BOARD OF EDUCATION
CITY OF CHICAGO
BUDGET HEARING
AMENDED BUDGET FOR THE 2016-2017 FISCAL YEAR
held on
February 13, 2017

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had in
the above-entitled matter at 42 West Madison
Street, Garden Level Board Room, Chicago, Illinois,
commencing at 6 o'clock p.m., MR. FRANK CLARK,
presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS:

MR. FRANK CLARK, President
MR. JAIME GUZMAN, Vice President
REV. MICHAEL J. GARANZINI
MR. ARNIE RIVERA
MS. GAIL D. WARD

ABSENT:

MR. MARK F. FURLONG
DR. MAHALIA A. HINES

Reported By: Anna M. Morales, CSR, RMR
License No.: 084-002854
ALSO PRESENT:

MR. FORREST CLAYPOOL, Chief Executive
   Officer

DR. JANICE JACKSON, Chief Education
   Officer

MR. RONALD L. MARMER, General Counsel

MS. ESTELA G. BELTRAN, Secretary to the
   Board
(whereupon, the following proceedings commenced at 6:07 o'clock p.m.)

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Before we begin this hearing, I would like to introduce Jadine Chou, Chief of Safety and Security. She will give a brief safety announcement. Jadine.

MS. CHOU: Hello, everyone. My name is Jadine Chou, Chief of Safety and Security for Chicago Public Schools. On behalf of all of us, we would like to welcome you to tonight's budget hearing.

Before we start, I would like to quickly share some safety announcements to assure the safety of all of our attendees here today. In order to maintain a safe environment, we ask everyone keep all aisles and exits clear. The primary entrance and exit is to my right, the door that you entered when you entered the room today. If you are leaving the room as a matter of course, please use this exit.

In the event of an emergency and we need to vacate the room, you will hear an alarm. Please
remain calm and promptly and calmly move to exit the room. In addition to the primary exit, there are also two additional exits for your use, one behind me on my left and one behind me on my right. During the meeting, if you should need any special emergency assistance, please wave the attention of one of our security officers and they will come to your aid. We will have CPD and emergency responders available to assist us in the event of an emergency.

At CPS, safety is of the highest priority, and we want to thank you again for joining us today.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Jadine.

PRESIDENT CLARK: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome. I am Frank Clark, and on behalf of my fellow Board Members, I want to thank you for coming today. Actually, it's good evening.

The purpose of this hearing is in compliance by the Board with the School Code Provisions regarding amending the fiscal year 2017 budget.

Madam Secretary, please state for the record the notice procedure for this hearing.
SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Notice of this public hearing was published in the Chicago Sun-Times, a newspaper of general circulation in the City of Chicago, on February 8, 2017, and posted on the cpsboe.org and cps.edu Web sites on February 8, 2017. The amended budget was posted on the cps.edu Web site on February 6, 2017, in accordance with the School Code.

I will now read into the record the public notice as published. Notice, Public Hearings, FY-17 Amended Budget 2016-2017, Chicago Board of Education, commonly known as Chicago Public Schools. To Whom it May Concern: Public notice is hereby given by the Chicago Board of Education that it has prepared an FY-17 amended budget for the 2016-2017 fiscal year in tentative form and that five copies thereof available for public inspection have been filed and are now on file in the office of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, commonly known as Chicago Public Schools, One North Dearborn Street, Suite 950, Chicago, Illinois, 60602, and available at www.cps.edu/budget and that said Board of Education will hold two public hearings upon said amended budget on the 13th day
of February, 2017, Chicago Public Schools Loop 06:10:12
office, 42 West Madison Street, Garden Level, Board 06:10:16
Room, Chicago, Illinois, 60602. The first hearing 06:10:19
time was 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.; registration, 12:30 p.m. 06:10:22
to 1:30 p.m.; and the second hearing, 6 p.m. to 06:10:27
8 p.m.; registration, 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. 06:10:30

Dated at Chicago, Illinois, February 6, 06:10:34
2017, Chicago Board of Education by Frank M. Clark, 06:10:36
President, attest, Estela G. Beltran, Secretary. 06:10:39

And, Mr. President, I would also like to 06:10:43
note the Board Members that are present here today. 06:10:44

And we have Member Rivera? 06:10:47

MEMBER RIVERA: Present.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Vice President Guzman?

VICE PRESIDENT GUZMAN: Present.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Member Ward?

MEMBER WARD: Present.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Father Garanzini?

REV. GARANZINI: Present.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: President Clark?

PRESIDENT CLARK: Present. 06:11:00

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you. Five members 06:11:00
present. We have a quorum.

And I would also like to recognize 06:11:03

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Forrest Claypool, our CEO; Ronald Marmer, our
General Counsel; and Dr. Janice Jackson, our Chief
Education Officer. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLARK: Thank you, Madam Secretary.
Let’s begin with the amended budget presentation,
Ron Denard, please provide us with all this clear
and concise information.

MR. DENARD: Ron Denard, Senior Vice President
of Finance. Good evening, everyone. Good evening
President Clark, Vice President Guzman, and fellow
Board Members.

To start off, the CPS 2017 budget was
balanced, and I repeat, our budget was balanced
until we had a state funding veto by
Governor Rauner. That created a $215 million hole
within our budget.

In order to resolve this issue, we are
taking the steps in phases. So Phase 1 will be to
reduce our budget by 104 million and -- reduce our
expenses and reduce our revenue by 104 million.
This will be accomplished by four furlough days
that were previously announced for 35 million.
There’s 50 percent of the unspent nonpersonnel
school funds will be frozen. That would be
46 million. Centrally controlled professional development, that will be cut by 5 million. And the charters' share of the above reductions will be 18 million. Again, the charters will be reduced by $18 million. And then our revenue will be reduced by 104. And so the balance is 111 million that we're expecting, still expecting from the state.

So our amended budget, again, we will reduce our spend by 104 million. That goes from 5.5 billion to 5.411 billion. That's our amended budget spend.

There was an issue that arose at the 2 o'clock meeting, and we decided to -- it was a discussion around SBB Title I and SGSA dollars. So to clarify that, no Title I or SGSA funds will be frozen or swept for the deficit reduction.

So we're going to use an example. So if a school had unspent funds of SBB, student-based budgeting funds of $10,000, Title I of $20,000, this is the total available funds that have not been spent. We take 50 percent of that, and that's $15,000. We're saying you must cover that in SBB funds. So they only have $10,000 of SBB funds left. So they will freeze that and not spend that
$10,000. Then they have a choice. They could either use some of their Title I dollars for, for instance, an after-school program that was previously paid for by SBB, or they could cut $5,000 from some other SBB program such as programs that are in open purchase orders that are encumbered but have not been spent or overtime or things alone those lines.

So we're not freezing any Title I or SGSA dollars. It's just used in the calculation of the total available funds.

PRESIDENT CLARK: Questions? Thank you very much, Ron. Okay.

Madam Secretary, let's proceed with today's public comment segment, and please share the rules for public comments.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. President. For the record, I would like to note that registration for this public hearing was held been the hours of 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Individuals who registered to speak will have two minutes to comment. And just to note that I will call the speakers with children first and then proceed with the speakers in the order of registration.
The hearing will conclude after the last person who has signed in to speak has spoken or at 8 p.m., whichever occurs first. When called, please state your name.

And I will proceed, Mr. President, by calling the first speaker, and I believe Karen Lewis from the CTU is with us this evening, and she will be followed by Guadalupe Garcia, Speaker Number 22, and then we'll proceed with Speaker Number 1, Michelle Leon, and Speaker Number 2, Karina Martinez.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you, Estela. Good to see you. Hello, hello. It seems like I know almost everybody here.

