GARFIELD/HUMBOLDT PARK COMMUNITY MEETING No. 1

February 5th, 2013

7:00 o'clock p.m.

The Report of Proceedings had in the
meeting of the above-entitled cause, taken before PAMELA A.
MARZULLO, a Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public
in and for the County of Cook and State of Illinois, at
2622 West Jackson Street, February 5th, 2013, at the hour of
approximately 7:00 o'clock p.m.

PRESENT:

MS. THERESA PLASCENCIA, Chief of Schools
MS. WANDA WASHINGTON, Chief of Schools
MS. DENISE LITTLE, Chief of Network
MR. PHILLIP HAMPTON, Chief of Family and Community
   Engagement
MR. RANDEL JOSSEYAND, Deputy Chief of Schools
INDEX

WITNESS:                        PAGE

OFFICIALS

Alderman Chandler               10
Alderman Fioretti                19
Alderman Erwin                   29
Alderman Bernett                 58

SCHOOLS

Beidler, Bethune and Calhoun     11
Cameron, Casals and Cather       16
Casals, Cather and Delano        22
Dodge and Ericson                26
Faraday, Garfield Park and Goldblatt 31
Gregory and Hefferan             34
Jensen and Kellman               36
Lowell, Marconi and Melody       38
Morton and Nobel                 44
Piccolo, Ryerson and Stowe       47
Sumner, Tilton and Ward          53
Webster                          63
West Park                        67

1

10

11

16

22

26

31

34

36

38

44

47

53

63

67
PASTOR MILLER: Hello and good evening,
everybody. Thank you so much for coming to the JLM
Center tonight for your dedication, your love and
commitment for our children and for the schools. As
a matter of fact, for you our community.

You showed tonight that in spite of the
weather, you are committed and dedicated, and we
want to say thank you for coming. We're glad you're
here.

Unfortunately there is not enough seats
for everybody. It just shows how committed you are
to make sure that your voice is heard, and that you
send your message and that the schools remain
intact.

We want to thank you one and all for being
here with us on this evening. Let me just ask of
you, if you will, it's getting a little warm. There
are chairs besides you. Please allow somebody to
sit down, if they need them. Hold your coat.

And then the next thing, I need you to be
really civil tonight, cordial one to another, as you
are respecting one another in this place because
where there's unity, we can gain some strength; but
without order, we cannot get anything accomplished.
You are here, and you are here, your voice will be heard. The mission is here. You are in the place. We're glad that you have the opportunity to be here.

We ask you from the outset that you are welcome here to the JLM Center. We thank God they gave us the opportunity to put this place here on Jackson on the side of the road to help ours and make some difference like this.

I want to just ask tonight, because we need to get all we can out of this meeting, let me just open with a short word of prayer for our unity, for our cooperation, for our working together tonight.

Our father, we thank you for this gathering for seniors, for children, for principals. We thank you for teachers, for workers who have dedicated themselves and have come out tonight to share.

We ask now for your peace, your guidance and your motivation that we would remember the cause for which we've come. We thank you even in the things we claim that even now in Jesus name. Thank all of you.
Give yourselves a hand just for being here tonight. It's a great night. It's a great night.
It's by the light. Welcome.

Alderman Chandler is here tonight, the local teachers, Commissioner and all of CPS. It is my delight now to give to you Mr. Phillip Hampton, who will give us direction from here.

MR. HAMPTON: Good evening, everyone. Good evening again, everyone. So, I'm not going to belabor the time for the meeting, because this is your meeting, and it is very important that you have an opportunity to speak.

You see we have an overwhelming crowd. So, the only way, as Pastor Miller has made clear, the only way that we can get through this meeting, we're going to have to cooperate with one another. So, we beg of you, in order that we can do that.

So, I want to lay out for you why we're here, make sure that as many as possible have the information that we provided. I want to quickly introduce the leadership that is in front of the room here, and then we'll get started. Okay?

Pastor Miller, we just appreciate you. We thank you for allowing us this opportunity to meet
here. We meet here quite often. So, we just
appreciate you, and I just want to say that.

Chicago Public Schools has a fiscal
challenge. It has a fiscal challenge, and we have a
school utilization challenge. CEO Barbara
Byrd-Bennett has asked us, those of us in
leadership, that we have a meeting out in the
community to talk about this issue and get concerns
directly from you. So, that's why we're here.

You need to know the people that are in
the room, that we'll be listening to your comments.
You need to know that you have many opportunities to
provide us comments. Don't be afraid if you don't
have the chance to speak from the microphone
tonight.

Also, you need to know, as with every
other meeting we have done, these meetings, your
comments, the break-out sessions that we hope many
of you will participate in, all those conversations
will be compiled into a report that goes directly to
our CEO, Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett.

So, Ms. Pam Marzullo, Pam, would you raise
your hand? Quickly. She is the official court
reporter for your comments, as they will be going
back to CEO Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett.

You notice to the left we have some support for those who may need that support as well, and I'm going to pause because we had equipment here to provide translation services. We're having difficulties with that equipment, but we have a plan to make sure that our parents that need that support will get that support as well. I'll get right back to you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. HAMPTON: Okay, thank you. You should have, I hope you were able to get two copies of information that we passed out. I understand we ran out of some.

You should have a fax sheet with you that says "Addressing Utilization Crisis for CPS," and then also you should have a list of all the schools within the Garfield/Humboldt network; and it will have information on it, including utilization information and other information. Okay?

So, you should have both of those. If you didn't get it, work with the CPS folks. Many are here. We want to make sure you get that
information, even if we have to get it to you at a
later date.

The second thing, Pastor Miller has
reminded me, that we need to ask all of those who
are in the center aisle, if you would please make
room, make one aisle, because we're going to invite
the school representatives to speak first; and then
we want to provide opportunity for everyone else, as
many as possible, but we need to make one aisle so
they will be able to get the schools to make that
comment. All right?

This is important. Please support us in
that, because we don't want to have an issue where
we're we break the fire code, and they will be
asked -- we'll have to get out of here. So, please,
support us in that. Okay?

So, who is up here from leadership? I
would like to first introduce the Network Chief for
the Garfield/Humboldt network, Ms. Wanda Washington,
and her deputy, Mr. Chip Johnson. Chip, as we call
him.

We also have Ms. Theresa Plascencia, who
is the West Side High School Network Chief, Theresa.

And we have Mr. Randel Josserand, who the
Deputy Chief for the west side. Also, the chief of all the chiefs, Denise Little is here. Denise is here. Also, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize that we have Mr. Gates. Everybody knows who Mr. Gates is, who also served on the Commission of Utilization, who will be here and observing as well. We're just so glad that he's here as well. Okay?

So, here is the process for tonight: We will have Ms. Andrea Hall will be calling up the school to the center, two representatives. Please, two minutes per speaker. That's the only way we're going to be able to get to every school and individuals who want to speak. All right?

So, we beg of your consideration, we beg of your report relative to that. We have a young lady here is going to be reminding us right in front of me of the time that we have left. So, without no further ado, Ms. Hall.

