MIDWAY NETWORK COMMUNITY MEETING

MARCH 2, 2013.

11:00 a.m.

The Report of Proceedings had in the meeting of the above-entitled cause, taken before DENNIS M. HARTNETT, CSR in and for the County of Cook and State of Illinois, at 4500 South Pulaski, Chicago, Illinois, March 2, 2013, at the hour of approximately 11:00 o'clock a.m.

PRESENT:

Mr. Luis Soria                Chief of Schools
for Midway Network

Ms. Minerva Garcia-Sanchez    Deputy, Director
of Midway Network

Mr. Yair Rodriguez
Mr. Ben Felton

INTERPRETERS:  Mr. Matt Ginsburg
                Mr. Alex Linarel
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MR. SORIA: We already know the order of the schools that are speaking and their times. If you wanted to speak today, you need to still register up at the front at the registration table, okay. We are starting at 11:00 o'clock, okay.

Even if you are not speaking today, if you want to mark your attendance, you want to register that you have been here, you can do that throughout the meetings, you don't have to do that right now, but we want to make sure we are recording everyone who is here, okay.

Good morning. I'll begin when you show me that you're ready. This is so important, so I want everyone to hear all of the schools this morning.

All right. We are going to be speaking in Spanish and English. We're going to be capturing everything you say in both languages. There is an interpreter, not a translator, an interpreter, who will be giving a brief review of what each person has said in the reverse language.

So if I am speaking in Spanish, there will be a quick review of what was mentioned in Spanish. However, everything is being captured today as you
I'm the Chief of Schools of the Midway Network. Good morning. How are you? We are going to start with Claremont first, and here in front we need Claremont, Ashburn, Carson, Dawes, and then after that I will tell you who needs to be up front here, okay.

From Claremont School, Miss Banks.

SPEAKER: Good morning. My name is Sharon Banks, and I am a parent from Claremont Academy. First of all, I want to tell you that I have two children who attended Claremont Academy. My son started at Claremont in second grade. He went all the way through eighth grade.

When he left Claremont Academy, he entered into high school in an honors English class and an honors reading class. He go back to Claremont if he have any problems with math and reading and speak to his teachers. They will help him. They also can go on FaceBook and contact his teachers and tell them that he's having a problem and they will help him.

They have after school programs, morning programs, Saturday programs, and he attended all
those programs and he is wonderful.

    I have a fourth -- a child that's in fourth
grade now at Claremont Academy and she has wonderful
scores at Claremont. And she attends after school,
Saturday school programs, and is doing wonderful at
Claremont Academy. The staff is wonderful. You can
always contact the teachers, the principals, the
assistant principal, whenever you need help, you can
contact someone at Claremont Academy.

They have a rigid curriculum, math and
literacy, always focusing on math and literacy.
It's just a great, I see another parent here,
Miss Branch, she might want to come up and say some
things also.

(Speaker interpreted in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good morning. My name is Ashanty
Branch, and I am a proud parent of six Claremont
students. I have a kindergartener, a first grader,
a third grader, and two either graders.

    When Claremont was first being built, I
thought, oh, a new school. We needed something in
the community to replace the violent infested middle
school that was there. I enrolled kids and we
became family. Over the years I got to know the
principal, the staff, and everybody is just
welcoming at Claremont. This is my son, (redacted),
he's an eighth grader. He's taking algebra this
year, so he don't have to take it next year.

You got something to say.
SPEAKER: I'm (redacted) I have been attending
Claremont since kindergarten. And I have the
privilege of having a great family, but when I come
to school, I think that the teachers and staff are
my family too, but instead of coming and just being
in the building, I think we all are family, and that
the teachers, when they prepare me for high school
and even college.

SPEAKER: So, like I said, Claremont is a safe
place for the students. We have a lot of
activities, not just for the students but for the
parents as well. We have parent workshops, parent
field trips, we give the students gifts for the
parents for Mother's day, for Christmas, anything,
so. In time, all Claremont students are stars.

(Speaker interpreted in Spanish.)

MR. SORIA: Next Ashburn School, Mr. Strickland.

Bravo.

SPEAKER: Good morning, everyone. My name is
Gregg Strickland. I'm the vice chair at Ashburn, I'm on the local school council at Ashburn. I just want to point out a couple of things that I think that are great about Ashburn. I am a parent, I have a student in seventh grade at Ashburn.

Ashburn is off of the list, the initial list. They are a tier two school. They're only a few points from a tier one. So they're on the rise. They're making things happen. Ashburn also is a diverse school. We have got diverse programing for all learners. It's got two technology labs, it's got technology in all the classrooms. They have seventh and eighth grade algebra.

Also, they have a comprehensive gifted program for kindergarten through fourth grade. There's multiple after school programs. They have activities and different learning, what's the right word, learning programs for all the kids afterwards, after school.

There's a fine arts, they have music and art. They received a health and wellness program. They have a health and wellness program which reached silver level status. They also received a five year, 21st Century grant, they had this grant
for the next five years, which includes Mexican fine
arts, homeowner helper, common thread, they have
cooking classes, ballroom dance, West African dance
and spoken word. So that's some of the things that
are going on over there.

    Also, this is a diverse culture, a full
inclusive special education cluster program. They
have six special education classrooms, and these
students are part of everything that Ashburn has
done. I witnessed that. They participate in all of
the programs. They also have a gifted program and
an algebra program. The bilingual population is
about 15 percent of the school. They are really
thriving over at Ashburn, and our annual Cinco de
Mayo celebration rivals everyones.

    So, also, some areas of concern, as far as
I am concerned, in Ashburn is that they could
receive more children over at the school. If
there's a school with overcrowding, they could
easily accept more kids to insure that they remain
open.

    One of the other things I think about is
our students, the children need and deserve a
playground at the school. We don't have a
playground right now, and at the very least we should be able to get our school, our parking lot paved, because that's where the kids take recess currently.

And, lastly, Ashburn is a leased facility, so they don't have the option to do all of the things that they would like to do. They have to go through the owners of the building in order to do, make decisions. So, hopefully, the CPS will consider purchasing the building and that way the school can have absolute control and do everything that they would like to do.

And, once again, I am a proud parent, I don't have anymore kids, if I did have another child, I would want them to go to Ashburn. Thank you very much.

(Speaker interpreted in Spanish.)

MR. SORIA: Next is Carson School, Senora Maricela Arzate.

SPEAKER: Thank you and welcome. Welcome to all the people present. My name is Maricela Arzate. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions here with my peers, and here present, here with the people that are present and we want to
talk about the school Carson.

I'm the president of the parent council and I represent the families here. I am very proud of what the LSC provides. The teachers along with the administration work very hard to work with the parents to assure that the kids learn at a very high level.

Our kids are very good at programs like math, reading, band, computers, art and other types of programs during and after school. We have a very high level of people, families that are involved with the school, almost a hundred percent of the families come in to pick up the report cards on time twice a year. The professors, teachers are always willing to work with the parents and they maintain great communications and they almost always send out notices regarding the school projects and administration duties and also for school meetings.

So there is a lot of participation with parents, especially during school assemblies, like assemblies in May and in the summer. We have about 550 parents that come in and they assist in the programs. We are almost reaching level two, but right now we're level one and we're waiting for the
school testing results and they still remain very high.

I want to thank all the parents for having high expectations for our children. And now I would like to comment on some concerns regarding the school. The school is overpopulated and we have about 3,500 children within the school. We have about 300, we have about 30 children per class, and we want to see that within the next year, we want to have full integrated classes in Carson. We have 11 kindergarten classes, but we want to have extended classes.

There's kindergarten class in the morning and afternoon, and then next year, when kindergarten starts, there will be five classrooms, but right now we don't have those classrooms. So I want to ask CPS how they will resolve this problem and how this would effect the computer classes, art classes, and music classes.

The art classes and the computer classes are indispensable for promoting a very good level of education for our children, and it's something that they deserve.

Another point is regarding supporting our
children regarding how the classrooms. Our kids
can't even look outside of the school because they
are closed off and walled off. During the
wintertime, during the wintertime there is a lot of
cold air that comes into the school as well. The
roofs also has to be fixed immediately. Some of the
buildings have high.

We have all been informed of the tragedy
that has been, that occurred in the school Sandy
Hook in January. For this reason we need new doors
and some of the doors don't even close well or
properly. And we need them to be improved so they
need to be changed immediately to prevent and make
sure that there is secure schools within the
neighborhood.

Here I want to show you photographs that
demonstrate what needs to be fixed at the school.
So I ask that you immediately address these concerns
and to make sure that CPS schools start converting
some of those things and here is the photographs of
the things that need to be fixed immediately. Thank
you.

MR. INTERPRETER: I am Maricela Arzate of the
LSC of Carson School. She's very proud of
everything provided by Carson School. That there's a lot collaboration between teachers and parents, make sure the students have what they need. That there's programs for math, for reading, for dance, for art, there are after school programs. Almost hundred percent of the parents come for report card pick up days twice a year. It's a level two schools, on it's way to becoming level one, which means they have good state test scores. The teachers have very high expectations for the kids.

There's a problem with overcrowding. There's almost 1,300 students from fourth to eighth grade. Some class have as many as 37 students, and then the big worry about the transition into full day kindergarten next year, since they only have three classrooms for five kindergarten classes, and they're worry that if they're going to be expanding, they're going to need five classrooms.

They're either going to take away either art, computer, music or science class, but those are very needed programs for the kind of school and classes that are children deserve. There's photos that she gave over to CPS that show the physical state, old windows, and that are, you barely even
see out of and cold wind comes in them in the
winter. There's leaking roofs in some of the
classrooms, and also a need for new doors, something
that they are very worried about, especially after
the Sandy Hook tragedy makes it difficult for
students to learn when they're worried about their
security.

MR. SORIA: Next is Dawes School. Dawes School
is represented by a former student who graduated.