So I'm really a little upset, as you can imagine, probably not as upset as people were earlier today because I heard that was a real fun experience, but there's some things I think we need to get into -- put into perspective, and that is that we have to make all kinds of choices, but when you make choices that hurt people, you have to be held accountable for that. And that's one of the problems of having an appointed school board and
having mayoral control, you know. And waiting for Governor Rauner's cold, evil heart to melt to me is just a waste of time and energy when you've got other things you can be doing, you know. You guys are going to have to figure out a way to hold people here in Chicago accountable, not just us, but we sat -- I mean, Arnie, you were there. How long did we sit to organize a new contract? And in that new contract are ten paid professional development days. Oh, we don't have money, so four of them are gone? Do you not understand how important that is to -- not just to us, but to our students, for us to have the appropriate professional development? I prided myself when I was a teacher on being prepared all of the time. Because if you don't have a plan for your kids, your kids will have a plan for you. And those of you who have been in classrooms know that. We cannot deal with this destruction. All of this special ed people, they are climbing -- and we're getting the phone calls. And I'm --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: -- I'm going to start calling you
guys. I know my two minutes will be up. 06:18:36

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you. 06:18:38

MS. LEWIS: I'm going to start calling you, Frank. I've got your number. I'm going to put you on blast. Forrest, you and I need to talk for real. 06:18:40

And I'm just going to say this. There are other ways to get more creative about finding money. There are 50 aldermen in this town with multiple schools in each one of those wards. We have to figure out a way to do this and it cannot be just by cuts. You cannot cut your way to a good system. You cannot do it. 06:19:00

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Lewis. 06:19:04

PRESIDENT CLARK: Thank you very much, Karen. 06:19:07

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Our next speaker, please, Ms. Garcia. 06:19:11

MS. GARCIA: (Through interpreter) My name is Guadalupe Garcia. I am here because it's unfair to cut funds for special education. I have a son in special education and I have seen his great progress. 06:19:16

So we need these funds for our children to advance. We need the teachers. Rich corporations 06:19:22

06:20:15

06:20:21

06:20:24

06:20:27

06:20:29

06:20:32
downtown always have benefits. I think we should tax the millionaires now and give that money to special education. My son deserves this. Thank you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Garcia. Our next speaker, please, will be Speaker Number 1, Michelle Leon. As I call the speakers, can you please stage to your left and John will assist in placing you in the right order. Please state your name.

MS. LEON: Hello. My name is Michelle Leon. I'm sorry, do you mind if I take my time? I'm still a little bit nervous.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: You'll have two minutes to address the Board, honey, so you can start.

MS. LEON: Hello. Good afternoon. My name is Michelle Leon. I'm a sophomore at Kelly High School.

I'm a little upset about the budget cuts because after all the fighting my friends and I have done during this school year, during the past school year, we still have to sacrifice. This was a result of all the sacrifice that we did and of all the press conferences that we've been to, of
all the rallies we've been to, after all the walk-outs we've been preparing -- all the walk-outs that we've been to. We've been organizing.

How come our budget still be cut after all the sacrifice that we did? How come the students still have to sacrifice? How come my principal still has to choose between cutting one of our programs or cutting after-school programs or choosing between should we not be able to fund for printer paper or should we not fund for new schools?

It's not fair. It's really not fair because there's other students in rich neighborhoods that have more than us, and then there's us who have to sacrifice our time to stay after school and try to organize this so we could have a better future.

It's also not fair that we have to hold in our pee because we don't want to use public rest rooms because there's three stalls that work, but there's two stalls that don't have paper toilet. It's also not fair that we still have to sit in auditorium seats that been there since the 1950s. They haven't been repaired. They're seats that are
broken, and then there's roof -- the ceiling is falling apart.

And it's not just my school. It's other schools in this neighborhood. It's other schools like Curie High School.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Leon, can you please conclude?

MS. LEON: I just think that the rich should pay their fair share and then none of this will happen.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you. Our next speaker, please.

PRESIDENT CLARK: Young lady, that's really well said. I know people don't think we hear or pay attention to what you say, but that's not true at all, and we take into very serious consideration everything that we hear. It's just that we're always doing a balancing act. But I thought you were excellent, and I just wanted to comment on it.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you. Our next speaker, Mr. President, will be Karina Martinez followed by Speaker Number 3, Jesus Sanchez, and Speaker Number 4, Edward Ford.

MS. MARTINEZ: Good afternoon. My name is
Karina Martinez, and I'm a senior from Curie High School. I'm a student organizer with the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council.

These cuts may have never affected you, but they have affected me. I've lost teachers, had to sit in classes with more than 40 students and not enough desks to sit in. I've had to sit in leaking classrooms, and I've had to see massive amount of bugs in my school.

These budget cuts have caused an increase in violence in our communities. My school had two deaths of students in a span of three months.

You may have cut the amount of funding in my school, but not the determination of my students. I've been accepted to over ten universities with scholarships from seven. My success is not due to you, but due to the passion of my school, teachers, and administration.

The city chooses to fund sidewalks and beautification projects instead of my education. When you prioritize projects like this, you are telling me that my education and the education of so many other students in the system is not important. You are not prioritizing the safety and
education of these students. All students, no matter their race or ethnicity or any other factors, should matter to you because real sanctuary means protecting your students and funding your schools.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Martinez.

Our next speaker, please, Jesus Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: Hi. My name is Jesus Sanchez, and I'm a sophomore John Hancock High School.

I'm very disappointed that you have allowed 64 -- $46 million from us be cut and we're not going to stand here and just take it. We are here to fight for what is ours and that is a good education. Education is our right and it is important to all of us. We all have dreams and aspirations. Mine is to one day become a doctor, but how do you and the Governor expect us to do well in school and go to college in order to reach these dreams if we don't have the money -- if we don't get the money we rightfully deserve to buy books and improve our schools and the education of its students?

You are not just affecting the CPS district, you are affecting us, the teachers, the
staff and, most importantly, the students. Textbooks, instruments, and the supplies that are essential to student learning are not cheap, but we still need them. How do you expect us to reach your standards if we don't have a textbook in front of us when we are learning? And all teachers have to resort on making copies of a lesson from the one book they have for their four to five crowded classes. But they're not even -- they should not -- but these budget cuts are real and affect basic essentials.

Our schools -- and the school issue -- and this shouldn't be an issue in our school, but sadly it is. And how do they expect us to learn in these conditions? It's not the Governor's fault. CPS has the power to -- it's not only the Governor's fault, but CPS. CPS has the power to do something, and we need to stand up for what is right for the students, the staff, and the teachers of CPS.

If you really do care about our education, you would do everything in your power to do what's necessary to help us.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. Sanchez.

Next speaker, please, Edward Ford.
(Chanting.)

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Please state your name.  

MR. FORD: Good evening, Board. For those who
know me, how you doing? For those that don't know
me, my name is Edward Ford, and I'm a proud parent
of two Chicago Public School students, fourth and
third grade; fourth grade, Ronald H. Brown Academy;
third grade, Edgar Allan Poe, regular school,
selective enrollment.

The reason I say that, I have a son in
fourth grade. He come home and say, dad, I got 41
students in my classroom, one teacher. I'm not
learning really too much. But he still is a
straight A student. How are you not learning
nothing and you're a straight A student? So when I
look at him and we go by his education level, I
notice that our third grader is in a selective
enrollment school that is doing -- he's a third
grader doing much higher work than his brother is,
he's in fourth grade.

So I see a continued disbalance about how
I'm supposed to help my children to grow up in
Chicago where I grew up from and went to Chicago
Public School to understand that they have the same
level of education that everybody else that have it that's not in Chicago.

So me, as a parent, I'm trying to see how to weigh my options because we not the only poverty that's in the country as Illinois because we have other states that's got poverty, too, and they have a better school system. They have their kids get out of there. So it makes parents want to go to places -- like I said, you can't leave poverty from poverty if you still have the same income. That's not going to change.

I do want to change the system as far as my kids getting a better education than what I have. And if Chicago Public School is not able to provide that, maybe another public school. Because I still believe in the public school system because that's where we all come from. So if this public school system don't do it, then maybe another public school in another state or something. I'm Chicago born.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Mr. Ford?