MS. HALL: Good evening, everyone. We're going to start with three schools at a time.

MR. HAMPTON: My fault. Before the first person who is speaking, relative to public comment, is elected officials. We have Alderman Chandler who is here. We want to allow him to make comment; and
then after Alderman Chandler, we'll call up the
schools.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN CHANDLER: Good evening. I said good
evening. Good evening. It is great to be here
tonight. I would like to thank Reverend Miller once
again for opening up the doors of his church, his
auditorium for us, for the people of the community.

I believe we should be here tonight
talking about how we need more resources for our
schools, more computer labs, more science labs, and
libraries in every school.

All the parents that I spoke to, all the
principals that I spoke to, and all the people I
talked to, the CEO of CPS, I let her know, I
introduced myself to her, the next words out of my
mouth is that we want none of our schools closed.

So, I talked to the CEO on down. I'm here
tonight to speak up for my folks in the community
that we demand that none of our schools be closed.

MS. HALL: All right. So, we'll go ahead and
have three schools line up at a time, two
representatives per school. We'll have Beidler,
Bethune and Calhoun. Any representative from
1 Beidler?

2 Because there are so many people in the
3 room, if you are here, I call your name, raise your
4 hand so I know you are here, so I don't move onto
5 the next school. Thank you.

6 SCHOOLS: BEIDLER, BETHUNE and CALHOUN.

7 SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone. My name is
8 Farris (phonetic). I've lived in the Garfield Park
9 area for most of my life, and I am a product of
10 Beidler Elementary School. My wife is a volunteer
11 at the school. I have met with Mr. Anderson, the
12 principal of the school.
13
14 I think that he's working very hard to
15 provide proper education for our children. Nothing
16 that we want to achieve is given to us. It will
17 take hard work to achieve our goal, and our goal is
18 to keep the schools as long as we can, but it will
19 take hard work.
20
21 Hard work for parents to prepare our
22 children to come to school and be ready to learn.
23 Hard work for my teachers to prepare our children
24 for higher learning helping to shape the future.
25
26 Most of all, it will take hard work for
27 the students to open their minds to see what they
are taught, to show those that oppose us that our 
school is academically able to prepare them for the 
future. My question to our parents of the schools 	onight are we prepared to do hard work? We need 
our schools, and our schools in our community, and 
must work to keep them open.

Our strength comes from our unity, from 
our numbers; and as you can see, our numbers we're 
here tonight. With few we can do little, but with 
many we can do much. So, I'm appealing to each you 
not just as a pile of numbers, but as a concerned 
parent to do all we can to keep our schools going.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Dr. Shirly Billing (phonetic), 
retired principal of the Jacob Beidler Elementary 
School.

First, I would like to begin by saying 
this is our community. The majority of us were born 
and raised here. Therefore, you close our school, 
that is like closing the doors on our front porch.

You say that you need to consolidate for 
budget reasons. We understand that, but we also 
understand that our children need a local place that 
they can go to daily and not have to worry about
crossing gang lines to get to another school.

The park is all the way to Washington to figure out what the solution to all of the violence in our city. Leave our children in our community, and then we won't have to worry about them.

Beidler has been down this road before. We know the situation when you think of the threat of losing your child's school. We know it's an old motto, but we ask you to go back to the children's first motto. Put our children first.

That's why we are here. That's what we're concerned about. We already took God out of the schools, let's not take our children out of the schools.

MS. HALL: Okay. Next we'll have will Bethune up next. Is anybody here from Bethune? Bethune?

Moving on to Calhoun. Is someone here from Calhoun?

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Linda McLennan. I'm the proud principal of Calhoun North Elementary School. I come to you on behalf of my parents, my students, my community, my staff.

I want you all to understand that as you are thinking about who to consolidate, know what you
are interrupting. We have progress in place. Our
data shows that for the past 13 years, not only have
we increased the data, our scores, our state report
cards shows we are above both the distinct and the
state in reading and math.

Our concern is don't interrupt where we
have a place for our children. We have the
interactive learning place for the two computer labs
and the two sciences. We use those places with the
so-called underutilized space we're utilizing for
the learning process for our children.

So, please understand that to consolidate
Calhoun is to take not only our children that are
already in place, but our children's parents who are
Calhoun graduates. We have generations of parents
who come in because they know what Calhoun has to
offer, and they are there to support us.

Our parents are LLT, our staff they are
the pillars for our children, and our children came
with us tonight because they are compassionate about
what Calhoun has to offer.

So, please, remember that Calhoun has
something great in place, and to interrupt that is
to interrupt our children's lives.
SPEAKER: Good evening. I come to you as the LSE chairperson for John Calhoun School. You all want to come here to take over our school. Our kids will have to travel between two different gang turf.

Right now, as it is, our kids know the gangbangers in the school; therefore, they have nothing to fear. But if you close our school, they will go from Lake Street back. There is too many gang turfs for them to cross.

Our kids have fought over for the past six years to break our school from an underutilized and underprivileged school, to the top school there is on the west side. You close our school, where will our kids go? What will they have to look forward to?

There's too much going on out here in these streets, not only for my kid, but every other kid in the community. Calhoun is the community school for around here. You close our school, where will our kids go then?

We already have the highest drop-out rate.

Then what are you going to do then when our kids have nowhere to go?

MS. HALL: The next three schools will be
Cameron, Casals and Cather. Someone here from Cameron? Raise your hand, Cameron.

SCHOOLS: CAMERON, CASALS and CATHER

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Sola (phonetic). I'm the mother of two students in Cameron School and president of the local school council. I'm still surprised to see my school Cameron on the list of closing schools, a school that has shown academic growth from year to year, from level three, and we are now at level two and working harder to reach level one.

Our school is open to the community and is focused on the growth and development of the students, the parents and members of the community, a school with an adult education program with over 100 participants, and that is how we need to continue with programs in the long list of work that we have.

The reality is that we do not understand how can a school that has 80 percent utilization still be on the list of underutilized schools, when we don't even have one office or one classroom that
is empty right now.

Our school does not need to be closed or be on the list. On the contrary, it needs more rooms to use as a clinic, as a space for a clinic, room for our parents to have a program for more adult classes and more professional personnel to help us with mental health in our community, especially for our children.

We need another counselor, an IB program in our school, so that families and students don't have to leave our school and community to seek out better alternatives.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: She said the last part we're not here for political games. We are here to make sure the schools aren't closed, and that we need to work together. We're here for the well-being of our children.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: My name is Ricobero (phonetic). I'm the vice-president of LSE Council in Cameron School and a resident of west Humble park. We don't
understand why we're still on the list of school closings, when our school is actually 80 percent, according to the formula CPS has put out.

We have a parent program and a reading program with the most participants in the network. We know our school, and we walk to our school and classrooms every day. We can testify that none of those classrooms are empty in our school.

On the contrary, our problem is that we don't have enough classrooms, or we don't have enough offices to keep educating and serving our families and our community.