SPEAKER: Good morning. I graduated from Dawes
School, and our students, parents, and staff want to
thank the Chicago Public School for providing us
with the opportunity to speak about our wonderful
school and our need for a building addition.

Thank you for providing the full school day
music position at our school. We love our new music
teacher, Miss Pipember. (Phonetic) Our assemblies
have come alive under our new music teacher's
directions. We love when Miss Pipember plays the
piano as we sing along.

Our music teacher has to push her piano and
instrument cart from the hallway into our
classrooms. Our music teacher can't use the piano
in the mobiles, because it's too hard to get the
piano out there. We need a classroom for our music

teacher.

Thank you for providing an additional full
school day art position. Now we have an art teacher
for kindergarten through third grade students, and
an art teacher for fourth through eighth grade
students. Check out our works of art at
artsonia.com.

Both of our art teachers visit the
classrooms using a cart. They store their materials
in the special education resource room. Our primary
art teachers drying rack is stored in the hallway.
We need two art rooms for our two art teachers.

We are proud to offer four blended
preschool classrooms for our three and four year
olds in our community, and also for the students
with special needs. Over 80 students participate in
our health programs, holiday program each school
year. The blended programs are in the module units.

The electric heaters in our mobile
classrooms break every winter. Our school has, our
students have been displaced from the modular units
over 20 days this school year. Students, sometimes
the air-conditions do not work either. When our
students are displaced from the mobile, we need to find space for them in the main building.

Our 20 pre-school students were relocated into a primary special education resource room. We have to bring in materials and there is nowhere to put their coats and backpacks. When pre-K comes into the resource room, special education instruction takes place in the hallway.

Dawes School offers four full day kindergarten programs. We are grateful for the full kindergarten programs. Our kindergarten classrooms are located in a module units. Over 50 kindergarten students were relocated into the gymnasium for at least ten days this school year. When kindergarten uses the gym as their classroom, physical education classes must be held in the general education classrooms.

The modular units are over 20 years old. Our parents have painted the mobiles in the past and they are planning to scrape and paint them again this summer. The mobiles were installed as a temporary solution to our overcrowding. They are old and need constant maintenance.

Over 150 students must walk into the
building each day for lunch, computers, and gym. They use the bathroom when they enter for lunch. The mobiles only have one toilet for boys and one toilet for girls per unit. Each unit has over 55 children. The toilets frequently break from over use.

The Dawes cafeteria is located in the school basement. The warming area, serving area, and eating areas are all located in one room. The cafeteria was built in 1950s, when most of the children went home for lunch. Our cafeteria serves 150 students per lunch period. We have over 1,050 students. Our first lunch period begins at 10:15.

Our lunch room was renovated three years ago. We went from a cooking kitchen to a warming kitchen. Our teachers' lunch room space was needed for additional freezers. Our teachers eat in their classrooms. We need a teachers lunch room and planning area.

A salad bar was installed when our kitchen was renovated. Our students enjoy fresh salads each day. We appreciate the lunch room improvements, but we need much, much more room. Our kindergarten students sit on their coats while they eat their
lunch.

Our cafeteria is air-conditioned. We love the cool air inside when the weather is warm outside. We hate that the air-conditioning units block our basement windows. This is the basement walkway, just outside our lunch room. Over 160 students, children and adults must pass through the basement walkways and up steep cement stairs during fire drills. We are worried about our children's safety.

As one group of students exit the cafeteria using the stairway, another group of students enter. The line of students is long and often backed up, causing long waits on the crowded stairway. This is not safe for our students. We need an addition with a new above ground cafeteria.

All of our students look forward to PE classes, unfortunately, our kindergarten through third grade students only have PE classes in the gym two days a month. Our fourth through eighth grade students have PE class in the gym three days a month. Our gym is small and does not meet our students' physical activity needs. We need a second gym with seating for parents and visitors during
games. Our gym is air-conditioned, we use it for
instructional classes during summer school when the
rest of our building is too warm. We need
air-conditioned classrooms.

(Speaker interpreted in Spanish.)

MR. SORIA: Next is Eberhart School with
Mr. Jaime Serrano.

MR. SORIA: Good morning, my name is Jamie
Serrano. I am one of the parent representatives
from Eberhart Elementary. I believe we, I believe
we should work together and stand together to
improve all public schools, no matter where they are
and who may attend them.

I would like to share Eberhart's specific
needs. I'll start with the good things that are
going on first. Eberhart offers a variety of
enrichment classes before, during, and after school.
We have advanced math, including algebra for eighth
graders, reading and creative arts and dance,
fitness, and homeroom support for our children.

Our after school Allstars branch enables
staff members to share their passions for things
like chess, Zumba, recycled art, and volleyball with
students.
Second, I am proud to announce that Eberhart has their very own art room, music room. Last fall our music teacher was awarded a grant for new instruments. The grant included acoustical and electric guitars, drum set, and music keyboards.

Our school library is equipped with research computers, laptops, books, English and in Spanish. Eberhart has two instructional computer labs, a critical resource necessary to develop life long skills in our children.

Unfortunately, due to the necessary numerous standardized tests, the computer labs, art rooms, and libraries are not accessible to our nearly 1,700 students for several weeks each school year.

Third, we are also part of an ongoing community partnership that will always be to Eberhart, because of our committed administration, faculty, and staff, Eberhart has developed positive partnerships with Southwest Organizing Project, SWOP, this partnership provides grant funds for the parents, mentors, parents, volunteers programs for parents work in classrooms for two hours daily.

It also brings a 21st Century community
learning grant funds to our school, programs with,
programs with help, homework help, leadership
training and culinary classes.

Second, envision. Envision is a local
community organization that we partnered with,
supervised conflict resolution and anti-violence
support through talk in circles and justice
practices. These are just two examples of our many
community partnerships Eberhart has some of the
great names that are working right now.

But there are also several areas that need,
that are critical for a quality education. As you
can see here in our pictures. First, even though an
annex addition was built in 1999, to relieve
overcrowding, mobile rooms were later built to deal
with further overcrowding. As you can see here on
one of these pictures.

We are not faced with a full day
kindergarten. We do not have four additional
classrooms, we don't want to give up our music room,
library, computer labs, or art rooms, as they are
essential programs. We are afraid class sizes will
have to be increase to accommodate the full day
kindergartners.
And these mobiles, they were intended to be temporary, have been up for over 10 years and are still being used by first graders. First graders are walking multiple times to and from the main building for lunch, PE, computers, et cetera, no matter what the harsh Chicago weather is, through sleet, snow, rain, or high temperatures. These six and seven year olds have to travel to the main building several times a day, risking illnesses.

We respectfully demand a solution from CPS to resolve this issue. The best solution in the long run to resolve overcrowding and safe travel for first graders will be to build a structure that will accommodate our students.

In the meantime, a connecting breezeway or canopy connecting both structures will be an immediate relief for parents, teachers, and children alike.

Second, security is a critical issue at Eberhart. We are committed to protecting our children and staff at our building and around our school. In order to enhance safety and security, Eberhart needs stand alone metal detectors, additional security for patrolling not only the
hallways but our streets when the children are let out for the day.

Just last week there was a shooting a block away when kindergartners were dismissing. Imagine the dangers we face when the weather warms up.

Finally, Eberhart is lucky for having some green space behind our building. Though part of the campus is covered with blacktop, our campus is not truly sufficient to accommodate 400 students in each of our four lunch periods during recess. But our staff tries to make the best of a bad situation when they are able.

Our one and only field consist of patchy grass during which it turns into an unusable mud pit during rain and snow. But the space is wasted space and the kids cannot make use of it. Aside from the mud that kids track inside in the morning entrance and recess, the space cannot be effectively used for sports or recreation, or even warm days when the mud dries. The best solution would be to install synthetic grass, like Astroturf, and have a kid friendly playground, a level and mudless field and a playground for pre-K and kindergarten kids will be able to enjoy, excuse me, Eberhart can have to make
I urge you to use your energies and monies to improve the life and quality education at all schools, specific needs and concerns about Eberhart. We look forward to receiving solutions in writing as soon as possible. We are ready to meet with you and look forward to hearing from you very soon. Thank you.

MR. SORIA: Lining up here we should have Edwards, Fairfield, Hearst, Hernandez and Hurley are the next schools. The very next school that will be presenting is Edwards Elementary School.

MR. INTERPRETER: Good morning. Please, on behalf of all of the parents from Edwards stand up.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: I would like to share with you the magnificent program of Richard Edwards School. Edwards is an Ivy school program. The international baccalaureate program is provided for all the students to the sixth through eighth grades. It IS a very important program for our school.

Edwards has fine and performing arts, like violin. For example, our kids from the pre-school to eighth grade try violin. We have drama, guitar,
interpretive dance and others. We have dual language. We currently have dual language for the kindergarten classes. Our school is now a level 2. We were one point away from becoming a level one. But we have, maybe later, soon, we will get there.

Edwards serves approximately 200 Head Start students. Now, please pay attention and listen. At Edwards, we also have challenges. Number one, being overcrowded. Over 1500 students currently enrollment.

Number two, security. We need cameras in the building, in the back building to secure our school, especially when they, the students miss classes. It's a lot of kids outside.

Number three, need more sports. But if we have more sports, we don't have the space with the children to attend and play. This is an outrage, but now at Edwards we have three solutions for overcrowding challenges.

Number one, addition. Meanwhile we will have closed enrollment. The second solution, addition. Give us additional space to have our currently enrolled students the construction of our addition and I need the CPS to support these
solutions. Please, because we don't feel faithful if the students go to another school, it's no safe for our kids.

SPEAKER: We will not send our kids to another school, unless we have it in writing that we're going to get our addition.

SPEAKER: Okay. And the third one, solution, is addition. My partner will now show some pictures that will explain what the problem is in our school is.

