CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PUBLIC HEARING
FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET PRESENTATION
held on
Thursday, August 1, 2013

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had in
the above-entitled matter at Harry S. Truman
College, 1145 West Wilson Avenue, Chicago,
Illinois, commencing at 6 o'clock p.m.

PRESENT:

MR. TIM CAWLEY, Presenter

MS. MELANIE RODRIGUEZ, Timekeeper

Reported By: Karen Fatigato, CSR
License No.: 084-004072
MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good evening, everyone, and welcome to the FY 2014 Chicago Public Schools Budget Hearing. My name is Melanie Rodriguez, Private Programs Analyst.

At this time I'd like to introduce Chicago Public Schools Chief Administrative Officer, Tim Cawley, to my left. And I'd also like to acknowledge Illinois State Representative Greg Harris, who is in the audience with us today. If you can please -- thank you.

At this time I will begin our budget hearing proceedings, and Tim Cawley will go through a PowerPoint presentation.

Budget hearing will begin promptly at 6 p.m. and end promptly at 8 p.m. or when the last speaker has concluded, whichever is earlier. We have a sign language interpreter and Spanish translation on site. If you need assistance please raise your hand or come forward. Spanish is here. Sign language to my right.

All who sign up to speak will be given an opportunity to ask a question or make a
statement until the meeting is adjourned.

All those wishing to speak are asked to please sign in from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on the speaker sign-in sheet at the entrance registration table and each speaker will be given a number.

Please note that no one will be able to sign up to speak after 6:30 p.m.

Speakers will be limited to addressing topics related to the CPS budget.

Speakers are asked to limit their comments to 2 minutes so that everyone that would like to speak will have the opportunity to do so.

When multiple speakers from the same organization or school are listed, only one member of the organization or school will be allowed to speak regarding the same issue.

If the speaker has a follow-up question or your question was not completely answered, we ask that you please speak to CPS staff members who will be on site to help you follow up and fill out a follow-up card with your contact information.
The public hearing is scheduled to conclude at 8 o'clock p.m. or after the last speaker, whichever is earlier. CPS also has set up a website where the public can share their thoughts on the budget. Visit www.cps.edu/budget.

At this point in time I'd like to introduce Tim Cawley who will go through a PowerPoint presentation regarding the FY '14 Budget. Thank you.

MR. CAWLEY: Thank you, Melanie.

On behalf of our CEO, Barbara Byrd-Bennett, our Board President, David Vitale, and all the members of the Board, I want to thank you all for coming tonight. It shows a commitment to engaging in the process, to understanding what's going on and a desire to be heard. And that is what we're here to do tonight, to hear from you.

The court reporter will ensure that we have a transcript of all of your comments and those will be conveyed to every member of the Board for them to consider for the budget process, which will be concluded on August 24th.
There's a Board meeting that day and the Board must approve a budget on that day. We have to get the budget approved before the end of August. So they will have to approve a budget, but it may be revised based on input from community and others as they contemplate this.

The goal of my presentation is to give you a quick summary of what we faced as we put the budget together this year. There's a lot of detail online as Melanie said. The entire budget is there school by school, department by department, practically position by position within CPS to show you where we are spending money and comparing it to previous years. And the goal of that is to help you get an understanding that's pretty hard to get in just a 15- or 20-minute PowerPoint presentation. But we do want people to understand what's happening with our budgets and to see what our priorities are and to see the impact on your own school and your community. So we urge you to go there either from your computer at home or work or a library, there is a tremendous amount of information there that's available for you.
So what I would like to do is just focus on the high-level story, on what we've been trying to do, the challenges that we faced, I'm going to get out here and walk a little bit, the challenges that we faced in putting this budget together so that you have a sense of what we're trying to do district-wide. Although, I recognize, and as a parent of four children I realize, that what you really care for is your own school and your own situation. But we have over 600 schools and we want you to see the context in which we had to put the entire budget together.

So let me just give you the high-level story. The high-level story of what we were trying to do. And I think the first point everybody understands, we have faced a staggering financial situation in fiscal '14. Now, we've had our challenges, as I'll show you in the past, but fiscal '14 is a unique challenge and that's because we have an enormous pension expense increase, and I'll show you that in detail. But one of the things as we face this big challenge in fiscal '14 is we have to
continue to invest in things that are right for
our kids. We have to continue to try to make
our schools better. We have to make the good
ones great, we have to make the weak ones good.
We've got to invest in our kids. So I'll show
you some of the investments that we're making.
You'll be pleased to know that we're
changing the way we do just about everything at
CPS to free up money for schools. And I'll show
you some of the details of that by the way we
manage facilities, the way we work with
suppliers, the way we operate our buses, we are
trying to squeeze every last dollar out of those
things that don't affect the classroom. They
still affect jobs, by the way, and they affect
people, and people see it in schools, but it
doesn't affect the classroom and that's why
we're trying to squeeze as much money out of
those areas before we get to the cuts in the
classroom.
We're doing something that we get
criticized for, we did it last year, we're doing
it again this year, and that is we're closing
our budget gap using reserves. This year it's
almost $700 million of onetime money, and I'll explain a little bit of where that came from, to close our budget gap. And there are people who would say, why don't you just save that money for next year and the year after, you ought to just like a household, you ought to have reserves that you can lean on? But the decision we're faced with every year is do we make devastating, even more devastating cuts to schools and sit on a couple hundred million dollars of reserves, or do we take everything we have and spend it this year to try and minimize the pain in schools and hope that things change next year and hope that there's another way out of this, that we get pension reform in Springfield, that funding does go up? And we've chosen that approach. And it would be a tough way to run a business or a household, but we're running a school district, and we believe that we have to spend everything that we can in the current year to not have devastating cuts in our schools.

And then finally, Representative Harris, we need help. We need help. The
pension increase that we're facing this year is overwhelming. In fact, I never would have thought that we could find a way to absorb this, and we got lucky, and I'll explain that. And we need funding to go up overall and we need pension reform or it does become devastating in our schools. So I'm delighted that Representative Harris is here to carry this message back to Springfield for us because that's our one big prayer for the future.

So let me talk specifically about '14. We started with a billion-dollar deficit, and that's because of the failure to enact any pension reform this year.

A VOICE: How about TIFs?

MR. CAWLEY: I have a suggestion. I won't yell when people speak, I'll let you be heard.

A VOICE: You're putting Representative Harris on the spot and the rest of Springfield.

MR. CAWLEY: So we can make a choice here as a group. We can be disrespectful and not allow speakers to be heard.

A VOICE: The budget is disrespectful.
MR. CAWLEY: Or we can -- you can have me present this and then we'll listen to what people have to say, which seems to be a better alternative than just shouting crazily. So you decide, you decide what kind of a meeting you'd like to have.

A VOICE: Can we have an informative meeting? Can we have the truth type of meeting?

(Whereupon, there were applause in the audience.)

MR. CAWLEY: Here's what I'm going to do. If we can't -- if you don't want to hear this presentation, I'll just turn off the microphone and we'll listen to you or I can make this presentation. So that's the choice. I am not going to present and be shouted over by people. I just want to be very clear about that. That's disrespectful. If that's the way you want to model it for the children who are here, that's your decision, but I'm not going to allow it that happen. So we can just turn on the microphone and listen to community members or I can complete the presentation. Okay, I'll continue, and if you want me to stop just keep
shouting and I will.

A VOICE: Let's go with the speakers.

A VOICE: I have a question.

MR. CAWLEY: We're not answering questions. I'm speaking and then you'll have your turn.

We are saving money in school actions this year, but we're reinvesting that in the welcoming schools. One thing that we were told by the Clark commission was that if you're going to do it you have to spend the money to do it right and so that's what we've chosen to do and I'll show you that.

And then the budget does reflect what we've done to try and minimize the pain in schools. We're using reserves. We've cut costs away from the classrooms. We've restructured debt. And we've raised your property taxes and my property taxes. So we've done everything that we can to try and minimize the pain in the classrooms, but there was no way to have zero pain in the classrooms.

Let me show you what the pension increase looks like. The purple bars are CPS is
required by state law contribution to the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund. And as you can see before 2006 we actually didn't even have to make any contribution. The pension fund was fully funded, regular contributions from employees and the state and good investment returns allowed it to be fully funded. But as the years went on it started to fall behind, we lost a third -- actually, more than a third of the value of that in 2008 because of investments. And by the way, CPS management doesn't invest the pension fund proceeds, Chicago Teachers Pension Fund is its own entity with its own board, its own investment advisors. If you're mad at them for losing a third of the value, write to them, I have nothing to do with it.

A VOICE: That is not the problem.

