BURNHAM PARK NETWORK COMMUNITY MEETING No. 1

February 19th, 2013
7:00 o'clock p.m.

The Report of Proceedings had in the meeting of the above-entitled cause, taken before PAMELA A. MARZULLO, a Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the County of Cook and State of Illinois, at 6045 South Michigan Avenue, February 19th, 2013, at the hour of approximately 7:00 o'clock p.m.

PRESENT:

MR. PHILLIP HAMPTON, Chief of Family and Community Engagement
MR. JOHN PRICE, Chief of Burnham Park Network
MR. ARTHUR SLATER, Chief of South Side High Schools
MR. ADAM ANDERSON, Office of Portfolio Planning & Strategy
MR. PRUITT, Deputy Chief of Schools
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PASTOR GABRIEL: Good evening, everyone. We're about to start. We would like to start with a prayer. So, first of all on behalf of the church, God has love and compassion. We thank you for bringing us together to discuss the very important issue the Chicago Public School nowadays.

We invoke your spirit to be with us. May a representative of each school able to speak up about their concerns and that their voices be heard, with wisdom, compassion, and fairness.

Let this evening be a peaceful resolution, and we ask for these prayers in the name of God in whom we service. Amen.

MR. HAMPTON: Good evening, everyone. Good evening again everyone. First we want to thank Father Gabriel for having the courage to allow us to have this meeting.

We do understand that this is a passionate issue, and we understand it's very personal for everyone; but as the gentleman described to us, we want to respect and thank Father Gabriel for allowing us and welcoming us into his place, his home. So, thank you.

Secondly, this is a large crowd, and we
wanted to insure that every school has an
opportunity to speak on his own behalf, so we want
to go ahead and start.

My name is Phillip Hampton. I'm the Chief
Officer for Family and Community Engagement for the
Chicago Public Schools. I was here for the first
meeting, and I'm here also tonight supporting this
process.

Our chief of the network, John Price, will
be leading the meeting tonight, but I want to at
least come to the microphone and, number one, thank
you for coming. Number two, beg of you that we will
be civil, understanding.

Number one, we're in a church, but also we
have children here; and if we brought our children
to conduct themselves in a respectful manner, I
would hope we would monitor that tonight. So, we
beg you on their behalf.

Our court reporter, Ms. Marzullo, is here,
and please note that every comment that is made will
be formed into a report that goes directly to our
CEO Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett.

You should know that also, Mr. Adam
Anderson, raise your hand Adam, he is responsible
for putting to the information that is in your hand that spells out the criteria and has the list of all the schools in the network.

We want to be respectful and please allow us to give us two minutes so we can explain to you how we get to this point. Mr. Anderson is going to do that; and then finally, we will call each of you up.

Those that are designated speakers from the schools, you have five minutes. You can use those however you want with your speakers. We have a number of schools here, and it's our intent to have every school tonight have this opportunity.

The microphone is here. There will be a time keeper, just to encourage you to follow the process, not on our behalf, on behalf of all the speakers who will be following you. Okay?

So, again, thank you so much. The first thing we would like to do before we have John Price come up, is we want to invite our public officials that are here. We have two Alderman. I see Alderman Pat Dowell coming in the room. I also understood Alderman Willie Cochran is here.

Alderman Cochran, we're going to go in the
order of how they entered in the room.

Alderman Cochran, I invite to have

comment, Alderman Cochran of the 20th Ward.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN COCHRAN: Well, thank you all for that

warm reception. Excuse me with the cold whether, I

have my sinuses run.

I'm here because schools, school

performance, school attendance, schools make a

difference in the lives of our children and the

outcomes of our community.

Hearing what you have to say, keeping the

schools open in our communities, are a very, very

priority for me. My connections with the schools go

far beyond this issue this year. Since I've been

Alderman over the last six years, education has been

one of my most important areas.

I don't want any schools in the 20th Ward

closed, none, because we know how to make them work.

We know how important it is -- way to go.

We know how important it is to bring

institutions, teachers, unions, private businesses

to the table to support the needs of our school, and

what everyone should be doing, bringing partnerships
in our school, demonstrating that we have the
capacity to have our schools have regular capacity.

   We know that lower classroom numbers work
well, and it tells us that lower classroom numbers
work well in our communities, not 40, not 38
students in a classroom.

   We know that transportation getting to and
from schools are the key for us to get to the best
schools that we have, even if they're not in our
communities; but most of all, we want our local
schools to perform well.

   We want the monies that could be invested
into those local public schools to perform well. I
believe in offering a number of different options,
whether it be a Catholic school, a public school, a
charter school.

   People should have choices, but it
shouldn't come off the backs of the local schools.

So, I support you. I want to thank you all for
giving me an opportunity to speak. Thank you very
much.

   MR. HAMPTON: Thank you, Alderman. Next
Alderman Pat Dowell from the 3rd Ward.
ALERMAN DOWELL: Thank you, Phil. While it looks good out there, I'm glad to see the community come out. This is the way all of our community meetings should be, but especially tonight when we're dealing with schools.

Now, I said a lot to CPS already. For those of you who were here last week or the last we were here, you heard me talk about my approach to the schools and what's going on in this city.

But what I want to say this evening is to let you know from the last meeting that we had, I have met with and talked to each and every principal, within the Pershing and the Burnham network.

We are coming up with the best arguments that we can make, looking at all the little rules that CPS has, we're going to try to make the argument to keep all of our schools open. I want to thank the parents who have reached out to me who have given me their perspective.

I want to thank the members of the Bronzeville Community Action Council, Co-Co, and all the other organizations that have given me input in
this process; and I plan to be a strong advocate for all of the schools in the Burnham Task Network that I could be.

Now, I have to be honest, the reality is that we've lost population in Chicago on the south side of the city. I heard some grumbling about that, but that's a fact. So, I'm going to be doing what I can to save every school that I can; and for those schools that I am unable to save, we're going to make sure that the receiving schools, or wherever they go, get all the resources they need, academic supports, the social supports, the technology, the books, all the things that CPS has divested in our schools in the past going forward, that just can't be the case.

I expect all of you all to stand up with me, and your other aldermen in this city, to make that happen, because they work for us. I work for you, and together we could do what we need to do to make our schools great places for our young people who have already too many obstacles in their way. Schools cannot be another obstacle. They have to be supported for our children. So, I want to thank you all for coming, and let's get this
MR. HAMPTON: Thank you, Alderman. We appreciate we know it's crowded. We just appreciate everyone squeezing in, especially allowing as many ladies, many of our women, to allow them a seat, if you can. So, squeeze in if you can. We appreciate that.

Next we'll have the order that we started, and right away we're going to have chief John Price come on up to the mic.

MR. SLATER: Good evening. I would like to introduce Adam Anderson, Office of Planning and Strategy.

MR. ANDERSON: Good evening, everybody. I'm going to be very brief. First I want to narrate the things to Pastor Gabriel to allow us to use the space. Also, on behalf of CEO Byrd-Bennett, I want to thank each and every one of you that are here today, teachers, parents school leaders, community, most importantly students.

These conversations we know are difficult. We know that everybody in this many room up here, everybody out there, we know that we all believe every child should and can receive a high-quality
education, and that's why we're here. So, thank you
to the parents and the students.

The one thing I want to quickly walk
through is the handout that everybody should have
received today. There's two sides. I'm going to
very quickly talk about the purpose of each side.

The front, which has a list of schools on
the left-hand side, a set of schools on the
right-hand side, outline for the Burnham Park
network where we started this conversation and where
the conversation currently stands.

The middle is a set of criteria that we
don't need to spend much time on, but know that that
criteria was defined based on a number of
conversations that we had, including the last
meeting.

So, for example, we heard things across
the city like if we recently receive students from
another closure, we should not be under
consideration. So, a school like Beethoven was
removed from consideration because of that.

Now that is less important, I understand,
to those of you that are in the room tonight,
because there are 24 schools that remain under
consideration, and that's what the purpose of tonight is.

I want to emphasize one point before we move to the back of the page. The 24 schools that are listed are not currently recommended for closure, and they will not all be recommended for closure.

Tonight is a continuation of the conversation. We want to hear more from each and every one of you, and we welcome ongoing input beyond tonight.

The final recommendations will be made by March 31st; and then if action is proposed on your school, there will still be three more meetings after March 31st before the final vote. So, there is still a number of opportunities to speak. So, I want to reiterate tonight is a continuation of the conversation.

So, what is that conversation? I want to flip to the back. This will be the last point I'll make. I want to make sure to state that for the 24 schools that are here, you are not under consideration because we did not hear from you the first time. We heard everything that was said.
We've been tracking it. We got a court reporter. We've had note takers in the breakout sessions. We heard you also talk about there being partnerships. We heard great talk about the potential impact on your special education programs. We heard you talk about the unique ways they are using their space. We have heard these things, and we are continuing to consider them. Tonight is not about a repeat of that conversation. Tonight is about the questions that are outlined on the bottom of the page. These are the questions that CEO Byrd-Bennett has specifically asked to hear more about each school from, and I want to make sure to draw your attention to my last point to the last question. While all of the questions are important, we do want to emphasize that we want to hear anything else about your school that's not captured in these questions, that you think is important that you want to share. So, again, thank you all for coming. I know that everything that is said tonight is important as we go through the process. This is an
ongoing conversation; and most importantly, we thank
you for continuing to come and communicate with us.
Thank you.

MR. SLATER: Again, my name is John Price of
the Chief of Schools for the Burnham Park Elementary
Network. I'm going to be calling the schools to
speak this evening.

For the speakers, if you do have notes, or
anything written that you can turn into us, that
would become part of the transcript, we would
appreciate that and help us keep a better record.

The first three schools that come to the
microphone in order, the first three schools Dumas,
Wadsworth and Till. Dumas will be first.

SCHOOL: DUMAS

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Armani
Harris. I'm in seventh grade at Dumas Academy. As
a successful student to attend Dumas Technology
Academy, I know that my school has had to take very
intelligent children from community for the Woodlawn
community.

First, I want to convey that I really love
this school, and I do not want to see students who
have the potential become world changes, have to
risk their lives traveling to a new school, crossing territories filled with gang violence.

Secondly, I want to mention the statistics that prove the intelligence our students withhold. As an entire school, K through 8, our NWEA scores increased 39 percent in reading, starting at 21 percent in the fall and jumping to 50 percent in winter.

In middle school specifically, my peers and I achieved having 70 percent meeting or exceeding our benchmark in reading, and 57 percent meeting or exceeding in math.

This is a dramatic climb for our school's total success. Dumas doesn't deserve to close to little facts on a sheet of paper. These are some missed facts: Over the past years, ISAT scores have increased from 30 percent to 57 percent. Help us to maintain our teachers from September to June. Our suspensions are down at a 43 percent, due to the supports of our partnerships and new student interventions.

Our schools have 29 rooms with 24 occupied with core and special classes. Our parent enrollment has increased 50 percent over the past
six years. We have three full-day pre-K classrooms, and over 100 students receiving additional service to support their learning. I can go on.

We as a community encourage you not to close our school, but rather to improve where needed. It's not worth it. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is DeAndre Short. I'm the director for Riah International Foundations. We have a monitoring program that works directly with Dumas Technology, but I don't stand before you today as a representative of Riah.

I stand before you as a representative of the Woodlawn community, and I stand before you as Dumas being one my home schools.

I'm since working in Dumas since June of last year. We have built a community, we have built a culture. I just want to let you know the things we've done to do that.

As Armani said, we have increased suspension percent, and that is in compliance with the 50 percent of CPS back scores.

Three ways we've done that. Riah Foundation has created a mentoring programs that personally invest, identify and support kids with
social and emotional needs.

Another way we've done it, we've created a PASS program, which is positive alternative to in-school suspensions, which would prevent kids from getting out of school suspensions, but given an opportunity to still learn within the class session, still learn in the school day, being mentored but also being disciplined for any disciplinary behaviors.

We also created peace circles. What we have on Mondays and Thursdays is each child is able to sit in a core community of their a classroom, and even with their own gender group, and discuss issues that are important to them; and over that time, I've seen the community flourish. I've seen the morale of the classrooms grow. Students are feeling more comfortable, things that are very important to us.

One last thing, since working at Dumas, I've learned that there are teachers who have students, who have children of their own, who their colleagues teach. I've never been to a school where teachers allow their own students, or their own children, to be taught by their colleagues.
I think that shows that we are a family.

I think that shows we are a community.

As you make your decision, please remember that you are not only closing a school, but will be disrupting a community; and more than that, you will be dividing a family. On behalf of Dumas, thank you.

SCHOOL:  WADSWORTH

SPEAKER:  Good evening. My name is Pamela Jernigan. I'm the LSC chairperson of Wadsworth School. This is my son who is already a fourth grader, principal scholar, 99 percent in reading on ISAT last year with a perfect score of 97 percent.

I speak for all the parents of Wadsworth school when I tell you that if you close our school, you will be jeopardizing our children's safety by requiring them to walk across gang territory.

Why would you endanger our children?

That's not right. Why would you make our children walk into a high-crime area with child molesters and pedophiles. Tell me why is that?

You are also considering to send our children to local level 3 failing schools. That is against Illinois School Code Section 34-225.
You are denying the rights of our children to a quality education. You have implemented a failure curriculum and blame schools for test scores being low.