MR. FORD: Been here 39 years, and I want my kids to be here, too. So, hopefully, Chicago Public Schools will get their act together and we
can all have a good education for these kids.  
Thank you very much.  
SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. Ford. Thank 
you for your comments.  
Next speakers, Mr. President, will be 
Speaker Number 5, Joy Clendenning followed by 
Speaker Number 6, Barbara Burchjolla, Speaker 
Number 7, Jessica Espinosa, and Speaker Number 8, 
Patricia Clark.  
MS. CLENDENNING: Good evening, everyone. I'm 
Joy Clendenning, CPS parent. I am speaking tonight 
for Raise Your Hand. 
What an afternoon. So this amended budget 
is just not acceptable. Once again, it tries to 
balance the budget on the backs of those most 
vulnerable, this time by penalizing low-income or 
sometimes known as low wealth -- that might be a 
better word -- schools, those whose nonstaff 
spending is most dependent on federal Title I and 
state SGSA funds. 
We believe it's time to make sacrifices in 
Central Office departments and contracts, not with 
basic classroom supplies and after-school programs 
and not in a way that potentially violates,
supplement not supplant.
Forgive me while I shovel through papers.
we have a handout we'll give to you with a list of
some departments and also contracts that you can
peruse. Some examples: Professional services
contractors with political connections like
Analytic Innovations, or those with hourly charges
as high as $580 an hour. We think you should give
these contracts more than a second look when
schools are having to cut low paid hourly staff who
care for our kids during recess and after-school
programs.
In August, you approved a contract for
$12 million in ed tech to support the MTSS system
which is a really costly way to push what we
believe is a questionable policy. And, again,
we'll give you this list.
We also signed on to the letter about the
Noble Charter School expansion for seats at that
one campus. We're opposed to that. We also know
CPS put out another RFP for charters which is not
required by law, and so that's money being spent to
put out an RFP that you can spend elsewhere.
SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Clendenning?
MS. CLENDENNING: I'll finish up right now.
So we are frankly a little confused because we've been hearing about people are having to shift money around after getting the news last week. We came here today really expecting to hear about the amended budget and didn't hear much. So we would like to know, have the Board Members been briefed on the amended budget? What information is available to the public? And can you tell us much more specifically what's being cut and frozen because the new slide this evening --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you.

MS. CLENDENNING: -- didn't really help. For schools that don't have any money --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Clendenning.

MS. CLENDENNING: -- they're having to shift things. So we really need some answers. Thanks very much.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you. Our next speaker, please.

MS. BURCHJOLLA: Hello, Mr. Clark. Nice to see you again. I'm Barbara Burchjolla, citizen, and I want to state for the record that I love Rahm Emanuel, but this is not about personalities.
This is about principles and practices in the CPS school system.

I'm happy to hear about the charter schools because actually that's where Rahm and I cross swords. I believe that the money that is used for the charter schools can be better spent on the public school system. I don't know what the budget is. I haven't looked at it, but I have done a lot of research as far as what the charter schools do.

I can tell you about the Stanford study, 2009 and 2011, and they say, and I'm paraphrasing, that charter schools are no better than and oftentimes worse than what they characterize as district schools.

So this is not about personalities. This is about practices, and I believe that the citizens of the City of Chicago should seize these charter schools and it should be turned over to the people that live in the city. Quite frankly, I think it's wrong to subsidize schools that are privately owned with public monies. And I thank you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Burchjolla. Our next speaker, Jessica Espinosa.
MS. ESPINOSA: Good evening. My name is Jessica Espinosa, and I'm a parent from Mather High School. I also have Durkin Park parents with me. Our school budget affected our school in security overtime. Security overtime is needed as we need and have to -- we lost two security this year. We need security overtime to hire security for before and after-school programs since we are short-staffed already for the safety of all of our students and to monitor students on our after-school detention.

Detention serve as a way to make sure the students are not tardy to school and get to class on time. It has a major impact on the entire education program and safety for our children.

As a parent, I only want to know that my child is getting the education he needs and also know that he's safe in school. I think that every parent want their children's safety and also their first priority is their education.

By the Governor cutting our fundings, not only it's going to hurt our children's safety, but also their education. Thank you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Espinosa.
Our next speaker, please, Patricia Clark. 06:36:20

MS. CLARK: Actually it's Erica Clark. 06:36:22

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you for clarifying, 06:36:24

Ms. Clark. 06:36:26

MS. CLARK: I'm with Parents for Teachers. 06:36:27

Thank you. 06:36:28

I'm going to echo some of the things that 06:36:29
Ms. Lewis said although, Karen, I'm going to be a
lot nicer than she was -- she was a lot nicer than
I'm going to be.

You are not going to find any love lost
here among any of us for Governor Rauner. His
actions have been and continue to be despicable,
but your actions are equally despicable. You
continue to cut schools and programs. Your cuts
harm the most vulnerable and the most in need
students. And your attacks on special ed are
shameful. What kind of people deprives special
needs students of their teachers and of the
services they need? Those students need stability
and safety and security, not the continued chaos
you've been inflicting on them.

So, you know, we all as you know would
like to see the elected school board elected. We
would like to see the school board elected and you 06:37:22
guys out of a job. But the Mayor continues to 06:37:26
insist that he wants to run the schools. So if he 06:37:30
wants to run the schools, he wants that 06:37:33
responsibility, he needs to stand up and take 06:37:35
accountability for what's going on. The buck has 06:37:39
to stop at City Hall. This blame game is getting 06:37:42
us nowhere. You're asking us to just kind of like 06:37:47
cross our fingers and hold our breath and hope that 06:37:50
the Governor comes through with some money. 06:37:53
And you said the balance -- the budget was 06:37:55
balanced before the veto. This budget was never 06:37:57
balanced. That was funny money all along. Who do 06:38:00
you think you're fooling? It's time for you guys 06:38:03
to step up and do your job. We come here meeting 06:38:06
after meeting giving you solutions on ways to cut 06:38:10
that don't harm students, like Joy just said. We 06:38:13
give you funding options, progressive revenue 06:38:16
sources that you could demand that the Mayor 06:38:19
implement.
Mr. Clark, we were here in August. We 06:38:22
talked to you specifically. We asked you to 06:38:24
support the TIF ordinance and you refused. You all 06:38:27
sat there with blank looks -- 06:38:30
SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Clark? 06:38:31
MS. CLARK: -- and denied our requests. 06:38:32
SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Clark? 06:38:34
MS. CLARK: It's not our job to tell you how to 06:38:35
fund the schools. But this blame game has got to 06:38:37
stop. The buck stops with the Mayor, and he has to 06:38:40
take responsibility for fixing this problem. 06:38:42
SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Clark. 06:38:45
Our next speaker, Mr. President, will be 06:38:46
Speaker Number 9, Katherine Oswood followed by 06:38:48
Speaker Number 10, Marrice Griffin Converson 06:38:51
followed by Speaker Number 11, Nathan Petithomme, 06:38:56
and Speaker Number 12, Jasmine Curtis. 06:38:59
Katherine Oswood, please. 06:39:05
MS. OSGOOD: Hi. It's Osgood actually. 06:39:05
Good evening, everyone. I'm a special 06:39:11
education teacher. I teach at Langston Hughes 06:39:15
Elementary on the far south side of Roseland. I 06:39:17
just want to say real quick, it would be helpful to 06:39:19
have some more of these meetings in different 06:39:21
locations around the city. My community, school 06:39:22
community had a hard time coming up here. They 06:39:26
weren't able to be here even though they wanted to 06:39:28
speak. 06:39:30

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Today, I have actually spoken to the Board before about the trauma, about the chaos that my special education students are going through as a result of these budget cuts. Today, instead of continuing to tell those stories, you guys know those stories about the trauma, about the -- just the constant disruptions to schedules, we're actually going to ask you guys if you would commit to standing with us to help protect our special education students.

Now in special education, we often use little charts like this with our kids, especially our kids with autism. It's called a first VIN chart. I'm asking every member of the Board to go and use your own networks. You all are appointed by Rahm Emanuel. This means you know him. He's a friends of yours. I need you to go to him and explain to him this chart.

First, you need to fund your schools. Then you can go do your river walk, your high-rises, your TIF projects, your whatever it is you need to do. But go tell him we need this done first. And, first of all, we need to protect our most vulnerable which includes our special
education students.

Today, we're asking the Board Members, and this includes our CEO, this includes all the members that are on -- who are leaders in CPS, we're asking you today to sign a pledge. The pledge reads: I pledge to CPS students with disabilities, February 13th. I, your name, as a member of the Chicago Board of Education pledge that I will do everything in my power to ensure that special education programs are fully funded --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Osgood.