MR. CAWLEY: So the contributions that were required by CPS are the purple bars as you can see growing to $329 million in fiscal 2010. And that's when Springfield intervened, and Springfield said, CPS can't afford to keep doing this. We're going to buy some time. We're
going to artificially deflate the pension fund contribution. Meanwhile the pension fund is falling further behind. And the pension fund was held at $200 million, right around $200 million, from 2011 right up until June 30th, 2013. And I think the folks in Springfield said, you know what, three years is enough time, we'll deal with this. We'll be able to figure this out, and by the end of the session in 2013 we're going to be able to solve this problem. Because if they didn't solve it CPS's payment had to go up by $405 million to $613 million. This is a fact. This isn't something made up. You can write to the pension fund if you'd like to get facts. This is a fact. CPS had to take on $405 million in higher expense in one year, and that's why there was so much attention on what was going on in Springfield. That's why there was so much pressure to get pension reform because everyone knew that this was intolerable. And by the way, it keeps going up in the future from $613 million, but you can see it's smaller increases. But we have been forced to swallow a $400 million increase.
Additionally, and I apologize for this, Representative Harris, I don't mean to pile it on, but Illinois funds education among the worst in the United States. We're 48th out of 50 on the state's contribution to education funding. So -- and at the statutory level it happens to be $6,119 per pupil, we haven't even been there. This is the third year in a row we're below that. The core level of funding is $5,720, below the statutory minimum and the lowest percentage of education funding of -- the third lowest of 40 -- of 50 states. Other large districts get a lot more money, and they probably have people in the crowd who are disrespectful too. But other large districts get a lot more money. They get over $8500 from their states, New York, LA, Milwaukee. Baltimore gets over $10,000 per pupil from the state, and Maryland has great schools, because the states invest in education.

There's an independent body called the Illinois Education Funding Advisory Board that says an adequate level of funding for the state would be over $8600 per pupil. And ours is
$5700 per pupil. So we're well below what they think Illinois should be funding at an adequate level.

Additionally, that $405 million increase I showed you, no other district in Illinois covers its pension liability the way CPS has to. None. The state pays for it, it's in the teacher retirement system. No other district contributes hardly at all. Right?

None of the other major districts, New York, LA, the ones up there, none of them contribute to all of their pension fund costs like we do. So this is on us. We have got to figure out how to do it. This is the hand we've been dealt and this is why we're trying to be so aggressive in how we're playing that hand and what we're doing to try to close this gap.

And as Representative Harris I'm sure would admit, if anything the pressure in Springfield is on less funding for education because of the pension crisis. Until the pensions get solved there's going to be less and less money for the state to spend on not just education but roads and everything else. So
it's not like right around the corner it looks rosy and the state is going to start giving us more money, if anything we're playing defense to hang on to the money we do have.

Here is a chart that shows in blue our revenues every year, in red our expenses every year. And as you can see it looks pretty easy back from 2005 even up to 2011. And by the way, you can draw this back to 1995, it looks the same, revenue is going up every year, expenses moving right up with it. The easy days of CPS, right? Every single year a few hundred million dollars more in revenue and they just turned around and spent it. They spent it on good things like investment in employees, higher salaries. They spent it on programs and a lot of other things. But our problem started in 2011. It looks like it didn't start until now when revenues dip below expenses, right? That's a problem in any organization. But actually in 2011 we already started to have problems. And if you were around the district then you may remember there were 1200 teachers laid off in the summer of 2010, which is the beginning of
fiscal '11, 1200 teachers were laid off. But the Federal government rode to the rescue with about a billion dollars in Federal stimulus money that we got in fiscal '11/'12. We got a bunch of it directly in the district, about half of that, and the rest went to the state. Right, Representative Harris? It went to the state to help them save education jobs. And that billion dollars makes '11 and '12 look a lot better than they would have. Actually, it started in '10 and then carried over to '11 and '12. Then the dumb luck happened in '12. Everybody here who pays property taxes, I know if you're a renter you wouldn't but your landlord does, but if you pay property taxes you know that last year for the first time in 35 years the state of -- Cook County moved the property tax penalty date from November 1st to August 1st. August 1st is actually the law, they're allowed to do it August 1st. And you have to give President Tony Preckwinkle a lot of credit. She said, it's crazy that we don't collect it when we're allowed to. Why are we waiting until November 1st? Now, as a taxpayer we all hated to pay
earlier, but she did the right thing for Cook County by saying I'm going to collect on August 1st. You know what that did for CPS? Hundreds of millions of dollars that would have fallen into October, which would have been the next fiscal year, moved up into fiscal '12. Hundreds of millions of dollars only because they moved the date. If they don't move the date, I don't know how we stand here and have anything resembling a reasonable budget. Pure dumb luck. And by the way, if they move it back out, and I don't think they will, we lose hundreds of millions of dollars. But that was a onetime pull forward that saved our butts.

So that's what got us through fiscal '12, but even with that, sorry, '13 and '14 have these big deficits, expenses higher than revenues. And the billion dollars in fiscal '14 that's where we started, looking at the pension deficit for our pension expense increase, looking at where we started, and that was where we started with a billion-dollar deficit. Now, we've been working on this for months trying to reduce that deficit from a billion dollars or
just under it, $977 million, and we've been able
to get it down to about $700 million. And this
is what you see in the middle column, the middle
number in red, that number right there, that is
our deficit. And to get there, by the way, we
had to use $50 million of something that's
called a debt service reserve. It's money
that's meant to pay for our bonds that, you
know, when we build a building or renovate a
school, we sell bonds to cover that and then we
pay it off over time. Well, we had a couple
hundred million dollars in this reserve that we
had never touched before to close the operating
deficit, ever, and we took $54 million out of
that, and what that does is it increases our
revenue at the state level because if the money
from the state doesn't go to that fund we get it
as revenue.

So we even after adding that 50 million
in, we're $640 million negative. Very simple.
Like this isn't hard to understand. Expenses
are $640 million higher than our revenues. That
is exactly the budget that we have proposed.
And the only way that we could cover that is by
cleaning out an unrestricted fund balance, which leaves a zero a year from now. We're using something SGSA is actually -- the money that the state gives us for high poverty schools that follows children who qualify for free and reduced lunch and there was a carryover there so that all goes out to the schools. And then something called a tort fund, which is basically our reserve for lawsuits, for security issues. And we have a reserve there, and we're using almost $40 million of that.

So all of that leaves us with almost $700 million of onetime money because the alternative to doing that is very simple, cut expenses by $700 million because the revenues are set. Springfield is not coming in with more revenue for us. The legislature, I will give Representative Harris credit, I think who you probably voted for, the budget that was passed was better what than the Governor proposed. The Governor proposed to cut education spending, which would have taken $60 million away from CPS. And on May 31st, the last day of the session, the legislature said, we're not going
to do that, Governor, we're going to put education funding where it was the previous year and that saves CPS $60 million in a reduction, still below that legislative, still below all those other things I told you, but at least $60 million dollars better than the Governor had proposed.

So all of that -- the only way to then deal with the revenue that -- the Federal government is not giving us anymore revenue, we're set on that. We raised property taxes, that's the thing that we control. We raised property taxes, so our revenue is set. The only other place to close that gap is to cut expenses. And the only place to cut them would be in the schools, that's where the money is.

So let me tell you what we're doing on investments. Now, this is a part of the discussion that is a little challenging because you say, if you don't have any money, why do you invest? Why are you spending money on these kinds of programs? Why do you have Magnet schools and Selective Enrollment? Why are you doing full-day kindergarten? Why are you doing
these things? And reason we're doing these
tings is because we believe it's the right
inght for kids. We believe we have a mission to
accomplish, and we've got to educate our
children.

Now, people, maybe some in this room,
may disagree with the priorities we set, but you
know what, we have to make those decisions and
then present them to you and ask for your
feedback on those. You may say, you know what,
we don't want full-day kindergarten. I don't
think many people are saying that. So we're
investing in children in the ways that we think
will improve the outcomes throughout the
district.

So you can see here, investing in
programs for Magnet, Selective Enrollment, more
STEM and IB. So up here on the north side you
have a lot of STEM and IB programs. They
haven't had any on the west and south sides.

Almost none. And we're adding the schools on
the south and west sides so that those children
have the same opportunities that some of the
schools up here have. They don't have as many
magnet schools on the south and west side as you have up here. They don't have that. So we're adding those to those programs on the south and west sides.

We are doing full-day kindergarten throughout the district. We believe that it's the right thing to do and that's what's going to improve outcomes for kids long-term. And we are expanding our pre-K program.

We're also doing a lot to help the children who are most in trouble, the ones who are dropping out, who have chronic truancy, who don't have a safe way to get to school, and we're investing in those areas. The OS4, the Office of Strategic Support Services, is intervening at 22 really struggling schools that are on -- they have been doing poorly for years, and we're going and we're saying, enough is enough, this isn't fair to these kids. And we're investing $20 million in those schools because we don't think it's fair that they have a bad choice in their neighborhood.

We're also engaging communities more.