You deny the rights of children when you take public dollars to fund privately-run academic institutions where there is no accountability, and parents are not on governing boards, and you have the audacity to blame neighborhood schools for lower enrollment.

Closing schools, while overcrowding others, is not the answer. In fact, the most notable class size reduction study, the student-teacher achievement ratio revealed that the positive effect of small class sizes work greatest for black students, economically disadvantaged students, and boys.

How can those schools pursue their right to happiness when you have set them up to fail?

Everyone, I am telling you, CPS is stealing our children's education, killing their dreams and destroying their future for the sake of privatizing education.

CPS, I am telling you today that we the
people of Wadsworth School are holding you accountable for disenfranchising our students. It is unjust and not right. We are not going to allow closure of our school.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Reverend Ralph Tolbert. I am the assistant pastor at Merchas High School Christian Methodist Episcopal Church 4310 South Champagne.

I'm here tonight on behalf of our presiding elder of the Chicago jurisdiction, the 18 Christian Methodist Episcopal Churches here in Chicago, to oppose these school closings in general, and to oppose Wadsworth closing specifically.

A number of issues are very germane to the situation specifically at Wadsworth. A memo dated January 30th, 2009, two principal closing from K Foulks AOI and Josh Adelmen.

This is letter was directed to the principal telling her the benefits of them reducing Wadsworth School and taking the sixth, seventh and eighth graders from Wadsworth school.

In this memo, at bottom of the memo, it says, "There is a better chance that Wadsworth will not be closed or consolidated in the near future,
because the building will be operating efficiently, and academic performance will likely increase."

The building is at full capacity. The building is operating efficiently. There is no reason to consolidate Wadsworth children and to separate families.

Additionally in this memo, approximately on the second page, it says, "As one of your arguments you gave to our principal to not oppose taking her sixth, seventh and eighth graders, you say Wadsworth Schools will also have the opportunity to potentially attend pre-K through 12 in the same location if they apply and are accepted into the University of Chicago Woodlawn Campus.

Now you are taking that away from them. You have families at this building who have children from K through 8, and now you want to take the first through fifth graders and send them somewhere else?

Do you really think that families are going to allow their younger children to walk by themselves, without the sixth, seventh and eighth grade brothers and sisters? Do you think that's safe? Do you think that's right?

The integrity of the CPS Board is at
stake. You make promises, you make meetings statements, and then walk away and change the decision.

We are holding you to your word. Do not close Wadsworth. Do not transfer their citizens.

SCHOOL: EMMET TILL

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Julie Corse (phonetic). I'm speaking as CPS parent and also a teacher at Emmitt Till. I've been a teacher Emmitt Till for the past 15 years.

I've been through changes in different programs, administration at all levels and staff, but the constant that remains is the positive learning experiences that our students at Till receive.

One of the best ways is to show this is through a story about one of my third grade students. He began working with me the beginning of last year, and was a non-reader with very limited reading skills.

Today, only a year-and-a-half later, the student has made a two-year growth in reading. He is more confident in his abilities and is able to read independently and has actually the most
important thing developed a love for reading.

He is just one of the many other students
who have shown this type of awesome growth and
success here at Till. This is only one example why
Emmitt Till is a flourishing school that should
remain open.

Our ISAT data over the past three years
has increased in reading by 11 percent, and in math
by 16 percent. Our current path is showing clearly
that students are making growth in both reading and
math, while many are also on target to eventually be
performing either at or above grade level.

We pat ourselves in what we have done with
our RTI programs for many of our students who they
just need extra support. We service over 100
students through RTI through the assistant 44
program, which is intense reading intervention.

We have additional pullouts tutoring
taking place. We have team meetings weekly to
review data, minor progress to determine next steps
tore these students.

Besides test scores, which we all know are
just as utmost importance, we are educating the
whole child. We have sports, flag football,
basketball, the boys and girls pom-pom, after-school programs such as parent tutoring, Boys and Girls Mentoring, Action Reading Programs, SES, Freedom School, hip-hop, art club science, club and family movies nights, game nights literacy night honor roll incentives.

Taking all of this into consideration, the programs we offer, the growth we're continuing to make, the dedication of our administration, Our teachers or students and our community, the history of the school is a staple the Woodlawn community.

The closing of Emmitt Till would have traumatic affect on our students and their families.

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hello everybody. My name is Dr. Helena Yiuota, and I'm the school psychologist assigned at Emmitt Till, where I have been working for almost three years.

Tonight, I want to read you the unheard voices of the students. In my role as a school psychologist, I work with students who have academic and emotional difficulties.

Frequently, behind their academic struggles, there are emotional difficulties and
dramatic experiences. When I interview the
students, I literally ask them what they want to be
when they grow up.

Their response is chilling. "I do not
know if I will grow up" or "I do not know if I will
live to be 20 years old."

Later in the interview, it is revealed
that their friend, or a friend of their friend, or
their cousin or their uncle, or their family got
shot.

These students are surrounded by violence.
They, at times, are not allowed to play outside
their houses or in the street, because their parents
are afraid they will loose them.

These students walk to school in the
mornings, very often holding hands with their
siblings or their mothers. The neighborhood school
is their safety zone. It is the school that quite
often their parents attended.

Their school has become their family.
Closing their school for them will be a traumatic
experience, another thing they cannot understand or
explain. It will be like getting rid their life
vest in a sea of violence.
Where are they going to go? Where else
can they walk to school in the mornings? In Emmitt
and in the Woodlawn area, there were 40 homicides in
2011 and 22 homicides in 2012.

As you know, as educators, when children
carry trauma with them, they cannot learn easily.
They need help to understand and heal.

At Emmett, with Mr. Asiyanbi's, our
principal's encouragement, we have implemented
interventions to help the children, and we have seen
them grow.

I urge Dr. Bennett and the board to think
about the scars these children carry in them, and it
is a disruption to their fragile lives.

Before you make your final decision to
close the school, these children need your support.
We need your support, and any help. Thank you for
listening.

SPEAKER: Good evening to everyone that's here,
to the board. I've I come to stand alone. I'm a
part of the Till family. I need you all to stand up
in the back.

We didn't come to represent ourselves
alone. My name is Rita a Johnson. I am the
instructor aide at Till school. I'm also a former alumni, a parent and presently a grandmother.

I come from three generations that came from that school. That is a 100 plus years. I said, "We're not going to sit back and start schools closing." You understand?

I see my parents, grandparents, heard back then or the civil right movement. I didn't expect myself right here to be fighting and coming to the Board of Education for the rights of our children in our schools.

Our communities are dangerous. They say to me, "We're going to make sure your kids get from point A to point B. We can't see and protect our children to a store.

So, my job right here to you is I believe that I mentioned to you, as this school right here is flourishing. Come take a look. Come and look at it. Come and let look at our art department. Come look at the team program we have.

And also I pose one of the best ones in the city. Come look and see what we're doing here at Emmitt. I say to you we do not kill the eagle with the sword.
That is what is happening to our schools right here. So, I say to you where a heart is pumping in the body, don't kill it. I beg you do not close our school. You look at the best team of people right here. Thank you.

MR. SLATER: The next three schools I would like to call are Fisk, Firmi and Sexton. Fisk, Firmi and Sexton.

SCHOOL: FISK

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Shirley Calhoun. I am PAC person LSD vice-chair assistant parent coordinator.

Most of all, I am an active member of the John Fisk community. I am also under the leadership of WCPC, an organization that supports the growth ran transformation of the Woodlawn community.

I stand before you as a community stakeholder in John Fisk survival. By closing our school, that means that our children have to cross into gang activity.

Now, let's talk about the homicide. You have the map. To the southwest of our school, the homicide rate is 70 percent. To the southeast of our school, the homicide range is 30 percent. Gang
activity in every area but the areas surrounding our school.

If you close our school, all the Woodlawn schools, where will you send our children? So that you guarantee me that they will not be shot or killed?

We have an education plan. We have WCIP and emergency management plan. We have committee action plans to close the achievement gap.

What is your plan to invest in our schools, and keep our children safe, and keep our schools open, so that they can attend and achieve their education? Most of all, keep them safe in the community where they were born and raised.

You have the map. Once again, now I leave that on your hearts and hands. The blood is on you.

SCHOOLS: WOODLAWN

SPEAKER: According to the recent data, 79 percent -- hello, my name is Alder Shields (Phonetic). I'm in eighth grade at John Fisk Elementary School.

According to the recent data, 79 percent of the students in area Woodlawn Schools met the standards in math, which is one percent above the
Chicago average.

77 percent of the students met or exceeded the standards in reading, which Chicago average is 79 percent. At Woodlawn, 414 percent of the students feel safe outside and around their school.

So, if we don't feel safe around our school now, what makes you think sending us across Chicago to another school will make us feel any safer?

Right now, our schools are on the list for closure. Sending our peers and I across Chicago's gang infested streets will make us even more nervous and vulnerable to gang silence.

The tenth grade is 90 percent in the Woodlawn area. If we go to different schools outside of our neighborhood, the attendance rate will drop due to excessive tardiness and absences.

I want to be an entrepreneur one day. I want to be successful. I don't want to be afraid to go to school, especially in a neighborhood that is unfamiliar to me.

If my school closes, I will definitely have to ride the bus. What do you suggest we do, if we can't afford to get there some days?

My parents don't have expenses going to
preschool. When I graduate, my little sister will have to take the bus by herself while my parents go to work.

Right now, we walk to school together because it's in our community. When I go to high school, I don't want my sister to feel defenseless on the bus and feel alone and have to deal with strangers. What if my sister gets hurt or killed because she has to start taking the bus?

If a school closes down, students have to come to my school, it puts my parents and I at risk of getting into altercations for stupid misunderstandings.

At John Fisk, we don't have fights like that because every one knows each other. However, new students coming to our school, this will change. We might have to deal with bigger problems like gang rivalry, cheating and bullying.

If Burnham schools have rival gang bangers, how am I to know my safety is assured. How are you going to be able to afford more security guards, because now at John Fisk we only have one?

If they come to John Fisk, how are you supposed to protect all of us? We want to feel safe
in the school because we are supposed to be a safe
haven.

We want to be able to be safe at school
because we come to learn, and we can't learn one
thing if we were constantly concerned about our
safety.

Closing down our school is bad enough, but
you're trying to close all the schools in the
Woodlawn area, and I live in the Woodlawn area.
The school I attend how will I get far
away when you are not providing transportation? I
want stay at school. My parents don't have the
money to pay for expenses.
The Supreme Court decision Brown versus
the Board of Education guarantees quality education.
Back then they had to have an education in black
schools inside the community.
The same as we have to battle against
these gangs. It's 2013. Things are supposed to get
better, and I am wondering are we going backwards or
forwards?

SCHOOL: FIRMI

SPEAKER: Hello. I'm Dr. Margaret Policastro,
Professor of Language at L and L at Roosevelt
University.

I just want to share with you some thoughts. Over past three years, we've been working with Firmi, as part of a partnership from a grant with the Illinois Board of Higher Education; and to date, we have just been funded under $1 million for Firmi and other schools at Woodlawn.

This grant has provided amazing ongoing professional development in literacy. The teachers at Firmi have the equivalent or are working towards the equivalent of the Master's Degree in reading.

Which now we're focusing on professional development on the common core state standards.

This grant has provided Firmi schools to establish the literacy team.

This literacy I team now focuses on differentiating instruction for all the children in the school. In addition, the grant is providing enormous resources for the children, the teachers and the parents.

As a result of all of this, test scores have gone up at Firmi School. And most importantly, we have been able to watch the children grow into readers, writers and thinkers.
I just say from the bottom of my heart, in my 35 years of working in schools, that I have never seen such amazing professional learning community with such dedicated administration and teachers. Please don't close Firmi School. Change takes three to five years or more, and we are just getting started.

SPEAKER: Hello, everybody. I am out here this evening regarding Firmi Elementary. I was a former student here. Mr. Marburger here is my teacher. I currently attend Hyde Park High School in the IB program. To me, Firmi was not just a school, it was home.

I think I spent more time at Firmi than I did my own house. They have activities for us to attend. Art club was my favorite activity while attending Firmi. Art club gave me an opportunity to be creative in a peaceful environment. Ms. Diamond, my art teacher, became one of my favorite teachers in the school, because she pushed me to expand my thought through art.

I had the opportunity to tutor younger children, kindergarten, first grade in a program that I was in. This helped me improve their
vocabulary skills and for them to become more fluent with their reading.

They also helped me gain patience and leadership skills that I currently use today. Firmi prepared me for High School, because I learned a lot of things, such as dissection of fish and frogs, algebra, reading the novel the Boy in the Striped Pajamas.

Dissecting fish and frogs helped me to understand how bodies works and the many functions of body systems. At Firmi, I was taught how to talk solve and graph equations.

This is helped me a lot because now I am far ahead of my fellow classmates. Reading the Boy in the Striped Pajamas has opened a new historic world to me in understanding the Holocaust.

In addition to all of these things that I've spoke about, I met a lot of Firmi staff where I formed relationships.

For instance, I have strong relationship with one of my teachers, Ms. Elzy. She is like a second mom. She checked my report cards and progress records. She corrected my grammar when I had my moments, and she is a major role model for
Another important person in my life was my eighth grade teacher, Mr. Marburger. He has had a big impact in my life, because he pushed me further than I would push myself.