MS. OSGOOD: -- and distinct from general education, uncommingled funds to ensure all students' needs are met. Additionally, I promise that the Board will practice fiscal responsibility and advocate for local progressive revenue.

We are asking that you sign this, that you say -- so I'm going to ask Mr. Clark, President Clark, would you please sign this pledge right now that says that you will -- that you will advocate for special education students, that you will go on all of the talk shows and the news programs in our city, that you will go to your networks of millionaires and the corporate elite
that are in our city? I know that you guys have
these connections. Will you go to them and push
for progressive revenue? Will you push to release
the TIF funds that still exist, have not been
released yet? Will you go and -- will you --
PRESIDENT CLARK: You need to let me answer
them so you can wrap up so other people can speak.
MS. OSGOOD: We have our Sharpie here.
PRESIDENT CLARK: The short answer to your
question is that you don't know, although you think
you do, you don't know what this Board does. You
don't. You come here with very, very
predetermined, preconceived --
MS. OSGOOD: I'm just speaking for my special
education students.
PRESIDENT CLARK: Let me speak. Let me speak.
I'm addressing that precise issue. You come here
with a pledge, the ramifications of which I don't
really know what it means. No one signs anything
without thoroughly understanding it, at least they
shouldn't.
But at the end of the day, we have some
things in common. I do believe you care. I think
you care deeply. You don't respect other people's
opinions, but you shared yours, and some of what
you said I think deserves more thought.

I know that this question comes up
constantly from Board Members to the leadership on
special ed and special ed funding, and we've gotten
very complete, thorough answers. You don't agree
with those answers. And I respect that.

MS. OSGOOD: Your answers are harming my
children. I just want a pledge that you're going
to make that stop. That's all I am asking.

Whatever you have to do, whatever is in your power
to do, and this includes the entire Board, I know,
you know, you guys can get on these news shows.
You can be out there writing op-eds. You can be on
board with all of us that are fighting for these
things and make a united front and actually go
after the people that have money in our city.

Our city is so rich. You just have to
come downtown and you see the money. I don't
understand why we just -- I'm in a high poverty
school in an African-American community and we just
got another round of budget cuts. This is our
seventh, eighth round.

PRESIDENT CLARK: I have to let other people
speak. Thank you very much.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you for your comments.

MS. OSGOOD: So the answer was no.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Griffin? Please state your name.

MS. CONVERSON: Marrice Converson.


Good evening. It's my pleasure to talk to you, but not under these circumstances. This a crisis. We are in crisis. Now what are we going do about it? These are our children. It's not your children. It's not somebody else's child. It's all our children. These are our children we're talking about. Our education for our children in crisis.

Pre-schoolers start school, some of them are reading, some of them are not. By this time, some of them may be getting together and starting to read. Some of them have not even -- when they start have not been in an educational system at all. So now they may just be starting. But now
you're cutting. So where are children are? What 06:45:16
is going to happen to our children? 06:45:20

This -- I understand the whole thing about 06:45:22
balancing budgets. All of us have to have balanced 06:45:26
budgets. But do we have to balance them for the 06:45:29
education of our children? Everybody knows that 06:45:33
Chicago Public Schools kids cannot read. So what 06:45:35
does this mean? More children not reading? More 06:45:40
children not doing math? More children not doing 06:45:44
science? Does that mean we have no engineers 06:45:47
anymore? What does it mean?

I know you care. I know you care, but I 06:45:53
also know that you have alliances. But cut all the 06:45:57
alliances at this time. The alliance always should 06:46:03
be to our children. Only to our children. And so 06:46:06
what we should do, we should stop now, stop right 06:46:10
now with this budget cut --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Converson? 06:46:14

MS. CONVERSON: -- and figure out how we can 06:46:16
join together and make this work for our children. 06:46:19

Thank you. 06:46:23

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you for your 06:46:26
comments. Our next speaker, please. 06:46:28

PRESIDENT CLARK: Dr. Jackson, no one knows the 06:46:30
academic achievements of CPS better than you and Forrest. Do you care to make any response regarding the academics of CPS and the statement that our kids cannot read?

CEDO JACKSON: Well, I think it's been noted that our kids have made significant gains over the past five to ten years, and I also know that Reverend Converson is well aware of that as an active member of the Bronzeville CAC. I think, you know, making maybe just more of a political statement around the fact that our kids do need -- they do need great schools in order to continue along that trajectory, but nobody would doubt that we've made progress over time.

So I think it was more of a broad statement -- and I don't want to speak for her -- just more of a broad statement about what's at stake, and I don't disagree that a lot is at stake.

PRESIDENT CLARK: Thank you, Dr. Jackson.

Continue.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. President. I'll continue. The next speaker, please, is Nathan Petithomme followed by Speaker Number 12, Jasmine Curtis. We then have Speaker 13,
Catherine Henchek, Speaker 14, Bess Kuchenbecker.  

Last call for Nathan Petithomme.  

Moving on to the next speaker, last call for Jasmine Curtis.  

Last call for Catherine Henchek. Please state your name.  

MS. HENCHEK: Catherine Henchek. Hello. As I said, I'm Catherine Henchek, and I'm here as a member of Parents for Teachers and a parent of a special needs child in CPS. 

I have been here before and, frankly, I'm kind of disgusted we're having the same conversation over and over again. When we passed this budget which relied on state funding, I think everybody outside the Board knew that wasn't going to come through, and then we're just blaming the Governor for it. I mean, we all knew he wasn't going to pay up. 

So why aren't we doing anything about this as a city? We've been pushing for the TIF ordinance, but nothing has happened. There's other progressive revenue sources that people have been talking about, the corporate head tax, millionaire's tax, and nothing is happening.
I don't really understand why the Board isn't out pushing for these things. We just got to stop blaming the Governor and actually find some money in the city. We can't balance the budget on the backs of special needs children.

As I said, I have got a special needs child and, you know, he's 14. He's only just started to learn to read; and, to be honest, I never thought he would be able to read, and I'm really excited by this. And he couldn't have done it if he didn't have all the aides, all the supports, all the therapists, the speech therapists, all these people to help. And the kids coming up now, what's happening? Their money is being cut. And children like this need that help. They need one-on-one. They need a small classroom. And we cannot balance the budget on their backs.

So don't take the future away from our special needs children. I'm really asking you to do the right thing, try and find money within this city. We know there is money here. Quit blaming the Governor. Nothing is going to happen with Springfield. Look for the money here. And, you know, don't penalize our children, especially our
special needs children who need all the help they can get. Thank you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Henchek.

Our next speaker, please.

MS. KUCHENBECKER: Hello. My name is Bess Kuchenbecker. I am a charter teacher at the UNO Charter School Network in Archer Heights. I am the special education teacher for middle school as well as the case manager.

I want to say that everything that Catherine just said is all the words that I would like to say as well as a few others. Some of the things that we need are we need special education teachers, because if we're not there to teach those children, then they don't get taught. Because the fact is that they need these services and they're not getting them. They're not getting them in CPS schools and they're not getting them in the charter schools either which you also fund.

We have been cut across the city, whether we work in a charter school or we work in one of the district schools. We are all in the same boat. We have the same children. My children live in Archer Heights, and they can't get their special
education services because we don't have the funding. We can't get the materials that they need, that are specialized. We have kids who need special scissors, who need special paper, who need special chairs, special desks, but there's no money to pay for that, especially with this latest freeze because that's where this freeze is going to hit us. It's going to hit us in the supplies that those kids can't have unless we got the money to pay for it.

We need to fully fund our special education programs. We need to fully fund our schools. We have such immense violence in the city because children are uneducated, because children don't have what they need. They don't have after-school programs. They don't have the supports that they need in place to make the good decisions. So they are failing to make those good decisions. And what does that end in? It ends in the extreme violence that this city sees.