We've gotten more people -- when we don't have
any money we're adding people for community
engagement. We're adding a Chicago Parent
University. And we're trying to develop the
talent in the district. We know that not all of
our principals are where they need to be so
we're going to help train them and evaluate them
and recruit great ones. And we're going to be
evaluating teachers and coaching them and
investing in professional development for them
so that every school can look at staff and say,
we're proud of these people, they're making a
difference for our kids because that's not the
case today.

And then finally we believe in our
principals. We have a student-based budget
approach this year that took $2 billion dollars
that we used to decide centrally how schools
needed to staff. We said, you will have this
many teachers and this many aides and this many
clerks and this many counselors. And instead
we've given that money to principals and said
you decide what's right for your school. So
they put together the budget that makes the most
sense for them. Here are the children that
benefit from the investments that we've made,
tens of thousands of students are benefitting
from increases in IB and STEM, full-day
kindergarten, Safe Passage. You probably don't
have to worry about Safe Passage up in these
neighbors, you do on the south and west sides.
(Whereupon, the audience was
screaming and yelling.)

MR. CAWLEY: Schools on the south and
west side we're expanding Safe Passage --

A VOICE: My son was murdered and shot
here and so was my husband. How dare you. You
don't know what's going on in these communities.
(Whereupon, the audience was
screaming and yelling.)

A VOICE: Rahm Emanuel lives a few
blocks from here, we have homeless people
sleeping on the streets here. How dare you
people.

MR. CAWLEY: Would everybody like me --
would everybody like me to a turn the meeting to
these people? We have an opportunity for
everybody to speak. We have an opportunity.

A VOICE: If you would just keep it to
the facts and not your commentary. We don't
need your condescending comments about the
neighborhood, you're not from here.

MR. CAWLEY: Our Safe Passage
investment is based on crime in the areas around
the schools, the inability of students to get to
and from schools.

(Whereupon, the audience was
screaming and yelling.)

MR. CAWLEY: Ma'am, when it's your turn
to speak I promise not to shout over you.

A VOICE: You can shout over us, we'd
appreciate that because we'd like to hear your
responses.

MR. CAWLEY: As I've said, we changed
the way we do everything in the district, and
some of the schools are feeling it. We've
reduced custodians. We've reduced a number of
engineers. We've reduced food service workers.
We've changed bus routes to save millions of
dollars in how we operate everything in the
district because by doing that -- by doing that
we free up money for classrooms. Now, everybody
thinks that there's no pain in that. If your
cousin is an engineer or custodian at CPS they know it or a food service worker. The alternative to doing -- taking the steps that we do, the savings that we've got in operations, the alternative to doing these cuts of operations and administration is to cut teaching positions, and that's the last thing we want to cut because we think keeping the teachers in schools is the most important priority.

This is the head count at Central Office since 2006. And most people cheer for that, they say it's great, we love to see Central Office get cut. You know what, you may feel that way. There are a lot of people who lost their jobs, 500 people fewer who work at Central Office. But now just like we're closing 50 underutilized schools, we're closing our underutilized headquarters and we're moving to a smaller space where we have room for only a thousand or fewer people because we're smaller and we don't need the building we're in now. So we're applying the same logic, which is we can't keep wasting money on space we don't need, and we are closing down 125 South Clark.
So that's the operating budget.

Let me talk briefly about the capital budget.

(Whereupon, the audience was screaming and yelling.)

MR. CAWLEY: In capital we're going to spend about $187 million in money that CPS will fund with bonds, but there's another $120 million or so, money that we get from the state, there's a capital fund from the state, and some TIF funds. And on TIF -- so it's an $8 million -- $10 million in the coming year. In total CPS has received $900 million in funding for new schools with TIF, new schools, additions throughout the city. And because we can't afford to be building and fixing our schools that are on average 74 years old, so TIFs have been very helpful to us in allowing us to build schools where we're in overcrowded situations or where we have buildings that are falling down.

We have a process that, you know what, never makes everybody happy. You're only happy when the money goes to your school.
(Whereupon, the audience was screaming and yelling.)

MR. CAWLEY: People don't tend to say we're glad you're fixing the roof across town. And we have means, we know we have means in almost every one of our buildings, and so we have to go through a process that is very, very difficult to do because there are people who are going to get their roof fixed or their boiler fixed or air conditioning added or the hallways painted or a new annex because of overcrowding and there are others that aren't. And so we have to go through a process and prioritize the different investments.

This year we're going to save money by closing 57 buildings. Over the next ten years we would have spent $400 million on those 57 buildings. And that's less than 10 percent of the total in the district, but if those buildings were open eventually their roof fails, they need air conditioning, they need a new lab, they need new technology, and you can imagine with not much money it spreads it too thin and that's why closing the underutilized schools is
the right thing to do because it concentrates resources in fewer facilities, in fewer schools and it allows us to do the right thing.

Here you can see the things that compete for the money. As you can see in fiscal '13, welcoming schools, we're spending $155 million in those welcoming schools. And that's because we know it's a challenging situation for children and families and we want the school they arrive at to have a very positive environment, air conditioning and new technology and labs, and so we've invested in that. And others may disagree and say just because the schools are closing doesn't mean those schools should get so much of your budget, it's a huge portion of the overall budget. We felt it was the right thing to do. You can disagree, but that's what we felt where the investment needed to go.

A VOICE: Who is we? If this is a community process who is we?

MR. CAWLEY: So in conclusion, we've got a very, very challenging financial situation, and there's no magic to this. We
need more revenue and we need lower expenses.
And the biggest way to lower our expenses is to
get pension reform, and that's out of our hands,
that resides with Springfield. And so we can do
things to get more revenue and we're looking at
a lot of different alternatives to finding more
revenue, but ultimately that $700 million gap
that we're closing with onetime money this year
can't keep getting closed by reserves, you'll
run out.
So we are looking at a lot of
alternatives. We're going to keep cutting.
We're going to keep streamlining. We're going
to reduce head count in all the areas that we
think they have the least effect on children.
And eventually we got to come up with a
solution. We're determined to do that. We
don't have any choice. We can't go out of
business at CPS, we have 400,000 kids who are
relying on us every day, and so we have to make
the tough decisions to determine what's best for
them.
And now I welcome the opportunity to
hear from you on what you think the solutions
would be in this situation. The speakers come up, give us your ideas, your proposals, your priorities, tell us the things you think we're spending money on that you think we ought to cut. You can't just say give us more, tell us what you think we should cut. I look forward to hearing from all of you. Here's the site where you can find more information online. So now we'll turn it over to speakers as they've signed up. How are we doing this?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I'm going to call your speaker number and say your name. You can come down to this microphone, you'll have two minutes to speak. I'll give you a 10-second warning and then you'll see this when your time has expired.

At this time can I call down the first speaker, Victoria Benson.

MS. BENSON: Hello, my name is Victoria Benson, I'm the LSC chairperson for Portage Park School, and my two sons go to Portage Park. I'm here to plead with you on the budget cuts to ask you to sit down and think of other ways to save on money than taking away from our students. You advised that you were going to try to keep
the budget cuts away from the classroom,
however, it seems that is the only place it
really is affecting. Portage Park this year
will suffer $780,000 loss, which does not
include our self-power money, and the things
that you once supplied you will no longer be
providing, substitute supplies, janitorial
supplies but, of course, that was not averaged
in your interactive budget. Our children will
suffer with no textbooks, little to no PE
equipment, recess, little to no supervision
during lunch and recess because of the longer
school day and we do not have the staff to cover
this.

In addition I was also advised that the
new students that are coming to our school that
you would not be paying per pupil, that it would
be more like every ten students. If we receive
19 transfers or new students you would only be
paying for 10. So if we got 19 you still would
only be paying for 10.

Today I was not going to come here and
I read an article regarding the TIF surplus and
the DePaul stadium. The mayor is out of
control. If the city is broke --

(Whereupon, the audience was

applauding.)

MS. BENSON -- and we are on a beer

budget, why does he think he can spend the
taxpayer's money as if the city had a champagne

budget? Even I know that if I can not afford to
clothe and feed my kids I should not be

purchasing new cars and going on lavish

vacations because I have to take care of my

priorities first, this priority being things

that the taxpayers specifically pay for,
schools, parks, water reclamation. You get the

point.

As an outsider I have noticed that CPS

is a very poorly run business with bad

organizational, communication and managerial

skills. I have spoke before regarding CPS

vendors and contracts and how we cannot even

find the best deal to make the money stretch and

if the cost benefit analysis determine even the

most cost-effective contracts. After seeing

that you agree to a non-bid Supes contract

regarding principal training makes me question
this even more. These budget cuts are wrong and
if anyone is trying to convince you otherwise --

    MS. RODRIGUEZ: Your time has expired.

    MS. BENSON: Please do not continue to
make these same mistakes and harm our children's
future. Wait, I'm done. You are the Board of
Education and you are supposed to fight for
them, but I don't see much fighting. Your
actions --

    MS. RODRIGUEZ: Your time has expired.

    There's other people.