For example, we need a room to put a clinic in our school. We need more room for our parent university; and at this moment, our parents are learning English and GED in offices, not in classrooms, in offices.

We don't have anything to hide. You guys can come and visit us any day and walk with us, and we can show you the reality of our needs. If CPS is so worried for the education of our children, and wants to focus their wasting of money, we are here to help you out and help you solve this problem.

What we need is more rooms for family and
student counseling. We need more counselors. We have one counselor for 840 students. We need another assistant principal just to meet some of our needs.

This is right now the time to stop the show, and we need to focus on the reality of what our children and our families need; and I say it is not right that we're back on the list, and you guys having to play with the mental health of our community and our children, our teachers and our families, and stop the show of closing schools.

If you want to learn the reality of our school, we're open Monday through Saturday, come join us, and you'll understand the reality; and that reality is different when you walk through it and are sitting from behind the desk. We hope to see you soon at Cameron.

MS. HALL: Before we go on to the next school, which will be Casals, we're going to have an elected official come up, Alderman Fioretti.

ADLERMAN FIORETTI: Good evening. First of all, I do want to thank the panel for being here, taking your time, your effort. When we were here
six weeks ago, and with the same recommendations, and I prepared a very lengthy letter to the Board, and I'm going to unveil it next week. Six weeks ago, when we were in this room on a Saturday, I don't know who was there then, but we are all here. And I made three recommendations, and those recommendations stand firm today, as I've watch the six weeks transpire, and have attended and listened to what's happened at these meetings.

First of all, we should not close any schools at this time. Secondly, we should stop the expansion of charter schools until this is resolved. And third, if you go down that perilous path of closing the school, and I gave the examples, this is a fight, as people read my letter to the Sun Times yesterday about why Jones should be a neighborhood school. Why crane should be a neighborhood school, when real resources are dedicated to the people, but we have problems.

No matter where we are in the city, the gang lines control access. We know what happened when we started Operation Safe Passage, in '08 after Rubin Isaac died. He was killed outside a block away from Crane, and we got the leaders together,
the religious folks together, and we did it; and
people did it without the pocket books and paying
everybody now and all these other communities.
They did it from their heart for the
students to make sure students have a good
education; and I talked about last time we were here
six weeks ago of what happened at Sutter in a
ten-day period, a magnet school at Washington, just
past Damen, in ten days, there were twice in the
lockdown with shootings outside and the students
were there.
Parents, when I finally met with the
parents, they said, "If it happens again, we are
taking our kids out." We have to be careful. These
kids, these young folks, are the future of this city
and where we're going.
So, I ask this panel to make sure that
they make the recommendation, whether it's first or
it's second, it doesn't matter, no more charter
schools until we get this resolved and don't close
any of our schools. Thank you.
MS. HALL: Next we'll move on to schools.
We're going to have Casals come up, Cather.
MR. HAMPTON: Alderman Erwin, Jason Erwin, is
in the building, as well as Alderman Walter Bernett.
We're so glad they're here. They requested not to
speak, but we want to acknowledge that they are
here. Thank you.

MS. HALL: All right. So, we'll go ahead and
have Casals, Cather and Delano. I'm so sorry,
Delano. Is someone here representing Casals?

SCHOOLS: CASALS, CATHER and DELANO

SPEAKER: My name is Jordan, and I'm a
four-year-old with Delano SMAPC. Today is my fifth
birthday. I am here. I would like to play with the
sitter dog. We make choices where we walk the dog,
and we say where we want to go.

I went to the library every day. I like
to play in our city or wherever city we are in. I
also like reading. We like Delano because we will
graduate and we will handle it. I like when I learn
with my teacher. I like my friends at Delano.
Please keep Delano open so I can learn more and
more.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Aloso Iland
(phonetic). I attend Delano Elementary School, and
I'm in the seventh grade. I come to put myself as
an attendant at Delano, and say we have been making
a lot of progress. We have gone from a level three
school on probation to a level two school, and we're
now off probation.

Due to hard work of our teacher and staff,
we will go to level one. Our teachers are focused
on us having quality education in the classroom,
technology rooms, including projects that prepare us
for education.

The reason why I believe Delano should
stay open is because we have teachers and a
principal that believe and actually care about us.
They are concerned about the safety and health of
every student, including making sure that all
students receive a quality education in a safe
environment.

Another reason why I believe that Delano
Elementary should stay open is because not only do
we have wonderful teachers, we also have wonderful
schools. From a personal experience, I can assure
you that the students that attend Delano are very
loyal, caring, understanding, very athletic.

We try our best to improve our grades and
scores until they are perfect. We just don't take
any grades or work for satisfaction. We keep moving
forward until our grades are perfect. The Delano Elementary should stay open because they offer many extra-curricular activities, other students would not have access to them.

We have after-school programs, including basketball, pom-pom, cheerleading, volleyball, track and football. We also have other sports which will be competing against middle schools, high schools and colleges.

Last year we came in third place in our league. We were the only principal there competing against high schools and colleges. There are many programs at Delano that offers support for students.

These programs allows us to learn about our bodies, illnesses and diseases. They also allow us to speak and develop self-esteem among our fellows sisters and brothers. Delano Elementary will be celebrating a very special year between 2013 and 2014.

The school will be celebrating their 100-year anniversary. It will be extremely upsetting if we are unable to celebrate this landmark, along with celebrating our school becoming a level one. Please allow our school Delano
Elementary to stay open.

MS. HALL: The next school up will be Dodge. We'll actually have Cather go first. Wait one second, Dodge.

SPEAKER: Good evening. I'm Christopher Grebby (phonetic). I'm an eighth grade teacher at Cather Elementary School. First I would like to say, first and foremost, I'm here to support everybody here at the Garfield/Humboldt network.

Our network has come a long way. We have great leadership in front of us. We know this. We thrive on as little as well. But most of all, Cather is at a renaissance over the last seven, eight years.

When our current administration took over, I think we had a composite score of 13 on the ISAT. Our previous administration didn't really care about the ISAT, they didn't care about the Iowa Test.

Well, that went up to 84, and we came out from probation forever to a level one school. Many people think a level one school doesn't have anything to worry about.

That is why I'm here is to remind these good people in front of me that we have come along
way, and that Cather, we only have 250 kids, but
think what we could do with 800. So, thank you.

MS. HALL: Representative from Dodge? Moving
on to Ericson.

SCHOOLS: DODGE, ERICSON

SPEAKER: Good evening. I'm before you as a
parent first and as employee second. My son attends
Leif Ericson Scholastic Academy, and at Leif Ericson
this year, with a group plus Mr. Abram, we have art,
music, computer, gym, and library.

Now, they are only short 270 students,
according to this roster. Those 270 students was
taken from us by the 108,000 that went to charter
schools. If they didn't go to charter schools, they
would be in our schools.

To insure that our students are able to
get to and from school safely in our community, how
many blocks would the schools be from each other,
and are the blocks safe and will there be bus
service?