So fund after-school programs. Fund our kids' schools equally, including the south side that's always shafted. Please, show how much you care about these kids and provide them with the
funding that they need regardless of where they are located, regardless if they are a charter school or a regular public school. Thank you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you for your comments. Our next speakers, Mr. President, will be Speaker Number 15, please, Angie Chavero followed by Speaker Number 16, Sarah Chambers. We will then have Speaker 17, Natasha Carlsen followed by Speaker Number 18, Omar Santiago Diaz.

Please state your name, Ms. Chavero.

MS. CHAVERO: I'm waiting for my kids, please.

Good evening.

Mr. President, you just told these special education teachers they don't know what they're talking about. They care about these students more or less than you do.

Let me ask you a few questions. Why are you trying to hurt our children? Why are you trying to hurt the Latino and African community? Why are you trying to hurt the most vulnerable children that there are which are special needs kids?

All I have to say is, thanks to those special education teachers, my daughter is where
she is. She is a 15-year-old who has a third grade
reading level, but because of those teachers right
now, she's in the top of her class.

Why are we taking their money? It's their
money. It's not Rahm's money. It's not Rauner's
money. It's our special education kids' money.

Let's start taxing the million dollar people, not
our students.

Why do our kids have to worry about if
their teachers are going to come back or not or if
their teacher is working for free or not? These
teachers care about these children that you see in
front of you.

My daughter, like I said, is a special ed
student, and her teacher, Ms. Sarah Chambers, works
her butt off for these kids every single day.

Let's not keep taking their stuff away.

That's all I have to say.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Chavero.

Our next speaker, please, Sarah Chambers.

A VOICE: She's using the rest of her time.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: I'm sorry, did she register
to speak? What's her name? She didn't register to

speak. Ms. Chambers?
MS. CHAMBERS: Not letting students speak.
Typical Board.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Please state your name.

MS. CHAMBERS: Sarah Chambers, Saucedo Academy.
Good morning, unelected school board. I'm here to ask where is Rahm Emanuel because we all know he controls everything that goes on here? Everyone knows that every single budget decision that is made here, he is choosing. Rahm Emanuel is choosing, and he is choosing not to fund special education. He is choosing to make cuts to special education.

And every time that Rahm Emanuel gives millions of dollars in TIF money to condos downtown, like River Pointe Plaza got 25 million, or every time he's choosing his rich banker buddies, he's choosing them over my students with disabilities. Shame. Shame on Rahm Emanuel. And every time Rahm refuses to renegotiate toxic swaps, he's choosing his banker buddies over my students with disabilities.

Rahm, you blame Rauner, right? We all know. Rahm is on the news. You all are on the news blaming Rauner every day. This is Rahm's
fault. This is your city. If you did not want to run Chicago Public Schools, then give it to us. Give us an elected school board. Give us an elected school board.

And Rahm Emanuel is here blaming Republicans, but here he is, destroying special education. There are at least 20 speakers on this list speaking on special education. The past few months, the Board of Ed, you've had the same. Rahm Emanuel is blaming Republicans? He's doing the same thing DeVos is about to do. DeVos is about to destroy special education. Here, Rahm Emanuel is doing it in his own city.

All right. So what does this actually look like in our schools? At Saucedo last Wednesday, people from downtown CPS came into our schools to change all the special education schedules. Written on the schedules, it said that they're cutting minutes. It said too many minutes. Do a revision. Too many minutes. Cut from 600 minutes to 300. I listed all the kids. They're cutting 28 students' minutes, reducing the minutes.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Chambers.

MS. CHAMBERS: They're saying they're trying to
make minutes meet. They're not trying to make minutes meet. They're trying to cut special education because you all think it's too expensive. Shame on you. Look at these kids in the face. Look at these kids in the face because you are deciding not to fund their education, not to fund special education --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Chambers?

MS. CHAMBERS: -- and, instead, to fund bankers and billionaires. Shame.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you. Our next speaker, please, Natasha Carlsen. Last call.

MS. CARLSEN: I'm here. I am short. Sorry.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Carlsen?

MS. CARLSEN: I was just checking for my pledge that I had made just in case any of your accommodations were that you needed a larger print, that was all.

After two prior budget drafts, both hearings that I attended as a special education teacher and a system that is forced me to be an advocate, you still fail to protect the well-being and basic safety.

Mr. Clark, you stated that you expect the
state will fulfill its promise, but all of us told you that was not unthinkable, and it was exactly what we thought would occur. And especially since, Mr. Clark, you just said, I don't know what you do or we don't know what you do or you are stating that we don't respect your opinions. I'm sorry, but -- I'm not sorry. I don't respect your opinion when it's shown through your vote and voice that you want us to continue to do more with less when there's nothing left to cut. You cannot cut your way to good schools on the backs of my children, all children, and all teachers.

When you brag about that you fight for revenue, but, in fact, in special education in Illinois, that it is 95 percent less than what other school districts in the state give.

Also, the professional development for principals for quarter two, something us teachers know nothing about because this budget chooses to furlough us for, you chose to have your white paper from the Oodles department which it selectively cited research that was meant to deceive rather than to illuminate which is in line with practice of the budget that lacks accountability,
transparency or any sense.

You cited in the white paper Boston which 06:58:32
Boston, Tampa, and St. Paul all have higher 06:58:35
achievement for our special ed students because 06:58:37
they invest in our special education students. 06:58:40
Boston dramatically increased spending from 2006 06:58:42
which was around 11,000 to 2015 which was more than 06:58:46
16,000. Tampa has increased their spending by 06:58:50
19 percent since 2010. And even St. Paul, where 06:58:54
our Deputy Chief Liz Keenan is from, had increased 06:58:57
per pupil funding up to 18,167.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Carlsen? 06:59:05

MS. CARLSEN: Thank you for a budget that does 06:59:05
not meet the needs of my students. If you are 06:59:07
serious about meeting the needs and if you are 06:59:09
serious about your opinion and you are serious 06:59:11
about what you do as a Board, an unelected school 06:59:13
board at that --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Carlsen. 06:59:17

MS. CARLSEN: -- you will fight for progressive 06:59:18
revenue. You will give our students the budget -- 06:59:20

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Our next speaker, please, 06:59:21
Omar Santiago Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: Ladies and gentlemen, how are you 06:59:27
doing? I'm a parent. This is my son here. He got special ed needs. 06:59:33

To be honest with you, these are old tactics. You guys keep going back and forth about budget, this and that. We pay the highest taxes in the whole country. You're building condos, billion dollar schools, Emanuel that's building by Hyde Park, and kids are going ten to five miles away from their home and they have to go through gangs that is not even in the neighborhood. 06:59:55

You got kids that are deaf. You got kids that are handicapped. You got kids that are blind. Maybe none of you guys got kids like that, but once in a while, if you live in your neighborhood, you might see a parent with their kids. How hard it is to take that child to a store, help them go into the washroom or help that blind child trying to come into the car, get out of the car without getting hit. 07:01:22

These programs help these kids. I know in the past it's been going up and down with the budget, but you got to look at the bright side. Yes, the reading scores is going up slowly. It's moving up. These teachers are spending 12 hours a
day even when they're at home doing paperwork,
correcting kids, putting money out of their pocket
to give into the kids.

As a parent, I contribute. Some parents,
they don't contribute, but they volunteer to help
the teachers out. It's not about -- it's about
protecting that child, even if this child is not
mine, white, black, Asian, Hispanic, Muslim,
Indonesian. It all matters because we want to get
the same education, equality.

Emanuel, you guys pass laws to make sure
that child on the first day of the school so you
guys can get the funds. If you do, you don't, you
can correct me, but --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Mr. Diaz?

MR. DIAZ: -- when the kids get there the first
day of school, what happens? Nothing. It's the
same ol' story. It's like playing Monopoly. Once
you go across Boardwalk, oh, well, we're sorry, we
don't got money, but we are doing all this
construction around the city.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Mr. Diaz, thank you for
your comments.

MR. DIAZ: Thank you.
SECRETARY BELTRAN: I'll continue,

Mr. President, with the next speakers and we'll have Speaker Number 19, please, Misael Camarillo
followed by Speaker Number 20, America Olmedo, and then Speaker Number 21, Olga Contreras.