    MS. BENSON: If we don't invest in our
children now our society as a whole will suffer.

    A VOICE: I didn't think speakers were
going to be interrupted.

    MS. RODRIGUEZ: After her time ran out.

    A VOICE: Is it necessary to have two
people up there? That's really unnecessary.

    MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker number two,

    Tammy Stants.

    MS. STANTS: Hi, my name is Tammy

    Stants, I'm a Local School Council chairperson

    for Soloman Elementary. I have been to several

    meetings where public officials and CPS Board
members remind us all that there is no magical solution to the budget crisis. As the mother of a student with severe disabilities in a school that has 25 percent students with disabilities, I am acutely aware that there is no magic, only hard work and very difficult decisions. We make them all the time.

My son works hard to access his education not because a general education curriculum is too difficult for him but because his body makes it almost impossible. I think you all know about things that are impossible you've said so many times.

Even with all the accommodations afforded to him by law, it's a herculean task. We work hard at being his parents, supporting his school and education. His teachers work very hard. His support staff equally hard. Now we need you, the Board of Education, to do the hard work. For as long as public education still exists it's your job to see to it that our schools are properly funded, not adequately funded, but properly funded.

Pension reform, tax reform, all of
these things, yeah, they're probably part of a
long-term solution. My son and his classmates
only have until fiscal year 2018 to get college
and career ready. Every minute in the classroom
counts for them. They make it all count.

I am so happy to work with CPS for the
long-term solution, but the students can't wait,
we need fiscal relief now and it seems to me
that release of TIF surplus is the only option.
It's been done before, it can be done again.
You as the representatives of our public school
system need to demand that schools are properly
funded --

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Your time has expired.

MS. STANTS: -- by any means necessary.

Funds to make our city bike friendly are
available so I think funds to make our city
student friendly are available as well.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker --

MS. MEEGAN: My name is Janet Meegan,
and I am a CPS parent, and I am angry. Rahm
Emanuel sold parents on the idea of a longer
school day and only funded it for one year.
Almost a year ago he bragged that kids would
have 45 extra minutes of specialized reading time. He blogged on the National Endowment to the Arts that teachers would not have to choose between the arts and core subjects. And on April 10th, 2012 at Disney II he was quoted no longer will we have to make false choices, teachers will no longer have to pick between science and social studies, math versus music, reading versus recess.

At our school we lost our longer school day position first. She provided that specialized reading time. We also lost our librarian, which certainly doesn't support literacy. And we are only funding our art and music program with parent donations, raised student fees and onetime rollover funds. After the school year we won't be able to afford these programs anymore. And I understand that it is difficult to calculate the cuts at Disney II, but I do know that they lost two PRSPs and they are adding a high school with only nine positions. But I imagine that parents and students will feel the squeeze and will soon realize your promises are empty. Not only this
but Raise Your Hand has total cuts of 162
million, 92 are positions, 54 music, 58 phys ed
and 40 librarians. This is not what we were
promised. This is choosing between art and
music. You threw our principals on a sinking
ship and told them the only way to keep afloat
is to throw some positions over board. And what
do you think they're going to pick? I am here
to tell you no. Parents need to come together
and say no. This is robbery. Do not let them
steal your baby's education and do the right
thing for every student.

And I encourage you to work with parent
groups across the city, many of whom I know our
voices are not being heard and the drastic
actions need to be taken. I personally feel
that voices calling for a boycott sound a lot
more necessary and just next to the empty
promises of Rahm Emanuel and his hand-picked
school board.

(Whereupon, the audience was
applauding.)

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker four, Adenia
Linker.
MS. LINKER: My name is Adenia Linker.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I apologize.

MS. LINKER: That's quite all right, it's not a common name.

I have two children in selective-enrollment high schools here in Chicago. One was lucky enough to get into Jones, the other was lucky enough to get into Lane. They did that because they had excellent elementary school education.

Last year we were told by our mayor that we would be getting a full school day, a richer school day and a school day with opportunities for creative learning. I got that right off the CPS website. Okay, we got our longer school day. He promised us 500 new positions, which all ended up being temporary only through the first semester.

I've attended the most recent Board of Ed meeting Mr. Cawley where you gave this presentation and you claimed that all of our troubles are due to this recent pension problem, but I think this audience knows that's ludicrous.
(Whereupon, the audience was applauding.)

MS. LINKER: We were sold a longer school day when you knew we had a pension problem. The unpaid pension means that you've re-prioritized what you do see as value. And what I found in your presentation and the research I've done is that while the longer school day was mandated, a TIF for DePaul was suggested. I'm a DePaul alumni, take my TIF. Eight-six million to charters. You said that you gave new schools to different neighborhoods. I believe Humboldt Park lost four schools and did not get a magnet or a STEM, it got a charter.

Professionally I am a social and emotional health advocate, and I could spend the rest of this evening giving you evidence why art, music and PE are essential to the improvement of academics. Not only do they improve academics, they reduce conflict and violence. They improve the mental health of our students. They encourage --

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Please conclude.
MS. LINKER: And they do lead to gainful employment.

(Whereupon, the audience was applauding.)

MS. LINKER: I am appalled and disgusted that any group of stakeholders would participate in this farce, and I ask you to please use your influence to change what is happening to our education. Thank you.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker five, Carolyn Brown.

MS. BROWN: My name is Carolyn Brown, I'm here to speak as a CPS teacher and a CPS parent and a Chicago resident and taxpayer. I interact with hundreds of youth every year in addition to my own teenage daughter. I found that they're instinctively good at calling out BS. Adults can sometimes be led off course by things like pension reform, utilization formulas and school choice, but young people are pretty immune to those distractions, they see straight through those words to the actions, intentions and the results.

It's with this in mind that I want to
quote a student of mine, thoughtful, intelligent recent graduate who speculated on the top of his head one day. He said it seems like Chicago Public Schools hates Chicago's public schools. And, you know, I laughed too, right, because it was kind of ironic and humorous. And then I thought about it again, and I'm like, that's not funny because maybe hate is a strong word and maybe it gives too much credit to the amount of energy that CPS actually thinks about spending about for its schools and its students, but it's the message that Chicago's young people are receiving. It's the actions of Chicago Public Schools over the past year that confirm this message to the children and families across the city.

And do you know what children do when they realize that they're not loved and valued? If you were a teacher you would know, and we seem to have fewer of those to ask every year. This is what the students are doing now, all right, they're calling BS on the mayor's claim that he cares about educating Chicago's children. They're calling BS on an unelected
School Board that sells out our neighborhood schools to charters. And they're calling BS on the suggestion that our schools can possibly be successful with these strict down austerity budgets. It's not their job and it's not the parents' job and it's not the teacher's job to find the revenue for these schools. All right. So the fact that we keep telling you and giving you solutions and you don't listen to them is actually irrelevant because that's your job. All right. So our students know that Chicago has failed them and --

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Please conclude.

MS. BROWN: And we also are aware of that.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker six, Daniel Phalen.

MR. PHALEN: Hi, my name is Dan Phalen, CPS alumni, Lane Tech, north side. Firstly, I want to thank Tim for coming out and hearing the communities' insights. I know it's a rough crowd. Be glad you're not at the south side meeting.

That in mind, that in mind, these
budget cuts are going to cripple our neighborhood's public education. There's no doubt about it. You're going to put our kids in classes of 40 or more, they'll provide less campus safety and destroy career and college services and that's just in the schools that are still open. Okay.

What's more, I don't believe we're in such a financial bind as people are saying we are. I don't think we're in such a bind that we need to strip our schools of all of their resources. You're asking our teachers, you're asking our parents and you're asking our students to do more with less because the city needs money, but I'm imploring you to find somewhere else that can do more with less. I'm imploring you to look at the private companies that have received millions of TIF dollars from our --

(Whereupon, the audience was applauding.)

MS. PHALEN: Ask the Hyatt Hotel who gave Penny Pritzker $500 million. Ask Walmart, we gave them $24 million, ask them to do more
with less. And that was just on the south side
stores they opened up. Ask the 20 charter
schools that are opening after 50 public schools
have closed to do more with less. And, you
know, Emanuel says the public schools can't TIF
their way out of a budget crisis. You tell
DePaul they can't TIF their way out of an arena
crisis.

And I am begging you, I am begging you
to take this property tax money the city still
has and invest it in our neighborhood schools.
And, you know, Tim, it disgusts me to say that,
it disgusts me to say that right now I am
begging a city official to do what he should
know is right. You don't beg a fireman to fight
a fire. You don't beg a teacher to teach a kid.
And you don't beg a fucking public servant to
service the public.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker eight, Carol
Keating. If you are eight, nine and ten if you
can make your way to the side. Thank you.