Performance, providing students to
enrollment in higher-performing schools, what if we
insure that all our schools are higher-performing
students, the utilization of the schools, to
understand how space is used and to combine underutilized schools to provide a well-rounded, high-quality education for these students.

Why not use the space, if there is some, to reduce the number of students in a class from 36 to 28? Have a more effective staff to provide well-trained education. Building quality where possible, facilities are closing. Why not hire capital investmentees and poor learning conditions.

Instead of selling buildings to charters for a dollar, why not let them be on the property as other real estate companies have to do. Why are we talking about our schools? No mention of charters, who face the same situation.

They are no better than Chicago Public Schools. Maybe instead of us, the taxpayers, using millions of dollars given to them, would take their money and put it to our so-called underutilized schools.

SPEAKER: On behalf of Ericson, I don't have too much more to say after that. I do have things to say.

In addition to things that my parent just mentioned, we do have a program called GEMS, Girls
Enjoy Math and science, where the young ladies are learning not only to do better in math and sciences, they are also learning to be entrepreneurs by making lotions and body oils and things like that all natural.

They are learning to be entrepreneurs, which is what we need. We also have a principal who takes -- I think we are the only grammar school on the west side whose principals takes their children on college tours. That's right. When they are thinking about college.

Also, we have a principal who knows that technology is the key for our children. We have two computer labs, plus a global lab. We have a parent room, which we just recently finished furnishing that has three computers in it, which is not a lot.

We are new to that. Our parents are coming in. They are looking for jobs. They are applying for schools. They are doing everything in the school.

This is one of the reasons why our school should not be closed. This school is a family school. They are like four generations of students in this school. It is a family.
Our school should not be closed because there will be nowhere for our students to go. One reason we're underutilized is because there are no children in the neighborhood. The buildings are gone. If there are no buildings, how can there be children? That is why our school should not be closed. Thank you.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you so much. Before the next group of speakers, Alderman Erwin has decided he would like to speak. We Invite Alderman Erwin.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN ERWIN: Thank you. Good to see all you out here this evening about our schools in this community, not only Garfield, but from Marconi, all the way past Faraday. We talk about underutilization. We should be talking about being under resourced.

I want the same things for my kids in Garfield Park that they have in Lincoln Park. We want the same stuff for the kids in Humboldt Park like Rogers Park. The issues that we need to understand is that if you are underutilized, under resourced, what do we expect to happen?

So, we are in this situation. It's not
something that just happened overnight. This is
something that has been going on, and it's on us to
stand up for our community, for us to stand up for
our schools, and for us to stand up for our
children.

When I heard this little young lady here
four years old reading, speaking, this is what this
is about. This is about us, fighting for what we
believe in.

I believe that we need more dollars to
help these schools do better, so these children can
do better. The only thing we're over here, if we
are over taxed, we send more people to the
penitentiary. We're sending more people everywhere
but to college, getting jobs.

So, we need resources in our schools here
in Garfield Park and Humble Park, and I stand on
that, and I stand on that until I die, that we need
resources for our kids in this community. Thank
you.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you. Because of the
overwhelming crowd, we want to make sure that we
don't have a fire hazard, we want to invite our
Spanish speakers, the ones that need translation
downstairs, where we will have facilitators to work with them at this time. So, Claudia.

All right. So, as we mentioned earlier, that is an invitation only. No one is going to make anyone do anything. We're going to move on with the list of schools that we have. Thank you so much.

MS. HALL: The next school is Faraday, then Garfield Park and Goldblatt.

SCHOOLS: FARADAY, GARFIELD PARK and GOLDBLATT

SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Carmen Rice. I'm a proud parent and an LSE chairperson in Faraday School. Faraday School is never an option or solution. We need to come together at all levels and come to a higher ground to save our school. These children are our future. Thank you.

MS. HALL: Next school, Garfield Park. Is there a representative from Garfield park? Moving on to Goldblatt.

SPEAKER: Good evening, everybody. My name is Ms. Luellen (phonetic), the assistant principal at Goldblatt Elementary. Come on. I have a parent right here that we're going to let start off and speak about how she feels about this going on.

SPEAKER: That's right. To tell you the truth,
we want our school to stay open. Our kids have been
going there for a long time. I got two in high
school that graduated. I got two more. They are
strong. They are smarter than ever. They get As,
honor rolls, and I am LSE chairperson.
I got personal stock, too. I got them
all. They've been doing good, very good. They're
smart. They love that school. They asked me to
come out, "Mama, come out rescue our school."
My son is in tenth grade. He is all As,
personal stock, seventh grade. He is going up, and
they love their school. I do not want them to go
nowhere. We got to keep that open. We need to be
strong, and I'm going to help them out, because I'm
an LSE chairperson.

SPEAKER: Thank you. I also just want to say
we just want to give our kids an opportunity to
prove themselves. They worked hard this year. They
are very competitive, and I love the competition
with them, and they really strive to do better.
I have one student right here that is very
shy right now. He doesn't want to speak, so we
won't make him. I want them to be able to prove
themselves.
They need to see that next year. They need to see what we're doing now is going to help us next year; and what we're doing next year will help us later and we keep moving on.

They're not going to be able to do that if we close our school, or any of the schools over here. It's too dangerous. We did not need our babies walking around about to get shot because they just want to go to school.

So, it's we got to do better for our kids.

That's all I have to say about that. This is a lovely parent.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Joselyn Davis. I'm a grandparent. All three of my kids graduated from Goldblatt. My last son was salutatorian at Goldblatt. He was on the honor roll every day, every year that he was there, from four years old up.

Now my granddaughter goes there, and I'm hoping she gets the same great education. Just keep Goldblatt open. Thank you.

MS. HALL: Thank you. Next we'll have Gregory, Hefferan.
SCHOOLS: Gregory, Hefferan.

SPEAKER: How all doing this evening? My name is Floyd James. I'm a resident of North Lawndale area, and I'm also the president of the local student council at Gregory Elementary Math and Science Academy.

We are actually at 81 percent on the level of productivity of moving up, but our utilization I see this really is a numbers game. It's basically stopping us from producing in our community.

All the resources, like Alderman Erwin said earlier, are stripped away from our community, only in the black community I want to say, from the businesses to the shore to anything that is going on in our community.

You all are trying to strip away from our schools and put our children in harms way. I have two children that attend Gregory Elementary. We also give a scholarship. We have five generations of our family, we give scholarships for valedictorian and salutatorian.

So I know that I'm a father of the community, and I totally agree with you all coming together for the solution, because this is not an
option to close down our schools.

So, I really want to say to you all do
what you possibly can do to come together, because
so many of our people are hurting in our community
and this is not an option.

We don't want a Darien Albert case again.
We don't want the little girl the other day. We
don't want these issues to come up. We hold you all
accountable for our children, and we really want to
give you the opportunity to fix it before we have to
come together because there's power in unity.