MR. CAMARILLO: Good evening, everybody. My name is Misael Camarillo. I'm also a parent of a kid that's in seventh grade. He's been getting special ed since probably about two years ago, and he needed that education really bad because, before that, his grades were really low, below average; and, right now, I can gladly say he's between As and Bs, and he couldn't have done that without special education and the teachers that are here helping them every day. This is my son.

I think if you guys take money from -- that is destined for his education, you pretty much are hurting his future because I want him to go to college, and I want him to develop his skills; but since he was born premature, he had learning issues from the beginning. So that's why he needs that special education.

If you guys cut that right now, he's going to start having problems or learning issues.
probably starting high school. So what's going to happen after that? He probably won't be able to go to college because he couldn't get enough education from the beginning. And that's a hurtful thing for my son.

Mr. Clark, what do you think about that, sir?

PRESIDENT CLARK: I think you're a wonderful parent and you delivered a strong, compelling message.

MR. CAMARILLO: Thank you, sir.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. Camarillo.

Our next speaker, please, America Olmedo.

MS. OLMEDO: Good evening. My name is America Olmedo. I've been a CPS student, elementary school, high school. I was the first one to graduate college from my family. I have four children. Two are now in college and two are in elementary school.

So I'm here to talk about -- because I know you already heard about all the special ed cuts, but besides that, I'm here to talk about the wonderful job Durkin Park Elementary is doing with my children, the principal, the assistant
principal, but especially the special ed teachers. I heard that Durkin Park was cut $68,622, and that's a little upsetting not only as a parent but as a resident because I pay property taxes and my property taxes are not decreasing. Actually they have been increasing for the last five years, and I don't mind because I know part of that is for my children, for the education, for the libraries. I definitely don't mind, right.

The other second thing is, as you heard it already, it's on the price of whose back? The most vulnerable. My youngest son, he has an IEP. He's been in a special program for the last two years, and for the first time he does not hate going to school. He loves to read. He comes to me and says, mom, help me with my homework because this is something he can do. Okay.

So if these cuts are going to continue, I haven't heard about Durkin Park. I was a little surprised earlier that they have a safety issue. I'm going to get my husband to go and volunteer during the day because that's not right. And I hope they don't start cutting the special ed programs because that's where they're going to
start is what I hear.

I don't want him to lose that stamina that he has grown. He's ten years old. And yes, he is going to go to college because I am a determined mom.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Olmedo, can you please conclude?

MS. OLMEDO: I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry. Let's listen to the other options for funding. Listen to CTU. We got the millionaire's tax, the LaSalle Street tax, the TIF surplus. We must put our children first.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Olmedo.

Our next speaker, please, Olga Contreras followed by Speaker Number 23, Norine Gutekanst, and Speaker 24, Julianna Ritzu.

MS. CONTRERAS: (Through interpreter) My name is Olga Contreras. I'm here to speak about other aspect of the budget, the cuts that are affecting the cleaning of our schools and the health of our students and staff.

Floors are dirty. The soap they are using is diluted. It doesn't have foam. Please make sure to hire more personnel to clean the schools so
we can have a healthy and respectful environment for our communities. Cleaning is not negotiable because it could be a health risk. We don't have -- we don't want to see rats or roaches infestations in the schools. So instead of going to the news to tell our story, we invite you to visit our schools in Little Village. Thank you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Contreras.

Our next speaker, please, Norine Gutekanst.

MS. GUTEKANST: Hello, good evening. My name is Norine Gutekanst. I'm here to ask what are you and your political patron, Rahm, going to do to fund our schools? Not the game of blaming Rauner, but the work of finding revenue solutions. And I'm going to give you some solutions, proposals that you have heard many times before, but I want to know when it is you're going to start looking at them and when you're going to start actually funding the schools instead of perpetrating the cuts that everybody has been talking about.

We -- I'm a member of Chicago Teachers Union. We support reinstating the employer's expense head tax. That could supply $94 million
for our schools in one year. We're in favor of the personal property lease transaction tax which could provide $35 million to help fund our schools. There's potential TIF surplus money of up to $100 million.

So our City Council is actually controlled by Democrats. I don't think there's a single Republican in that City Council, right? There's no partisan divide there. Every ward has multiple schools. Every single one of these schools is facing cuts. What are you going to do to work with City Council to fund our schools?

There's also things that you can do in the legislature in Springfield, but I don't see that you or Rahm are doing any of this stuff. You could be going after the TIF surplus funds. House Bill 3720, that would say that TIF surplus money should actually go towards funding these dire special education funds needs that we have in our school.

You could be supporting a millionaire's tax. That would provide millions of dollars for our schools. You could support the carried interest tax which is a bill that's been introduced by Senator Daniel Biss and Chris Welch.
So what I want to know is what are you going to do to find funding for our schools?  

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Gutekanst. 

Thank you for your comments.

Our next speaker, Mr. President, is Speaker Number 24, please, Juliana Ritzu followed by Speaker 25, Sabah Hussain, and then we'll have Speaker Number 27 -- I'm sorry, 26, Jesse Sharkey followed by Speaker 27, Rosa Esquivel.

Julianna Ritzu? Last call.

Moving on to the next speaker, Sabah Hussain? Last call.

We then have Jesse Sharkey, please.

MR. SHARKEY: Good evening, President Clark and members of the Board. I'm Jesse Sharkey. I'm the vice president of CTU. Good evening.

Rauner vetoed $215 million. And, frankly, I wasn't surprised. I doubt any of us in this room were surprised by that. Look, I know he has disdain for public school teachers in Chicago. He called us illiterate. I know he has disdain for the finances of this district. He personally intervened in the bond market to drive up the cost of our borrowing to the benefit of his friends in
the bond market. So I'm really not surprised by that.

But Rauner's personal qualities are somewhat beside the point. Rauner has a program that's fundamentally anti public education. It's a program of keeping taxes low so that the companies and the wealthy can prosper in Illinois. And he calls that being good for business and, yet, what that means is freezes and cuts in public schools despite the fact that those public schools are at the heart of our neighborhoods and the heart of our future for the city.

That's the problem. The problem is a question of his fundamental program. And so the question of having to fight that program is the heart of what we have to be about. And, frankly, I want to say that there's no organization in this city that's more willing to fight the program of privatizing our schools, keeping taxes low for the wealthy, and gutting our neighborhoods and schools than the Chicago Teachers Union. Let us have that fight. That's a fight that we want. We want that fight.

Not about Rauner personally. This isn't,
you know, a name calling match. This is about fighting the program of privatizing our schools. What I do have to say, though, is this Board of the Chicago Public Schools and the Mayor that appoints it has failed to do everything in its power to take that fight to the Governor. I just got to call it like we see it. Rauner's personal fortune grew $176 million, $176 million in 2015. 

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Mr. Sharkey?

MR. SHARKEY: Will you guys join us to call for a tax on carried interest? Will you join us in that call? We've sat down and been arrested at the same banks that made hundreds of millions of dollars off toxic swaps. 

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Mr. Sharkey?

MR. SHARKEY: Will you join us in the sit-ins?

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you for your comments. 

MR. SHARKEY: We want to take this fight to the Governor, but we want the Mayor and the members of the Board of Ed and the officials of the CPS to join us in that fight. 

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. Sharkey.
Our next speakers, Mr. President, will be Speaker 27, Rosa Esquivel followed by Speaker 28, Juan Vaglienty, Speaker 29, Gregory Goodman, Speaker 30, Sarah Simmons.

Please state your name.

MS. ESQUIVEL: Good afternoon, Board of Education members. My name is Rosa Esquivel, member of Pilsen Alliance, parent of Benito Juarez High School who got a cut of 613,000 and Andrew Jackson, 49,000.

I am a mother who has been fighting for special education for my son, for my son, who before, especially he has low self-esteem problems and suffer from panic attacks. As a parent that comes from the Pilsen community, we are battling many issues like gentrification, and now we're battling with more budget cuts and after-school programs are disappearing. Plus our schools have lead problems.

We are outraged that Rauner, Rahm, my own alderman, Danny Solis, and many public officials are not trying to find any solutions to those problems. We know that Chicago is not broke. There is money. They're out there. We have TIF
money. There are a lot of corporations that are getting tax credits. We need to have our priorities straight.