He always told me that be model classmate. We have the potential to be successful, but it's not going to come like that. We have to work for it.

Now I have motivation and hopes. So, as you can see, I learned a lot from Firmi. This is why Firmi can't close, because if Firmi closes, where will I go when I need advice? Where will I go when I need someone to talk to? Where will I go when I need help.

You said it's about students, well where would they go.

SPEAKER: Good point. I have a child that attends Firmi. My name is Calvin Watson. I'm here tonight because I received a notice that our school is about to close. When I received that notice, it actually shocked me. I felt real bad.

The first thing came to mind was, "Oh, my God." Why? Because without that school, I would be in trouble. I am a single parent, and I have to
take my son to school and pick him up in the afternoon, so I don't have anyone to help me other than Firmi at the moment.

At the moment I would like to tell you a little bit about my child. He's an emotional child. As you know, he suffers from ADHD, and he has impulsive reaction to do things that other children really don't do.

So, I want to tell you this here, but tonight I can say that through Firmi Elementary School, I can see real progress. I see a lot of hope for the last two years they really helped him learn to be constructive and productive.

So, I really can't give my speech. I wrote this. Now I have a happy child that goes to school. So my message to you all tonight, Firmi is the best school I ever came in contact with.

It's very productive and provides proper services needed to child and who can ask for more from a school. So, parents, fathers and mothers if you hear my voice, my name is Jeremy. We need to stick up for our children's future.

We're losing our children to the street from violence. The only hope we have is the school.
So, I don't know what exactly we need to do, but we need to pull together and do this. CPS, I appreciate it if you all take all this under consideration. I am a concerned parent. Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Bruce Thomas. This is my fourth year as one member of a five-member volunteer team at Firmi Elementary.

I also represent a team of three people called the Vulnerable Student Initiative, and we're helping schools strengthen its capacity to work with challenging children.

As a Firmi partner, I've got my feet planted in Firmi's present and future. It's the future I want to talk about. If Firmi is closed, that future is amputated.

Current policies and practices notwithstanding, turning around a school in authentic and durable ways takes a long time and a lot of commitment.

My roots my commitment to this school is that Firmi has a mission in special education, but also has a larger vision of making and education special for all students. Under one of the paths to that goal is building a network of external
partners, and we're doing that with groups like Urban Rebuild, Theater Gate's arts-based initiative and Growing Homes and Growing Power, to urban initiatives.

Making education special for every child will be to write a truly remarkable chapter in the annals of urban education. Firmi has a large and continuously growing community of people and the organizations committed to their vision.

No one thinks it will be easy. No one wants to be surgically cut off from trying.

SPEAKER: All right. I'm teacher at Firmi, and I work with some of these amazing people. We have a amazing students. There are to things I want to speak about real quickly.

First off, Firmi is a cluster site for special education. We have three different classrooms that service these children. Two classrooms are for intellectual disability students, students that were formerly known as trainable mentally handicapped.

We also have an early childhood special education program. These students are part of our community and, our students are respected in our
community by our gen ed students.

Now, when you look at the utilization, we are at 73 percent. When you do the math, according to federal and state law, using CPS's formula, they are not taking into account that in some of our classrooms we can only have 15 students or 13 students, or even 8 students, that is law.

It's a beautiful law we are at 73 percent utilized. I know other schools are in the same situation. The thing is we have three-and-a-half years, South Shore Fine Arts moved into our building.

We were told that we would not be closed, we would not be moved, and that we would remain as a strong school in our neighborhood. We were told that students would not be stolen from us. That's happened.

These are promises that have not been kept by CPS. We keep our promise every day. We come to teach our babies. Our parents keep their promise every day when they come and bring their babies to us to make sure that we keep this promise.

We've kept ours. Please keep yours.
Good evening. My name is Daphne Alspy (Phonetic). I am a college awareness of A.O. Sexton Elementary School. Our academic goal is to be a tier 1 school, which is spearhead by our mission and envision which every child, every circumstance, onward to college.

College readiness is the state goal. Our college readiness idea begins with building our scholars' academic skills, so they feel confident that they can achieve any task given to them, and its extended to my classroom of scholars from preschool through eighth grade practice critical reading skills, public speaking skills.

They are taught how to study. They are taught how to take notes. We call that note taking. They are taught and they practice on the resolution illusion of these habits.

Professional development occurs weekly in our meetings and is based on data where we have identified students for interventions and academic support. Teachers and staff meet all initiatives through the support and guidance of our awesome new administration.
Sexton is in line with state standards.

Our enrollment is steadily increasing. The foundation of our reading has begun. With the help of WCPS and midwest CPSC expansion, we now have two full preschool day-school programs.

Our balance literacy approach and loose framework will catapult put us into our future success. Sexton is a home of future college graduates.

SPEAKER: Hello. My same Latashia and I represent A.O. Sexton. I'm a parents Of A.O. Sexton. We ask you not to close the door of our schools. So far we've been succeeding with change.

We succeed with success. If you close our doors and send our children to different areas and close our school, you are going to have the biggest dropout rate in Chicago history. That's guaranteed.

Our kids are college readiness. These schools support special kids at A.O. Sexton. We ask you not to close our school. Keep the doors open to our school. All right?

A.O. Sexton had a turnaround. We have more students than we had last year. We have new teachers. We have a new principal that we are proud
Do not send our kids to a danger zone, an unsafe zone. Let our kids remain where they at. We ask you to come visit. We sent you an invitation. We extend you a visitation to A.O. Sexton 1620 South Langley.

SPEAKER: Good evening. I'm a teacher parent administration. My name is Marilyn Harper. I'm here today to speak on behalf of A.O. Sexton. I'm an involved parent who have two children that attend Sexton.

It would affect our children and our community if A.O. Sexton would close. They would have to walk further to the next available school through abandon buildings, high crime areas.

Teachers, counselors and staff are instrumental in inspiring our children to not settle on simply graduating from high school, but becoming future college scholars.

We need more schools at Sexton that provide a safe haven with pride and commitment to each and every child. By keeping A.O. Sexton open, this will be our first step in keeping our children to be the best, but the most outstanding educators,
teachers and staff. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name Avyyance Williams. I'm a sixth grade scholar at A.O. Sexton, home of future college graduates where every day is training day.

I don't think it would be fair to close down our schools that I've been going to since I've been in preschool. If you close my school, that means whatever school I go to, I would have to make new friends, and I will be very uncomfortable.

I catch the bus to school every day because I like Sexton. Some of the advantages I have at Sexton are being in a foreign language club, being on the basketball team, and I am in a leadership program. We now have art and college awareness, also music and gym.

We are getting to know about college at a young age. We take college field trips. Our former field trip was to U.I.C. and U of C. You shouldn't close our school that you just remodeler. So, as a scholar of A.O. Sexton, I ask please don't close my school. Thank you.

MR. SLATER: The next three schools that we'll here from are Canter, Reavis and Ross. Canter,
Reavis and Ross.

SCHOOL: BETSY ROSS

SPEAKER: My name is a Chamara McKinney. My name is Koyakie Anderson. Before we start our speech, we want to say our pledge at Betsy Ross.

I pledge to Betsy Ross as a place to learn and grow. I believe in being fair and honest to everyone I know. To show respect and kindness to everyone I meet. To show responsibility, to work hard each year. To strive to be the best that I can be so I succeed in my school family.

My name is Koyakie Anderson and I'm Chamara McKinney. We are students at Betsy Ross Elementary. We would like to keep our cool open because we are learning a lot and accelerating with our scores.

Also, our teachers and principal care where our futures are headed. If Betsy Ross closes, there will be no other safe school for the students of Betsy Ross to attend.

Last, but not least, our schools is open seven days a week because our teachers care, and they care about where we go. Please don't shut us down.
SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Ethel Ducay, and I'm a proud teacher at Betsy Ross Elementary School. I am a product of CPS. I attended Stanton University, and I am National Board Certified Teacher, along with other teachers at Ross.

Several us have Master's Degrees as well, and I'm working this year to make sure we have high qualified teachers -- there are high qualified teachers in heightened areas who want to be here, who chose to be at this school.

I look at the data, and I see that our school is listed to be underutilized; however, as I someone mentioned before, smaller class size is key to student success. Students will thrive and be college readiness. Students have learned from pre-K how to select a college, how to look for a scholarships.

They are engaging in the library or field trips to Roosevelt University, to Northwestern University, have hopes and dreams attending Yale University as well.

I hear a lot of conversation about test scores and, yes, all although those are important, I
think the testing is the key to students need to be able to have accountability for their own education, and that's something we do at Betsy Ross Elementary School.

If students have questions, if it's not in the curriculum, we was put that aside and we meet their needs. We show them how to learn an search in the classroom.

What I'm notice, and this is black history month, I think about reconstruction. It seems as though our schools are going through this phase of reconstruction starting at 1865 and allegedly ending in 1877.

However, I think about how the civil rights movement a hundred or so years later came about, and how we're trying to define schools two or three to five years to putting a moratorium on school closures for five years.

I believe that is unrealistic. I strongly believe that these schools in our communities need to stay open. Otherwise, these students are going to appear themselves to the detriment of our students.

Everyone here is working hard tirelessly
rooting for their schools. We need to get the rid
of the violence. We need to see CPC people out
here, too. Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Theresa Harrington. I'm a
middle school teacher at Betsy Ross Elementary
School. I know I am here to speak for Betsy Ross
and keep Betsy Ross open, and that's what I want
more than anything.

But as I sit here, I am filled with such
pride after 20 years of teaching in three different
states to be a teacher on the south side of Chicago,
to hear all these teachers fighting for their kids,
all these parents fighting for their children.

These teachers, we all here, are doing
everything we can to keep our children safe and
educate them. Working harder than most teachers in
this state and in this country. Please listen to
what we're saying.

At Betsy Ross, when I looked at the
criteria that you wanted to hear tonight, one thing
think you want to hear is about our administrators.
We have terrific assistant principal and our
principal as recruited from Cleveland two-and-a-half
years ago, because he is an excellent Ph.D.
administrator.

He is an amazing man who our children look
at as a father figure. He is here two-and-a-half
years. He is -- give him a chance to be the man
that he was asked to be to turn this school around.
Give him the next year. He has made
amazing strides. When you walk in that building,
the whole thing is painted. It is immaculate, it's
clean. The kids feel safe. Our schools are so
safe, our kids come to our school. Come to our
school in the afternoon. They come on Saturday.

When they see cars there on Saturday and
Sunday, kids from other schools come with their
basketballs and say, "Is the gym open?" Because
they know it's safe and clean.

They want to be at Betsy Ross. The other
thing I just wanted to say, we all know that the
relationship we build in our children is of the most
important thing.

We have children who come, and they tell
us, "I was walking home yesterday and I saw someone
who got shot." We all taught talked to these
children. When and if they have to be switched to
another school, that relationship that has been
built is going to be cut and slaughtered, and that
trust that needs to be there to teach these children
is going to be lost.

It's going to take another year to gain
it. You think your scores are going to improve?
Your scores are going to go tanking and it will be a
year for it to be safe to learn again. Please keep
our schools open.

SCHOOL: REAVIS

SPEAKER: Hi. My name an Angela Hampton, and
I'm an alumni and graduate. My son is an alumni at
Reavis and currently an employee at Reavis. I have
seen heard and been a part of anything and
everything that Reavis.

We have worked hard to make sure our kids
in our neighborhood get what they need at Reavis.
We have a full health clinic. We have before-school
progressing. We have after-school programming.

We have mental and physical services that
can take care of the needs of our schools and the
community. I know the parents of the kids, the
grandparents of the kids, and many of the
make-believe cousins and best trends.

Reavis takes care of all of them. It is
an anchor in the community. If you close Reavis, you will not only hurt the students, you will be hurting generations of family.

Help us create a next year of our family with this new leadership that they deserve.

Academic priority and goals are Chicago Reading Framework, intervention in reading and math, EPIS.

We currently have a school-wide intervention block that provides our students with 45 additional minutes of reading or math interventions per day. Common planning time supports our focus on common core standards and our school-wide PBI behavior management program.

Support our college-going culture of excellence. We currently have a new principal and assistant principal; and although there are new staff members on board, 50 percent of them have been a Reavis for at least two years.

A small percentage have been at Reavis more than ten years. Our professional family focuses independent reading and small instruction.

All full and half-day professional developments are dedicated to building capacity in those areas.

Many of our students are homeless or
double-up living situations. Our students have a
variety of social, emotional needs, which are being
met through the wrap-around services that are
available throughout our site and our health center
and our social worker provides support daily. Thank
you.

SPEAKER: My name is Lauren Campbell. I'm a
parent of a first grader and the LSE chair at Reavis
Elementary. I'm here to represent the students and
the parents of Reavis Elementary.

We are -- Reavis is trending upward
academically. Our AWA and reading shows an increase
from 3.85 in math, an increase 4.8 overall average
of 50 percent of our students meet their growth in
reading and math.

We understand that Reavis is currently
underutilized, but as we look at what is actually in
place at Reavis, we know that five classrooms should
be taken out of the equation due to the current use.

We have a school-based health center that
takes up two rooms. We have an office for our
community school staff that is important to our
culture and climate, and we have two reading, math
learning labs.
We have learned that numbers -- we have looked at the numbers and realize there is 300 plus students that reside in our attendance boundaries that we do not currently attend Reavis.