SPEAKER: Here is a picture, we have children standing out hungry waiting to be seated. Here, again, we had to breakdown two classrooms to make it a lunch room. So we're already two classrooms short. And this one, the elbows collide, children are sitting next to each other trying to eat. Streets being flooded with students at dismissal time. Little children are being walked over by so much crowdedness. Dismissal in the annex serving over 400 students. Last, but definitely not least, rooms 15 by 15 with over 29 fifth graders. Where is the equality in that.

Our community has potential to prepare and educate the next president of the United States, but
we will never know, inequality holds us back. We
care about our students and we know you do too.
That's why we're asking, Edwards is asking for an
addition. Thank you very much.

MR. SORIA: Okay. You're taking 30 seconds away
from the next group. Here we go, next school,
Miss Aisha Robinson Fairfield. Bravo.

SPEAKER: Good morning, my name is Aisha
Robinson and I am a parent of two students at
Fairfield Academy. At Fairfield Academy we are not
just a school, but a family made of students,
teachers, parents, staff, and community members.

Our students are led by the wonderful
example of our teachers that have only high
expectations for them. Fairfield Academy is better
known as the Mighty Falcons. Our students continue
to show us that with hard work, confidence, and with
those high expectations that our teachers have for
them, they can achieve all things possible.

We have seen a significant change in our
students' behavior. Disciplinary issues have
dramatically decreased, our fearless leaders,
Miss Quiroga and Miss Clay brought in a lot of
programs for our students that made an impact on
them. Now Fairfield offers girls and boys scouts, algebra club, reading, After School Matters, math, after school programs, SCS after school programs, soccer, basketball, track and field, cheerleading, double Dutch, 21st Century after school programs, open book poetry programs, where our school was actually published in an actual book, and those are just to name a few.

Fairfield Academy is very important for our parents in the community. Our parents are highly involved in a parent mentoring program from SWOP, through SWOP, Southwest Organizing Project. There's a parent in every classroom for grades kindergarten and third, and parents also attend weekly workshops on how to work with student.

Fairfield Academy is providing English classes for our parents and soon will be providing Spanish classes for our parents too. They have also provided computers for us to use. This may seem small, but speaking from my own life, it's very important for those of us who do not have computers at home. I have to let it be known that this little school on the southwest side of Chicago has given me a lot of support with the education of my two
children.

All of these high expectations, improvement in student behavior, parental involvement and wonderful programs for our students has increased our test scores on the NWEA. We can see from these tests that every classroom has improved from fall to winter and reading and math. Not only that, but we can, excuse me, when we compare our scores to the national norm, Fairfield Academy is not far behind in reading and math. That's not to shake a stick at.

I have no doubt that we will see even more growth in the end of the year in the NWEA test. Our babies are working very hard and that leads me into something else that is important, for all the good that is going on, we need more resources to make our school shine brighter than it already is.

We all know summertime in Chicago is hot. We do not have air-conditioning. Our children cannot function efficiently and productively in 90 degree weather, sometimes over 100 degrees.

When it reaches these temperatures, our students shut down, students have bloody noses, are dehydrated, the more prone to asthma attacks, and
suffers from headaches. Soon we will have a school fund raiser to raise money to purchase ventless air-conditioners, which are floor model versions, since we are not allowed to have window ones. Any donations would be helpful.

We are in dire need of a library. For many years Fairfield Academy has not had a functional library. Are students deserve a library. A solution we are in contact with Jeromy Dunn from the department of libraries and information services, so that we can start a library. A bookstore has offered to put in shelving at no costs. They have already donated 500 books for students kindergarten through eighth grade to our school and have offered to donate more.

Now that are schools are outside for recess, we really need a playground. Are students play on the sidewalk, which is unlevel, uneven, and pure concrete. There is glass on the street and often times they are too close to the street for our comfort.

Solution, we have spoke to the parish for permission to have a playground put in the parking lot. Also, we are working with a company, they will
bring supplies and help parents to build.

Thank you so much for giving the parents at Fairfield time to share what's going on at our school and also to thank CPS for taking time to listen to parents, like myself, and understand the importance of parental involvement, and we want to make sure that our children are ready for the future and a big part of their future will be the Mighty Falcons. Thank you.

Can I say one more thing. We are hear to listen to each other, and it was very rude that while I was speaking up here, nervous as it is and important as it is, people are having their own conversations. Thank you.

(Speaker interpreted in Spanish.)

MR. SORIA: Next is Hearst School, we have Miss Joanne Williams, who is going to speak, then they have a video from their school. Hearst School.

SPEAKER: Good morning. My name is Joanne Williams, I am the president of the Hearst Community Organization, a homeowners association, I have been a resident of the community for 40 years, and I am a proud graduate of Hearst Elementary School in 1968. We're going to fight for Hearst.
I want to thank Soria and representatives at CPS for keeping Hearst open. I want to take this time to do two things. Let you know Hearst Elementary, what Hearst Elementary needs are and we're proud of. Hearst Elementary needs a full time nurse. One day per week does not work for our student population. Additional funding for a sensory room for our special needs education students. We need funding for the STEM program. We want to compete globally.

Now here is what we're proud of, and I want to say, stop opening up charter schools and support our local community school.

(Whereupon a video was played.)

MR. SORIA: So we should have lined up here, Hernandez, Hurley, Kinzie, Lee, and Morrill.

Next is from Hernandez, Eva Rodriguez.

SPEAKER: Hi, I represent Hernandez School, Middle School, I am vice chairperson of the LSC. I'm the chair person, and I am the mother of 998 students that we have in Hernandez Middle School. We are a brand new school. This year we became a community school for the next five years.

Thank you to Mr. Soria for having the opportunity to
have enrichment programs for our kids and for our parents, especially having GED classes, English second language, computer classes, and math classes.

This school has an enrichment for arts program. The students are involved in art. We have pictures here to give to the Board. The students have programs offering after school, guitar, choir, robotic, science, beta chemist, school of rock, Junior ROTC, health and fitness and more programs for the school to keep other kids safe. We have increased in the current enrollment with LSC members, BAC, active parents being there for the security of our kids.

Thank you for our new principal, Raul Bermejo, and the two months that he have been there, he have done all these changes for better our community and better our schools, but we do have two problems.

Our kids, when they come out, out of the school, they come out in groups. We have a line there, we have one security crossing guard security crossing our kids for 998 students, and it's not enough. We have only five parents there. We have contacted our aldermen, thank you to Alderman
Zielinski, he is going to be helping us, but we need CPS to help us with that too, not only our alderman or state representative.

We do have a court yard filled with sand, our kids cannot play there because this brings the sand to the school and mess up the floor. We want the court, a multi-sport, so they can play sports after school, during school, and now with the new program of recess, they can be outside doing sports for their own health. Or us parents we can take our kids in the summer when the schools are closed to play sports. That's the only thing we need.

That's the only, I know a lot of the schools have more problems than us, but we don't want to go to that limit, that's why I am here representing the school, because we want better and, again, let's support the CPS and stop supporting charters and UNO schools, because they're taking our schools, our schools for them with our money for them. Thank you.

MR. SORIA: Hurley School.

SPEAKER: Good morning, my name is Luz Moreno, I am the president of the local school council for Hurley. I have two children, sixth grade and in
fifth -- and in fourth grade, and this is why we are all here. For 15 years our school has been overpopulated and now we continue with this problem. This problem is after the construction for another school, there was also continued to be overpopulated. We have tried to relieve the problem with overpopulation, but we stay the same. They would construct the school, Escuela, (phonetic) and we still continue to be overpopulated. We have many good things in our schools. We have worked to get for classes in art, dance, and we also have worked together with the Alivio Medical Center, which has provided health services to the children. And we also have our children would like to be participate in various activities. Also the teaches are also involved in after school programs that include drama, art. We have a chess club, and we were able to get in second place for the chess club team. And we also have students on the national science board that this year they were able to participate in Washington. And we are very happy to share with you that we are part of the national junior honor society, that have shown that they have shown and have done a lot of
community service. And this is the first year that we started with 23 kids within the school, and now here are the problems that maybe that some of the directors at CPS want to hear about.

First, the stairs where the children go for lunch are dangerous, and here's an example of this. They're not, some of the pipes are not covered properly, and they might be contaminated and they're right in the line of where the children are going to the cafeteria, within the actual cafeteria.

They use mostly as facility rooms and they also use two and a half classes for guitar and also classes for adults, but you need to have its own specific space. But we also need another additional building. For example, when we're talking about the overpopulation that has occurred at the school, we have three mobile schools that are not of quality condition. We have made many solicitations to try to have these things approved and we had people come in last year and they have fixed one thing regarding the actual pipes, but that was it.

We need to actually have them not just have cosmetic improvements, but actual real improvements, because we want to have our children study within
mobile schools, because there's also problems with heating, and especially in the summertime or in the wintertime.

We want these mobiles to be replaced because they are used and they have been there for a very long time, and we want them to be removed and not a gradual fix them. We want our children to have a high level of education attainment, so they will be able to achieve their goals, but we need to give them their support.

Also, I don't want any more meetings and more constant meetings, we need to have work and have actual resolutions. We can give our opinions and we want people to come in and hear our problems, but we need a committee to actually improve these things. And they can see that, and they don't need people to come into the school and see what are the problems with the school, what the children need to have for the schools to be improved.

I think that we shouldn't, if we have children come to these mobile schools also there is problems with violence with a lot of schools and we need to have better security. Thank you very much.

MR. INTERPRETER: My name is Luz Moreno, I have
two kids there in fourth and sixth grade. They have
had a 15 year problem with overcrowding there.
They're supposedly going to be a fix where they try
mobiles for four years and the problem is still
there. They built two schools near there, two of
them and still problem with overcrowding. There's
lots of good things in the school programs, art,
dance, in collaboration with the Alivio Medical
Center, drama, chess, national science board winners
twice in a row. National science bowl winners twice
in a row. They teach the kids, good parents, but
there's some bad things going on that CPS needs to
hear.