MS. KEATING: My name is Carol Keating,
I am an employee of CPS. I'm also a parent, my
son goes to Lane Tech. He's an honor student.
He went to Burley and Cooley, had music. He's in the honors music program. He plays five instruments all because public schools and the music program that he went through. I'm also DePaul alumni, and I hold a Master's degree in public health from UIC. And I'm a Chicago girl all my life, and I've never seen anything like this in my life, 57 years of being a citizen and taxpayer in this city going on with the Chicago Public Schools. I think it's a disgrace.

And I also felt insulted by your comments about that we only care about what happens at our particular school. I think we care about everybody's school throughout the entire system.

(Whereupon, the audience was screaming and yelling.)

MS. KEATING: And as a person in public health I really do feel this is a public health issue, particularly at Lane Tech. You were talking about cuts, four counselors with 4200 students, and we have to cut four counselors with suicide and issues like this going on. Four security guards cut, talking about safety
issues. There's going to be cuts in the
lunchroom. There's going to be teachers cut.
We are affecting the mental health and safety of
all our students throughout the entire system.
And I am a firm, firm believer in getting rid of
charter schools. Why are we investing? And
I'll tell you why we're investing in charter
schools because you have a high turn over of
your teachers, they stay maybe three years, they
don't get a pension. And this is the secret
behind it because you're not going to have to
pay -- you're not holding teachers that are
going to be there for 15, 30 years, you're going
to lose good, dedicated teachers that actually
care about their students.
And I would like to know how in the
world this is a state issue when it's Chicago
Public Schools? I don't understand. I'm really
confused when you show me the budget how -- why
this is a problem down there in Springfield when
this is the Chicago Public Schools.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Please conclude.
Speaker nine, Chris Ball.

MR. BALL: Hi, name is Chris Ball, I'm
speaking here partially on behalf of Raise Your Hand, we're concerned over the depth of the cuts that have occurred to many of the schools. I actually am a parent of a school that had its budget rise so against the other people there are many people whose schools are doing fine but who are concerned with other schools in the system.

A budget is supposed to be a set of priorities, and this budget seems to indicate that the Board doesn't believe that traditional neighborhood schools are a priority in the system. There's a number that's abandoned around in the press that there's a net cut of $68 million. I mean, we get a figure and we'd love to sit down at some point and go through the numbers of closer to $162 million, which is a significant difference. At the same time we've seen charters and contract schools gain funds. This doesn't help neighborhood schools. The per pupil funding level is simply too low. The principals are given the lump sum, which is an insufficient lump sum, and then there's no provision in the budget to protect programs at
the school levels that schools want. I mean, so far we've counted 92 schools losing their art positions, 58 schools losing their physical education positions, 54 losing their music positions, 40 schools losing the librarian. If this is supposed to help neighborhood schools, we're not seeing the outcomes in this budget. So we ask you to seriously reconsider what CPS is trying to achieve here. Thank you.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker ten, Rod Estvan.

MR. ESTVAN: My name is Rod Estvan, and I'm the education policy director of Access Living of Chicago. I think Tim laid out a lot of numbers and a narrative, and we don't agree necessarily with the narrative on the pension issue. This pension crisis was created in 1995 when Mayor Daley took the tax dollars that went directly into the pension fund and put them in the Chicago Public Schools. And in 1996 in the budget, which I have in my office, the district bolstered that because of that move they gained $69 million in revenue. Such reports were given for many years in the budgets and then the big
collapse came, the same collapse that affected all of us, Tim, not just the trustees of the pension fund, you and I probably lost money too in this deal, unless we were geniuses. So the pension fund took a beating. We knew that we needed to set up the money and reserves to deal with this. We didn't do that. Why didn't we do that? Because our property tax rate in the City of Chicago is lower than any other town in Cook County. Our property tax rate is very low and people here won't like to hear that because we don't want to pay more in property taxes and the mayor doesn't want to raise the property tax rate.

The kind of pension relief that you're looking for is not enumerated in the budget. The only way we can get a handle on that is to look at the last day of the session when a proposal was made for a pension holiday, and that proposal was a 43 percent cut in CPS payments to the pension fund. If you're looking for the General Assembly to reduce benefits of retirees and increase costs for current teachers to that level, it is unrealistic. You are like
a gambler here, you're rolling the dice and
hoping for the best. The only way you're going
to get this kind of relief is with an increase
in the property taxes.

Every time I'm in Springfield the
suburban districts talk about this and they say,
what about your property tax rate, Rod, you come
here with your hand out for money --

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Please conclude.

MR. ESTVAN: -- and you guys are not
putting out the effort you need to. So we need
to look at that issue seriously and the Board
needs to take some risks with the mayor and tell
him the truth.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 11, Hagit
Stone.

MS. WALLIN: I'm speaking on behalf of
her, she had to leave. We're both on the LSC.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: What's your name?

MS. WALLIN: My name is Georgia Wallin.
She would want me -- I'm going to speak on
behalf of her for just this portion. She would
want me to relay this to you, to give this to
you because this is the we that we're talking
Because of the short notice of the meeting, you know, with the budget situation here, we went out -- she went out and this is a reflection of the community. In one day 300 people -- 331 people said restore the funding back to the schools. That's one day, okay. That's her position.

My position is this. We're at -- we both work for a special needs center and those children with the cuts that we're going to receive it's going to be devastating. We lose technology. We lose library. We lose personal assistants to these children. And my thing is I have to ask why are we doing this experiment with these kids right now? Why do our kids always have to be the brunt of an experiment? We've been doing this since I was in school. We can't keep going around in circles. Like they said, if you don't remember your history you're doomed to repeat it. We're repeating the same thing that we did in the '60s, in the '70s, in the 80s. It's got to stop.

The notion that, you know, insanity is when you do something consistently and then you
expect a different outcome, this is what we're doing. Okay. We've got to get this thing together because those children are the most vulnerable and we're putting this -- we're trying to balance the books on the backs of these kids. We can't do that. If you don't take care of it now we'll pay for it later. The cost will be astronomical. So let's get this thing together.

        MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 12, James Morgan.

        MR. MORGAN: My name is James Morgan, I'm the chairman of the LSC at Trumbull Elementary School. Winnetka, Mr. Winnetka, you can talk on top of me as much as you want.

        I want to start out by saying that at Trumbull when this closing process began we called it theater. We are now on act four of the theater. It keeps continuing. Chicago Now, an online blog, 1.6 million CPS dollars -- dollars CPS has contributed to Teach for America, 7.7 million on the Safe Passage, 18 million for efficient lighting. Trumbull got new lights. Trumbull and Stewart received new
lighting this spring. Why would you do that to a school you're going to close? Budget cuts start at the beginning, that's common sense.

At Trumbull Elementary School right now we have a 24/7, 365-day-a-year security guard right now. He's there right now. I was in the school today. If you pay that person $10 an hour you're paying them for a year $87,600 for an abandoned building. Why are you doing that? It makes no sense.

At Trumbull we tried to help you. We tried to educate you that you were violating the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act by closing down our school. You neglected to listen. We are now in Federal court on August 7th and if we win you and your team and Todd Babbitz will have to completely reconstruct Trumbull Elementary School for its opening day of August 26th. Even the partitions have been removed from the inside of Trumbull Elementary School in the bathrooms. They're not paid for, CPS is not paying the bill, but it's been removed.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Please conclude.
MR. MORGAN: There's nothing else to say.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 13, 14 and 15 if you can come down and line up. Right now we have speaker 13, Margaret Aguilar.

MS. AGUILAR: I do not have a fan club here. I am reminded of a book from the '70s, I'm a child of the '70s, called the Flack Catchers, and that's what I feel that you are doing, you're catching the flack of the anger, the really truly reasonably based anger of people who are being screwed by this, whose children are being damaged by these changes, who 2000 special education students are having to move schools when they really need a stable background and you're there getting our anger. And I just have this horrible feeling that it's not going to go any place else, that there's going to be no results.

There were meetings and hearings about the school closings, no School Board members as far as I know went to any of those community hearings, and those schools were closed anyway. Children are suffering from this. Children are
suffering from the so-called Safe Passage.
You're going to see the murder rate go up
because students are having to go through gang
areas to get to schools, and not just on the
south side, not just on the west side. And I
will say that as a person whose son graduated,
went his whole career in Chicago Public Schools
and graduated in 2007, that I have as much
concern about this because this is a future of
the city that I moved to 40 years ago. This is
our future. And if you short -- if you
shortchange and if you destroy public education
in this city, you are destroying our future as a
city.

And then my question is, I understand
that there's $1.5 billion in TIF funds, half of
which come from Chicago Public Schools, that is
$750 million, and so what you have put in it is
a pittance.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 14, Jerry
Skinner.