We plan to target these students with intent outreach and improvement, which you received the packets to see the six-point strategy that we have planned for that.

Reavis is one of two elementary schools of art in our community that has a school-based health center, which is $1 million have been invested. Our health center not only provides service for Reavis students, parents and community members, it also provides services to surrounding schools and was an instrumental in helping in school gain medical compliance this school year.

This school year Reavis, and our community partners QCDC was awarded the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant to continue to strengthen our support and network for our students and our families.

We have a network of strong partnership through our elev8 day program. The program has leveraged over $250,000. QCDC, our community
partner, is a lead agency with the Local Initiative Support Corporation, who has committed to -- who is committed to the continuing support of Reavis partnership.

Reavis is isolated geographically in the community, as it relates to other elementary schools, which according to the latest CPS report is one of the criteria for being removed from the list.

The location of Reavis and the level of violence in the community are a major concern as we are about -- as we are about thinking of the possibility of our students having to walk and take the bus to schools and maybe crossing gang lines and crossing into different communities. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone. My name is Alicia Jefferson. I'm affectionally known as Miss Alicia. I'm a graduate from both Thomas J. Higgins Academy and Christian Finger High School class of 1984 and '88 respectively; and coincidentally both tease schools are currently on the underutilization list.

In addition, I am currently employed as a family nurse practitioner at Reavis School Based Health Center, which is housed inside William C.
Reavis Elementary. Again, another school on the current underutilization list.

From September 4th, 2012, to present, my health center has provided 265 CPS students, their families and Reavis faculty members with health services. These health services range from physical exams, immunization, social services, acute healthcare, asthma treatments, paps, et cetera.

Due to the Reavis' Principal, Gail King's believe, that no child should be removed from school because he or she cannot attain a physical or immunization in a timely manner, Ms. allowed Reavis Based Health Center the opportunity to assist other CPS students.

I've seen some of these children in the room actually at my health center. So, I've helped you with your compliance rates, okay, in order to increase CPS compliance rates for all involved.

Beethoven Health Center also opened its doors to neighboring schools as well. Having a school-based health center has allowed students an opportunity to obtain and improve their academic performance and afford parents the opportunity to remain at work without being penalized for missing
In short, it's imperative to remember that one can not be healthy without a education, and one can not be educated if he or she is not healthy.

Therefore, I am asking that any CPS school with a health center, or those without, please be removed from the underutilization list. Thank you.

SCHOOL: CANTER

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. My name is Juma Brown. I'm an 8th grade student at Canter, and I appreciate you taking the time to listen to me tonight.

In elementary school, I was always a good student and getting As and Bs always came pretty naturally. Since I've been at Canter, I've really learned what it means to work hard for my grades.

Every day my teachers push for me to challenge myself by setting and reaching goals, even when I don't know if I can do it. With hard work and their support, I've made the honor roll every semester that I've been at Canter School.

Canter teachers are special. I know that I can always count on Ms. Stewart to smile and ask me about my weekend or last night's basketball game.
I know the life lessons Mr. Paranjape teaches me will always help me to become a better student and a better person when I get older.

I know I can always count on Dr. Conlan and Mr. Lewis to make sure that Canter stays a safe place for kids to learn every day.

My teachers love our school and love working with the kids here. You can see it in the way they talk to us. They tell us all the time they believe in us, and they want us to be as successful in high school and college and in life. Because of the hard work and the academic skills I learned at canter, I know I will to be.

SPEAKER: Good evening, my name Aligia Power. I'll graduate from Canter Academy this June and heading out the college. This is an investment in my future. I went to Canter Academy, but I will be wrong not to give high appraise to Canter Middle School.

Canter did a great job putting my classmates and me on the right path. Canter pushes Academically. More importantly, Canter supported us emotionally. Maybe I need to say a little bit more that is because my life has been a real uphill
battle.

At the age of two months, I was diagnosed with sickle cell disease. You know, sometimes the pain is great, it's so great that it is hard to push through.

I cannot begin to tell you how much love and encouragement I received from Canter Middle School. When I shared my story with the good people at Canters, they rallied around me.

In fact, we set up a community service project to raise awareness of cycle cell disease. This year we're holding our fifth annual drill team basketball tournament.

This legacy is something I am extremely proud of. Canter provided me not only academically, Canter provided me the knowledge just to survive but to exceed in high school, and that's what made my academic life a lot less stressful.

It is a Canter where I learned to appreciate math. it is at Canter where I began to gain interest in social studies. It is at Canter where I realized with my circumstances, I have potential. I stand here with a 3.8 grade average on my way of college. Thank you for your time.
SPEAKER: Good evening. I am the parent of a child at Canter Middle School, as well as a high school student. I will read my story.

I'm speaking on behalf of my son who attends Canter Middle School. I transferred him from another school, which was another one of CPS's great ideas of grammar schools inside of high schools.

However, this didn't work for my son because parents are not being informed when they are encouraged with these ideas of miracle schools. It is a extremely accelerated pace of learning and rapid maturation, which is mandatory in order for them to be successful.

Canter Middle Alcohol is a staple in Hyde Park and should remain. The transition for children from one age to another is a difficult task and should be handled gingerly as possible.

We work to provide them with K through eighth schools in a large variety. It is necessary to continue providing middle schools where all children can be allowed to attend and not require to test and to gain entry.

They should be allowed to attend a school
in an area where they are comfortable and where they are very safe. In this day and age, in overly exposed social networking society, it is our job, CPS's job, to insure academic and emotional growth as much as possible.

A school with Canter's personal and limited environment, we are sure to attain, especially with a leader as involved as Dr. Conlan, Dr. Conlan over there, they be allowed to continue as an integral part of Canter.

We want our children part of an environment conducive to success, and yet we have one and CPS is work diligently to take it away from us. This is a time where we should be working hard to keep an institution.

Young men are dropping out of schools at alarming rates. Dr. Conlan knows each kid personally, and I have witnessed this with current other staff welcoming each children every morning.

The people making the decisions to send our children to the lyon's den, they are not attending them schools themselves, neither are their children.

They sit on their thrones and make our
decisions as if we are incapable. We have to stop them. Let's begin with saving our schools. Thank you.

MR. SLATER: Next three schools are Kozminski, Carter, and Mayo.

SPEAKER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, on this panel. I just first want to share with you what it's like growing up under the leadership of Chicago Public Schools and the Woodlawn, Burnham and Englewood community.

We have been neglected like it is nobody's business by Chicago Public Schools. I promise you, every community from Woodlawn to Englewood to Burnham, not a book has been contributed towards none of these schools in all these years.

I used my grandmother's textbook. I saw her name in the book. We never had new books, not even a copy machine, but I'm not here to degrade you or anything of that nature; but I am here to propose that Chicago Public Schools completely take their hands off of the Woodlawn, Englewood and Burnham community schools.

Please allow AUSL to come in and turn our schools around. My brother was put out of Chicago
public schools in fifth grade from Emmet Till. I really don't want you to tell you how the story ended. I thank you for your contribution towards that CPS. I don't want to underestimate you. Let me guess, you were not there during that time, but you did a real good job carrying out that tradition. So, please take your hands off our children. You did it to us. We're not going to let you to do it to none of these kids over here. I'm ready. I'm ready.

SCHOOL: CARTER

SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone, panel and thank, you so much to give us the opportunity to support not only our school, but each and every school that is here.

My name Sophia Raglin. I am the LSE chairperson at William H. Carter Elementary. It's took pride and joy seeing my school tonight.

Starting back this summer of July, I was just recovering -- went into a battle of cancer. Now my children and I we're very particular people and we're not too -- you know, we're iffy about people.

So, my children come home every day,
"Mommy, mommy, mommy Mr. Moore, Ms. McNeal." Who are these people? Not knowing that my former administration was forced to retire, and I had to find out in September who Mr. Moore and who Ms. McNeal and my new administration was beautiful people.

Not only did I find out from meeting Mr. Turner, but I also got a call, "Ms. Ranglin, we understand. How are you?" That is neither here nor there.

We're here to talk about why, why would you want to close the school with such compassion for our children? Why would you want to close a school with so much help coming in. I mean, our assessment has gained 31 percent in my second grade great schools, and 61 percent in our NWEA of our seventh grade exceeding national average.

We put in an offer for the preschool in 2011. We're applying for. We have not yet received an answer. New technology from 87 new desktop computers to five smart boards.

Now we also have new programs that has been introduced to our children, the boys and girls club. Our open house had over 187 families to
attend. We haven't that in the past six years under
the old administration.

We thank you for this opportunity to
represent our schools, and we have more as we have
given you, to show the growth that we've made at
Carter.

SPEAKER: My name is Lauren Aractin (phonetic),
I'm a former student of Carter Elementary. Now I
attend a preparatory academy.

From my understanding, I do not know why
are schools are closing. I don't feel that we
should close at all. I don't understand why are our
schools are closing, because if you stood in our
shoes, you're like, "What's going on?"

I don't see how can these parents sit up
here and want to close schools down; and if their
children have to go places that are dangerous where
they feel uncomfortable at all, I don't know why
this is going on.

I actually need a very good explanation
because from my understanding, the reasons why are
not good at all. The Board of Education are not
doing anything for Carter or any other schools out
here.
Those schools are closing down need help.

You keeping the high rate schools open. What about
the other students? I actually don't understand
that.

In my understanding, there are people that
really need help. If you stand in our shoes, if you
go to Carter Elementary and actually see the classes
and see our children are very bright, brighter than
others.

I say to you if you just help out the
people, and you just give us a chance and understand
what we're going through, I bet we will have a good
school. Every school that is sitting here is
fighting for their rights and fighting for their
school. I ask you to give us a chance.

SPEAKER: My name is Ms. Lacy. I'm a minister
at Jubilee Temple CME. I'm here to represent us as
a people. You guys can't keep destroying us and
pushing us in corners like this. It's all against
people of color. I don't understand why. Why?

What have we done that is so awful to be
poor and black. Don't do this to us. You are
hurting our children. Do you think that we won't
come together? We will. You push us together,
we're going to stay together, we're going to stand together against all of you.

This is for our children. Don't mess with the children. Don't mess with their minds, their education and lives. I mean, don't you have a heart have and a mind? You have children. We attend public schools. You pushed us in projects, pushed us together, pushed aside, separated us. What are you doing to us as people?

You do not know we're not going to be backed up like that? You can't do that to us. It's enough. Enough is enough is enough. Don't do this.

You are making a bad mistake when you mess with children, and I'm a child of God. I'm a child, too. Don't do this. We are all children, don't you know.

SCHOOL: MAYO

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Sylvia Maxwell, and I'm a proud parent of two past and two present students Mayo High School. I have two still attending Mayo and two that are in high school.

And why should we keep Mayo open? The quality of education exemplified and exceeds excellence for Mayo. I would not be standing here a
proud mother Mayo's 2011 valedictorian and 2012 salutarium, if this was not right.

We want Mayo to stay open because of the quality of education teachers give. They install in our children knowledge at an early age by teaching them drills when they are entering the school.

How many schools who teach their first graders, the first 50 presidents. My baby came home and knew the first 50 presidents by heart because they drill it in them as they are walking to classes.

They drill multiplication, square roots and all of this. The dedication the teachers have in teaching our children what is needed for them to go to that next level goes beyond the call of duty.

Mayo is not one of those schools you just pass the kid along, get them out of the way. They start out by building a foundation that the kids could stand on. Those drills, the folding of their arms so won't no kid say, "He hit me." He hit you when their arms was folded.

That is the kind of dedication and foundation they instill in my children. With that foundation comes confidence. With that the child --
within that, that child -- nothing is out of reach for that child.

We should keep Mayo open because it's a pillar of this community, and positive and responsible and pride. It is a safe haven in the community.

Mayo is surrounded by seven other high schools. Mayo is actually the bigger school to these high schools. If you close Mayo, how are we going to feed our kids? Who you going to feed to the other high schools? There are seven high schools in our area.

My support of Mayo and the teachers centered from my children's education. My involvement is consists of volunteering. My children are at Mayo because I'm always at the school. I'm known for the PTA classrooms pointing out kids that, "I'm going tell their mama on you."

You know, when a kids knows you care, they straighten up.

Why should we keep Mayo open? Is the most important reason to me is the expectation quality of education is very high. I did not set this bar, Mayo did. Teaching my children to be the best they
can be is what I'm working for, and I'm working on building two more evaluate valedictorians.
I have two more kids left, and with their help, and the help from the wonderful teachers and principals, I'm sure 2010, I'm going to have another child that is a valedictorian or salutarium. You see this village? This village is what raised high children. Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Dennis Roy. I'm a proud parent of 2008 valedictorian. Mayo has took my kids to another level. These teachers work hard with these students.

There is no failure. They push them to another level. These teachers need tools to work with. They need tools. They need classroom size reduction, they need a lot of help.

This should not be an issue where you're going to close the school because of certain situation. The school is in a safety zone. It is in a safety zone.

These kids walk to school. They can walk to school without fearing someone jumping them, someone grabbing them. This has been a pillar in the neighborhood for a long time.
I'm an alumni of the school. I had a chance to walk to school scores ago, and it's still a safe zone for these kids to walk in. These teachers, the school have worked diligently with these kids.