Problems with the staircases that are
dangerous, there's problems with the pipes that are
exposed. There's problems with the lunch room,
they're trying to use for everything, for workshops,
for dance, for ESL classes for the parents and for
the kids to be able to eat and it causes problems,
they need a bigger school.

They have three mobile units, they're in
awful condition. They were brought in already used.
They don't want them to come in and put make-up on
them, put paint them and put superficial changes,
they want new classrooms, 10 new classrooms. The air-conditioner is always breaking down.

They need CPS to support them, not just to set goals, but to actually support them. No more hearings, no more meetings, they want answers. They don't want a commission set up to close schools, they need a commission to help the schools. They need people to come out to the school and see for themselves. It shouldn't be necessary for there to be sick kids, for there to be kids to be falling down and for there to be kids who are victims of violence in order to get the ear of CPS.


So we're going to go with Beatrice Srebalus. Morrill should be here. Nightingale. Owen, Pasteur and Peck. Can you please line up here.

Next is Lee School. Bravo.

SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Beatrice Srebalus, I have been a parent at Lee School for 16 years. I have been blessed to be on the LSC for 13 years. I am currently serving my third presidency there at
Lee or chair person at Lee School. I want to share with you some good things about Lee before I go onto the negative things about Lee.

The three things that I am proud to say of Lee is that our school trend have been going upward in the last three years. Lee has moved from a level two school to a level one. Lee was just awarded a five year community schools grant totally a $500,000 plus for the next five years, allowing for many after school programs for students, family, and community programs that focus around social, emotional issues, such as bullying and character education, health and fitness, such as cooking and girls on the run.

Also art, which includes music, drama, and art of different sorts. We have an increased parent family involvement with everybody this year dealing with the recess. Our parents move strong to help initiate the recess, which we have many parents, you know, stepped up and are there to help teachers and the aids to initiate the recess program that CPS implemented on us this year.

We also have school socials for parents. We have a BATs, PATs, we have many assemblies,
curricular events, such as movie nights and also literacy and math, science, and social studies programs for after school, that include parents and students.

Lee was built back in 1957, a long time. Back then, as many schools here today inside the Midway Network were built for kids that go to school, but also all the houses in the area were all single homes. The way the population is now, currently, a lot of the single family homes are now converted into multi-family homes, up to three families in one single family home.

It's all legal, but because of the growing population, a lot of our schools are overcrowded. Our school was fortunate to have Escuela being built within the past two years, it helped alleviate some of our overcrowding. We went from, I would say, 1,400 students to right now, at the beginning of the school year, we started with 830, approximately. Right now, as of the last time I checked, which was yesterday, we are close to 900. We are knocking on the door of being overcrowded again.

With the changes that CPS is implementing again, for the upcoming year, we do not have a
choice of going on multi tracks to help alleviate
with the overcrowding. Also, we need, as many
schools here say, additions. Either a new addition
or modules to help with the overcrowding. Right now
our class sizes, and granted we have from pre-K all
the way through eighth grade in our school.

In our classrooms, on each grade level,
except for kindergarten, pre-K we have one class,
but we have two session, I believe. In our kind
dergarten classes, we only have two classrooms
for our kindergarten, and that's the module that
they added on to us.

They're thinking of going to all day
kindergarten next year. We do not have the space.
We don't have the capacity to help these children to
be in the classroom. We have two classrooms and we
have bilingual classrooms in each grade level,
because of the continued growth of the bilingual
population in our Midway area.

Right now our classrooms size is anywhere
from 33 to 35 in each class. We are utilizing about
172 percent of our school. With the full day
kindergarten, it's going to hurt us, we need
additional classrooms, and we need them. We do have
space in our school, but as everybody here too I
have heard, safety is an issue. Especially with
what happened with the Sandy Hook Elementary School.
We were given, in this picture, we have an overview,
which is very small and I apologize, our main
building is here, we were given an annex that's
attached to it, but there is nothing connecting
them. So, as many school here that are faced with
Chicago weather, the students have to go back and
forth. We have a multi-purpose room which is a gym,
a lunch room, and also an auditorium.

We have lunch in there, we try to have gym
in there. We're fortunate enough to be right next
to park district which, Westlawn, allows us to use
their gym, but it's not enough space. We also were
given, to try to quiet us down, modules to help. To
try to quiet us down again, they gave us a small
module for our pre-K and our kindergartners, but
it's not enough space.

I was fortunate enough to be here at Lee as
long as I have to actually have seen blueprints made
for Lee, before Escuela it was even created, to be
built. What happened to those blueprints? A
question I would like to be answered, which I have a
feeling no one will ever answer my question.

Safety, a huge issue with the Midway area, with the gang population growing and them trying to get our young youth, our 7th, 6th, 8th and 8th graders, they're trying to grab to pull into the gang violence. We're fortunate enough to have a great set of students at our school, which we are not faced with any of those problems, but we all have a strong group of parents that are there and show their faces every day to prevent those bad influences to come into our school.

We also need cameras to help with the surrounding attachments to our school, because our school doesn't have videos that can actually show who is knocking on the door. So when the door is being knocked at, at the modules and the small little class in, the small little group in the back, which are pre-K and kindergartners, they cannot see through a window to see who is knocking at the door, they have to open it. I am just blessed that nothing bad has happened yet.

MR. SORIA: Thank you. So we have Kinzie. We just heard from Lee, then Morrill, Nightingale, Owen, Pasteur, and Peck.
Next, Miss Christina Brown, a parent from Kinzie School. Bravo.

SPEAKER: In addition, I am also the child of a number of CPS teachers, former CPS teachers, so I know that, yeah, these are not the first round of closures or layoffs in CPS. Against the demands of the Emanuel administration and the entire political establishment carrying out these cuts, we in Chicago have to demand no school closures, absolutely zero school closures.

Instead of shutting down public schools, enormous resources must be mobilized to reopen schools, hire more teachers, modernize the infrastructure that we heard is crumbling in the schools. The claim that there's no money for education, as corporations pulling record profits is a total lie. Is a lie. Stock markets are soaring. What's happening in Chicago is part of a national strategy. The ruling class to dismantle the various institutions of public schools, it's been going on for a very long time.

Cities like Detroit, New York, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, face school closures and expansion of charter schools. In
Philadelphia, 40 percent of the school system is charters. New Orleans stands alone, I think that's almost completely charterized.

Arne Duncan said the best thing that happened to New Orleans' public education was Katrina. It allowed them to charterize the entire district. It is a national policy, it is not just a Chicago thing. Teachers have been laid off by the thousands. Those that are still teaching are being victimized by test based evaluation.

Education workers, like the striking school bus drivers in New York City, as well as social worker, nurses, support staff, they face constant attacks on their jobs and wages and benefits, pensions.

Parents and teachers have been encouraged to come to these school closures meetings as though all the decisions have not already been made. They wait for hours for an opportunity to beg and plead for something as basic as public education. It's degrading. It's degrading. It should not be happening. They should be exposed. The meetings are a sham, all the decisions have been made.

Now, by implication we're up here, I'm here
for Kinzie, at the expense of every single other school. We're not to be placed in competition with each other. It's absolutely unconscionable. It's very, very bad for us, for our children. I mean we have to fight back, but we have to take a different strategy, positively. I mean, first of all, it's very necessary to understand that nothing less than a political struggle to defend public education is required, and that includes against the Democratic party, which is leading the attacks and the closures on public education, as well as the Republicans.

Both big business parties are absolutely united in their commitment to dismantling public education and making it for profit. It's a gambling enterprise. Now, Emanuel, as mayor, is carrying through, in Chicago, the national policy of the Obama administration. Chicago, as we know is Obama's home city, and Emanuel is the former chief of staff and top fund raiser.

These people are not separate. Emanuel was not thrown out of the White House for being an SOB. He was brought here to carry out what we're seeing here right now. He's working closely with the Democratic administration, with the Obama
administration, including Chicago, former Chicago Public School's COE, Arne Duncan, who we are all familiar with.

The second thing to keep in mind, in addition to the fact that a political fight against the big business parties is needed, is that we have to work with the experiences of the teachers strike. There was courageous strike, the 26,000 public school teachers in the city. It had national support. And we have to look at what happened, you know, how is it that there was a strike and the school closures are going ahead exactly as planned.

It is extremely important to understand that the CTU is not representing the interest of teachers, who showed enormous courage and determination to fight to defend public education. They would rather speak for a layer of privileged union executives dedicated above all to their political alliance to the Democrat party. They're dues based in support for the capitalist system.

Whatever has to be carried out over the heads of teachers and against the interests of students in order to maintain that will happen. And that's what these closures are about. That is how
you can have a strike of 26,000 teachers and 120
school closing five months later. That's how it
happens.

Now, while the CTU is trying to present a
left face, the aggressive program of closures and
consolidations is in their own small part their
responsibility in shutting down that strike and an
historic austerity contract. I have talked with so
many teachers who felt betrayed. And they knew that
they were betrayed, that strike was settled in an
austerity contract.

The past -- when 26,000 teachers went on
strike, they won immense support within the working
class. And the response of the CTU was to try and
shut it down as soon as possible. We have to fight
in a different way. These closures are going to go
through, thousands of teachers are going to be laid
off. The socialist equality party struggled to
fight independently of the union and Democratic
party, the former rank and file committees for
teachers to really defend public education, which is
what the strike was about, and we said if this does
not happen, the closures will go through. And
that's exactly what happened. We must take up a
political fight, independent of the Democrats and
the Republicans for working class struggle to
Defendant basic social rights, like public
education. Thank you.

(Speaker interpreted in Spanish.)

MR. SORIA: Next we have Morrill School, three
youth leaders, three students. (Names redacted.)
Morrill School.

SPEAKER: Hello my name is (redacted), I'm in
the eighth grade at Morrill Elementary located at
6011 South Rockwell, and I came to talk about the
conditions of our playground. I came to the school
for a very long time, and I have seen the changes
throughout the years. The chipped walls and peeled
off paint changed slowly but the condition of our
playground have changed drastically and immensely.

