

ORIGINAL

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FY 15 Budget Proposal

PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, July 16, 2014

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS had in the above-mentioned matter held at Kennedy King College, 740 West 63rd Street, Chicago, Illinois, commencing at 6:09 o'clock p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS:

Ginger Ostro, Chief Financial Officer

Mary De Runtz, Deputy Chief Facility Officer

Jack Elsey, Chief Innovation and Incubation Officer

Felicia Sanders, Deputy Chief of Schools, Network 13

Kimberly Williams, Grants Management & Administration

Kourtney Freeman, Senior Reporting Financial Analyst

Reported by: Ailene Barkhoff, CSR, RPR

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1 MS. OSTRO: Thanks to everyone coming out
2 to the 2015 Budget Hearing for Chicago Board of
3 Education Public Schools.

4 I need to make one announcement. If there
5 is anyone in the audience who needs sign language
6 interpretation, would you please raise your hand.

7 Okay. So everyone picked up an agenda
8 from outside at the table. I'm just going to go
9 over a few of the logistics of the evening, so I'll
10 turn it over to Ginger Ostro, who is the chief
11 financial officer of Chicago Public Schools.

12 We're going to start a little bit after
13 6:00 p.m. and end promptly at 8:00 p.m. or when the
14 last speaker has concluded, whichever is earlier.
15 All who have signed up to speak will be given an
16 opportunity to make a statement of up to two
17 minutes until the meeting is adjourned.

18 All of those wishing to speak are asked to
19 please sign in outside up until 6:30 on the
20 speakers sign-in sheet at the entrance registration
21 table. Please note that no one will be able to
22 sign up to speak after 6:30.

23 Speakers will be limited to addressing
24 topics related to the budget including the capital

1 plan. Speakers are also asked to limit their
2 comments to two minutes so that everyone that would
3 like to speak will have the opportunity to do so.
4 When multiple speakers from the same organization
5 or school are listed, only one member per
6 organization or school will be allowed to speak
7 regarding the same issue.

8 If the speaker has a follow-up question,
9 we ask that you please speak to CPS staff members
10 who will still be at the registration table or
11 throughout the audience who will be able to help
12 you fill out the follow-up card.

13 The full budget is on the CPS Web site.
14 You can provide feedback or leave questions on the
15 Web site as well. We will respond to all questions
16 on the Web site including any that we were unable
17 to respond to at this meeting.

18 Also, we have a panel and CPS
19 administration this is with us today. We have Jack
20 Elsey from the Office of Innovation and Incubation;
21 Kourtney Freeman will be our timekeeper; we have
22 Felicia Sanders, Deputy Chief of Schools, Network
23 13, Karen Saffold is our chief; and we have Mary
24 DeRuntz, Deputy Chief Facilities Officer.

1 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. So now I'll turn it over
2 to Ginger Ostro.

3 MS. OSTRO: We also to do have a Spanish
4 language interpreter here. If anyone needs Spanish
5 language interpretation services we do have someone
6 available, and they can also translate questions.

7 We do also want to -- I do want to mention
8 before we get started that we do have a court
9 reporter who will be taking a transcript of the
10 presentation and all of your questions and answers
11 this evening so that it will be available and
12 published on our Web site as well.

13 I'm Ginger Ostro. I'm the chief Financial
14 Officer for Chicago Public Schools. We do have a
15 short presentation for you, which is just an
16 overview of our Fiscal Year '15 Proposed Budget
17 that we would like to share with you before we take
18 comments and questions from the members of the
19 audience.

20 Just, again, a little bit of an overview
21 here. Our budget that we will be presenting to you
22 today speaks both about our operating budgets, our
23 day-to-day expenses that pays for future salaries,
24 textbooks, conservative services, Safe Passage

1 Programs. We refer to that as the operating
2 budget. So we will spend time talking to you about
3 that today.

4 We will also be focusing on our capital
5 budget, which includes investments in our buildings
6 such as repairing roofs, building new schools,
7 providing air conditioning. So we will be taking
8 comments on both parts of our budget. So the
9 presentation will cover those very briefly as well.

10 As Kim mentioned, we ask you to limit your
11 comments to two minutes so that we can hear from
12 everybody.

13 The full budget detail is on our Web site,
14 both the overview summary information, the detailed
15 narratives, as well as interactive tools where you
16 can look at the budget in detail. Let me just take
17 you through some of the highlights and share these
18 with you.

19 As you know, each year for the last
20 several years, we have grappled with an
21 ever-growing budget deficit given in large part by
22 state funding, which has been declining over the
23 last several years, as well as the lowest amount of
24 education funding that any state provides for

1 schools in the country. Illinois is last.