They shouldn't have to go through what they are going through right now. Over size classrooms, how you going to teach with oversized classroom. It's hard teaching classroom at home that's oversized. They got to go home.

These kids should have a better chance and education right now. They should have a better education. I want to read this. Mayo School academically is based on the recent NWEA.

78 percent of schools met or exceeded their winter growth targets in reading and math.

I came up here a little shaky, but I'm good. These teaches work hard. I have been involved in the school for 11 years. They took me to another -- took my child to another school, so I know where my son is going now.

My daughter is graduating from Lane Tech and going to college. She's still achieving. So, this school should not be closed. If you're going
to consolidate the school, it cost less than $7,000
to run the school. Consolidate Mayo. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. I just want to qualify
who I am first, because some of you came in the
house I asked you take your hats off. I am a
Catholic Deacons Co-chair of the black Catholic
Deacons. So I have the faculties to not only to
teach, marry and to baptize and to go around the
world to do all those things. So I say that so you
know who I am, first of all.

Mayo children are not just CPS parents'
children. They are the community's children. They
are our children.

For ten years, I've been active in the
community of Bronzeville as a block club president.
We had provided Thanksgiving dinners to needy Mayo
families for at least eighth years.

In 2005, myself, Dr. Jeran, the Center for
New Guys, who I believe is in the audience. Grant
Washington of the Grant Boulevard Federation, and
some alumni and Mr. William Phillips that formed
that safety patrol that this gentleman was talking
about.

The reason why he feels safe, that program
was made by volunteers by for a period of four years. That model eventually became the CPS Community Watch Program.

To take that away from Mayo students would be a travesty. As hard as we worked as a community to keep our children safe, you will be turning the clock back.

There is no need for them to go anywhere else but to the school that they are most proud of. 94 percent of our children arrive there daily for their daily instruction, and they are excited by the goals that are set there before them.

So, before I admonish you, and I ask you respectfully to consider to keep Mayo open. Thank you.

SCHOOL: KOZMINSKI

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Kimberly Stark. I'm a Parent of the child at Kozminski Community Academy.

I'm here today because I was a student at Kozminski, and I'm a well productive human and a parent and responsible. I could not allow you to close Kozminski, because Kozminski have the best teachers in the City of Chicago.
They are there every morning. They have created programs to help our children to read to write and to do things better. Our principal that you have chosen, Mr. Myron Henson, has turned that school around. It is beautiful and it is great. They have created a safe environment for our children to come to every day every morning, as well as Michele Runfield, our assistant principal.

So, I say to you today, CPS, and to the government, do not let our children suffer. Do not leave our children behind because they have a future and they have goals to achieve in life. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Vicky Long, and I am recently elected community official at Kozminski Academy.

I have to start out by saying this process totally confuses me, but I care a lot about that school, so I'm willing to come and do whatever it takes.

I know how important strong schools are to a strong community. My children are grown, but I care enough I want to be involved, and I want to help.

I wanted to be involved in Kozminski for
many years, but the former administration was not
interested in having anybody else inside the school
come in. That all changed in October 2011 when we
had a new principal and assistant principal.

And the culture of the school has changed.
They welcomed the community into the school. They
support the teachers; and most importantly, they
care about the students.

In addition to the physical upgrades, like
painting, art work, they have brought in new
computers, new after-school programs, a Saturday
ISAT academy, and a feeling of hope.

They have a wonderful pre-K program, which
is bringing members of the immediate community into
the school for the first time in years, and they
have space to expand them.

Kozminski is now using the resources
available to it in our community, and that includes
the University of Chicago, which is really only
two-and-a-half blocks from that school and
absolutely a wonderful resource.

The university students are welcomed into
the school. Their energy and knowledge are now as
an asset. That was not always the case.
As a property owner, taxpayer, and community member, I do not understand why you would close the school that now finally has all the pieces in place. All they need is some time, but you already know that.

SPEAKER: My name is Curtiss Brown. I'm a representative of the Kozminski Academy. I just want to expand on some of the things that she said.

Some of our statistics from 2012. Three out of six grades were above the national average of student enrollment. Four to sixth grades were above the national average for growth in math.

Subsequent growth from 2011 to 2012, I can remember students with disability were above the national average scores in math. See the schools progress is rewarding.

The ISAT down from 2012, the ISAT composite scores has increased in the last three years. Composite math scores in 2010 was 60 increased from 60.9 to 66.3 in 2012, and composite score in 2012 was 50.5 increased to from 54.2.

Although they are mimial gains, the school has experienced a significant school action. The previous principal was removed in 2010. The school
has afforded a new principal until October 2012 and
in 2008.

The school was awarded the Spotlight
Achievement Award for except exemplary performance
in closing the achievement gap.

Meeting high standards and opening a world
of opportunity. This year's ACL reading mandate at
Kozminski and others schools to allow students to
perform at schools to transfer into higher
performing schools, which impacted Kozminski's
culture and claimant.

This change caused many high-performing
schools to transfer -- students to transfer from
Kozminski to academic centers in high-performing
schools.

I also want to say we have all kinds of
programs under the administrative leadership of hire
Myron Henson, Michele Runfield, our principal and
assistant principal.

They are doing a phenomenal job with our
children. They come in early, they stay late. They
get us all together. We're a team. We care about
our students. Our students are like family. I have
my own granddaughters in the school, which never
I came to Kozminski in 2008 because it was a spotlight school. Out of 600 some schools, we ran 66.

Also we want you to know you're not alone. We do care about the schools in our community. If we get consolidated with one of those schools, we would welcome all your students.

As a child being raised in a CPS school, I wanted to let the families who have spoke tonight talking about crossing gang lines, I know I stand here before you I have been stabbed, I have been ran over but a car, by such a gang crossing when I had to go to school.

So, I speak from experience, and I know what these children go through. So, to say to you parents who are concerned about this, we are concerned as well. Don't close our school.

MR. SLATER: Overton, Drake and Burke.

SCHOOL: OVERTON

SPEAKER: I good evening. My name is Tanya Dixon, and I am currently an eighth grader from Overton Elementary School. Welcome parents, teachers, students and CPS officials.
I stand before you representing the students of Overton. It has come to our attention that CPS is considering closing our academic institution.

Closing Overton would not be in the best interest of our staff and students. Overton has had tremendous amount of academic success. For example, in 2009, Overton implemented an integrated technology program called ST math.

This program challenges the spatial and temporal part of the student's brain using various strategic math structures. As a result of this program, and receiving in 2010 school retention award, Overton's composite math score showed that 70 percent of our students meet and/or exceed state standards.

In addition, Overton's business school department has initiated higher learning. This program differentiates classes of student regarding AP and enriched classes. In each of these classes, one day we sit adjacent to a sixth, seventh and/or eighth grade scholar.

I am currently enrolled in all AP classes. This intense structural and peer pressure has helped
me become eligible for selective enrollment schools.

Overton has provided me with options, options such as Whitney Young, Lane Tech and Walter Payton.

Overton has provided me with extra-curricular activities. I am an eighth grade scholar who was featured on various local news stations for our successful participation in a Learned aid day project. This program enhances entrepreneurship skills and learning for starting our business.

Furthermore, I have been fortunate to participate in student council. This builds leadership skills and took an active role in Overton's restore adjustor program.

I am a member of Overton's cheerleading team, science fair, young art, and also young investment for the school. I stand before you to attest Overton has given me numerous opportunities.

I am college and career ready.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is a Lorna Dixon, and I am the parent of a student at the Overton School.

As of 2012-2013 there are 452 students enrolled at Overton.

95 percent are low income, in the largest
demographic of African-American. This demographic makes up for 99 percent of the student population. Anthony Overton Elementary School is a neighborhood community school for students living in the city's area.

However, students living outside the attendance areas has selected Overton as their home school because of the family caring and safe atmosphere at Overton.

For the sake of time, like many other schools in the Burnham Park network, we all require additional resources and support like our north side counterpart. However, we face daily challenges.

We have a large population of homeless students. 12 percent of our students make up special education population, and another three percent on are the tracking center.

There are safety security concerns. Overton is at the center of gang territory north of 47th Street, East of King Drive, South of 51st, and west on State Street.

Overton is the safe haven for those students in the enclosed boundary. On a more positive note, in addition, Overton is the home
school for all these kids. Students have this facility. Students are enrolled at Overton on a weekly basis.

Where will these students go? Despite their racial differences, lack of parental love and custody battle, when those students enter the doors of Overton, they don't want to leave because of the outpouring of love and support and family environment.

Overton has been showcased by SC Have, Orange County, California, and awarded with the school with the station award for the highest gains in mathematics. 15 percent gains in one year. 26 percent gains overall in three years.

Overton is currently a school on the rise. We have the highest value added score in mathematics in area 13 in 2010, and the third highest in CPS.

Composite score of 60 percent of students meeting and/or exceeding state standards, 17 increase over two years. Overton is partnered with the community schools in 21 Century, Metropolitan Family Services, provided Overton learning environment with an additional $2100,000 a year to service our students and partners in different
activities. Please do not close our school.

SPEAKER: My name is Loraine Bell. I'm a representative of Drake Elementary School. I have the opportunity to being at the black history program Friday, and I'm coming to you all from a different point of view.

My niece she goes there. She's been labeled with autism, and it was just so wonderful to see the autism children sit through the assembly.

Now, in Chicago Public Schools, there's not another program for the autistic child. So, any change that comes about with a child who has been labeled autism, can create a grade school problem. Most of you all have seen Radio Man and Rainman. That is the gentle version of it.

So, I just want to give Mrs. Warner a great shout out because she brought a new path and new direction of the pride of three of the teachers, one is behind me, received an award, and it was very nice the teachers getting the award.

But what was most very, very rewarding was to see the children whose confidence had been built, whose confidence had been up lifted, due to the teacher raising the math and reading over
When you close a school, you collapse back to the community. When you close a school, you collapse the community. When the schools close the communities are affected, the children are affected. So, merge the schools with whatever best school is there. So, injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere.

SCHOOL: DRAKE

SPEAKER: My name is Tara Henninger, and I'm a proud teacher, and I am a proud teacher of the 32 second and third grade students in Drake Elementary.

In our school, we strive for our students to be college ready and have a voice. We teach them that their words have the power to change, and here is what one third grade students wrote today in regards to this, "Dear Mrs. Bennett, I am writing this letter because I want my school to stay open. We have a really great education here at Drake Elementary and really great teachers. My teacher's name is Mrs. Henninger. She wants us to graduate from this school, and I love when she brings books in our class. It's helping me reach my reading goals. Ms. Warner, our principal, brings smiles to
our faces, and we have really great daycare.

"This is a special school to me. When I graduate from school, I want it to be this one. Even though we have only 250 students in this whole school, it doesn't mean you have to close our school. These 250 students matter, and they love this school. A scholar of Drake, Makynna Walker.

PS, Ms. Henninger says she'll be waiting by her mailbox one day to get copy of my college diploma."

We teachers in a district value student achievement. Drake student achievement has been steadily on the rise. We make increases in all subject areas. To quote Mr. Price, the trim trifecta. Reading, math and science, ISAT composite score of 70 percent. More recently our winter NWEA data shows we are on target for another successful year with 89 percent of our third graders meeting target. 92 percent of our sixth graders meeting their science target, math target, and 75 percent of our eighth graders meeting their reading targets.

We know our student achievement is directly related to the stability of our dedicated staff and the nurturing environment of our school and the rigor of our curriculum.
Students at Drake joyously enter each morning as our school principal assistant principal greet them by name and encourage them to have a productive day. They feel safe because they see the faces of their former, current, and future teachers, as well as our entire staff who are invested in their learning.

I just want to close and say again with the words of a student, I would like to close with the words of a student. "I will be sad, very sad. The schools are a very big part of my heart. the school are the top of my heart, and my family is the bottom."

To quote, "If Drake is still considered a school for action, my family will be torn apart."

SPEAKER: Thank you. My name is Catherine Everhart. I'm the school math and science teacher at Drake Elementary.

On the sheet we received tonight, the last bullet point on the right is, quote, "Any additional information about your school and community that you believe is important for you all to be aware of."

You further you are aware of our test scores, our NWEA scores. There is no doubt we are
school community leaders and staff. Many of us are not in school today. We have not been home toady, here we are now.

We believe our capital improvement cost to maintain or update our building are inaccurate. Our capital improvement cost was 7.5 million in our 2010 assessment.

On this sheet, Drake is listed as over 21,000,000. What happened in two years, to a school built in 1961 when many schools in CPS are over 100 years old.

Was the campus next door that was part of Drake in the '60s included in this number? That campus is no longer part of Drake. It has been a charter campus for high school girls since 2000.

We would like to know where the 21,000,000 number is coming from. That is the additional information we believe you need to be aware.

SCHOOL: BURKE

SPEAKER: My name is Marlon Cummings. I am from the Greater Bethesda Baptist Church, 301 South Michigan Avenue. We are a proud community and partner of Burke School. We have a program where many of our students attend.
Recognizing and deciding about the ways we engage in the community and support these families. We also recognize the significant parent investment that we see in the school, and as you can see from sitting over here in the audience.

We can serve as one of the 11 community partners that provide important wrap-around services to the student and families at Burke. Currently we are partnering with the schools to develop a suspension alternative program, aimed at changing negative behavioral students and working with them to provide social and emotional programs with middle school girls helping them to develop and maintain a positive self-image.