Our playgrounds are unsafe, especially for
a much younger students, the pre-schoolers, the
kindergartners, first and second graders. Our fence
has gaping holes where unknown people can come in
and grab the children while they are playing.
The benches have been removed where only
holders of the bench remain where students cannot
really sit on. We sit atop the field house with
shattered windows and graffiti. There are various tripping hazards around that cause our students here at school to become injured, and there's barely any grass or nature, just a small patch of dirt.

We cannot have our students playing around outside in these conditions until our children feel 110 percent safe. We also need a parent meeting room, the field house would be perfect, but we can't let these parents, who make our school better for all of us, use a broken window, graffiti covered building. They need something at least a hundred times better than that.

We are asking for enough money to fix all the things that need to be fixed to insure the students here have a safe playground where they enjoy playing every day, a clean bathroom, an office, one hundred percent privacy and professional working place for our parents to meet community in.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is (redacted). I attend Donald L. Morrill. We are both eighth graders and she is a seventh grader. We are youth leaders here to address some of the major issues in our community.

Like my partner has already stated, we need
a safer playground. Every kid deserves to have recess in a safe haven, helping us fix our playground won't just make our community seem nicer, but it can also increase test scores. This was proven by the No Child Left Behind Act, CNN, Scholastic, and other sources. I believe that our communities need to come together and unite. We all have the same problems. The only way we will get a resolution will be by coming together and communicating and finding our ways to fix all this, all these problems. To become stronger.

SPEAKER: Well, first of all, hi everyone, my name is (redacted), I am in seventh grade. I go to Morrill Elementary School on 6011 South Rockwell. We are here to tell you about our playground. Our playground is unsafe. We have no grass, but a patch of dirt. We have no benches but the bench handles that are made of brick and our children could get injured badly.

We have fences with gaps in them, where unknown people could come in and even snatch a child or children. We have tripping hazards on the ground where students can fall and be injured badly. And we need this playground to be safe so the children
can play and have fun, but I know some parents are
like we should use the money for books for our
children, but having a safe playground for students
has to have recess, connections with learning as
well.

It has to be been proven that people -- it
has been proven that play is a form of learning that
unites with mind, body, and spirit. Recess allows
potentially hyperactive kids to blow off steam. It
prevents children from having hard boredness and
keep focussed. Parents even have to have recess,
but we call them breaks when they are at work.

Other experts point out that when kids miss
the physical activity and stress relieved in play,
they get distracted from learning. When they don't
get a break, they lose focus and can't concentrate
when it's time to hit the books.

So it's important that we have the money we
need so the children matter, so the children, as a
matter of fact, so our children can have a safe
place to play on.

MR. SORIA: Next is Nightingale School,
Senora Sanchez with Nightingale.

SPEAKER: Good morning to everyone here. My
name is Carolina Sanchez from Nightingale School. My place is of someone who is a parent from the school Nightingale. I have much to thank, worrying about arts in the school right now, lately what we did as a petition that, I want to make a petition in the name of the school, and I don't know because currently my daughter is there. 

I want there to be more support for the teachers because they are there and they are almost like second parents that they're always there for them. They're always there to make sure their homework is done perfectly, our school is almost like 80 percent bilingual.

And one of the things that I have to be thankful for is the teachers that last year they had actually taking classes in Spanish to give an incentive for parents to continue to work there within the school as well. And right now they're at a level 2 school. And they have helped my daughter be able to win an award in science, she's been able to do so. They also have a program called ISER, where it just started a year, and they are really thankful for it because it was implemented to have recess for kids, because regarding, because you can
see from the example of the comment made earlier.
It helps our, the school helps our schools be
occupied and have a love for school, they have
sports, they have dance, they have technology,
technology has increased, and it's also very good
for our children.

The necessities are a lot, and they need to
have a lot more classes regarding music in the
school. Right now a big necessity is to have more
rooms to support the kindergarten classes because
right now they're asking that the days be increased
and extended for the, there's not enough space to
actually put, where to place them in for the next
year.

This is a big necessity, I think. And this
is a petition, as a mother, that I am making that we
help get new classes because we're also losing art
classes to make room for the incoming kindergarten
kids. Here is photographs of places of room that
are available to actual put in.

MR. INTERPRETER: Miss Sanchez is a parent from
the Nightingale School, who is on the LSC. It's her
last year there because her daughter is going to
graduate there. Much to be thankful for. It's very
important to have the parents and the teachers working together as a team. 80 percent bilingual at the school. There's lots of after school programs and programs in the school, algebra, literature. Her daughter has won the science fair citywide several times. Also wanted to reiterate what the young lady said about the importance of playgrounds, and having a better quality playgrounds, there's sports there. There's been an increase the amount of technology there, but there's also many needs. Specifically, bigger rooms for music and the biggest priority is having more space, they need more rooms to put the kids in, especially now that CPS has extended the school day and it's mandating that there be a full day kindergarten program. They need more rooms for that to happen and gave some photos of the spaces that are available for those rooms.

MR. SORIA: Next is Owen school. This is a parent Gary Willis and Gary Willis, Junior.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon everyone. Hi, my name is Gary Willis, I'm from Owen, I'm with Owen Scholastic Academy at 8240 South Christiana. I am a proud parent of two children there. One in seventh
grade and one in third. I am involved in the LSC for six years. I am the LSC chair. These are the things that we are proud of at our school. High academic performance. Our 2012 CPS school progress report rated Owen Academy as level one school. We received above average ratings for student growth and for student performance.

Historically our students have always performed well academically. Last month we received two awards from the Illinois State Board of Education for academic success. We have a spotlight school award and an academic excellence award. Our 2012 ISAT scores indicate 91.9 percent of our students meet and exceeded standards in reading. We have 97.5 percent met and exceeded standards in math, and 92.6 met and exceeded in standards of, in science. Our ISAT scores indicate we are the highest performing school in the Midwest Network.

Number 2, highly qualified teachers. We have a highly educated and dedicated staff. Many of our teachers have advanced degrees and some are endorsed in reading and math. Our teachers really care about the success of our students and they go over and beyond the call of duty.
They put in countless hours of work to insure our students' instruction is challenging and engaging. We have a strong administrative team that leads the charge.

Number 3, parental involvement. Our parents and community are continuously engaged in academic and extra curricular programs at our school. Our strong LSC and high functioning PTO insures programs are in place, which promotes continuous school improvement.

We have three needs for our school. Number one. A fence. We need a fence around the entire perimeter of our school. The fence was part of our capital improvement project in 2007, but was eliminated due to the lack of funds. Even though Owen Scholastic Academy is a small school with 223 students, the building occupies a very large campus area that occupies an entire square block, and this area is surrounded by a field campus that, a campus block. Our concern is safety for our staff and students.

Students who attend other schools in the neighborhood use our campus as a shortcut to get to and from their schools. There have been occasions
when our students have been attacked by neighborhood youth and automobiles from our staff have been vandalized.

Having a fence installed around the perimeter of our school would eliminate these situations from occurring. Another reason we need a fence is to eliminate the neighbors allowing their dogs to defecate on our campus grounds.

Our students utilize the school field for gym classes and for recess. This creates health concerns when the waste from dogs is tracked into the building. We have asked our neighbor to refrain from walking their dogs on the field, but to not, for them to not adhere to our request.

There are only two custodial employees at Owen. Maintaining and keeping the field clean consumes a large almost of their workday. Their time could be better utilized if they did not have to continuously clean up the waste and debris from our campus field.

Number two. Air-conditioning. We are once again requesting air-conditioning in our school. Our school building becomes very hot when the temperature rise, outside rises. The inside
temperature can reach 90 degrees and beyond. The learning climate is adversely affected because it becomes very difficult for students and staff to concentrate and remain focused on teaching and learning, when extreme heat inside the building makes them uncomfortable.

Many students in our school have asthma and other upper respiratory conditions. These illness flare up during the extreme heat, and students attendance is impacted.

Number 3. Gymnasium. We are in desperate need of a new gymnasium. Our 15 square foot gymnasium is currently used as a multiple purpose room. We use it for our lunch room, recess, gym classes, assemblies, team practices, LSC, PTO, meetings, basketball games, et cetera. The space is extremely too small and it gets extremely warm in there. We need the gym for events that occur during the day. The students have to eat lunch in their classrooms. During the winter sports season, the pom poms and cheerleading teams have no practice, have to practice in the hallway, due to the lack of space in our gymnasium. Thank you for listening to our request. Have a nice day.
MR. SORIA: The next is Pasteur. Maria Cruz.

Pasteur. Bravo.

SPEAKER: Good morning, my name is Maria Cruz. I am in the school Pasteur. I'm a mother of three kids, and I have one in pre-kinder, one in fourth grade, and the other one in sixth. I am part of the local school council. I am president of the committee. I love my Pasteur School. I consider it like a house for my kids where they spend most of their day. That's where my kids find their second mother, who in a certain way knows more than their own mother.

The teachers know when something is wrong with my kids and they help them. And they support them academically and emotionally. The same with just like them, they're helping them to build their dreams, both for my kids and other kids. And to build what they want to be in the future.

The teachers for the Pasteur School are so nice with our kids in giving them the best education possible. The school also offers to the students programs before and after school. They also offer them programs for us as parents to give us training.
That helps us to get more involved in the things that are going on in our own school.

This year the school won a grant, along with other schools, for them to carry out programs that they hadn't had before. We're thankful because last year we carried out a project and where we were able to get a soccer field, thanks to everybody who collaborated so that we could carry out this program.

Our school still has a problem with overcrowding, but it's still been able to create a positive atmosphere for learning.

I want to summarize, we're a big family, but what happens to a big family when you grow, logically you get another house in order to accommodate. So that we can satisfy all of the needs that we need, the things that worry us as families, and, obviously, for our students.