When we come together, we put you in a
position to totally take you out. One thing I want
to say, Chicago is the only city that Chicago runs
the school district.

First of all, that should not even be an
option, but we as the people will come together to
stop this so we can stop your political machine by
allowing charter schools to come in place so you can
get money for your campaign.

MS. HALL: Is there a representative from
Hefferan?

SPEAKER: Good evening. Greetings from
Hefferan Elementary School, located at 4409 West
Wilcox, Chicago, Illinois, 60624. Jacqueline Herz is the very proud principal. Hefferan is a level-one school.

We're that way because our children have the nerve to step around the drug dealer and come to school. Our children have the nerve to pass up the gangs and skirt right down to school.

Our children are successful because every teacher, every administrator, every parent, every LSE member in Hefferan teaches the children, even though you're smack dab in the middle of K town.

It doesn't matter where you grow up. What matters is what grows up in you. Save our children.

MS. HALL: Next we're going to have Jensen and Kellman. Is there a represent from Jensen raise your hand. Moving on to Kellman. Jensen, Kellman.

SCHOOLS: JENSEN and KELLMAN

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Ed Smith. I represent all the schools, because I live right in the middle of the schools, and I'm sick and tired of this mess that the Board of Education is throwing on us.

All of these children, look at these beautiful kids, they are thrown up to the dogs,
leaving them to go out in the world, and close schools and reconstituting the schools, and our kids are not being educated. This mess has to stop.

Now whatever we have to do, we got to stop it. We cannot wait another ten years for the Board of Education. In ten years how many kids will be in jail, how many will not be able to read, how many will be dead? Some can't get a job.

This mess has to stop. Now, parents, we're here tonight. We cannot allow this to be the last time. You got to be on top of this mess every day. The Board of Education is in a mess.

If we don't correct it, it's not going to happen. Stay together, work hard and make sure our kids can go out in the world and compete against any school in the world. If they don't get to college, our kids in the school right here, they won't be able to do that. It's on us.

We are complacent. We are complacent with what the Board of Education is doing. Let's go to work. Let's kick up butt and get these schools in order.

MS. HALL: Is there a representative from Kellman? I asked for Jensen first and then Kellman.
All right, we're going to move on to Lowell Elementary, then Marconi, then Melody.

SCHOOLS: LOWELL, MARCONI AND MELODY

SPEAKER: Hi, everybody. My name is Julia Frametz (phonetic). I'm a teacher at Kellman and also at Melody, so I can do two schools in the network.

One thing I don't think has been brought up yet is extra-curricular activities, like after-school programs. The kids are going to other schools farther away.

I know from my experience I run an after-school program, and the kids have to wait for their older brothers and sisters and things like that; and I think if they were at schools farther away, a lot of them wouldn't be able to go to those programs because they would be walking farther distances.

They have kindergarteners. Parents wouldn't want them out that late. So, I think it would deter a lot of kids from being in extra-curricular activities and things like that.

SPEAKER: My name is Doris Gillmore. I come to you as a parent, a CPS student, and a teacher at
Marconi Elementary school; and most importantly, as a former student of Marconi Elementary School. When I decided to take the position at Marconi, it was by my choice. It wasn't because I just happened to get the job. I knew when I went to school to become an educator that I wanted to give back to the community which had educated me to be prepared for the world, which was at Marconi Community Academy.

Therefore, I came back to educate other students as a way to give back to my community; but I really want to talk about these key facts about the school utilization at CPS.

You say over the last decade, Chicago lost about 145,000 school-age children; but you forgot to say over the last decade, Chicago lost about 145 schools because of charter schools.

You said that most of the population occurred on the south or west side of the city, which is true, it did, but it was as a result of the charter schools.

CPS you said that about 50 percent of CPS schools are underutilized, and nearly 140 are more than half empty. Again, this is your fault, your
fault.

You also say there is -- that CPS is facing a million dollars deficit next fiscal year. I would agree with you; but I also say that, again, this is your fault, not the community's fault. This community did not create a million dollars deficit.

This community has been sacrificed year after year after year, and I for one come from this community; and I feel like my education was sacrificed, and I had to work extra hard because the resources were not provided for me in 1988, and they are not provided for our students now in 2013.

We need to make a change. We need to see some differences. Curriculum is a joke in the west part Garfield/Humboldt Park communities. We should have the same provisions as those in Lincoln Park, and those at DePaul, and those in Ogden park.

Why are our children being sacrificed. You had want to continue to sacrifice them to keep your budget that you created. No, you find a different way to fix the budget and stop sacrificing our kids.

SPEAKER: Hello. Good evening. I am Danielle Orchard, the president of Marconi Community Academy
Local School Council. Tonight I had to speak for you all, but I got one thing to say: Our principal and our children are our future.

Our principal needs resources and funding. You still say cut 2,000, I'm going to get my chance to walk on up here.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I'm going to first go. Let us yell for Marconi until the thrown of grace that we may obtain mercy divine grace to help in a time of need.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Wanda Hopkins, and I'm here for all the schools in the city in Chicago. I stand firm to the commissioner who sits here at the table.

Don't you dare close one school, and let me tell you why. You say we close schools for a deficit. These schools have been closed for 15 years, and the deficit still goes up hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and you know why?

It's because you keep giving charter schools a dollar to open up a school and give them all of our dollars, so stop being confused, and stop trying to confuse us.

The message I want to say to the people in
the front, to the aldermen, to the state legislatures, to the pastors, if they close your school, you won't get no more tithe.

I'm calling everybody out. I want you to go back to CPS and say, "We're not stupid. Educate us." You all got doctors degrees. You tell them, Rahm Emanuel, closing schools don't save us nothing but destroy communities; and we're not going to stand for it any more because we going to turn over some back tables so we can make sure that our schools stay open. Thank you very much.

MS. HALL: Melody?

MR. HAMPTON: Do we have Melody waiting to speak?

SPEAKER: Good evening. Is Melody in the house? That's all I need to know. My name is Rose Thomas, and I represent the parents, the students of Melody School, and I would like to say I wouldn't want to be in the hot seat like you all for nothing in the world.

They are in the hot seat tonight, but I would like to send a personal message to Barbara on the local school -- I mean, on the school board, and I would like to say I know it's not an easy job and
to sit and make these decisions; but in spite of the fact that nobody wants their school closed, somebody's school is going to be closed. It's just a fact.

We all are just hoping that it don't be our school. So, what I would like to do tonight is that extend an invitation to any student, parent, principal, board member, if you all are looking for a good school, Melody is the place.

We invite you to bring your precious students. We have the most dedicated teachers. Bring us your most diligent, janitorial and medical staff. Bring us your hard-working food service, and please bring us your concerned, peace-loving parents.

We sit over here. We would like --

SPEAKER: Let me say this: She's not talking against you. We don't want anybody to close. We're not talking against you.

My name is Mary Hazel (phonetic). I'm the proud principal of Melody Elementary School. I was born on the west side. I was raised on the west side, and I was educated on the west side; and I am living proof of what can happen when educators,
parents, and community members get together and produce good results.

