Chicago Public Schools  
School Utilization Community Meetings  
General Session Notes

Date/Time of Meeting: February 11, 2013, 7:00-9:30pm

Network: Fullerton

Schools represented by audience: All Schools in General Session

Round: I

Disclaimer: The following are notes of the discussions in the General Session (There was no breakout session in this network). They do not provide verbatim records or a comprehensive summary of what was said. Also, these notes do not represent the point-of-view of the facilitators or of CPS personnel. Any questions about these notes should be addressed to CPS staff.

General Learning

- A flyer was passed out to the audience by a parent with the following main message:
  
  CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS: STILL SEPARATE  STILL UNEQUAL 
  SCHOOL CLOSINGS HAVE LED TO
  - INCREASED VIOLENCE AGAINST OUR STUDENTS
  - MASS FIRINGS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHERS
  - BLATANT DISRESPECT OF THOUSANDS OF PARENTS WHO WANT A VOICE IN THEIR SCHOOL’S FUTURE

- Parents see their neighborhood schools as an extension of their family life. They are very involved in their schools. It is a close bond they do not want to break.

- Small class size is considered to be an advantage in the learning process as well as a better way to prepare students for a higher education.

- Safety in sending children to other areas is again mentioned as a major concern.

- Overpopulation as a result of consolidation continues to be a concern.

- In addition to academic achievements, dual language and learning about community involvement are key benefits.
School-specific Learning

BRENTANO
- In a position to accept other students from other schools and with special needs. Will welcome anyone. Standardize test scores are better than reported by CPS, better than average.

- Look at the population in this neighborhood it has grown. Population of children under 5 (years old) has grown.

- There are students that come across the city to stay at Brentano. Our kids are in classrooms of 20-25. CPS is saying that's not good enough, 36 is too many, that's ridiculous. Building also used for the community. Have a play lot.

DARWIN
- You are taking away an institution. Overcrowded, diverse, united, and is growing. Here to stay - children are our future. Want smaller size classes. According to CPS is Level 3 on the list. School is one of six that has dual language classes - English and Spanish sometimes. Have music, healthy eating, parent mentor, self-esteem classes. Don't want classes of 30 kids or more in classes. Want a better future for kids.

- Public schools help the homeless. Was homeless for 2 1/2 years and daughter went to Darwin. Daughter is now at University of Illinois. Other homeless people need schools.

GOETHE
- School operating over capacity. Art in cafeteria, thinking about pulling down walls. Had low enrollment but grew 40% in the last 5 years.

AMES
- Not right to turn school into a military school. Cannot pass this with the chance to fight. Parents, students and teachers are working hard. Hear us and put resources into our school. It is the only school with a clinic open to the community in Logan Square.

- Kids choice is to stay open, no can break us, together we make a difference. Great staff would lose jobs, students lose mentors. Don't want to be sent to overcrowded schools. Working to be Level 1. Have chess, arts, music, etc. Teachers help me become a better person.

- Understand want Marines to move into a Latino neighborhood should look at another school in Logan Square.
BELMONT-CRAIGIN

- Opened early child pre-school in 2003. Is 1 of 2 preschools in Chicago with awards. Parent partnership cornerstone success. 100% parent participation. Seeing teachers and parents working together. Bilingual education, 90% (of students) are learning English. 70% are from Spanish only families. Center is a model with visitors from around the world. Highly qualified staff. Giving child quality education is the biggest challenge. We have met that school/family environment.

- Although school is small it meets big needs, everyone helped school’s big success. It is a school of pride and joy and does not deserve to be taken away from anyone. Everyone feels like family. School deserves a second chance.

NORTHWEST

- School has an elevator for handicap access, air conditioning, other services. GED classes. Disagree with amount to maintain building. Getting more students. Have after school classes.

- Have special ed teams. Son said it was the best school and did well. Was a D student. Taught art at the school. Left job to teach. Kids need their school. Teachers are an inspiration to many.

MANIERRE

- Keep early childhood centers open. Have a new administration, motivated to teach beyond their comfort zone for students, programs for all students. Partnership with parents. Received and giving Christmas dinners.

- Don’t want kids to be transported to another school. If students go their lives cannot be safe. School is open from 6am-6pm.

- Most (students) are coming from a housing association from across the streets. Students from the same neighborhood are comfortable and familiar with each other. If they go to other schools this bond will be broken.

- This is family; it’s not about just teachers. We embrace them like a family.

- Parents also receive an education. School provides education to single parents that don’t have the finances to send their child outside of the neighborhood.
YATES
- Good administration, 75% growth in some grades, experienced principal with good ideas. Bilingual classes. Yates makes leaders. Three kids graduated from Yates. Why treat us like enemies? We want you (CPS) to look at us as partners, invest in education to make progress.

- Ridiculous price on the education of our children. There are life-long friendships with teachers. Certain teachers are present.

JENNER
- Teachers care. Kids love the school. Want to stay after school. Have seen schools close around us. Children are the future. When graduate and want to come back, they lead by example.

- After school programs, sports, scholastic programs. Teaching social justice to stand up for the community. Closing will have an impact on the community. Changes will over populate another school.

LINCOLN
- Over populated school. School makes street safe. A small school is reported to have better relationships with students, teachers, and the community. More benefits, stronger relationships.

- Small K-8 school are a good model.