MR. SKINNER: My name is Jerry Skinner,
I want to echo what speaker number eight, C.K.
Johnson, said Mr. Cawley about a protest over
your comment that we're only happy when money
goes to our schools. But I do want to ask why
CPS, particularly people in charge of finances,
are so interested and determined to make some
schools very happy at the expense of others?
For example, when the budget came out last week
here is the Chicago Sun-Times report on the five
biggest gainers and losers. And I'll read the
five gainers, see if you notice anything in
common. At number five Noble Street Charter
School gaining 3.6 million. Number four,
Chicago International School Lawnwood gaining
3.7 million. Number three, UNO Elementary
Charter school gaining 4.5 million. Number two,
the new UNO High School at 51st and St. Louis
gaining 4.9 million. Interesting that UNO after
the financial scandals that it's gone through
CPS keeps giving to them. And number one this
contract school Link Alternative High School,
13.3 million.

Now, for your five losers. At number
one Kelly High School, 4 million losing. Number
two, Curie High School, 4 million losing.
Number three, Fenger Academy High School, $3.4
million losing. Number four, Wendell Phillips Academy High School, 3.3 million losing. And number five, my high school, Kelvyn Park High School, losing in its budget 3.1 million this year. And it cannot be due to any enrollment loss, we have seen this go down before.

And before I close I want to talk about your claim that CPS is cutting Central Office personnel. That can't be true. We have seen a huge number of administrators coming to our schools. CPS formula says Kelvyn Park should only have like one assistant principal last five years, we've had two assistant principals using discretionary money, taking people from the Central Office and bringing them in the schools. So you're not cutting Central Office personnel, your bringing administrators and project managers in the schools.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 16, Karen Zaccor.

MS. ZACCOR: My name is Karen Zaccor, and I am a teacher at Uplift Community High School and a member of North Side Action for Justice. Our message, all of us, our message
tonight is that the mayor needs to make our
children his priority and he is failing to do
so. At Uplift our budget was cut by $741,000,
and that doesn't sound like so much but we're a
pretty small school. So what it means is that
20 percent of our staff has been cut. So we've
lost one out of four science, math, English and
fine arts teachers. And one out of three social
studies and foreign language teachers. We've
lost a beloved AP. We've lost an awesome
librarian. And our dean of students now has
almost a full-time teaching load so pretty much
we've lost that too.

Our class sizes are going to go from,
you know, pretty small, and we had lots of
support staff so our children could do well, now
we will have very large class sizes and no
support staff. And I know that Mr. Emanuel
believes that a good teacher can teach no matter
how many children are in the classroom, but it's
a simple math problem. If you include the
number of -- if you increase the number of
students in a class by 25 to 50 percent that
takes a lot more time and that time will not
then be available for you to spend with all of your students. So the quality of their education in our school and every school is going to go down. Again, simple math.

The solution is easy, just like that commercial on TV, it's not complicated. No money for charter schools. No money for swap deals. No money for the stadium. And put the TIF surplus back into our schools. Here in Uptown at North Side Action for Justice we actually passed a referendum about what should happen with TIF money.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Please conclude.

MS. ZACCOR: I'll use my teacher voice if they cut me off. We passed it last March and the referendum said shall the City of Chicago return all tax dollars held in TIF districts that should have been allocated to the public schools, park and county to these public bodies --

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Please conclude.

MS. ZACCOR: And only be permitted to use future TIF revenues to preserve and develop
MS. RODRIGUEZ: Our next speaker, 16, Matt Farmer.

MS. ZACCOR: Four out of five said yes.

(Whereupon, the audience was applauding.)

MR. FARMER: My name is Matt Farmer, I'm a Local School Council member at Rogers School. If there was ever any doubt about just how out of touch Winnetka's own Mr. Cawley is with respect to the schools and the neighborhoods in which our kids are educated, he erased all doubt tonight with his comment about Safe Passage not being a concern for people in Uptown, in Edgewater in Rogers Park. Mr. Cawley, at that point you should have apologized to every person in this crowd, turned around and caught the Metra and north line to Winnetka to be with your four kids.

Make no mistake, Mr. Cawley is not here tonight because he cares what you or I have to say about $20 million no-bid contracts to Barbara Byrd-Bennett's old employer. Mr. Cawley is not here tonight because he wants to hear
what you or I have to say about over $100 million worth of cuts to neighborhood schools. Mr. Cawley is here tonight because CPS is required to conduct these hearings. CPS was required to conduct hearings on the latest round of school closings. How many of you took part in those hearings? I sat in the back of Judge Tom Allen's courtroom on the 23rd floor of the Daley Center yesterday and to tell you what a sham the school closing process is, not Judge Allen's handling of it, Judge Allen decided and ruled yesterday that the thoughtful reports of independent hearing officers, many of whom are retired Federal and State court judges, have absolutely no binding effect on the Board of Education. In other words, and these are my words, not Judge Allen's those school closing hearings were a sham.

Folks, Mr. Cawley from Winnetka, Ms. Quaso of the Latin School who replaced Ms. Pritzker of the Lab School, they have forfeited their right to run our neighborhood schools.
MR. FARMER: So instead of coming here and signing up for two minutes to speak, we will see you in the streets. We will see you in the press. We will see you outside your house. You will hear our voices in your sleep.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 17 -- let's respect the next speaker, speaker 17, Karina Molina.

MS. MOLINA: My name is Karina, I'm a junior at Kelvyn Park High School, one of the top high schools that was affected by a $3.1 million budget cut or more. Because of this major budget cut we lost 20 or more teachers. We lost a teacher that was not only an AP teacher but a mentor to many young men and women at Kelvyn Park. He coached three teams with many troubled teens. He helped these kids to make sure their education always came first. He was a best friend.

Kelvyn Park is now down to one
counselor. This is one counselor for four grade levels. The counselor we lost were also coaches and sponsored one of the biggest clubs in our school. We tried anything for help, even meeting with Alderman Ray Suarez. We asked for Logan Square TIF money for Kelvyn Park and his response was that that money was only for things like construction use and to help businesses. I was informed that Suarez was one of the two Aldermen to not sign into a bill to receive money from the surplus.

So with that how will my school recover, my teachers, my fellow students and I? I deserve a quality education. I want to be a police officer. How can you take away from schools, including mine, if we had not much to start with from the beginning. We need that surplus.

(Whereupon, the audience was screaming and yelling.)

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 18, Angela Casas.

MS. CASAS: Hi, my name is Angela Casas, and I am a senior at Kelvyn Park High
School. You say that you do the best for our schools, but you're not the one that sits in a hundred degree classroom in the summer or below zero in the winter. You've never had to share a textbook because there is not enough. My school lost $3.1 million with 20-plus teachers and two counselors, we are now down to one.

We already were -- our classrooms are already crowded, what are we supposed to do now? The teachers that have motivated and pushing me to do better are no longer with me. Classrooms I look forward to, such as, psychology and art are no longer available. We don't even have a librarian anymore. CPS no longer stands for Chicago Public Schools, it now means closing public schools.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 19, Natalie Metoyer.

MS. METOYER: Hello, my name is Natalie Metoyer, I'm also a junior at Kelvyn Park High School. This money is about us, the students. Students don't have enough money books because to expand our knowledge about the soil we stand on because I'm pretty sure we have more rights
than this. Students don't have teachers to
teach them and push them to do better than what
the statistics state. Other Kelvyn Park
students and I have high expectations for
ourselves. Just because we don't have a seat at
your children's school, Mr. Cawley, doesn't mean
we don't have a seat in our future careers. But
when you guys are taking money and using it to
wipe your butts, we are limited to education.
The education that you guys are supposed to make
sure we had. The education that you guys claim
to care about but don't. You guys say it to be
re-elected and so on.

They say money is the root to all evil,
I think that's if you misuse. And you are
misusing it. Use the money for its purpose, use
it for the education of students. We are not
offered a lot at Kelvyn Park, but they offer us
all they have. Why? Because they care about
us. They care about the jobs we are going to
have. They care about our future. They care
about the things you clearly don't. Why would
you take away from a school that doesn't have
that much to offer their students when you guys
sit here and say we want to give you guys all?

We want to make sure you guys have a bright future. We want to make sure you guys might have my job. I wouldn't want your job one day, but if I had your job I would make sure that anyone who is sitting in any Chicago Public School can sit in my chair one day.

(Whereupon, the audience was applauding.)

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 20, Representative Greg Harris. If we can have speaker 21, 22 line up.

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS: So my name is Greg Harris, I'm the State Rep for this area, and I live on Magnolia Street just behind the school here. And I came tonight first off to listen to what folks had to say about education priorities but also to represent for a number of parents and LSC members who could not be here tonight their opinions that they asked me to deliver to you. And this was great concern about how neighborhood schools are being adversely affected by the proposed student-based budgeting.
In just looking at the formulas and the distributions, I have a lot of questions when I come in next week, and I'm told I'll have a chance to come in and talk to you. How did we reach these conclusions per school where some schools with level enrollments are seeing major cuts, others with flat enrollments are -- there does not seem to be a lot of understandable parody here. So there's a lot of concern. There's concern among a lot of our families for ESL cuts. There's concern among a lot of our families for kids with special needs that those children may be left behind.