As a community partner, we are concerned that at Burke is one of the only community schools in our community. Again, Burke is one of the only nearby neighboring schools in our community.

The closest school is almost a mile away from Burke, which least to student safety concern. While the school is safe, the area around the school is not safe for students to walk around.

Also important is the academics side, we are excited by the academic progress Burke has made,
as well as the growth and population of the 
students.

The majority of our students exceed their 
national average. Aiming their winter growth 
targets.

Imagine what impact you have when you 
close the school. What impact would this have on 
the progress of Burke. We know that Washington Park 
community is growing. We see the is strong 
community schools like Burke as a pivotal part to 
the strength of this community.

SPEAKER: Hello, everyone. My name is Erika 
Helm, and I attend Burke Elementary School. I have 
attended Burke Elementary School for seven years. 
Burke is like a second home to me, because the 
teachers never gave up on us because they thought if 
we can become better writers for the rest of our 
lives, me and the other students who attend Burke 
Elementary?

The teachers help us to become independent 
learners and teachers are willing to help us do 
better in school or anywhere else. In my class, 
80 percent of the students met their winter growth 
targets in reading.
If the children who attend Burke now have to go to another school, they could get shot or even killed. Some children at Burke are afraid to go to another school because they might get beat or bullied by other kids who are at that new school.

Some people cannot afford to go to a school that is not near their neighborhood. The bus or train is not safe because people might have a loaded or harmful weapon.

The streets are not safe either because children may get harmed my accidental or on purpose. Kids should not go to another school because they might be teased for being the new student.

What would you do if your kid's school was closing down? Would you stand there, or would you fight like the students, staff and parents? Thank you and please keep my school open. It is not only a second home to me, but also to our staff and our students.

MR. SLATER: The next three schools I would like to invite are Fuller, Williams and Williams from those three schools who would like to speak. I invite Senator Mattie Hunter to speak for a few moments.
SENTATOR HUNTER: Good evening. My name is Mattie Hunter. I am the State Senator of the 3rd Legislative District. I would like to welcome you all to my district. Sorry I'm late. I had some other commitments this evening.

I am so happy to see so many parents and so many students here tonight. Your presence here tonight shows how much you really do care about your schools, as well as the community.

You know, I attended the meeting last night for the Englewood and for the Gresham community. We had the same kind of turnout.

But what I stated last night, I want to say the same thing I said last night, is I'm disappointed in Chicago Public Schools, and I'm disappointed in you all because we work too hard down in Springfield to bring dollars back to Chicago Public Schools for you all to slap us in our face by closing these schools.

Now, we do not agree with what they were doing. At least they sat down with the elected officials and you talked to us. I don't know who any of you all are. I've never seen you all before,
you know, and you all simply do not talk to us.

We would get at least one supporter, but I got to call last week informing me that so many of my schools were closing. Of all the calls, that's the kind of courtesy they give an elected official.

Okay?

So, they are disrespecting everyone, and it is really time now to have an elected school board. We have no choice. We have absolutely no choice, you know.

Last week we approved the supplemental budget and $32 million in that supplemental budget went to the Chicago Public Schools for capital improvement; but it was not for, it was not for the renovation of the existing schools.

Guess where the dollars are going? To charter schools, charter schools. Okay? So, there is something wrong with this picture, and I really do believe what you all are doing is illegal.

We will have our lawyers take a look at it. This is ridiculous. Since you all refuse to work with the elected offenses, I cannot work with you all.

My constituents here tonight are holding
me accountable for something you all are doing,
because you all have failed to notify and to work
with the elected officials, and that's not
acceptable. So, this is not last time you are going
to hear from me. Thank you.

SCHOOL: FULLER

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Pamela
Creed, and I'm the principal of Fuller School in
Bronzeville. I appreciate the task you have before
you. I now it is daunting; however, Fuller School
of Excellence should not be on the school closing
list.

Approximately one year ago today, the
Fuller community was told that their school was
going to go through a turnaround process; and as a
result, my team became part of the Fuller community.

In the few months that we have been
working with our wonderful students, parents and
school community, we have made significant
achievements.

Enrollment is 13 percent above
projections. Attendance is over 2 points above last
year's rank. In fact, if you look at our attendance
over the past three months, December was 3 points
above last year. January was 4 points above last
years. February was 3 points above last year. So,
our students want to be at Fuller.

Our winter MAP data is showing that our
students are achieving academically as well. Our
eighth grade students in math, 80 percent of those
students received gains in math for the winter
assessment.

58 percent of those exceeded their target.

In reading, 80 percent of our eighth grade students
also achieved gains with 67 percent of those
students meeting and exceeding their targets.

We have a rich art program, a music
program, a technology program. We're meeting social
and emotional needs of our students by having a
full-time dean and counselor.

After-school programming is available to
our babies, where we have athletics, choir,
performing arts. In fact, our performing arts club
is in the process of rehearsing for a Lyon King
production which we'll featuring in the spring.

We have a cooking club running, math,
girls and boys mentoring. Our partnerships have
given us school supplies, coats and debits for our
students. We've created a positive school culture
and climate.

I must need to read this one thing from a
visitor in our school in January, who said, "This is
for fabulous Fuller Elementary School." She wanted
to reaffirm her opinion that Fuller Elementary has
become a fabulous school with citywide attendance in
these programs. "I've traveled to many different
schools throughout the CPS system, but while I have
always been treated with kindness and respect
wherever I have gone, your school tops the list.

Everyone within your school community is
very helpful and considerate. I was especially
impressed after I had quietly entered Ms. Clepper's
kindergarten classroom to observe a student with
autism. One of the kinder students quietly left the
group lesson being provided by Ms. Clepper and
supported by the her classroom assistant, introduced
herself with a handshake and brief welcoming address
to the classroom and then pulled out a chair for me
to sit on. 'Would you like to have a seat' she
said. I have to admit my heart began to melt at
that point. I was very impressed but the student's
respectful behavior. In this day and age when one
hears of many sad stores about schools in general,
it is refreshing to visit schools where so many good
is being accomplished by the administration and
teachers and other staff members of the students."

We are scoring excellent. Please don't
stop us from fulfilling the promises we've made to
serving students and family at Fuller. Thank you
very much.

SPEAKER: Hello. Good evening. My name is
Laticia Duffy and I'm here. I am a parent from
Fuller Elementary, and I'm here because my daughter
attends Fuller Elementary School.

I stand before you because I heard some
disturbing news yesterday evening stating that
Fuller was one of the schools that was listed on the
closing list, and I couldn't understand why was
Fuller, because Fuller is an excellent school.

It holds an excellent principal, excellent
teachers, as well as excellent students. My child
is a living example of an excellent student at
Fuller. She was once a failing student; but since
she has been attending Fuller elementary, she has
been on two honor rolls, not once -- not just one
time, but two times an A and B honor roll, and I
plead tonight that you do not take this opportunity
away from my child, as well as the other students.
Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Steven Chapata
(phonetic). I am LSE chairman, parent guardian and
a parent representative of Fuller Elementary School.

As I said before when I was up here, I
can't say anything bad about Fuller. I'm here to
talk about this, okay, you are putting the blame on
us. I cannot respect everyone here.

I cannot understand why people are begging
you for things that should already been given to
schools. Okay? I cannot understand that. Okay?

I'm not used to talking to messengers.

I'm used it talking to the leaders. All right? My
situation is this: Is the school board too good to
be sitting here themselves to talk to us? They had
to put you together to talk to us? Are they that
much above us?

I know you last night it almost got out of
control. I noticed that. You people never answer a
question. What is your purpose? You never answer
one question anybody ask you.

I agree for the elected representatives
board, and I think we should have an elected
representative school board. I think you should
have a zero say so at all. The teachers, they go
back to their education, because our children are
our business and not yours.

   I congratulated you all, and let's stop
all of this separation in the schools. We have to
end this. We are one union. We're one community,
and we have to look at it that way. They are the
demons. We cannot be separated anymore.

   We have to come together as one union.

They can't tell us what to do. We tell them what to
do. We pay their salaries.

   Their taxes pay for these schools. They
don't belong to them. It's not their real estate.

They can't tell you what to do. You tell them what
to do.

SCHOOL: WILLIAMS

SPEAKER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Rahmeir Hampton, and I'm an eighth grade
school at Williams Preparatory Academy. I am hoping
to attend Chicago High School of Agricultural
Science this fall.

   Our school should stay open because it is
a safe haven for the children in the neighborhood and those who come from far out to learn. This school is just like the second home to most of the students. We think of our students and staff as part of our family. The teachers make learning fun and more interesting.

Williams has lots of extra-curricular activity that keeps our students busy and off the streets after school.

Many of those activities include Open Book, a club where students read and acts out books. They put so much work into the performance that they literally make the stories come to life. We also have a Tai Kwon Do, male mentoring program for young males to receive advice from father figures.

We have advanced academy classes taught by Ms. Colton, and reading enhancement classes taught by Mr. Addadevoh. Lately, children who are out of school have been injured and killed because they don't have anything else to do after school or to go, and I don't want to live with that type of fear in my heart.

This school means a lot to people who attend and work here. Almost everyone that had
graduated from here comes back to visit us. We've even have generation of families attend our school. This place holds a lot of special memories, and is not only special to those who go there, but to everyone in the community. During the previous summer, a group of kids broke into the school. They didn't want to steal or destroy anything. All they wanted was a place for them play basketball.

I, personally, remember a few good times. The school rewards students for their excellent work every quarter with an awards ceremony. I, myself, and other students have received countless medals, certificates and bigger prizes such as bike and tablets.

It is not just a school, but the building, itself, has historical value. Before it was even a school, it used to be a slaughter house and a hospital. It is also named after the first person to performed open heart surgery, Daniel Hale Williams.

I would be heart-stricken if Williams was closed. This school has been the first and only public school I have attended. In the past, I have
been to many charters schools, but have never been
faced with the academical challenges that I
encountered at Williams.

But I've conquered those and became the
intelligent person I am now. In conclusion,
Williams Preparatory is the foundation of Dearborn's
home. To close it down would be a huge punch in the
gut to the community. Thank you and good night.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Marshawn
Miller. I am an eighth grade student at Williams
Preparatory Academy. I plan to attend Jones College
Prep in the fall, received 99 percent on my ISAT
test last year and plan to do ever better this year.

I believe Williams Preparatory Academy
should remain open because of the foundation it
gives the community.

The children of the Dearborn homes would
be cheated out of an opportunity to learn from the
best teachers and guides that CPS has to offer.

If Williams Preparatory Academy were to
shut down, then this community will be doomed and
there will be no end to the mindless slaughter of
children my age and younger.

This school Williams Preparatory Academy
is my inspiration to become something better in
life, if it weren't for the guidance and help the
teachers have given and many of our fellow
classmates, god only knows how we would have turned
out.

Growing up in the community of the
Dearborn homes is one of the most dangerous
experiences I have encountered in my life.
Everywhere I turned, someone was either killed or
wounded by the gun play that went through the
community, and I feared that I would have ended up
dead sooner or later.

This school Williams Precatory Academy
helped create and place fundamentals for me to
become what I am today, a student with a genius
level intellect and test scores that are very rare
for a person with the background that I have.

Williams Preparatory Academy has taught me
everything that I know; and it were to shut down, I
will feel great depression because I think about
people who are in my position, but without the
guidance of the teachers at Williams Preparatory
Academy.

Their brains would be lost to the streets,
and they will become corrupted, and their life will end one or two ways, as an inmate in prison, or a dead body at a funeral service. I have taken up enough of your time, and I know that, but I would like to leave you with a few thoughts. Williams Preparatory Academy is the pillar of my community. It is the foundation that keeps everyone together, no matter if you're from 27th or 29th. The teachers keep us together and teach us the values of being united and not at each other's throats. For that I appreciate that and thank them with all my heart.

Williams Preparatory Academy is not just a CPS school, it is a community school that offers students longer chances to learn at school from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

In closing, it would just break my heart dearly if this school were to shut down, because children would not be able to receive learning that I was given at this school from pre-K to 8th grade. The experiences I got from this school will follow me till death, and I like to know that there are many more children out there learning and comprehending life like me.
Thank you ladies and gentlemen, and good night.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Natalie Colton. I am the representative from Williams Middle and Williams Elementary. I am in the Williams family. Please stand. We're in this fight together.

Now, first and foremost, our students are displaying more than average growth on a NWEA and Scantron, in spite of the fact Williams has been consistently on the closing list.

Our school is able to have of 74.1 percent of our students achieve their individual target score and their most recent NWEA test.

The nation average is only 65 percent. Once again, consistency is needed for continuous successful growth in our students. Give us the tools to continue to work with our students in our communities.

Our school has recently experienced a significant school action building open our doors Urban Prep, a charter school. These students have found safety in our school and our community. We have been a part of this co-location point for at least two years, but we are still on the
underutilization list, when we had to turn away
families that stay right on right in the Dearborn
homes that can't even submit their children into our
schools, but we're underutilized.

And then our kindergarten students at this
time have to eat lunch at 10:30 a.m., eat lunch at
10:30 a.m. to accommodate Urban Prep's schedule.
That's insane to me.