They took a chance on me as, a 29-year-old principal and said, "We're willing to do whatever it takes to improve our school, and not in 10 years, not in 15 years did we move, but we moved 15 points in two years, and you have some people who schools haven't moved a point in 20 years.

So, all we're saying we are showing we are making improvements, and that we are dedicated to moving our schools, like everybody is here, to give us a chance to show that we can improve our schools without any outside interference. Thank you.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you. Morton is the next school that is coming. I'm going to encourage the crowd please allow any speaker the opportunity to speak and say whatever they want to say, please. I encourage you. Morton. Is Morton here? Nobel, is Nobel here? Come on up. Thank you.

SCHOOL: MORTON and NOBEL

SPEAKER: First of all, I would like to start let's hear if for public education. Let's hear it for community schools. My name is Joe Oberton (phonetic). I'm an eighth grade teacher at Nobel
Elementary School. I am here on behalf of our
dedicated parents, our dedicated teachers, our
dedicated service people; but most importantly, I am
here for our 848 students that we service every day,
848 students.

Nobel is a home for all 848 of those
students. All 848 of those students come every day
to be fed, to be cared for, to be loved, to be
inspired.

Now when I think about Nobel, I've been a
teacher there for seven years. The word that comes
to mind is progress. We've made tons of academic
progress over the last four years. I forgot to talk
about our dedicated principal, Mr. Abrahamson.

Under his leadership, we have developed a
professional learning community that puts the
academics of children forefront. We've created a
book room. We've created a whole new scope under
the readers workshop.

We have dedicated teachers who weekly meet
so that we can talk about student progress. I just
want to leave it at this and hand it over to one of
our parents.

One story just recently one of our
students came back. Now I am on my seventh year.

My students are starting to go college. She's coming back freshman year at Northwestern University.

Let me just say this, this should not be an anomaly. This should be the norm. We should have students coming back from Northwestern every day.

I'm going to hand it over to our parent, Mr. Monroya (phonetic).

SPEAKER: Good evening, everybody. My name is Jorge Monroya, and I'm a parents of proud kids that attend Alfred Nobel Elementary School.

I have weakness that effort and transformation Alfred Nobel is doing. I have seen in my kids, they want to go to school. They want to stay in the school community.

If you even think about closing any one school, I want you guys to actually think that that is our kids' school. What will you do if your kids' school is in danger? How would you help?

That's how close you have to work with principals and community. I think the panel is going to leave tonight with a very good sense how
strong this community is.

So, please, think what your head, but make
the decisions with your heart. Thank you.

MS. HALL: The next set of schools is Piccolo,
Ryerson and Stowe. Is the representative from
Piccolo in the room?

SCHOOLS: Piccolo, Ryerson and Stowe.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Jennifer
Harlty (Phonetic). I'm the LSE chairperson for
Ryerson. Ryerson has about a standard of 58 percent
utilized.

I'm here to's say by stating Ryerson is
utilized to the fullest of its capacity. Everyone
at Ryerson is being utilized as a instructional
purpose for our children. We have a new library
with advanced technology.

We are not only preparing our students to
get to high school, we are preparing them to be
college ready because you stated in June of 2012,
that 70 percent of public high school students go on
to college and 40 percent is not ready.

We are getting our babies ready to go to
college, not just high school. We serve pre-K
through eighth grade. The entire third floor is a
middle school concept preparing our students to
transition into high school with little-to-no
problem.

We have two computer labs, a music room,
art room, to make our babies sociable. We have free
recess for safety reasons, because we know what's
going on on the west side. We keep our babies
inside.

We utilize room, and we have an exercise
room, sports room. We have a clinic. We need our
clinic. If you close the clinic, you close the
clinic that serves our community. We have
after-school programs. We have Saturday classes.

We have a parent room, and our parent room
we train our parents to be able to go into the
classroom and volunteer. Our school has been moving
upward because the transitional we retained it as
principal and we're finally getting ready to settle
down.

I say do not close our school. I have one
question in closing. The lottery money that is
supposed to have been utilized for schools, what
happened to that? Where are you taking the lottery
money? If we're so under budget, I know people play
lottery every day all day long.

So, our school just celebrated 104th birthday last Thursday. We consider it a landmark. We should be considered a landmark. So, therefore, please do not close our school.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you.

SPEAKER: I apologize. I'm going to let you know -- I apologize for screaming. I'm going to let you know I'm the first generation. My children is the second generation. They go to Ryerson Elementary School.

My son is graduating from Ore High School this year with a learning disability with a 3.5. Did you hear me? This is what Ryerson set him up to achieve. He had that before he got to high school. He is ready.

Now, my son right there goes to a charter school. That is what he chose, 3.2, and he college ready, baby. That one is college ready. He going to be a future doctor. That is because of Ryerson taught him that.

That's my personal achievements because Ryerson helped me get down. You know what I'm saying? This is not just a school building. This
is my family here. This is my family. They take
care of my babies.

I mean, they take care of my babies. God
bless us for Ms. James this year, because she came
in and she said, "These are my babies."

All 300, as you guys got 399 kids in that
school building, those are her babies. Do you hear
me? She love every last one of them. She talks and
respect each and last one of them, and they love her
back. Do you hear me? They love her back.

She only been there long enough to receive
all that, but them kids they receive her, and they
love her. You that is the dynamic due. You hear
me? The dynamic duo. I only see two. If I said
before, Ms. Williams, you hear what I'm saying?

MS. HALL: Next up is Stowe. Is the
representative here from Stowe?

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was
made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: I'm the translating. Her name is
Maria Garcia. She's the LSE president at Stowe
School. She's here tonight with parents, teachers
and administration.

Stowe is one of the largest schools in the
Garfield Humboldt network. They have 800 students from pre-K to 8th grade. Stowe has advanced in their 2011-2012 academics. They came from level three to level two. They gained ten points in one year.

Their school has also had made strengths and uses the NW -- I'm sorry, has made goals to improve for their NWEA plan to form the instructions in all the classes. So, they are using all of the common core and all of that that you guys are putting on our teachers and making it hard for them to teach. They are not teaching.

They are making our kids become memory banks, but what they are using, what is the point of bringing in other kids from other schools? If you close a school, and what's the point of closing our school? Why stop the progress in our school?

My recommendation she says for you is to bring more resources for the bilingual program in the school, and they need for space. They have 90.5 percent of their students are Latino and Hispanic, and 42.2 percent of them are in bilingual classes. So, their recommendation is don't close our schools. Save our schools.
MS. HALL: Thank you. The next representative.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Isabel Macado, and I am a parent from Stowe School. My daughter is in Stowe School, and she has been learning how to read and write. So, her education is in danger.

It's time to think about our children and their education. What is the purpose of closing schools? Where are our kids going to go, and what is the future going to look like? Instead of closing our schools, focus on the good for our children.