As I said before publicly, and I'll say it again, you know, I support using some of the TIF surplus that's not encumbered to fill this gap. Granted we have things we need to do in Springfield, but we should be putting the money in here now on an emergency basis until we get the --

(Whereupon, the audience was applauding.)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS: And thank you all, ladies and gentlemen, for coming tonight.
MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 21, I can't read that last name. We need a translator.

A VOICE: She is going to translate it.

MS. ALDAY THROUGH AN INTERPRETER: Good evening, my name is Merced Alday, I'm a mom of two students that attend Chicago Public Schools, one at Roosevelt High School and my daughter goes to Volts (phonetic) Elementary. I am a leader of the Albany Park Neighborhood Council and I am here representing parents and students of this community. In Albany Park more than $6 million were cut to only nine schools in our area. This is very frustrating.

So at Roosevelt High School there has been a budget cut of $1.8 million eliminating ten positions, many of them teachers. This is absurd. What is going to happen? Are they going to increase the student class size to 35 or more? This is not just.

While our students in our neighborhoods really deserve a quality education, your deficit and your crisis is just false. While our students are getting starved of resources, charter schools are receiving millions of
dollars more and they're expanding charter
schools. This is really a crisis. This is just
the fault of you guys.

So while our neighborhood schools are
not getting resources, they're replacing our
schools with charter schools based on lottery.
My children's education is not a game and it's
not a lottery. We're asking you to turn the
money to our neighborhood schools.

A VOICE: She's just saying a Spanish
chant, a song. We already gave you one, we
already gave you two, we already gave you three
chances, your time is over, we need an elected
School Board now.
(Whereupon, the audience was
applauding.)

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 22, Carolyn
Smarz. If we can have speaker 23 and 24
following.

MS. SMARZ: My name is Carolyn Smarz,
I'm a parent, a teacher, a lifelong Chicago
Public School graduate. I'm successful. And
I'm just appalled what you're doing to us in the
classroom. We lost positions, and I'm not sure
if these would be legal. We lost two of our ESL positions. Our ESL population is only growing. We are now down to a .5 ESL position. How can we service those kids? I'm not sure how that's possible.

You hired 600 people or more to walk these kids to their new schools, yet you're closing schools. And as someone said before, how can you maintain? You have to have people running the schools, keep heating the buildings so they don't fall apart. So it seems like that's counterproductive to closing the schools, it's costing you as much money to keep them up because you can't just abandon the schools.

CPS, and someone else related to this, 1995 you took a loan from pension and that's causing your pension problems now, you never paid it back to the Pension Board. It seems like you don't have a long-term plan as Stewart School and this other school got their new lighting and now they're turning around and closing it. That's not the first time it happened, it happens across the board. There's no long-term plan for resolving issues in the
And you are taking money away from Chicago Public Schools, the quality education of every student across the city by taking that money away from the public and giving it to the private corporations that run our charter schools.

(Whereupon, the audience was applauding.)

MS. SMARZ: Those charter schools don't offer -- don't offer anything more than our public schools do except they have less experienced teachers. As a matter of fact, we were told this year that our staff was going to be too expensive. We lost positions because the budget was based not on the teacher's salary but based on the number of kids in the building. So those of us who have more experience we're now giving our kids a list to bring supplies, including toilet paper to the classroom, hand soap, sanitizer, toilet paper, paper towel and everything else.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 23, Gina Abbate.
MS. ABBATEMARCO: I'm Gina Abbatemarco, and I'm from Blaine Elementary. I am the LSC vice chair there. I have a 7 and a 12-year-old at Blaine. We have been at Blaine since my 12-year-old was 3 in the preschool.

In the nine years that I've been at Blaine I've seen parents donate their time, their money, their resources to fill the budget gaps at our school. We have paid for computers. We funded teaching positions. We funded supplies. We funded field trips. We funded all sorts of things. And our story is not unique in any way. There are parents across the city who donate their time and whatever they have to try and better their children's education.

We've been holding our budgets together with duct tape and shoestrings already, and you've taken that away from us. We can't continue to hold it together, to donate all of this to the school, to donate funds, to donate our time and try and fill the budget gaps that we have to keep basic programs and basic things in our schools. We can't wait for pension reform, that's a long-term solution. You don't
even have a bill on the floor for CPS right now.
So we're talking who knows how much time that
that would ever occur. We need a solution now
and what we need is the return of the TIF
surplus to our schools.
(Whereupon, the audience was
screaming and yelling.)
MS. ABBATEMARCO: -- in June rejected
our budget and there were other schools, at
least ten across the city, who did the same. We
started a coalition called Common Sense
Coalition of LSC for Fair Funding. We have 70
LSCs that are members of our coalition. If
anyone here would like to have their school
included on the list please let me know after
the meeting and I can do that to join.
We are advocating for release of the
TIF surplus. I can't request a meeting with the
mayor. They can't request a meeting with the
mayor. You can request a meeting with the mayor
and ask for a return of the TIF surplus. We're
doing our part. We're calling our aldermen,
we're calling the mayor, we're e-mailing, we're
sending letters, and we are doing again our
part, we need you to do your part, request the
TIF surplus.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 24, Marty
Ritter. If speaker 25, 6 and 7 can make their
way to the aisle.

MR. RITTER: So first of all, I want to
shout out One North Side, LS&A --
(Whereupon, the audience was
screaming and yelling.)

MR. RITTER: Raise Your Hand, the new
Coalition, North Side Action for Justice, all
the people here, the real grass roots. This is
a manufactured crisis. Three years ago your
team took over and you knew this was going to
happen. I'm on the CTU's lobbying team, you
have never tried to get additional revenue.
We've been to Springfield over and over again
and you've allowed this situation to occur.

What did Rahm Emanuel say? Never let a
crisis go to waste. That's his game plan, it's
called austerity. He learned it from Bruce
Rauner, his buddy, okay, who is running for
Republican Governor. That may be why you gave a
thumbs down to Pat Quinn a couple of minutes
ago. And you also knocked the Pension Board, which the Board members of CPS are also on, so I'll remind them that you said that at the next Board meeting.

Next I'd like to say the chief administrative office that you run received an increase this year from $620 million to $816 million. That's your department. That's your department. A hundred million dollars is about a thousand teachers, give or take. You could restore the cuts by returning your department's budget to last year's operating expenses. Please write it down, it's your idea.

(Whereupon, the audience was screaming and yelling.)

MR. RITTER -- certain members of Rahm Emanuel's political team upstairs, those people, I won't name their names, but let them know that the grass roots aren't going to happen. We all must knock on doors. We all must learn our precincts. We all must get rid of these bogus aldermen and get rid of this mayor. I was a history teacher, we got to cut the head --
MR. RITTER: And I don't mean physical, let's unemploy him the way he's unemployed 3500 educators over the last six months.

MR. RITTER: I still got time, I know I do.

The chief financial office, which operates under you, I got ten seconds, received about $40 million this year. Last year's operating expense was $15 million, that's roughly about $250 million I just found for you. So please, please, please go back to the drawing board. Go back to Stand For Children and all of the people that tell you what to do and decide to put our neighborhood schools first.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 25, Aviva Theen.

MS. THEEN: Hello, I'm Aviva Theen, and I am a teacher at Morgan Park High School or at least I think I will be. I actually I was one of the teachers that got cut about two weeks ago.
and on Monday my principal offered me back the position because another teacher at my school left. This was a third-year teacher and she's amazing but she was sick of everything that we have to go through as CPS teachers. And I'm really lucky that I got my position back. And I knew at the end of last year that I was going to most likely lose it because I had the most experience of all of our non-tenured teachers in science.

Now, just to give you a little sense, my school we have nine science teachers and even though it looks like we might be losing maybe a hundred, maybe even 200 students, we were supposed to lose four science teachers. So that's almost half of the science teachers. And if you crunch the numbers it ends up being that we're going to need some overtime teachers but that we would not be able to offer any senior electives, and we would have class sizes of about 40. According to OSHA the limit for what could be considered safe in a science chemistry lab for one teacher is to monitor 24 students.
In addition, we're just talking about cost of teachers, we're not even talking about all the consumable costs. Our school has not had any operating funds to actually get any science supplies. We currently charge our students anywhere from $20 to $40 a year to buy these things. We got to do something and stop criminalizing our public education.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 26, Vito Greco.

If we could have speaker 27, 28 and 29 step down too.

MR. GRECO: Hi, my name is Vito Greco, I'm the chair of the Stone LSC in Rogers Park. I wanted to -- one of the things you said that I actually agreed with was that there are no magic solutions. In fact, I think the long-term solutions for the budget gap are all out there, they're all illogical things, like property taxes, changing the TIF rule so that surpluses automatically go to schools or gains in TPI automatically go to schools. Change the income tax laws. Do a financial transaction task. There are loads of solutions out there that are really obvious. And the problem that I have
with the CPS people that I talk with is that you
raise your hands up like you have no idea what
to do, you blame the problem on pension reform.
I think that you guys should spend a lot less
energy defending budgets that you know don't
work and start talking to the city and start
talking to the state. It's not all the state,
it's the city, it's a shared responsibility.
All the solutions are out there and you guys act
like you've never heard of them before or if you
haven't heard of them before I question, you
know, why are you even working on these budgets?