The population of the Bronzeville
community, based on city data, is expected to grow
at least 2 percent. Well, that's at least 700 more
families. So, where do those children go? Where do
they go?

They have to cross the boundaries into the
crime infested communities. You are killing our
children.

SPEAKER: I'm Andrea Knight. We understand
that the dollars short for our children's education
and into being. You can't be compared with the
dollar.

Williams School was closed in 2002 due to
the poor performance. We reopened in 2003 as one of
the first renaissance. 2010 school we were a model
for the country.
We have had children accepted at Walter Payton, Jones Commercial Prep, King College Prep, Lindblom and other selected enrollment schools.

Our 2012 report card we have a strong rigorous focus engaged and challenge curriculum. Children are learning our culture and climate as organized on the NEPA. 74.1 percent of our students have met their target goals. The nation only is 60 percent.

Why are you closing our schools within a ten-year time span? The Dearborn Homes were closed down. Now it has reopened with older families list and new families returning. We expect to receive 700 new families in the Bronzeville neighborhood, many who are relocated in the Dearborn Homes. You have disenfranchised our students and parents once, why do it again?

When the school closed, our children were transferred to different schools in the area, and they were not received favorably. That's a stress on any child.

How can they meet our expectation? Our homeless population is about 10 percent, and steadily increasing. With today's economy, why put
them through unnecessary mental anguish? Williams school is an oasis in our community. We don't have a community center in our area. Williams is an educational institute during the day and provides a space for park district to operate educational extra-curriculum activities, and social and emotional opportunities for our children until 9:00 p.m.

Williams is a safe haven for our children. Please don't take it away. Don't put them on the street corners with nothing to do.

SPEAKER: Hello, everybody. My name is Alex Hall. I'm from the Dearborn Homes, Williams building.

My reason for being here is not just solely for Williams, but here solely for if you look at all the schools, we are have an overwhelming number of schools closed on the south side and west side.

People hear me now. Go to your neighbor, go to your children, give everybody that you can think and tell them run to the schoolhouse, because this is all poured in our kids. We need to stand up.
My people over here, I don't know any of these people. Okay. You're going to cut me short. Anyway, our students don't deserve this. We got taken two times over a ten-year period. What about the north side? It's real lovely up there.

Do they have to go with chart schools in their buildings? Do they have to go short on books? Do they have to go 45, 35, 45, kids in their building? Do they have to go with all the things that people provide, "Okay, everything is fine and dandy on the north side."

How many schools are being closed on north side? Is there overwhelming number of schools being closed on the north side? Do you hear me people? Let's go? I am ambition about my kids.

Our kids we built this country with it. To tell you the truth, we built this country. We built this country. They are taking our schools, they are taking our hearts. You are tearing us within our communities. Don't do that to our kids.

MR. SLATER: Millison and Pershing West.

SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone. My name is Tawanna Williams, and I'm a parent of Williams Elementary. I am also a learner at Williams
elementary, and I'm resident of Dearborn Homes.

I am here to plead to you today don't sentence our children to death. We fought tooth and nail to get that community to where it is today. We got rid of drugs. We got rid of gangs. We got rid of all that, that afforded urban pride to come to safety with all those children in our building.

Now you want to push us out. You say we are underutilized. By my estimate of, what, 134 students, give us back our space that you took on the first floor, four classrooms that were given Urban Prep, and I bet we can fill those seats.

You say our scores are low. Well, when Urban Prep was doing their revitalization of the building, our children pre-K through fifth grade, as well as sixth, Seventh and the eighth in Williams Middle School had to sit through tar being put being in the roof.

That's in the building. My baby sat in a classroom, with the window sills and the tables from the dungeon, because we don't have air in our building. So, we heed to open the windows, but the dust came back in, having the children, check and see how many children passed out during the time
that. They were put on the roof.

When you say why do we need to get our school back on track, when you close us down, you open us back up, you gave us all the resources we needed.

You gave us a teacher, teacher assistant, and small classrooms. Now I have a kindergartener who, by the Grace of God, Ms. Graham and Ms. Durham, is reading on a fourth grade level. That ain't in your paperwork.

When you say our scores are low, give us back the those three years you took. Give us back our school, and we flourish again like we did in early 2000 when we had so many students graduating from going from one school to the next.

I am also a parent of a 2006 graduate from Williams Middle School, a 2008 graduate of Williams Middle School, who went on to get this city in state championship in track from Dunbar who is now in his second semester at the University, because of Williams School.

If you take our children, and you send them to all these other neighborhoods that have the gang fights that we do not have right now, what are
you doing? You are sentencing our children to
death. I get up every day go to Williams and put in
four hours of work, and then spend the rest of my
four hours unpaid doing whatever Ms. Graham needs me
to do because it's about the children.

You will not take our school, and we are
not going down. We tried to do it in 2001, 2002,
2003, you took our rooms on the first room. They
have four rooms. They aren't with us. I don't
think high school boys should walking the hallway
with preschool kids.

SPEAKER: Hello. I'm a very proud parents of
an eighth grade student who entered Williams
Elementary years ago with ADHD. I didn't know what
it was until his kindergarten teacher informed me
what it was; and through that, this school has done
a very, very well adjustment to my child, and you're
talking about closing the school.

I have a two year old that I'm putting
into Williams next year so that she can be in an
elementary school and get to the middle school like
her big brother.

All this, like the former parents said,
what you doing to the north side schools? I work
for a Head Start program.

As soon as I watch the news morning when I'm get my kids and my son ready and I see this school considered closing down. I E-mailed my program director and I informed her.

This right here needs to be sent to our education coordinators so that this can go to our Head Start programs that we partnership with. The kids are ready to go to school and this affects a lot of these parents, which is not right.

It's not cool at all. So you want to close the school, you want to put money elsewhere, why don't you try putting money back into the schools that you are closing? Why don't you try opening old schools.

If it don't work, then come up with a plan B, but you kicking all these kid out, and you're not even giving the kids that's coming from reschool from Head Start a chance to enter schools to see what it's like.

You're not touching the high school because you know high schools you are going to have the gang Rivalry what the hell do you think you are going to have in grammar schools?
SCHOOL: ATTUCKS

SPEAKER: I think a place where there's love on the overflowing. I wish I was home. I wish I was back there with. Maybe there's a chance for me to go back where there is love and affection. Is sure would be nice to be back at home where there is love and affection.

Good evening. I am Dr. Elaine Joiner I'm the assistant principal at Crispus Academy. I wanted to -- I know this is for the parents, but I just wanted to say one or two good things.

Attucks Academy has been the oldest school which I worked in the City of Chicago since I moved in 1992. I moved to Chicago by myself. I have no family here. I know the importance of family.

I know the importance of a home, and Attucks has made it a point, we make it our business, to make our students feel at home. We love our students. We love our students.

We give them a social safety net. We help our parents, our parents in STLS situations. We have help them when they are in need, when they have too many tickets to pay for.

What he ban together to help them. When
you ask them what is unique about Attucks, I can
tell you that Attucks is the place where the home
is.

We treat them with dignity. We treat them
with respect. They come from far and wide. To
close Attucks is to close their sense of stability,
and it's not just about the warmth and the love and
the caring and the sharing, it's about a fitness as
well.

Only our last NWEA, our population is
45 percent homeless. We have the number one and
number two schools, number one and number two, in
terms of our homeless population for the past eighth
years. 45 percent now.

Of that 45 percent, 61 percent has shown
growth in the NWEA. 51 percent in reading and 51
math. Attucks is a place for the homeless. I
appeal to you please don't shake up their social
safety net, their sense of stability by moving them.
Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hi. I am Tina Ikens (phonetic), and
I come from Crispus Attucks school. My sister also
attended Crispus Attucks school. We went off in
college, I worked for the Chicago park district for
26 years. I am retired now, been retired six years. My sister to go back to Crispus Attucks high school and work for them. You all are going to take our school? We are not going to stand for it. Too many our kids come through there. We have generations and generations of our children and our family that attended Crispus Attucks Elementary School. We have brought a lot of things to Crispus Attucks School, and we stand firm together as a family. That is a safe haven for our children. We don't want to send our kids away from that area. 51st and Street is open. If anything, you strip them their allegiance and you strip them of building and building something really strong. Do not take the school away from them. It doesn't make any sense at all. If you separate our kids, 26 of the schools in our area is going away. You want to close? Where you going to send them to? You're not going to send to the north side Walter Payton. Where you going to send them, Howard, where illegal crime is, Hilliard? Don't do that? You are supposed to take them from our future and send them to Iraq. Thank you.
SPEAKER: Hi. Good evening. My name is Melcadato (phonetic). I am G.P. Grover and Crispus Attucks. I've been at the school for five years. I've witnessed some miracles there, when the children, you know -- the children there are amazing with the stories I've heard that they've gone through, some of the things that they do. There's no statistics, there is no numbers there at all. You know, test scores and all that I is a little what I see every day. You don't really get to see the heart and soul of what the school made out of until you go There and experience it, and I've experienced it.

I would just like to say letting this school go would be devastating to the children that are there because of the stuff that they've already gone through, and putting them in a dangerous situation and have to build up trust with new people would be devastating to them, because they will be older; and all the stuff that we've worked for with them now, would just disappear within an instant. So, closing our school would not be good.

Thank you, sir.

SCHOOL: MOLLISON
SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Wanda Simmons, and I'm a Literacy coach at Mollison Elementary School. There were so many positive things I could say about Mollison. What speaks to me the most is Mollison is a small school with a big heart.

I say that because our teachers, staff, parents, and administrators really do care about the students and the work that we do each day. Students truly are our number one priority at Mollison.

When I began my position as a literacy coach this year, I was excited about the opportunity, given the fact given the literacy coaches have, for the most part, been phased out. I knew that my principal, Kimberly Henderson, was committed to creating a strong literacy foundation in our school that would increase student growth and achievement.

With the new administration this year, we are so proud of the accomplishments that we have made that are really making such a positive impact on our school community.

For example, Real Men Read is a partnership that is dear to our hearts. We have
several committed men from the community who visit Mollison every Thursday just to read to our students in fourth through sixth grade. The men have developed such a relationship with our students, and our students also look forward to their visits each Thursday. We have another partnership Reading is Fundamental, which is a nonprofit organization that puts free books into the hands of our students three times a year. This is a valuable partnership because of so many of our students are unable to purchase books. We held our first scholastic book fair this year, which was a huge success with our students who had never experienced a mobile book fair before. We also have students in grades fourth through eighth grade who stay after school at least twice a week to participate in after-school book club that will prepare them to compete in the CPS citywide battle of the books competition. Our resource group for teachers and students this year was created to provide teachers with books, materials and resources that can be used in the classroom.
Our teachers have also participated in professional development this year. Our focus has guided independent reading, classroom libraries have been expanded so that every teacher has a functional classroom library.

We've also established professional learning communities in our building. We are currently reading Teach our Champion as a School. We're also created professional for teachers observe each other instructional classes. Every teacher has a data wall outside of their classroom with information on every student along with goals and benchmarks.

These are just examples of our commitment to doing what is best for you our students. We see this as part of our strategic vision and action plan, and this is just the beginning. We have a collaborative staff, a strong school culture that has been spearheaded by the administration.

Even if this first year seems like to a marathon, we made great strides, and we're getting results, but it takes time. We have a strategic plan envisioned, and we are staying the course.

Our teachers have been great coaches and
trainers, and our students are eager marathon runners. It is not uncommon for our staff and teachers to go the extra mile for our students. By shutting down our school, you are preventing us from completing our marathon. Please don't rob our students of the opportunity to cross that finish line. Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Erin Lynch. I'm the visual arts and special ed teacher at Mollison Elementary.

Our students achieved phenomenal growth this year. We believe it is due to our focus on completing the construction of class. They tell at the beginning of the year they will be getting NWEA, NAP and TRC data. 55 percent are tear-grade students. This means almost half of our students were two or more grade levels behind.

Our middle year data tells a very different story. Now only 42 percent of our students are tier 3, and our tier 1 percentage is increased from 26 to 40 percent.

Our NWEA math test composite is 68.15 percent of students meet their goal targets in reading, and 79 percent of students meed their goal
targets in math.

   Not only are our students meeting their
growth targets, but we also have a higher level of
students at grade level than we did in the fall.

Our new administration has helped guide
our staff and together in forming a focus on
providing strategic supports and interventions to
our students. This year we have an RTI program.

For our kindergarten students, we have
hired part-time interventionists to, along with our
literacy coach, hold students for 30 minutes daily
on targeted reading instruction, one the focuses of
the Burnham Park network.

   Our fourth through eighth great students
are certified teachers to receive targeted
intervention. This program allows students to read
articles at their grade level from the Associated
Press.

   They also are answering questions on word
comprehension and reading comprehension; and lastly,
on that they are also forming written responses,
which is preparing our students to right on the park
exam.

   As you can see, we work daily to provide
necessary supports our to our students. The center
focuses on supports in and out of the classroom
observing inside and outside of our classes, inside
and outside of our building.

It has allowed us to close gaps. Our
students leave us at or above grade level, with the
skills necessary to be successful citizens, be
prepared for college and the work force.

SPEAKER: Hi. Good evening, gentlemen. Good
evening, everybody. I don't have any statistics
numbers. I am coming here as a father. This is my
son --

SPEAKER: Let Mollison speak.