Stowe needs many things. We need a laboratory for science. We need teachers for smaller class size. We need computers for computer technology education. We need more money for programs. We need nurses in the school. We need counselors for social and emotional support, and we need air conditioning in our schools. We're starting school in late August.

Thank you.

MS. HALL: Thank you. Sumner, Tilton, and
SCHOOLS: SUMNER, TILTON and WARD

SPEAKER: Good evening. I love my school very much, and I enjoy going to school every day. In fact, my brother and I look forward to going to school each day.

I am an honor roll student, and I most recently won first place, and my younger brother won second place, in the Operation Push World Tour Competition. We met and took pictures with Governor Pat Quinn, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr.

My name is Ionis (phonetic). This is my brother, Sahernik (phonetic). We are in third and first grades in Sumner Math and Science Community Academy. We are Sumner Eagles. Sumner Academy is our name.

We have come to present our concern and to voice about our school. We have a wonderful principal who is a great leader, and has been recognized by Chicago Board of Education more than once for outstanding leadership, great teachers who are highly qualified, students such as myself and my brother who are learning, growing and achieving.
Our Eagle Nest is a wonderful building that has a computer lab, science lab, art lab, playground, track and field for baseball and football, full-size library, full-size gym, full-size auditorium, full-size lunch room with a kitchen, plus so much more.

We feel loved, cared for and safe, and most of all inspired to learn. I recently scored on my EEWA Map Test the second highest in the school. This means that a third grader surpassed most of the eighth grade students.

Sumner is my school designed and dedicated for those who are dignified and serious. Our school has everything. Bring back the gifts in the student.

If you close a school like Sumner for any reason, it will be a horrible mistake. My parents and I agree that Sumner should be expanded not closed.

Who would dare destroy the Eagles Nest? Surely not any member of the CPS Board, and surely not out CEO who says this is not just about a building, but about people.

Support and protect our eagle's nest so
that the young eagles such as myself can thrive,
grow and learn. Then you will be able to stand in
admiration and proud and look up and watch us sore.

Even though utilization is a concern, we
say that as long as we have a school such as ours,
that by numbers measures underutilized, we present
it as occupied and justified and must remain open.
Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Ernest Prosser (phonetic).
I'm the chairperson for the LSE Sumner Elementary
School. How can you go after that? How can you go
after that?

I am opposed to any school closing. I'm
opposed to any school closing in the City of
Chicago. I had a long speech prepared here, but I'm
just going to take the top ones I have here, because
I know people want to get out of here and go home.

First of all, Sumner is located in a
central location, the west side. The west side.
All right? The best side. In 19 -- sorry, 2008,
Sumner had a flood. The media was on top of it.
The medias was there every day until they
cleaned it up. Once everything went back to normal,
we didn't see the media anymore. Right now Sumner
has one of the best buildings in the city. It's a
an older building. It has been rehabbed. It has a
new furnace, new everything in the floors,
electrical system, the building has been rehabbed.
Now they want to close it. The building
contains a gym, a cafeteria, auditorium, all very
self-sustaining. The staff there is Nationally
Board Certified Teachers. Our teachers are great.
The leadership, Ms. Robinson, the
principal, Mrs. Goldstein, the assistant principal,
those people do an outstanding job. We don't take
anything away from any other principal at any other
school.
We're saying keep Sumner open. Every day,
ever day I go past Sumner on my way to work. I see
the children standing outside the door. They are so
eager to learn. They're standing outside the doors
before the school even opens.
We need to have this school open just for
that very reason. She's stopping me now, but in
closing, I would like to say this, I used to tell
people that Sumner was the best kept secret on the
west side, and it still is.
MS. HALL: Thank you. Tilton?
SPEAKER: Good evening, everybody. I am surely pleased to see the house full tonight. It is supposed to be full.

I'm here to try to understand before the board, the panel, I don't understand why you spend so much money in these schools; and all of a sudden, now we have to close them up. Our school just had a brand new elevator put in. Millions of dollars. Okay?

So now we are getting ready to close the school. You know what I am saying? I don't understand why they are all standing here, sitting here today, wanting to close schools to make them overcrowded classrooms. Small classroom size are most needed.

Why we got to close them? Closing the schools for overcrowded classrooms is going to affect the scores. I understand the scores are not supposed to go down. Over-size classroom you going to get low scores. I understand all of that. Why are we doing this?

In the neighborhoods, all the schools being closed are the ones that are not charter, or not turned around. I have one, I am saying what
everybody else is saying, don't close at this particular time.

Don't close none of the schools on the west side. We need these schools. Parents, I need you to understand get out there and make a stand. We need to keep our schools open, not the ones that they turned around. They're going to stay there.

Our schools are going to turn around and meet the scores. They are trying to close it, too. We need to stand together, stay firm and get these schools and keep them open.

I am from Tilton Elementary. I am the security officer speaking on their behalf. The president is going to speak in a few minutes. Hold on.

SPEAKER: I'm not a great speaker, but all I have to say is please don't close our school. You all have a great night.

MS. HALL: Thank you. Next, Alderman Walter Bernett.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN BERNETT: Good evening, everyone.

First of all, I want to commend all of the young people that spoken tonight. Let's give all of the
kids a round of applauds.

It really takes a lot for them to sit here
hours and hours and listen to everyone talk, but I
also want to commend all of the parents for being
here. God bless you all for standing up and caring
for your children.

I think that's very important. It sends a
strong message to the Board of Education. I agree
with everything everyone is saying. We don't need
to close our schools. We need for resources for our
schools, but also there have been schools closed
over the years, and they move other schools into
those schools.

It seems like those schools that was open
last need to be the ones that's closed. They need
to move into the schools that's been open for a long
time. I think that's the fair thing to do.

But also, I think we need to market our
schools more. It seem like since this process has
been going on, a lot of schools have been encouraged
by stepping up their game; but it always seems like
we're set up to fail because, even as you put in
your test scores, the bar keeps going up.

They keep raising the score each and every
time you do it. So, we need to do something else.
The Board of Education needs to figure out something else on how to keep our schools open and bring more resources to our schools.

    What do you know that the black caucus of African-American aldermen we just met with Barbara Bennett. All of us expressed the same thing to her, we cannot have these schools closed because, for one, it's a safety issue; and for two, they've been stealing resources from our schools for many years, and we need the resources put into our schools here in the City of Chicago.

    We need to figure out a way to keep them open, and one of the things I said is maybe we need to change the name of the school. Maybe it should be Calhoun Skinner or Calhoun Whitney Young, or something like that, to attract the other people who are not interested in coming to our schools, get the people who can have their children in private schools to come to our schools with their young people, instead of spending their money at the private schools.

    So, we need to do something more creative to market our skills. We have some good schools.
All of these schools that I seen are moving up; and each time you move up, they raise the scores again. All of you all are doing fantastic. I'm very proud to see some parents out here. God bless you, and we're standing with you. Thank you very much.

MS. HALL: Thank you, Alderman. Moving on to Ward.

