off to one dollar a
year mortgage fees for everyone that lost their
jobs right now in CPS. Can we have that deal,
too?

(Applause.)

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

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

One more minute.

(Pause.)

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

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

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

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

(Pause.)

MS. SIMMONS: Ms. Speaker, please conclude.

MS. ZUPAN: I'm about to.

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

Thank you.

(Applause.)
MS. SIMMONS: Cezar Simeon. And following Cezar Simeon is Rolando Vazquez.

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

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

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

Second, I remember a couple of months ago, maybe even just a month ago, how on the radio and other media there were stories about a car or livery service for Ron Huberman. I don't know if anyone else heard that. But it is just
funny I didn't see that in any line item in the budget. Just an aside.

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

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

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

Before Mr. Ron Huberman and CPS proceeds to cut more experienced teachers from its
schools or hire consultants, should it not also
evaluate those decisions with value added, or more
appropriately, value subtracted metrics?

    Thank you.

    (Applause.)

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

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

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

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

    MS. FERGUSON: It will be.

    MS. HERZOG: It will be.

    MR. VAZQUEZ: It will be. All right.

Okay. When?
MS. FERGUSON: As soon as we receive it from the court reporter.

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

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

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

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes. I did until last Thursday .

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

(No response.)

MR. VAZQUEZ: No. Okay. All right.

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

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

MS. ORTIZ: (Speaking through Spanish
interpreter.)

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

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

(Appause.)

MS. ORTIZ: Is that something that
never cross your mind, having so many people
having so high salaries, especially the
consultants? I forget that you don't answer my
question. Are just sitting there like mummies.
It is a shame that we don't have a dialogue in something so important like this, like the budget for our economy and for our society.

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

(Applause.)

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

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

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

MS. HERZOG: Starting tomorrow.

MS. ORTIZ: Tomorrow.

(Applause.)

MS. SIMMONS: Rose Mary Finnegan. And
following Rose Mary is Norine Gehokanst.

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

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

Thank you.

(Applause.)

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

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

And what I want to know is why you
don't start looking at some areas in the budget
where you can be cutting? And I am going to give
an example of testing.

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

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

Another area that I can think of is,
there -- I know that the Board of Education -- and
I don't have the figure because I wasn't able to
do enough studying of the budget, there is a huge
budget item for debt. Debt to the banks. And
what I wonder is, shouldn't the Board of Education
say to those bankers, I am pretty sure those banks
and those bankers are not suffering right now, but
I know that our schools are suffering. Why should
those banks be making billions and millions of
dollars when our students are losing their
teacher, or my third graders are going to have to
have -- instead of going to a fourth grade, they
were going to a third/fourth split, or a
fourth/fifth split. Now, how fair is that?

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

    The third thing that I want to say is
that, obviously, we have already talked about the
TIF's and we have already talked about the hundred
million dollars from the Edu jobs bill. We
know -- everybody sitting in this room knows that
the Board of Education can be finding the funds,
the $100 million in the Edu job bill. And also,
declaring a surplus in the TIF areas of the blighted areas. Because there are plenty -- excuse me -- of the not blighted areas.

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

(Appplause.)

MS. SIMMONS: Angela Mordacai.

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

I have two children that has gone through the public school system. And I have 18 nephews, and nieces, and about five great nephews and nieces, and I heard you say two things. Originally, I didn't sign up, but I heard two
things that I feel like I should speak about. And that is, you are talking about your tenured teachers.

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

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

And I had always defended the teachers, always defended the senior teachers, always defended the gray-haired teachers. But then it took one young Chinese teacher to get in that classroom and for me to see the creative ways that she worked to manage, as I heard some people saying, managing the class. I felt bad because children were getting kicked out. Their parents were asking to transfer their children. From the
class, they moved out of the district over on
North Avenue -- north of North Avenue, west of
Ridgeland, is what I will say.

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

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

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

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

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

The point is, for me I think it's unfair to pick a -- pick certain people and accuse them of being the reason for the budget cuts and things of that sort, to talk about the new teachers that is coming in for them to be the reason. You need to point your finger at the
people who really are causing these problems, in
which I don't think it is new teachers and I don't
think it is the charter schools.

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

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

Thank you.

(Applause.)

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

MS. MILLER: I have been with the Board
since '04. My name is Carmella Miller and I have
been with the Board since '04. I am a teacher
assistant. And I am just going to give you a
little synopsis of the year, this past year.

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

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

And that is all I have to say.

(Appause.)

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

MS. LAWSON: Good evening. I am Donielle Christina Lawson. And I didn't have anything prepared. I just came just to observe the meeting.
But in hearing other people speak, I must share something with you guys. I came from a teaching alternative program, one of the best and actually has the highest retention rate, which is a program called Teachers for Chicago. Back in early 90's most of you never heard of it.