SPEAKER: Thank you, everyone. Food evening.

May name is Cathy Gail. I'm the community
representative at Mollison Elementary School. I
wanted to let you know Mollison has had three target
closings.

At either time we've not received any
support, even vp;f the school stayed open. Every
time a paper tax bill, I am empowered to fight you
about our school. We will not be pitted against
each other.

Therefore, people, all of you people here,
please meet us on Thursday, February 21, at
6:00 p.m. at Kennicott Park at 4434 South Hyde Park
so that all of us can fight to keep all our schools
open.

I am here tonight to say I want my school
because we should not have to beg to have our
schools open. We are committed parents and teachers
in the community.

We don't want a school to serve for one
percent of the budget. You plan to destroy and ruin
children families and communities. Thank you very
much for letting me speak.

MR. SLATER: Pershing?

SCHOOL: PERSHING

SPEAKER: Good evening again. I have no
statistic. I'm just a father of two at Pershing
West. This is my daughter, this is my son James.

A little background on information on the
schools he's been sent in school so far. He's been
to seven schools so far. He started out at
Jacksonville. There he went to the Developmental
Institute. From there, he started a child care
society. The infirmary to Pershing East. Finally
Pershing West.
He has special needs. You would never know by looking at him. He is very introverted, but he is a lover of basketball. Sophia is exactly the opposite, very extroverted. I actually said, "They want to close Pershing." Sophia said, "No, daddy, I really like it because what's on the menu in writing is always what is there when I go for lunch."

Always the same.

I have never had to go anywhere else with here. She thought it was kind of fun, so did he.

It brings to what Pershing West was for me as a parent.

There is a level of consistency within this school down from the lunch room manager, down to the students that won't let me in the door that recognize me in the morning, but they stand and look through the glass, "I can't let you in. You have to ring the bell. That's the rule."

I'm, like, "But you know me. Open the door." "No." And you have to ring the bell. It lends to what Principal Watkins is doing at the school and the culture that they have created there.

They have had three different assistance principles Dr. King, Jason Forensky and now Ms. Narris
None of them has missed a meeting at the school, nothing. It is always calm, consistent, nurturing, with a level of expectation that my children know they must achieve.

Fortunately the same thing I'm trying to instill at home, integrity and responsibility. The school reinforces it as will I do. So they come home, they tell me what they must do.

That is what we had fostered at Pershing. Allow them to stay home and continue the grow from there. Thanks for your time, gentlemen.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Kelly Lane. I'm a fourth grade teacher at Pershing West. I actually had the opportunity to teach both James and Sophia who are standing up here.

At Pershing West we work to insure every child's individuals needs are met. We hold high academic standards that we rely like there are germane factors through achievement. As was mentioned we prepare students to succeed in every aspect of their lives. We are one of four Chicago Public Schools to adopt a program leader. This school-wide initiative encourages every child to
seven habits of highly effective people to discover students for leadership within the school community. We work purposefully to enable students to take parts in their education. At Pershing West, we aren't just teaching students to be students. We are of equipping them with skills for the real world, so that they will of course knowledgeable in all subject areas, but also be able to think creatively, communicate effectively, respect and appreciate individual differences, work together as a team, and ultimately come engaged in compassionate businesses.

Pershing West started in 2005 when visioners had a formula to offer a great potential opportunity to students. We not close Pershing Shipping West, because we were not intimidated by the possibility of change.

We understand the change is inevitable. In order to persevere, we must adapt, however, in order to pro-actively prepare our students in our school for early many changes.

We must be afforded the opportunity to do so. We must be informed and involved in the decision-making process that would change culture
and climate of our school.

While I appreciate the opportunity for a
five-minute monologue, I would value more a chance
for a true dialogue. As a teacher, I am constantly
reflecting on my practice and how my instruction
decisions affect my students.

I painstakingly and meticulously plan each
lesson transition and activity in my classroom, to
anticipate for each student's individual needs.

I only ask that you put forth the same
amount of careful deliberation in consideration
concerning what's best for my students into the
decision making that you will do.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Larry McFee
(phonetic). I'm president of the community
organization. We've been a part of the solution of
education for over 35 years.

We understand our schools are
underutilized around and we understand the school
utilization. Pershing West was designed in 2010.
The school was designed to be a small
school, and now we're changing that because of the
underutilization we've heard about previously.

We would like to talk about the school
with CPS concerning how many available rooms are actually for education, and we would like for someone to come out and walk them with us.

Two, we would like to keep our school as a tier 2 school or higher; and if you decide to merge, how do we make sure that tier 3 when they come in does not adversely affect the school.

Three, we are concerned about the school boundaries. Four, we're concerned about the golden apple principal, teaches and the runner-ups what happens to? Them. We're also concerned about four and five, we are concerned about of the school process of Pershing West.

Six, we're also concerned about safety and the implementation of a process to make a better school. Seven, what can we do to continue our school. Thank you.

MR. SLATER: Last two schools Robinson and Wells.

SCHOOL: ROBINSON

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Kristin German, and I've taught at Jackie Robinson for the past eight years. As someone has witnessed the past, but more importantly is looking towards the
future of Robinson. I'm a proud to say we're
finally in a position to make gains and show
progress.

The damage that was left behind by
inconsistent leadership, has taken years of undoing,
but the process has finally come to a peak, and
Robinson is now in a position where visible gains
are being made.

Under the current leadership of principal
Sonja Spiller, we've shown significant academic
improvement as our middle-of-the-year data proves.

Jackie Robinson met 100 percent of our
gross targets of the middle of the year NWEA
assessments. This fact cannot be ignored as it
proves the process is actually working.

Just in the last four months, our students
have grow from 25 percent proficient in reading to
39 percent. That's a 14 percent increase just from
the beginning of the year.

Our first graders' proficiency increased
by 14 percent, second grade by 27 percent, and third
grade by 23 percent. In the last few years, the
culture and climate of Robinson has drastically
changed.
For example, our library had re-opened after being closed for several years. We've received Gold Status for Michele Obama's on the Move campaign, and we're one of only 71 schools to do so.

Our partnerships are increasing and leading to a steady rise in our school climate. A few examples, last year we began the partnership with Pastor Neal of Glorious Light Church and revitalized the Real Men Read program, which has now grown to five more schools with our support.

We have a unique partnership with the Sue Duncan Children's Center, whose enrollment in the last several years has doubled to include over 120 students from over 20 schools.

We've developed an open-door policy with our parents and hold monthly parent cafes, which give our parents an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions, and be involved in the child learning.

So, obviously these are only a few quick examples of the way we are improving our culture and our school, and this improvement is needed to increase their students achievement. We know given a chance to continue our growth that we can be the
neighborhood school that our children need and
deserve.

Give us the chance. Progress is clearly being made, so now is not the time to close Robinson's doors. Thank you.

SPEAKER: How you doing? My name is Joseph Williams. I'm currently a parent with the Jackie Robinson school council. I'm also a graduate of Jackie Robinson and I attended that elementary school.

They teach our kids better. It is an all-around better since she first even stepped foot into Jackie Robinson. She just did a big turnaround. I really like that school now. One more thing I'll let you know about Jackie Robinson is Jackie Robinson is committed to the success of our students.

We have also formed a father's club, the importance of giving our father's as a young father responsibility as a regular sense in helping our children.

Jackie Robinson has had a big turnaround since I've been there. I believe if the school stays in the community, it will not only help the
community but it will also benefit our kids.

Last, but not least, I will tell you that
these kids are our future. They are doctors,
teachers and lawyers, and I know one day I believe
if you care on just giving them a choice, but if you
will give the chance to succeed in life. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. Lorenzo Young. I'm
the LSE of Jackie Robinson Elementary School. I
also had the pleasure of teaching at Jackie Robinson
School.

I've seen its growth to where it is now.

I remember when there were 400 students in that
school, and these resources that we have today at
Jackie Robinson were not available then. Today you
can say Jackie Robinson has vision and we have a
plan, and that plan is we expand Jackie Robinson
from a pre-K third grade school to a pre-K eighth
grade school. We're prepared to do that.

In order to understand the impact of
attempting to close Jackie Robinson, it's necessary
to understand that the history of the neighborhood
that Jackie Robinson resides in.

Jackie Robinson school is in the Oakland
neighborhood, which is south of Douglas and North of
Hyde Park/Kenwood neighborhood. It's about four miles south of the loop; and Oakland, it's actually in the square mile kind of a square between 35th Street and 43rd Street.

There is a very elegant homes there in our neighborhood. The architectural treasures include Sullivan, Daniel Burnham, break away Ryan, Cicero Hines. Our neighborhood has seen transition. We were a very elitist neighborhood in the late 1870s and 1880s, moving right into the great migration.

Because Oakland is such small community, we're usually referred to as Bronzeville. We've seen discrimination, we've seen race rights.

The era in the '70s and '80 in the Oakland School. Today we're neighborhood of gentrification and Jackie Robinson stands right in the middle of that transformation of that neighborhood.

In fact, just across the street from us, the third phase of Lane Crescent Housing Development offering an additional 139 family units are being built, a walk away from Jackie Robinson, a neighborhood school.

I'm here to let you know we stand ready to meet the challenge. We have met the challenge. Our
teachers have given statistics. I don't need to
tell you the love we have for the school, because as
everyone here, we love Jackie Robinson. Thank you.

SCHOOL: WELLS

SPEAKER: Good evening. I guess the saying
rings true, they save the best for last.

My name is Courtney Crawly (phonetic), and
I'm a literacy teacher at Wells Precatory Academy.
I'm also the union representative and a product
Burnham network school system.

At Wells Prep Elementary, we consider
ourselves a core location school located in the
heart of Bronzeville. Wells Prep shares a building
with Phillips High School.

Since CPS is facing an underutilization
crisis, closing Wells Prep will further detriment
the building of Phillips High School greatly be
underutilized, moving from 35 percent utilization to
about 25 percent.

Based on CPS data, Wells Prep is at
73 percent utilization, and we have that attached to
support that. Wells Prep is already on the path
towards a level 2 school, preparing 2011 to 2012 AIP
data.
The reports show reading scores went from 64.8 percent to 70.4 percent, and math scores increased from 69.8 percent to 71.3. Our students have shown tremendous growth in their testing and our track -- I'm sorry and are on track demonstrating increasing ISAT scores for 2012 and 2013.

Our proposed preschool not only benefited Wells Prep Academy, it will also increase our community by creating a greater college model. This will also -- I'm sorry, this will also create a solution that recognizes the problem in Bronzeville as far as underutilization goes.

This model will implement choice, as well as saving the district money. Wells Prep offers a safe and nurturing learning environment, both for college readiness through collaboration with Phillips High School. Wells Prep is not only educating dating students, we are supporting generations of families holistically. We have a strong parent partnership. We're engaged with a functioning school council.

Wells Prep has become nationally recognized as a health safety school. Wells Prep
also offers a kindergarten engineering program which pays for our students college funding if the program is complete.

Wells Prep is already established where the board is trying to create a collaboration of schools. Our facilities cohabitate with Phillips High School, since the Chicago Board of Education created a more effective cost-efficient school environment, without affecting students, teachers or our community.

Wells Prep is already a core location school that should not be closed thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Angela Harrison. I'm a parent of a seventh grader at Wells Precatory Academy. I also a freshman at King High School that also went through Wells Preparatory Academy.

When my seventh grader was 18 months, she could not walk and she struggled to speak. We had to go to intensive therapy to get her on grade level for where she needed to be. She started kindergarten at Wells Prep, and she started there, and she learned and grew at that school was a dynamic pillar of our community, in our community
for years.

We were never on probation, we don't have any problems. We have teachers with Doctorate and Master's Degrees, and we have a low teacher reception rate.

Everyone knows our staff is consistent and that they give their best. My seventh grader is one of the proficient students in our school now. Because she was consistent, her education was consistent, and her teaching was consistent, she has also been consistent in learning.

We need to keep schools in our community that meet the needs of parents. Parents choose schools, and we heard all tonight, parents have students that are these schools that you say are inadequate, but yet they are meeting 99, 97 levels and they're going to these schools they are selective enrollment. Somebody is teaching somewhere.

It has to be that we actually have a conversation that makes sense. Wells Preparatory's numbers came out 73 percent December 5th. They came out January 24th at 51 percent, that makes no sense. The say that our building is 26,000,000 in
renovation, when Phillips needs 27,000,000, that 
again makes no sense. We need to have a 
conversation with our communities that comes from a 
place of honesty, and we have not had that. 

We have been defeated to have a community 
with ten percent of our schools being a level 1 
status makes no sense as well. We really need to do 
something. We're asking that the leadership in our 
community do something about improving our schools. 

We're demanding it, because it has not 
happened. You can't say this process will work, 
because it hasn't worked for ten years in our 
community, and it definitely needs to stop. Tank 
you. 

MR. SLATER: I'm going to thank you for 
staying, and thank you all for coming to speak 
tonight. I want to thank you again, Father Gabriel. 
We over stayed our welcome. Thank you. 

You to go home because you can't stay 
here. Thank you. 

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

PAMELA A. MARZULLO
License No. 084-001624

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

Notary Public
STATE OF ILLINOIS )
) SS:
COUNTY OF COOK )

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

_____________________
PAMELA A. MARZULLO
License No. 084-001624

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

Notary Public