SPEAKER: My name is Patricia Ross. I'm a parent. I have two children that is attending Laura Ward Elementary School, which is located at 410 North Monticello. Laura Ward Elementary School is a higher-performing school, with two computer labs, two science labs, a music room, an art center and a performance art center.

Laura Ward School's academic achievement is at 81 percent within eight years, which is better than most everyone's schools. I can sit here and talk, but I am going to talk fast.

The fact is when you close the Chicago Public Schools, it's not good or healthy for our children. Our children is our future and our hope. If you are closing the schools, you are closing their hope.

I have two children, like I said, that
attend Laura Ward Elementary School. My daughter is
12 years old and IEP. If you close the school, what
does she have to go to a charter school, where
teachers are not equipped to teach our children like
the teachers are doing in the public school?
Charter schools do not have a system for
children with IEPs. I was told, and I am a parent,
I was told my child would never learn past the
second-grade level because of her IEP.
And because of the great job they have
been doing, my child is now reading and learning on
the sixth-grade level, which is an achievement. She
is an eight-year-old that is in a fourth grade
class, A honor school, perfect attendance, who loves
to learn.
So taking the Chicago Public Schools away
from our children up in the area in the west side,
you are doing more damage than helping that you
think you are doing.
SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Leslie
Armstrong. I've been a teacher at Laura Ward School
for over 16 years.
I'll introduce the board to a little bit
of sarcasm, if you bear with me. Please listen.
All I would like to say is thank you to the board. Thank you for making our hard work meaning nothing. I want to thank you for affecting the morale of our teachers, lowering the hope of our students.

I want to thank you for my tired legs standing up all day to teach our students. I want to thank you for the new math that you put on the documents you passed out today.

When I began teaching at Laura Ward, it was overcrowded with classrooms in the closet. Now we have workable numbers, and you talk about closing our schools.

Thank you for the lies year after year that you say improve your schools, we did that. Improve your attendance, we did that. More professional development, we did that. Everything you asked for we did. So, what I am trying to say to you all is no thank you.

MS. HALL: Next we'll have Webster.

SCHOOL: WEBSTER

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Gentry (phonetic).

I'm a parent of four children, two graduated, two still there. You have no idea what Webster does for
a child and for a community. Right now just sitting
here with my daughter, she's the operations
specialist in the U.S. Navy. She graduated from
Webster in 2008.

I have a son that had an IEP that is in
high school now on the honor roll student, honor
roll math classes.

You take Webster, you shut down on our
babies, our babies need these schools. It is not
just school, it is a family. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Alia
Townsend, and I'm a sixth grade teacher at Webster
school. I walked into the doors of Webster 15 years
ago, and walked into my second family.

That feeling I had 15 years ago is the
feeling that all of our schools have every day when
they enter the doors of Webster School.

The staff, the students and parents worked
hard to get us out of probation. Now we are a level
two school achieving and will reach a level one
status.

We at Webster work very hard. We have
given up preps, we give up any free time that we
have. Any time that you come to our doors at 7:45,
there are more students there at 7:45 than at any other time. Teachers come early and we stay late.

Whether we meet the milk man in the morning and close the school, we do not leave until we make sure that all of our children are home safely. We call parents, and our parents work with us. Any time that we need them, they are there.

They are asking us, "What can I do at home to help my child?" They don't hang up on us, and they support us any time we need them. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Denise Wilson. I'm also a teacher at Webster Elementary.

Let me just first say how disappointed I am in CPS and the whole school system.

Had I known that this was going to be a field where anyone can come in and get the head position without any qualifications or experience, I would have never gone to school to be a teacher, number one. It's ridiculous. Okay?

Let me also start by saying we ask ourselves what is quality education? Do our children deserve quality despite their social economical backgrounds? If they do, then why are we so quick to close down our children's school and
send them to other locations where they have to
travel even farther to reach their destination to
get to school.

And as crazy as Chicago is right now,
that's the last thing that we need. Okay? We'll
see more and more of our students on the news dying
for senseless reasons. Okay? Webster is definitely
a diamond in the rough where we're reaching
children.

We're closing the academic achievement
gap. You all set the bar. You told us to meet the
bar. Not only did we meet the bar, we exceeded the
bar. So, now we have people running around
sweating, "What did we do now to close the schools?"
We no longer can use the excuse that they are not
performing, because we're performing.

Our children have showed you that they are
very well capable of performing, because they can do
it. So, now all our schools are not being utilized
to its full potential. Really?

For the first time in years our classes
are not overflowing with students where the teachers
can differentiation, meet these kids on an
individual needs that you wanted to see. You set us
up for failure so you could close our schools and
have a reason to send our schools to charter
schools.

Turner School is a charter school. It's
ridiculous. CPS is going to the dogs. It is
ashamed we are allowing it. We have to stand up,
teachers, administrators, parents, community to take
our schools back.

MS. HALL: Is there a representative from West
Park?

SCHOOL: WEST PARK

SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone. We're here
proud to represent West Park Academy. All those
West Park Academy say "yes." We have a parent here,
Maria Flores, who is going to speak on behalf of
West Park; but before she starts, I want everyone to
know that West Park is truly a jewel on the west
side of Chicago.

It has been open for 17 years. It has a
magnificent diverse student population. As you can
see by all the parents who came out to support us, we want
to see that our school remains open, and that we continue to
move forward under our great leadership. Thank you. This
is Ms. Maria Flores, who is one of our parents.
(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: I'm a parent, and I have two children at the school. My seven year old came home the other day and said, "Mom, my teacher said they will be closing our school." He's very affected by the school closing, and I don't know what I can tell my children.

Please don't close the schools. I have been a parent in the pre-K school, pre-K program. We invite parents to come and be part of the school. I also love the school. Please don't close our school. Thank you. Have a good evening.

MR. HAMPTON: Any other parents from West Park?

All right. Let's give a round of applause for all the students and the parents that made comments and stand up.

Again, I want to remind you and thank you for the comments. I want to remind you that all your comments are documented by our reporter, our official court reporter, which will lead to a presentation to our CEO Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett.

We also want to make you aware if you go to our website in a couple of days, you will
actually be able to get a narrative of what was said at this meeting.

The next meeting, the date is scheduled.

We look forward to seeing those who choose to participate in that meeting as well. Again, we thank you. We thank you for your civility.

The few of us who remain up here, if you have any additional questions for us, as we leave out, please catch us.

And finally, we want to thank Pastor Johnnie Miller for allowing us to have this meeting here. Thank you. Good night.

(WHICH WERE ALL THE PROCEEDINGS HAD.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS )
) SS:
COUNTY OF COOK )

PAMELA A. MARZULLO, C.S.R., being first duly sworn, says that she is a court reporter doing business in the city of Chicago; that she reported in shorthand the proceedings had at the Proceedings of said cause; that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of her shorthand notes, so taken as aforesaid, and contains all the proceedings of said meeting.

______________________
PAMELA A. MARZULLO
License No. 084-001624

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me this _____day
of _______________ 2013.

Notary Public