Our school has the capacity for only 650, and right now we have 1,250. Our students, like many others, like other schools, they have mobile units, but they are also deteriorating. One of the bath rooms, the teachers right now are worried about because it's having, how can I say, they need to use
wood support so the wall doesn't fall in on it.

Excuse me. Those schools are temporary.

The teachers have to prepare their materials in a room, but they don't have a dedicated room, much less do we have for music and art. We also don't have a breakfast room where they can eat their breakfast. Sometimes they eat it in the hallways or in their rooms, and, to me, that's not very healthy and not very recommendable. Thank you. Excuse me.

For next year, as a mother in the school, they're also going to have to deal with the library and the computer room, because there's no other rooms and need to increase the kindergarten program and then make a full day, and so I'm asking where are they all going to go? Where are all the other kids going to go? We don't have any more capacity for the teachers to carry out all of their activities.

The Board of Education, the Board of Public Education is paying millions and millions of dollars to rent space in order to take some of our kids to another school. They're renting that out from a church. Wouldn't it be easier, instead of repaying all of that money that they need to pay for the
mobile units and to take our kids to another space, wouldn't it be easier to just expand our school? I am asking the people from CPS that you might be able to ignore the reality, but you really can't ignore the reality. I know that you're supposed to provide for the teachers and all the schools what they need, it would be easier if you, for your work, if you did it and for all of the community, especially the Hispanic community, I'm asking for my community, let's not be so passive. Sometimes we don't want to talk because we're afraid of getting in problems, but also if we don't speak up, we'll never get anything. We can't be, we can't accept what they say to us and say that we're, oh, they're just the workers and they already helped us a lot. If they go and they do any little thing and then we're satisfied, I think that's maybe why they're not doing more than what they're doing. Let's leave our apathy behind. It doesn't important, it doesn't matter how we have to act, we have to do it for our kids and for the teachers. I think they will be able to do a better job for all the kids and give a better education. Thank you very much. Have a nice day.
MR. INTERPRETER: I'm Maria Cruz, I'm the proud mother of three kids and she is on the school council. And that she considers the school a second home. And that there's various programs that are very beneficial. First, she's also mentioned that there was a grant that became available and that this is something good to increase programs that have previously not been available, that also programs for adults and one of the positive aspects that we were able to build a soccer field, and that the school is a good learning environment, but that there's certain problems. One of them is in regards to overpopulation, where there's currently 1,250 students registered, and the second is that certain conditions, especially in the mobile schools where bathrooms need to be fixed.

Also, that they need to have a cafeteria, so they can serve breakfast to the kids. And also regarding overpopulation that they're going to have full time kindergarten classes, not enough space to get them and because of this they'll be closing the library and the computer rooms, and this is, that will be a detriment to them. And, finally, she wanted to make a statement in regards to not to be
passive and to do, not to have parents be passive to
do get work for the betterment of the kids and
teachers.

MR. SORIA: Thank you. So we should have Peck,
Sandoval, Sawyer, Stevenson. Next we have Peck
School with Senora Magana.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon everybody, my name is
Hilda Magana, and I am a member of the committee of
No Child Left Behind. We're here to ask for help
and we want you to carry this out. We're very proud
of our school in many different ways. Were a school
level one, and we have struggled for many years,
that's been our goal for the future. Above all,
we're proud of our teachers, we're proud of our
kids, we're proud of community and we always get
together to help each other out and to share and to
achieve our goals. We're very proud of that.

Our school has 1,563 students, every day
plus 660 that are transported by bus every day. So
excuse me, the Board of Education says that we're
another, we're another, we're the most overcrowded
school in the Midway Network, despite that, we're
still able to be a level one. We believe that, yes,
we can and, yes, we should. We're not just a
We're here because we want to have quality schools. We're here because we want new schools, but that they can't forget about the schools that are already there. They can't just make promises to us. We can't just sit back and wait for them to say whether they can do it or they can't, because at the end of the day then nobody is there.

I'm showing you some of the photos of our vision. We had an approval for an addition for our school, because we have a lack of schools, they made the plans. They made programs. They approved it. That was 10 years ago, ladies and gentlemen, after 10 years we have been struggling for them to carry out this vision. This vision was approved more than 10 years ago, and up until today, they still haven't carried it out.

Even the Board of Education sent us a letter to our community where they said that our school was going to be under construction and that the parents were going to be able to work on it. It's all lies. Here's the signatures, here's the projects, here's all the times that we went to ask for help, but we still have not received a response.
We're sick of them promising for us things that they then don't carry out. The Board of Education isn't worried about our kids, but our kids have a right to a quality education. They're not just a number. And in five years, five years they're not learning, they need quality support, help from the whole community.

Our school has Head Start programs, has programs for kids all the way up to 8th grade. So the kids, they have to go two blocks after school though to be able to get to the Head Start program. This school is being rented, that's okay. That's okay. They have a vision, a space, and I ask you can we please rent so that we can have more activities. These kids don't have enough space and the school is their lives. That's why all of those are here, we're not just here to meet with you, we're here to be the advocates for them to stand up. We need to ask for things for them, if we don't ask for them, nobody will listen to us.

Their biggest program, the biggest problem that we're confronting right now is that they're saying next year the kids are going to be in a full day kindergarten program for the whole year. And
the problem is our school, right now, only has four
rooms that are set aside for kindergarten, and every
room has 25 kids. But next year, if this is the
program, for them to make it all day, it's going to
be, it's going to be eight groups, so four rooms.
We can't have our kids, we can't have them like
cigarettes in a pack of cigarettes. They need their
space. They can't be crowded into a room.

These children, that's why our principal,
our teachers, all of us, we're struggling to do
something. We're in this country because we wanted
to be somebody and we're sick of them saying, yes,
we can do it, but then not carrying it out.

Please, stop playing with the education of
our kids. Stop playing with our necessities. Stop
just holding up and you can achieve things and you
haven't. We have photographs, we have letters, we
have plans, we have everything here, but we don't
have the buildings, ladies and gentlemen.

So we offer all the information to anybody
here who wants it, because we need to carry out your
promises. We need you to carry out what you have
promised. Everything that you said that you were
going to do and you didn't carry out.
Secondly, the Mayor commented he was going to come to our school, and we're still waiting. We see with our eyes, but we also see our needs, our necessities, our kids need education. More than anything people who are present, if you're willing to be ignored, stay sitting; but if you're willing to struggle and fight, stand up, please, we need them to carry out everything they have been promising.

MR. INTERPRETER: Miss Magana was saying that currently the school have been able to become a level one school, and this is even though that the school is one of the more overpopulated schools within the Midway area.

And that currently they have been struggling for the past 10 years. And have been demonstrated documents showing their petition that they had made for improvements to the school. And two of the main issues regarding the school is our, first, the kids need to walk two blocks in order to arrive to the Head Start program. And the second part is regarding more space that next year they're going to start kindergarten program, but there is only four rooms for kindergarten, when they're going
to be need eight.

MR. SORIA: The next Sandoval. Martha Villanueva.

SPEAKER: My name is Martha Villanueva, and I, along with several other students, I'm here representing Sandoval Elementary School located in 5544 South St. Louis Avenue in Chicago. Sandoval Elementary is a Head Start through fifth grade school built in 2001 to relieve overcrowding in neighboring schools.

Our neighbors has a capacity to serve 870 students, however, our building has constantly served 2,200 students, I mean 1,200 students. Sandoval School became overcrowded the first year it opening, it was placed on the calendar as well as controlled enrollment in order to try to serve 1,200 kindergarten through eighth grade. The students that belong to our attendance area.

CPS responded to the overcrowding issue by building a Hernandez Middle School in 2009, and our sixth, eighth students moved to this new school. Sandoval was then taken off control enrollment. Our building was still overcrowded in 2011. That's occupied by the district park was converted into
four classrooms, still we were in our overcrowded.

Despite considerably overcrowded and the
district space utilization report having 97.3
percent of our student classified as low income and
48 percent as English language learners. According
CPS data, we are extremely proud of our
accomplishments, some of which are:

One. Our school performance rating, we are
a level one school, we are not on probation,
according to the 2012 school progress report.

Two. Our student attendance rate has
consistently exceeded the CPS average in class, it
was 96.3 percent last year. We are one of the
schools receiving grants in the area of our art and
health for our students as well as health,
technology, and English, a second language classes
for our parents.

Our school continues to make efforts to
provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment
that leads to student growth and learning. Some of
ongoing challenges we face as we try to prepare our
students for college and career opportunities are
overcrowding, trying to meet the needs of 1,200
students in a school built for 870 students, means
that we use every available space for classrooms, which sometimes have over 35 students.

Overcrowding also impacts our ability to have a science laboratory, a music room, a science room, and more Head Start classrooms. Every year we have a waiting list of over 100 children waiting to enroll in our Head Start program. Lack of adequate and appropriate resources. The problem means that we have to provide our students with space to engage in daily play and recreation activities.

We cannot use the park due to safety and security concern. We cannot use the gym or the space for our physical education program, instead we use the hallway, and in good weather, part of the whole job. Full day kindergarten will be offered in every school next year, according to CPS, while we will welcome to the opportunity to expand the hours for kindergarten students, lack of space will mean we will not be able to set our Head Start students.

Parking, turn around space and park district property and also share common areas with two other schools, Hernandez Middle School and High School. Eventually this school will send approximately 3,000 students at one time along with
a staff from each of these schools and their families. Parking restrictions around this school as well as limited school parking activities created an expression and huge parking nightmare to double parking or parking a great distance from our school.

We propose the following options for our consideration in order to address our concerns effective at Sandoval School Community. To overcrowding, an addition of a third floor to our current building. Construction of an addition that's connected to the main building possibly, and park district land. Placing our school back to controlled enrollment.

To other lack of resources. Converting part of our courtyard into an area appropriate for (inaudible). Moving the Head Start program outside in order to make room for full day kindergarten, while still providing for the needs of our youngest students. To address a lack of parking facility. Extending our current parking facilities into the park.