How is it possible that there is money to build new charter schools, things like the Chelsea 606 or, in the case of Pilsen, El Paseo, but there is no money to fund the schools that we already have.

And also how do you base those cuts? How is that it our black and Latino communities are getting the most cuts?

So today we had a press conference at Benito Juarez High School, and we are asking all of you for answers. We need solutions. Our children need solutions as they deserve a good quality education. By not standing up to these budget cuts, you are setting Chicago up for failure, as in the long run, if we do not invest in education, we are going to have more crime. We are going to have more social problems and more poverty.

So what are we going to do about this as Chicagoans?

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. Esquivel.

MS. ESQUIVEL: What are we going to do this?
And I'm going to ask you right now, would you guys send your kids to our public schools? Would you do that?

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Esquivel.

Our next speaker, please, Juan Vaglienty.

VOICES: Save special ed.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Our next speaker.

MR. VAGLIENTY: My name is Juan Vaglienty. I am a father of two children in kindergarten, one in kindergarten, one in preschool. Both have special needs. And the reason why I'm here is I've heard that special ed is getting cut. And I have a daughter. She doesn't see. She can't walk on her own. She doesn't talk on her own. And she relies on other people to get her to the bathroom, to help her eat, and if she doesn't have an aide at school, she's not doing any of that. So if you can imagine being not able to see, being stuck in a wheelchair, and being forced to have to use the washroom in your pants, that's not dignified.

If you could please find other solutions than to cutting special education. It's really important. Thank you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, sir. Our next
speaker, please, Gregory Goodman.

MR. GOODMAN: Good afternoon. Good evening.

Gregory Goodman. I'm a social studies teacher at
Lindblom Math and Science Academy.

On the CPS Web site or on the page that's
dedicated to talking about your mission statement,
there's actually -- it starts with a quote from
CEO Claypool and it says, All of our children want
to succeed and it is our job to see if they can.
This is actually one of these rare instances where
you and I are in perfect agreement. It usually
goes downhill from here.

As a teacher in CPS, we spend a lot of
time having people who've never spent a day in the
classroom coming in and telling us how to do our
job. So I figured it was appropriate for me to
come back and maybe tell you a little bit about how
you're doing your job wrong. Okay.

As members of this Board, right, as our
CEO, it is your job to help us do the very best we
can to help our students; but the job that you guys
keep doing is helping rich people rob our students.
And it's -- this seems to be an easy place to get
confused if you're on the Board. I've never served
on the Board, I don't know, but I've seen board after board, CEO after CEO, you guys keep getting this wrong. So maybe it's worth just kind of driving the point home. Let's call this a revision assignment.

So, to me, when I wake up every day knowing that I'm fighting for my students, it's not just giving it all in the classroom, right. We've had people come up and ask you guys, the bare minimum was, can you go on TV and say maybe instead of cutting our budgets, we need more money for our schools. And we got a sort of a response about how we just don't understand the world because we think we should have more money, not less money for our students who are clearly in need, right.

I have been arrested more than a dozen times fighting for, among other things, trying to have access to emergency trauma care for our students, public mental health care for our students, trying to keep you guys from closing our schools, trying to keep you guys from closing school libraries, things like this, right. I've put my career, I've put my livelihood, my safety on the line. And I'm happy to keep doing it again and
again. I will. But we need you guys to actually --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Mr. Goodman?

MR. GOODMAN: -- fight for our students. When you actually take this job, right, it doesn't matter -- I understand most of you are rich people, right, and these are the people you're used to identifying with and working with, but when you take on this job, you take on a responsibility to put things aside and fight for our schools.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. Goodman.

MR. GOODMAN: I have a revision assignment.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you for comments.

Our next speaker.

MR. GOODMAN: I hope you read it. It says that Washington -- of the conflict --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Mr. Goodman, thank you.

MR. GOODMAN: -- means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Our next speaker, please.

MR. GOODMAN: If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the -- finally, I don't know if you really want to cut me off reading Dr. Martin Luther King during Black History Month,
The hottest place in hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in -- (chanting).

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Our next speaker. Please state your name.

MS. SIMMONS: Hi. I'm Sarah Simmons. I've been a CPS parent for 24 years. I am now a CPS grandparent. So you have the pleasure of continuing to see me come to these meetings.

I'm also a special ed parent, and I just want to say, thanks to extra help, my son graduated from high school. He went to college, and he is actually a middle school teacher. Success story, right. He does not have the courage to apply to CPS because he's seen how the teachers have been demeaned and vilified, laid off. He just is going to stay in the private schools for now because it is such a difficult climate.

A lot of what I want to say has already been said. I know that the state is remiss, but there is money in the city, and we need to come up with some progressive revenue sources to fund our schools. Right now you can get away with shitting on the most vulnerable, but it's going to come back to bite you because now everybody is being affected.
by this. Gen ed is affected when special ed is cut.
So today I heard that Northside College Prep, one of your flagship schools, failed the food safety inspections. Can you please stop privatizing the ancillary services? Nursing, the janitorial services, now engineering. How does that affect the safety of our students when we have lesser trained people being paid less to come in and take care of these vital services?
My grandson needs bilingual services, but with student-based budgeting, his principal can't afford to give him the kind of services he needs. He's also special ed. So you got all these different needs that are not being met and white, middle class people are going to start rebelling against it. We need an elected school board. We need somebody that can be --
SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Simmons.
Our next speakers, Mr. President, will be Speaker Number 31, please, Elizabeth Oldendorf followed by Speaker 32, Martha Baumgarten. We'll then have Speaker Number 33, LaNedra Vaughn, and Speaker 34, Bridget White.
Please state your name.

MS. OLDENDORF: My name is Elizabeth Oldendorf.

Good evening. I teach in the unionized UCSN school network at the north side Carlos Fuentes. I taught sixth grade reading in a low wealth school for six years.

Tonight, we've used the phrase vulnerable to describe a lot of students with special needs. I really want you to take a second and think about what that means. By the time my special education students made it to my class in the gen ed classroom in sixth grade, they have spent years feeling lost and behind. Most of my 32 students in my overcrowded classrooms could usually find some ways to learn on their own.

Our special ed children need their teachers next to them to help to keep them from drowning in their work. I have seen my special needs children get more support from their community gang members than from their schools. This is unacceptable.

Find the money and invest in these children.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Mr. Oldendorf.
Our next speaker, please.

MS. BAUMGARTEN: Hi. My name is Martha Baumgarten. I'm a charter school teacher, I'm a classroom teacher, and I'm a Chicago resident.

You can no longer drive a wedge between charter school teachers and public school teachers. As charter school teachers organize network by network and campus by campus, we realize that we all face the exact same problems. All of our special education students are not getting the services they need and deserve and have the legal right to.

We implore you to support the students who need the most support. We implore you to protect the students who need the most protection. We implore you to help those who need the most help. If the funding is not here now, find it, advocate for it. All of our city students are counting on you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Baumgarten.

Our next speaker, please, LaNedra Vaughn.

MS. VAUGHN: Hi. My name is LaNedra Vaughn. How can you sit here before us today as
our Chicago Board of Education and take education away from our children? You tell our kids to stay in school, get a good education, but you're attacking the educational system.

If anything, give up some of your money to supply and make us so all the money that we are not getting for our schools. Stop privatizing our school with all of these janitors and everybody else. Leave our people's that are in our schools in the schools. You're taking away the most important people for our students away from the school system.

Our schools need vocation back. Get the vocation back into the schools so our kids can go out here and get a job just like you. You had to get an education to get where you are today, and our kids have to get an education to get where they want to go.

So, please, pay more attention to what our student needs are and not your needs. Pay more attention to the people that are important in the schools. You're taking jobs away from us and we're playing an important part just like you do into the school systems.
So we need you to stop attacking the schools, bring the TIF money, bring Rahm Emanuel, Rauner, let them give money and put it where it's needed and not where they want it to be.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Ms. Vaughn.

Our next speaker, please, Bridget White.

After Ms. White, we'll have Speaker Number 35, please, Byron Sigcho followed by Speaker 36, Janice Pass, 37, Veronica Rodriguez, and the last speaker, Maria Martinez.