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

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

But anyway, we voted that Wednesday. And I am sitting there, and I said, man, I got to do the right thing. I got to do the right thing. But I know it is going to be my job. My job is going to be gone.
And I didn't tell you, I am single
with six children. My oldest is at Morehouse.
And I don't qualify for a grant.

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

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

So that Thursday I am at work, and
the principal comes and she reads me a script.
And she read me a script saying I am gone. And I
said wow, I knew when I voted the day before, with
my brothers and sisters, I knew then, even though
Board of Education got their hundred million
dollars, they got $126 million, I knew I was out. And lo and behold, the script gets read to me. And I said wow, I am gone. Isn't this amazing? But isn't it a great opportunity? I have been running for alderman for six months. I've been on the news. I've been on Check Please. I've been in North Town News Magazine. I mean, this would be great. This will even be better for the story. Because now, I am not only the jail teacher with six kids, a son at Morehouse and that I've got to pay tuition for. Oh, I forgot to tell you, I got a child here. She is in a college careers program here.

And how humiliating was it for me yesterday to ask for a waived month. Because the student fees here is $155. So I had to submit my paycheck, which, believe me, I was making some good money because I deserved it. So I had to submit my pay check. And then I had to write down, principal read me a script and I am laid off.

You know. It is funny. But it gets worse. And I just know that there are great things coming. I don't care about the budget.
Tell Ron Huberman I am coming. I am coming after him because I'm going to be the next alderman of the 24th ward.

(Applause.)

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

(Applause.)

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

MS. TURNER: Hi. I've held these thoughts and emotions in my head for the last two years. I would be a 12-year veteran teacher this year. Ten years in what is considered a hard-to-staff school.
Last year -- this past year I worked in another hard-to-staff school. Nothing but excellent and superior performances. Do jobs that no one else, or not a lot of people wanted to do. Came out of the classroom because I had the qualifications to work with Magnet Cluster Program, bringing it to the neighborhoods.

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

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

So, give me my letter from my principal telling me that I'm out of a job. Have done nothing but superior and excellent work. Have done nothing but work at hard-to-staff
schools. But yet, in 12 days I absolutely have nothing and I just don't understand. (Crying.)

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

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

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

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

    MS. FERGUSON: Certainly you are.
worthy. That is not the intention. The forum here is designed to hear your input, and is about listening to you, not talking, and talking at you. So we are trying to solicit your input and note your questions, and respond in a timely manner so that everyone has the benefit of the answer. Clearly you are worth it and we look forward to responding to you.

MS. PETERSON: Okay. That is all.

MS. FERGUSON: Thank you for your input.

(Applause.)

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

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. SIMMONS: Thank you.

Tiasha Baggor. I apologize. Please say your name
when you come to the podium. Followed by
Jacquay Carr.

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

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

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

Also, another thing I wanted to say
was, in my case the community that I grew up in,
one of my schools that I went to was shut down
because of funding. Another school that I went to
the tuition was too high, so we moved out of, you
know, our neighborhood to move somewhere else, so
I can go to a community school where I didn't have
to pay anything and things like that. So I just
feel like charter schools are a better
alternative, so that you don't have to go to a
Chicago Public School. And then the next thing
you know, either your teacher, who you have known
since you were in kindergarten -- because most
kids who go to Chicago Public Schools, they are
used to seeing the same teachers in the halls or
cafeteria, and this teacher has been patient with
you all this time and then they are fired. And
then after that, your school is shut down. You
are left to go to another school, new people, new
teachers who don't know you, who aren't patient
with you, who don't know your family background,
who don't know what kind of home you come from,
and then you are expected to adapt to them when
they are not even adapting to you. Because most
of them are coming in for year or two years to do
whatever they need to do to get their loans paid
back, and then they leave. So that is all I
wanted to say.

(Applause.)

MS. SIMMONS: Jacquay Carr.
MR. CARR: Hi. How are you all doing? My name is Jacquay Carr.

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

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

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

(Appplause.)

MS. SIMMONS: Do we have any additional
speakers?

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

    MR. SAFERO: I do.

    MS. FERGUSON: Another turn? Welcome back.

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

    MS. SIMMONS: State your name.

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

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

    When I was at Manley High School about 15 years ago, they put in new windows. And the old windows used to open from the top. And the shades I just referred to, the people whose job it was to maintain them, the shades were an integral part, because they were a two-phase
shade -- a two-part shade, where you could open with a chain, the top shade, and let heat out.

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

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

There is no ventilation, because all the transoms have been screwed shut. I don't know whatever caused that. Probably some, I am guessing, some lawsuit in the past or something.
But the windows used to articulate -- the transoms used to articulate with little brass rods and you would be able to open up the windows above the doors, open up the windows at the top, and you would have a nice breeze going through.

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

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

Thank you.

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

(Which were all the proceedings had in the above-entitled matter.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS  )
COUNTY OF COOK  ) ss:

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

Janice Smith, RPR
LIC. NO. 084-001346

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2010-2011 PROPOSED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
AT WESTINGHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL
August 18, 2010

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