Thank you for your consideration and concern. We welcome any assistance you provide to us in our effort to serve our community. Thank you.
MR. SORIA: You're doing a great job as an audience. Thank you very much. There's four schools left. So we're going to start with Sawyer, Stevenson, Talman, Tonti.

Speaking for Sawyer is Maria Mora. Sawyer School.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. My name is Maria Mora and I am the local school president for Sawyer School, I am located 5248 South Sawyer Avenue. And my three things from Sawyer is we are very proud of our overcrowded school with 1,894 students. And are currently enrolled in our school with 97 percent Hispanic population. Graded as level one school. We are proud of that, that our school is not on probation and that our students have made academic goals. Sawyer School promotes parents enrollment at grade level. We offer multiple activities to promote and assist children academics.

Our administration and staff are constantly promoting the students. The three bad things is we need an addition to our hundred year old building, that includes a minimum of eight classrooms, a cafeteria and elevator. Washrooms with plenty of sinks and hand dryers. Right now we have over a
thousand students in one building using sinks and ten working toilets. Right now it's not ADA approved.

We would like to have cameras installed outside of our building in order to protect our students. We would like to have a playground that will include a soccer field and add a park where necessary, so that students can run and play.

I have the proof, I have to give you the proof that I have some pictures for you, you guys can have. So I have another parent from the LSC, so she is going to say something in Spanish. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. My name is (inaudible), I am member of the local school council with the School Sawyer. A few things that are occurring at our school. One, school is overpopulated. There are other children coming from other districts, there's about 150 students right now. Along with the personnel administration and our school is also under probation, is not under probation, and that the students are proving with their scores. There's also across the board participation with parents involved within the
school, and that are helping the students grow academically.

Right now there's a gifted program as well for children, that is good for the kids within, but there are a few things that could be improve in our school. There's not, there's more than three actually, but we're just going to say three for right now, so they can be prioritized. Here are the three.

One. Construct an additional building, since right now there has been one building that's been there for a hundred years. Right now we need to have at least eight areas with the cafeteria, with bath rooms to actually have people wash their hands, and we also need to have six bath rooms and right now the school is not currently certified as to serve people with disabilities.

We would like to have a recreation area that has a soccer field and also has a place for students to be able to run as well as study. We're asking the same thing other schools are asking, but we're not against or having others open up, but if, but we want to make sure that those schools, so that children will have a better education.
MR. SORIA:  They have translated for each other, so there's an English and Spanish version already presented.

We're going to move on then to the next school. Stevenson with Mr. Shalabi. Steven School.

SPEAKER:  Good afternoon. And thank you for your patience. My name is Roy Shalabi. I am the president of the Stevenson Local School Council. I have served on that council for 23 years. I am the proud parent of eight children. Six who have graduated from Stevenson. I am also a graduate of Stevenson myself. I'm the oldest of seven, and all of us graduated from Stevenson. So it holds a very special place in our hearts.

The Stevenson Local School Council and the school itself has always emphasized one thing only, our children first. And we believe with the right equal opportunity, we can compete, not only favorably with other schools in the Chicago school system, but state wide.

I say this as an example because we need to be working together through administration, teachers, and parents, and we have that wonderful corroborative effort at Stevenson, a lot of good
things can be done. Our family alone, from our graduates, we have four lawyers, four teachers, one pharmacists, one accountant, and the rest are still coming up, so I say this as a sign of encouragement, but we need to work hard and be prepared and have at least the basics in order to succeed.

Many good things happening at Stevenson right now. We have a brand new nine room annex with a lunch room and cooking kitchen. The school is on the rise, just two points short of being a level one school. We have partnered with Metropolitan Family Service and have received a $750,000 21 Century grant for after school programming.

However, there are concerns. And I also have a petition that I will be tendering to CPS. While Stevenson has the new addition, we remain overcrowded. With the annex, mobile units, and the branch we're currently at 100 percent capacity. We're lacking an adequate gym, library, health, art, and music space.

The school has a population of 1,275 students. While we're thankful for the annex, there is talk of removing the branch, and I hope we can avoid that, because we have nine and soon to be ten,
7th and 8th grade classes. So if we lose that, we'll basically have taken one step forward and two step back. So we need to make sure that doesn't happen.

Another concern that's easily, that can easily be resolved is the engineer. For the past two years we have not had an engineer, even though we have had construction at the new annex. A great deal of leadership time is taken in facilities issue. We are concerned that the square footage has increased and facilities issues continue, we do not have enough custodial staff to clean and full time dedicated engineer to address these issues.

It's very difficult to have students sitting in very cold or very warm circumstances in their classroom.

And, finally, Stevenson lacks the bandwidth for required testing. So even though our students may be prepared and ready to take a test, if we don't have the computer, the internet service for them to put their ideas down, they will get a low grade. They can't compete. The students become frustrated with computer generated assessments and do not do well.
CPS has not yet rectified this issue and we need to continue bringing this to their attention. Our request is very simply, that our school needs to have these issues addressed through a meeting with operations, with our network chief and Stevenson leadership, and we would like to do it as early as this month.

As we plan for our next school year, and many schools have the same issue with full time kindergarten, we need to know where our full time kindergarten will be and how the rooms and furniture will be funded.

Support is needed in order to have the best facilities at Stevenson. Thank you very much for your time.

(Speaker interpreted in Spanish.)

MR. SORIA: We have two schools left and then after that we have Rebecca Martinez from Chicago's Teachers Union, and Alex Gebara, (phonetic) from Pilson Little Village School.

If you have not signed up, you need to register or see Minerva Garcia-Sanchez in the pink sweater, if you would like to speak.

Two schools left, okay. Let's hear it for
SPEAKER: Hi, good afternoon and thank you everybody for being here. Again, my name is Mirna Guzman, I'm from Talman School. I'm a parent at Talman, a seventh grade student as well as a local school council member.

I would like to begin by talking about our growth at Talman. In 2002, 29.3 percent met or exceeded in reading. 2012, 79.7 met or exceeded in reading. A 50.4 increase. In 2003, 31 percent met or exceeded in math. In 2012, 90.9. 59.9 increase. In 2003, 51.2 met or exceeded in science. 2012, 82.1 point one, which was a 30.9 increase.

Our community involvement, according to the essential survey, Talman Elementary is well organized for improvement and strong, strong instruction and very strong and effective leadership. Collaboration, teachers involved families and supported environments. These results are included in the attached graph, which we didn't pass out, sorry. The community involvement that is associated with the piece of the puzzle drawn on the math, again I didn't pass it out. The Talman way. The Talman way means many things to many people.
associated with the Talman community. Rather than
trying to explain each part of the Talman way, it
has been represented in the attached map.

Needs and wants with proposed solutions.
Talman is currently housed in a leased facility with
little room to grow any further. In an effort to
provide high quality instructions to more students
on the southwest sides of Chicago, we request a new
leased facility to occupy.

Our solution is to complete a thorough
assess of nearby leased facilities on the southwest
side in order to find a larger building that is able
to provide more occupancy for Talman students and
staff members.

We aren't asking to have a new building
built. There's empty space where schools have
closed down and those spaces can be utilized.
Talman needs to be continued. Our test scores speak
for itself. The kids deserve it. But in order to
accomplish anything, we need to support one another.

Thank you.

MR. SORIA: The last school. Tonti Elementary.
Maria Nunez and Jaime Uriarte. Tonti.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. My name is Maria
Nunez. I come from the school, the Tonti School, I'm a mother and have a child in that school, and I would like to thank the public schools for having given me the opportunity to share this situation with you.

First, I want to mention that we have had a radical change during the four years up until the present day, since we had our new principal in the school, everything has changed. And the academic level we had four years ago, we were on probation, today we're proud to be able to say that we're a level one school.

In the same way we have been able to form others, like the bilingual community, the special education community, and many more, and every time we always get reports. The school has also changed, it's given us the opportunity to belong and to become part of, where before we never had that dialogue.

Currently, we do have that. As a consequence, we're able to carry out different activities, like movie nights every month. We have a Halloween party, Christmas party, different events, which is possible with the integration of
the parents, the community, and the school.

But, unfortunately, our school, like many others, is overcrowded. It's designated for no more than 800 kids, and right now we have a thousand kids or more. And you can see the consequence of that in these photographs. Our kids have to eat their breakfast and their lunches in their own classrooms. We have an annex and they have to freeze going between, they also have music classes that have to be done in the auditorium, where we also have the classes for those who have been suspended.

We don't have an art room, so we have all of the art materials in the second floor hallway. And we still don't have a place to put those materials. We also don't have lab rooms, we don't have parents room, which is indispensable because during the time that the kids are at the school, we could be educating their parents with computers, we could have workshops for information, which is indispensable, so that we can support our kids.

We want to incorporate pre-school into the school, but that's impossible because we don't have the rooms. We're talking about kindergarten being a full day. We have three rooms where we have six
groups of kids. If we do a full day for them, we
would be leaving half of our kids out because it
won't be possible. Because two groups of kids will
be taking up one room.

Unfortunately, like many other people here,
we're asking for basic things, and the solution for
our school would be to take down the annex, which is
too little, and build a new one in its place. And
which we can add rooms for music, cafeteria, and
another library, because it's too small right now,
and a gym. We hope that through the authorities
from the public schools this is possible, and we
don't want to just stay with promises. Thank you
very much.

SPEAKER: I wanted to add about Tonti School
something that's very important for all of us. I
want to say that I believe in the extended family,
which means an additional effort, the additional
work that we can all do, after our jobs, after our
responsibilities, I believe in the extended family.

True, that we can change our schools, we
can differentiate them from others. And our school,
Tonti School, that's the way we look at it. Our
principal, our teachers, our support staff, our
school, they're going the extra mile, they're putting in the extra effort, that's why we were able to move from a school on probation to a level one school. That deserves an applause.