Please proceed.

MS. WHITE: Hello. My name is Bridget White.

As I stand here and I'm looking, where is the empathy? As I look across your faces, I see you all just looking at us like, are we done yet?

We are fighting for our children. We are not going to be done until they receive the resources they're supposed to. It sounds like people have been here several times with suggestions of where to find the money at for our children and all we keep getting is cuts, cuts, cuts.

I'm a mother of two children in CPS. This is my daughter. She goes to Ashburn, and I have a
son that's at Miles Davis. I'm so tired of our children coming -- not coming first. We have money to redo bus stops downtown. We have money for landscaping downtown. But when it comes to our kids, sorry, we don't have any money, only cuts. We have to buy reams of paper year to year for our children at their schools in order for the teachers to be able to make the copies and print what books that we don't even have at our schools.

You have money for bogus contracts where Barbara Byrd took the fall for, but, yet, again, we don't have money for our children at our schools. You pick and choose who gets a good education or not. That's why all these parents every year file in for selective enrollment because everybody is fighting to have a good education for their children.

All schools should have all the same resources that you should be able to send your child to their own schools in their neighborhood and everybody is the same across the board. Not based on your ZIP Code, not based on, oh, in the lottery. Everybody should have the same education. It shouldn't matter of your color, special needs.
children. Everybody should get a good education.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Ms. White?

MS. WHITE: We are going to keep fighting until you all do the right thing. Stop not putting our children first and put our children first. Thank you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you for your comments.

Our next speaker, please, Byron Sigcho.

MR. SIGCHO: Good evening. I cannot recall how many meetings that I have attended, you know, throughout the years. This has got to be, you know, hundreds of times, and I think we come to the same, same conclusion. No answers from the Mayor. No answers from his appointed Board.

But the disgusting thing is that it gets worse and immorality keeps growing and growing. I remember Board members like the last president, Vitale, who signed those infamous toxic swaps. He resigned and he left us millions in debt.

I remember Ms. Quasso selling furniture to the CPS schools, overpriced, recusing herself from voting in this board and now she's gone.

And I cannot help myself but to notice now, you know, Reverend Garanzini, now even the
Catholic Church has loaned themselves to play these nasty political games between Rahm and Rauner.

Mr. Garanzini, I know you're smiling, but today in Pilsen, in our Latino community that is a strongly Catholic community, I know you're laughing, but there are parents crying because these cuts are real. You hear from a student today that said we don't even have money for toilet paper. And you think that's funny.

REV. GARANZINI: I don't think it's funny.

MR. SIGCHIO: I just want to clarify because these are things that are real. Let me tell you something else --

REV. GARANZINI: I don't like being yelled at for something I didn't do.

MR. SIGCHIO: Well, let me tell you another conflict of interest, right, because when we're hearing, right, and we even have now even Catholics persisting in the public Board of Education, now we have parents who suffer for the consequences that you are making.

So I will give you a piece of advice because you have no choice because Rahm is your boss, and we're stuck with this guy. But you do
have an option. You can resign. You can resign and allow the people to have an elected board. That's what should happen because your decisions have -- way too long --

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Mr. Sigcho, thank you for your comments.

MR. SIGCHO: That's what you got to do, resign and let the people have the voice.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you.

Our next speaker, please, Janice Pass.

Last call for Janice Pass.

Moving on to the next speaker, Veronica Rodriguez. Please state your name.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good evening. My name is Veronica Rodriguez. I am a junior representing Back of the Yards College Prep on behalf of the students who want to speak up.

Today, it is more important than ever to prevent the funding cuts from our schools. I am the oldest of five. I want to be a role model and prove that it is possible to become something more than what the system has designed for us. Our voices will not resist -- our voices will not rest until we receive the fundamental education we have
always been asking for. We need to make our schools a sanctuary for students and families to feel safe and secure from unfair immigration policies. We need counselors and provide training for teachers to learn and understand how to be supportive in situations like these.

But how can we achieve this if our budgets are getting cut? What would you do to secure the future of our youth? When I become mayor, people like you will not be where you're sitting at.

Thank you.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Our next speaker, please, Maria Martinez.

MS. MARTINEZ: My name is Maria Martinez. I am representing all those schools that you are cutting budgets from. These budget cuts are affecting the students so much. Counselors are being fired, and counselors who help our students, including myself, with scholarships, scholarships that can get you into college. College is so important to me because it gets me into a job, a job that can prepare me, a job that, unlike you, I would be able to do right.
I'm grateful for the donation to get a new part of the building to my selective enrollment school, but the floors are peeling off. Our sink for chemistry didn't even work until now. It really takes that long to fix a sink? We lost $167,000, and that money we could have used to repair our building. We need to repair our schools and for our student safety. And this is selective enrollment schools. Imagine the problems with the other schools. We don't even have enough money for necessities like toilet paper. Toilet paper.

But the biggest question out there is where is all this money going to? It's going to the new building. Buildings are not just for show. Maybe we spend money on charter schools, charter schools that don't even affect students as much as greatly as CPS schools. That money belongs to us, and we will stand for it. We will fight for it and we will continue to fight until all of our money is returned.

The more you cut the schools, the more we are impacted. Michael J., I seem to notice you were laughing when one of us was presenting. This is not a joke. This is something serious, and if
you can't be serious, then quit because we need people that will take us seriously. We need serious people. We need an elected school board.

Just like my mother, she cares about me. All parents care about us, and they should be where you are. Our teachers care about us, and they should be where you are because they actually know what it is like to be in school. You have never stepped a foot inside our school.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Mr. Vice President, this concludes the public segment of the hearing.

VICE PRESIDENT GUZMAN: Thank you, Madam Secretary. Board Members, any comments or questions?

I just have one. I know we had the issue of special ed come up again, and I know we've heard it over the course of multiple months, and I know the Board has asked questions ad nauseam about how special ed services are provided to students.

Can we just hear again students that are -- that have IEPs are receiving services in full accordance with those IEPs. That is the understanding that this Board has been given and that is the understanding of how the district
operates and that is what is required by law.

Can I, for the record, just hear that again?

CEO CLAYPOOL: Yes. You know, the reason this year we had set a mandate with the principals at the beginning of the year to budget and schedule every single IEP before a single dollar was spent in general education was to ensure that every IEP was funded.

When you have 661 schools and 55,000 IEPs, I have no doubt that there are gaps. There are situations where the services are not being provided and should be provided. That's why we constantly ask -- our principals in each school, obviously, are responsible for ensuring that each IEP is there. When we get information from anyone that an IEP is not being met whether it's a parent, a student, a teacher, a principal, a community member, we investigate that. We want to make sure that every single IEP is funded.

But the reason that the system was set up this way is to ensure that every single IEP is funded for every single child. It's the IEP that governs the services that are provided to the child. So it's the IEP that's sacrosanct.
I heard several people here say that --
one lady said, one person said -- one gentlemen
came down and said, I heard that special education
is being cut. Another parent said, I hope they
don't cut the special education program.
Obviously, these parents are here. Their children
have been benefiting from special education. They
have been benefiting with incredible teaching that
some of the special education teachers here have
provided, and obviously I would be fearful, too,
that special education programs might be cut in
this environment.

But the key is, the IEP of each child, if
a child's IEP is not being funded, we will fund it.

VICE PRESIDENT GUZMAN: Thank you for that
clarity. Other questions or comments? Public
participation is over. So I appreciate everything
that's been said here tonight.

This concludes the amended budget hearing.
We stand adjourned.

SECRETARY BELTRAN: Thank you, Vice President
Guzman.

(Whereupon, the Budget Hearing
adjourned at 7:38 o'clock p.m.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS )
) SS:
COUNTY OF W I L L )

ANNA M. MORALES, as an Officer of the Court, says that she is a shorthand reporter doing business in the State of Illinois; that she reported in shorthand the proceedings of said Budget Hearing, and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of her shorthand notes so taken as aforesaid, and contains the proceedings given at said Budget Hearing.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF: I have hereunto set my verified digital signature this 20th day of February, 2017.

[Signature]
Illinois Certified Shorthand Reporter

Accurate Reporting Company
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