Now, the other thing is those are
long-term solutions. The short-term solution is
this TIF surplus. We all know, we all agree on
it. There are 32 aldermen right now that
supposedly agree that this is the right thing to
do, but the bill got put into the Rules
Committee, which is typically where bills die.
The progressive caucus is trying to use the
procedures to get that bill to a vote. So
everyone needs to put pressure on all of their
aldermen to vote for that bill. But while this
is happening the mayor and others are changing
the rules of TIFs to start creating effectively
ghost projects. They're creating projects that
don't have any beneficiaries, there are no
projects really attached to it, but they're just
sort of placeholders for the future. So what's
going to happen is when the momentum is there,
we get all the votes, he's probably going to
say, oops, there's no surplus.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Your time is expired,
please conclude.

Speaker 27, Rosemary Vega.

MS. VEGA: Woo hoo. Hello, my name is
Rosemary Vega, and I'm very happy that
Representative Greg Harris is here so he can
actually see how his people get treated when
we're asked to give our comments or to say our
concerns. We get two seconds -- two minutes
that feels like two seconds to say what we need
to say. And Mr. Winnetka here thought he was
coming to the city and get praised on what he's
doing. He was not prepared at all to encounter
this angry crowd, parents, teachers, students,
everyone here is angry. You know, the voters of
the city of Chicago are actually against school
closings and, you know, we're growing and we're
going together and we're going to make change.
And when you say that there is no magic wand to
fix this, there is one thing, there is actual
morals that you can actually say I'm going to
quit my job because this is not what people
want. So that's one solution.

When you said this budget you guys were
on the defense against who? Our kids, our
students, because they're the only ones getting
the axe, not anybody else. I don't see you
being defensive against UNO and all these
charter schools. You left my neighborhood,
Humboldt Park, with no public schools, we're
full of charter schools. So when you tell me
that you cut down underutilized schools, let me
tell you, you cut my daughter's music program
down. It was not underutilized to her. It was
her life, it was her passion and you took it.
It was not underutilized. When you -- you built
in my school, Lafayette Elementary School, you
guys put two brand new lunchrooms and a bunch of
classrooms down there, rebuilt for a Chi Arts
High School and then you come and you rip the
school and you close them.

I will talk about budget and I would
but I don't have a school anymore, you took that
from me. But can we talk about the $55 million
that you're giving DePaul, a private company or
a school that don't need it. You're taking from
the most needed to give to the ones who don't
need it.

(Whereupon, the audience was
applauding.)

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Vidalis Burgos.

MS. BURGOS: Hi, my name is Vidalis
Burgos, and I'm a student at Lincoln Park High
School. My school is facing a million-dollar
budget cut, and we've lost eight teachers, they
were hired but then un-hired again and some were
actually targeted for fighting for other
teachers.

I'm a music major at Lincoln Park and
I'm also part of the double honors program
because of budget cuts I'm also nervous that my
music program will be cut and my possibilities
of being something big will be cut and tooken
away from me. But budget cuts are also not my
1 fight. Like I fight for it, but it's not the
2 only thing I fight for. My sibling school was
3 recently closed. And, you know, it brings a lot
4 of pain to these kids because what they depended
5 on before they don't have now. They have to go
6 and deal with the new sense of bullying.
7 They've already been through bullying through a
8 Board with no heart. They have to go through
9 another stage of bullying through kids who have
10 their school who don't have to say, well, I'm
11 leaving my stuff behind to come to a new
12 neighborhood. You know, I go to Lincoln Park,
13 I'm Uptown, and we do need security, we need the
14 Safe Passage because I know that when I have
15 friends who leave the building they come back
16 and say, well, I saw this girl get robbed today
17 and this girl got shot today. So I know what
18 happens, you don't.
19 Also, another thing, you guys sit here
20 with straight faces and look at us. Do you
21 record the tears that we say or do you just
22 record the words that we say? You look at us
23 with these straight faces and you comment things
24 that hurt our hearts. You don't know my name
and I don't know yours, you know me as a number, and this number has gave you multiple money to make the CPS look good.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 29, Drew Heiserman.

MR. HEISERMAN: Hi, my name is Drew Heiserman, I'm a resident of Chicago, a taxpayer, a parent and a teacher down in Englewood. I love to see students up here advocating for themselves, that's great. Can people give her a round of applause?

(Whereupon, the audience was applauding.)

MR. HEISERMAN: And it's interesting that it takes this kind of manufactured crisis to get the students out here, and they're speaking for themselves, and this is awesome to see. I hope they continue and keep speaking up.

As I said, it's a manufactured crisis. A budget is a set of priorities. It's a political document. Whether you want to talk about numbers, et cetera, I teach math, the numbers don't add up. This is a political document, it's a set of priorities, we've all
laid out, we know what your priorities are,
they're not in the city of Chicago's public
schools, every single neighborhood school is
losing money, it's across the board. We know
it. Raise Your Hand is documenting it, all
right.

As has been said previously, these
things are a sham. The closing hearings were a
sham. I went to a lot of them, I got tired of
them. It was clear they weren't going to change
what was going to happen. What's going to
change what happens are you all right here in
this room getting out and doing the things we
need to do. Like Mr. Ritter mentioned before we
got to get rid of this mayor. It's got to
happen. Unemploy him, okay.

I was handed a sheet that looks kind of
interesting, it mentions something about a
boycott CPS on this day, Wednesday, August 28th,
it might be a good idea. It might be an
interesting idea. We're going to have to be
doing some very interesting outside-the-box
things to change the way the city runs. Clearly
Rahm and his friends are not going to do it on
their own, all right. Let's get organized
group.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 30, Hagit
Stone. If I can have speaker 31 and 32.

MS. STONE: Actually, I don't really
need a mike, but there should have been two
mikes there, okay. I'm not the spring chicken
that I was before, but I'm here with a struggle.

I just want to tell you, first of all,
ever have I been prouder of the people in this
room, the young people that spoke. This is the
type of leaders that we need.

(Whereupon, the audience was
screaming and yelling.)

MS. STONE: I've been an activist for
over 40 years. I've seen everything from school
desegregation to bilingual councils to bilingual
education being destroyed to everything. And I
certainly don't want to leave a legacy of us as
advocates for our children if we do not advocate
for them today and every time it is needed.

I looked at myself the other day and I
said, you know what, I'm not getting any
younger, but what's happening is very important
and I'm advocating or I'm pleading with people that have never ever been before involved in a struggle. This is as important as when Dr. Martin Luther King came to the City of Chicago. And if any of have seen public broadcasting, when you saw the people that were getting the hoses of water in their faces, those gashes in their faces, if it's going to take that much then our children are worth it. We must not be afraid.

(Whereupon, the audience was applauding.)

MS. STONE: -- Rahm Emanuel because he was applauded by Barack Obama. And a lot of my African American friends thought that he was a friend to the people, that he was a Democrat. Let's face it, this man is looking for money. There is a plan, the plan is to get rid of the poor and the people and the hard working people to make it to the number one city with people with a lot of money. That's what the plan is. That's why they close 53 schools. We have to wake up people, we have to smell the coffee and not be afraid. These are our children. Whether
you're white or you're brown or you're black or
you're yellow or you're red, these are our
children and harm is being done to them.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Please conclude.

MS. STONE: And I was told recently
that Rahm Emanuel already started doing his --
getting his money for his re-election. We can't
go home and say, okay, I did my duty, I went
over there. No. This anger, this anxiety has
to be fulfilled. We're not talking about
killing anybody, we're talking about defending
the rights of our children.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 32, Margarita
Miranda.

MS. STONE: Give me one second. Rahm
Emanuel is looking for money to make a bus or a
statue of former President Reagan, I'm sorry,
find the money for our schools.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Speaker 32, Margarita
Miranda.

MS. MIRANDA: My name is Margarita
Miranda, I'm a Local School Council vice chair.
CPS is trying to take away the power of the
Local School Council where the parent has the
power to defend our children, and the system is so corrupt. It's a shame. Tell them to return the money to George Manierre and all of Chicago Public schools. Thank you.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: And that concludes the FY 2014 Budget Hearings. Thank you for your comments and questions. Good night. There are no more speakers.

(Whereupon, these were all the proceedings had at this time.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS  
COUNTY OF COOK  

Karen Fatigato, being first duly sworn, on oath says that she is a court reporter doing business in the City of Chicago; and that she reported in shorthand the proceedings of said public hearing, and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of her shorthand notes so taken as aforesaid, and contains the proceedings given at said public hearing.

Karen Fatigato, CSR  
LIC. NO. 084-004072