I would also like to say that we, as parents, are going the extra mile because we want to participate, we want to support the growth of our school, especially our Tonti School, we deserve it. We have the right. We have the solutions, we're participating as parent mentors, and the local school council for the movie nights, also support for the bilingual parents, et cetera, et cetera.

We're making that difference because we want to commit to the growth of our Tonti School. Please, takes down the annex and build a three or four floors that will give a complete solution for all of your needs. We need rooms for music, for art, for labs, the cafeteria, we need all of that. We have been able to get to a level one, we're participating as parents, that's more than enough, I believe.

So I have the hope that please at the very least listen to us, please CPS, this is a opportunity for you to demonstrate your extra mile,
your additional efforts especially with our school,
Tonti. If you don't do it, it's okay, but if you
don't want to do it or you can't do it, that's okay,
but that means is that for CPS the extra mile
doesn't exists. Thank you very much.

MR. INTERPRETER: Tonti was saying that for the
schools there's been radical change, they have been
able to increase to a level one school and that's
something we're very proud of, but that there has
also been an increase due to the new principals that
has instituted these changes. And there's been a
better dialogue, better appreciation with the
parents and the school, and some other examples
include film nights and then Halloween, but she's
saying that there's also problems including
overpopulation. Right now they're limited at 800,
but currently there are more than 1,000 children
enrolled in the school.

And that also stating that currently as
other schools mentioned, they're going to implement
full kindergarten time, but there's only currently
three rooms, for the six classes, so that would
leave students out. They would never leave students
out. And, finally, the other gentleman that was
also mentioning that right now they have been doing
the extra mile in terms of available themselves to
the school, this is with the principal and also the
parents, and they should be very proud regarding the
move from being an underperforming school to level
one school.

But one of the main concerns is also that
in order to resolve some of the problems in the
school, they need to demolish the current existing
annex building to create a new building that will
house more space to accommodate the missing rooms
that currently don't exist for art, music,
laboratories, and also for the cafeteria, because
they had mentioned that currently a lot of the
children are eating lunch within the classrooms.

MR. SORIA: Okay. That was all of the schools.
Bravo, bravo. Some additional speakers have signed
up, okay. Next we have from the Chicago Teachers
Union, Rebecca Martinez.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon, my name is Rebecca
Martinez, and I represent the CTU. And I am a
(inaudible) with them in the Midway area. I have
been listening to what you were saying with all the
parents and from all the schools, and I am here that
this is not something new. This isn't just, that was created overpopulated schools every year. This is something that Chicago Public Schools have already known, that have been aware of this regarding the issue of overpopulation, because you have previously mentioned, and CPS has not been responding, they haven't been doing anything, but why now, why do now do they want to come and have these meetings and ask that what necessities you have, why now, why this year? Or why this year are they doing this. And the question is that I am asking you now, they want to close more than 100 schools and the way that they're trying to justify this, justifying the school closures is by saying that right now your schools need more resources and in order to have more resources we need to close other schools that are being overpopulated.

And once CPS has been able to work on their promises, we have this meeting, this is not true, this is false, all right. There's money there. Right now it's Chicago Public Schools, it's not your schools, it's charter schools. So there are more than 80 millions dollars that they have put in from the Chicago Public Schools in the budget to give it
to, to open charter schools, and that's from 9, why
do they want to close down schools to open up
charter schools, it doesn't make sense.

Because if there's resources, why don't
they take those 80 million dollars that they have
put in for the budget for charter schools and use it
to maintain, to keep schools open and give the
resources to you. Why aren't you guys doing it?
It's not that complicated. It's not complicated.

So, it's true that the women from Peck
School and this other school, Pasteur, let's stop to
being passive. Let's start a mandate that actually
keep their promises, but not just with the schools,
at the charter schools, that CPS starts putting
their priorities for maintaining order, and
prioritizing the schools that exist that are right
now functioning as public schools.

I want to enlighten you to two union
meetings on the 8th of March, the meeting is on the
8th of March, which is next Friday, and it's south,
at the First Unitarian Church, we have been passing
out the fliers and there's also a large, on the 26th
of March, and this is during vacation time, so you
should come.
One, it will be with the moms, the children, and teachers who are fighting to maintain their schools open, so don't let them use you to testify to school closures, like they're doing. We are here all united fighting to insure, like if you said and I have said that we need and we're demanding high quality schools for our children, they deserve it, and is a right, it's a fundamental right, and it doesn't matter if you're Latino, African-American or someone with low resources.

Thank you.

MR. INTERPRETER: My name is Rebecca Martinez and I am from the Chicago Teachers Union. We have been hearing this from, we have been hearing these things from the parents, but this isn't new. It hasn't started today. CPS has known about this for years and yet they haven't done anything.

So I ask why now? Now they want to close a 100 plus schools, and so to justify that they try to use the stories told here. But at the same thing, you can't rob Peter to pay Paul. When does CPS ever care about its promises. Our students, for them, aren't the priority. The charter schools are the priority. They have 80 million dollars set aside
for 9 to 12 new charter schools.

The solution is pretty simple, use that money to invest in the needs that we have heard about here today, and not have to close other schools. What we need to do is stop begging and demand that these things happen, but these things need to happen not at the expense of others, who's schools they are trying to close.

I want to invite you to two things, a meeting on March 8th at the First Unitarian Church in Hyde Park, a flier was passed around, and March 27th, during spring break, there's going to be a big mobilization. We need to all unite with those parents and kids to keep their schools open and not let them use us as a justification for closing other people's schools. Education is a right and we need and demand schools that our kids deserve.

MR. SORIA: Okay. Our last speaker of the day, Alex Gubara, from Pilsen Little Village. She teaches at Telpochacalli School. (phonetic)

SPEAKER: Good afternoon, my name is Alex Gubara, I'm a teacher from the Pilsen Little Village Network and a life long southwest side resident.

I won't spend too much time reiterating
what was already said, but I just want people to keep in mind that your schools absolutely need these resources, and there is money out there.

Number one, we need to demand that Mayor Emanuel open up the tax increment financing surplus and put that money back into the schools. That's money that was siphoned away from schools, and it needs to go back to schools, because all of the testimony that we heard today about all these resources, you all have told your administrators this, you have told your network chiefs this. You have been to the board meetings and it's going to take a long term struggle for us to get these resources that we need.

So we can get all these additions, all these resources, if they were to give us the tax increment financing money. We need that money for our school.

The other thing is please do not believe that there's a budget deficit in CPS, because when CPS gives out their audited budget, every year there's been a surplus for almost the past decade. So when they're trying to tell us, oh, there's multi million dollar budget deficits, and that's why they
have to close the schools, please question that, because the math that comes out of the audited budgets does not reflect, there's a surplus.

The other thing is that you all have been asking for these resources for over a decade and have been ignored, when CPS has prioritized opening up a hundred charter schools, expanding testing, which really takes away our instructional time, and then it's been a revolving door of leadership over there.

And every time somebody leaves, they leave with a fat check and 125 South Clark. So, again, I just want to say, again, just that even if it's not your school closing, please do not let them divide us, because if it's schools that end up being on the chopping block that are in the Englewood-Gresham network or in the Burnham network, or in the Austin, north Lawndale network on the west side, are we going to let them divide us to, between the African-American communities and the Latino communities.

There's a huge history of segregation in Chicago, and I feel like this is the fight of our day today, that we need to stand together as one
city and defend all the neighborhood schools,
because if we don't fight for those schools to stay
open, and those communities that are already
struggling with foreclosure and unemployment, if
they're not going to lose their neighborhood
schools, don't think it's not going to effect us,
because if crime escalates in Englewood, it's going
to come over to this area, to the Westlawn area. So
we really need to stand together and to fight for
all the neighborhood schools to be open.

One last thing is mayoral control. We have
had mayoral control of CPS. We don't elect our
board members, we have had that for 17 years, we
need to get rid of mayoral control and have an
elected school board.

So there's a lot of different things that
we can do, but as long as we continue to fight
together, we're going to be able to better our
district. So thank you so much.

MR. SORIA: Okay. Very good. You did a good
job. Especially all the people waiting in the end,
give yourself a round of applause. And I just want
to say good job, good job.

We just have Yair, I don't know if you know
Yair, who has been working with the parents in the community and we would have three area health fairs, Yair Rodriguez, a graduate of Sawyer Elementary School. And he is going to talk very briefly about the health fairs that we're doing, coming up in May, and then Claremont School, I would like to speak to you for a minute, don't leave yet, okay. Thank you.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Hello, I'm sorry, I'm what little sick. We're going to have a big health care, three fares, small fares, around our network. We're going to have three different health fairs throughout the network. If you haven't already, please pick up a flier, all the schools are designated to a certain spot. We're going to have a workshop, we're going to have a daycare room, so the kids can watch a movie while the parents attend the workshop. We're going to have a resource fair, and we're going to have vaccinations for the kids. So I'm working really hard to put that together for you. So please tell everyone around your school to attend our healthcare in May.

I'm going to go have a tea now.

MR. SORIA: He says he's going to have some tea.

Thank you very much for being here, it means a lot
that you are here, that we had different voices.
And thank you very much, okay. We were listening.
Ben Felton is here, I'm here, Minerva Garcia-Sanchez, we are listening to you. Have a beautiful weekend. Thank you very much.
STATE OF ILLINOIS    
COUNTY OF COOK    

The within and foregoing community meeting 
taken before TOOMEY REPORTING, at 4300 North 
Narragansett, in the City of Chicago, Cook County, 
Illinois, at 11:00 o'clock a.m. on the 23rd day of 
February A.D. 2013.

The undersigned is not interested in the 
within case, nor of kin or counsel to any of the 
parties.

Witness my official signature in and for 
Cook County, Illinois on this 4th day of March A.D. 
2013.

TOOMEY REPORTING
205 W. Randolph St. - 1230
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Phone: (312) 853-0648