2 Secondly, CPS has growing pension costs.
3 CPS is the district in the State of Illinois that
4 is required to make its own pension contributions.
5 For every other school district, the state makes
6 the pension contributions. That's what makes the
7 pensions a particular challenge for CPS because
8 we're the only ones that have to pay those costs.

9 We have done what we can to manage the
10 budget and over the years each year we focus on
11 areas that we can reduce in the central office,
12 administration and operations in order to keep cuts
13 away from the classrooms.

14 This year we will go through the details.
15 We will be making an additional \$55 million in cuts
16 in those areas of operations, administration and
17 the central office. That brings our total since
18 2011 to \$740 million.

19 This year you might recall that we
20 increased the amount of funding that we provide to
21 our student-based budgeting or SBB. We added
22 \$70 million and increased the per pupil rate by
23 \$250.

24 Despite our deficit, we do invest in our

1 classrooms by increasing the student-based
2 budgeting rate, as well as making other strategic
3 investment in programs, and we'll go through some
4 of those in just a moment.

5 The only way we have really been able to
6 balance the budget is through a change in our
7 accounting policy, which allows us to account for
8 some one-time money in this fiscal year's budget.

9 It doesn't really help us address the
10 underlying problems that we are facing with our
11 revenues. The money that we've earned is declining
12 and the spending is going up.

13 So this solution that we have is what we
14 call changing our revenue recognition period, the
15 timeframe in which we account for the money we
16 receive is really a one-time solution to help us
17 bridge to a more structurally sound budget.

18 What that includes obviously is a pension
19 reform that we have spoken of, as well as
20 additional revenues.

21 And then, finally, as we talk about the
22 capital budget, it's important to recognize that we
23 invested about \$510 million in our buildings. When
24 we invest in our buildings, we really are investing

1 in our classrooms and our academic programs, and we
2 will show you some of the details of that.

3 The next slide here focuses on where our
4 staff are and how we support our schools. What you
5 see here is a breakdown of the types of teachers
6 and other staff that we have that support our
7 schools, and most of staff are in the schools.

8 We have about 21,000 teachers, nearly
9 about 17,000 other staff that we refer to as school
10 support staff, and that includes your principals,
11 your assistant principals, your clerks, your
12 teaching assistants, your nurses, your custodians,
13 sort of all of the other folks that make the
14 schools work.

15 We have about 200 people in our network
16 offices. We have some representatives from our
17 network offices here. They work directly with the
18 schools. And we have just over 1,100 people in the
19 central office.

20 Now, when we look at where our dollars are
21 in the budget, you will see that the vast majority
22 of money in CPS's budget, which is almost
23 \$5.8 billion for the fiscal year starting July 1,
24 that about 4.8 billion of it is directly in schools

1 and supports the very services that we were just
2 talking about; instruction, school support and
3 other services. You can see the small amount that
4 is in the networks, and the \$262 million that is in
5 the central office.

6 What is significant here is the yellow
7 section, which is the amount that we have to pay in
8 pensions in the next fiscal year, \$634 million of
9 our budget has to go to support the pension fund.
10 That's about \$1,600 per student.

11 And when you put that in context of how
12 much we can provide in our student-based budgeting,
13 our core instruction, is about \$4,350 per student,
14 you can see how significant that pension
15 contribution is and why we see why it's such a big
16 challenge to balancing our budget.

17 As I mentioned just a moment ago, we have
18 taken a number of steps over the last four years,
19 five years in order to make reductions in areas of
20 central office, operations and administration so
21 that we don't have to impact the classroom. You
22 can see it's about \$740 million since 2011, and it
23 shows you the breakdown of the categories.

24 What I would like to highlight for you is

1 the amount and what we're doing in this budget
2 because this is what we're proposing. So that is
3 \$55 million in reductions. So what you will see in
4 this budget is elimination of about 20 central
5 office positions in areas like information
6 technology, finance, talent and central office
7 support, as well as other savings from separate
8 contracts and other areas that we can reduce in.

9 We're also reducing other outside training
10 vendors and administrative positions to save
11 another \$15 million. Our new facilities management
12 contract will save us about \$17 million compared to
13 prior costs of the contract. We're eliminating
14 some vacant positions, and we have become a little
15 more efficient in how we route our school buses and
16 transportation services, again, to save money.

17 All of these are in an effort to reduce
18 expenses wherever we can in way that doesn't impact
19 the classroom, and that's what we are really
20 focused on.

21 At the same time we make reductions in
22 central office, administration and operations,
23 we're continuing to invest our money because the
24 budget is about priorities, invest our money in

1 areas that will improve student achievement.

2 You can see some of the key investments
3 that are included in this budget; additional
4 neighborhood IB schools for over 1,400 students,
5 additional dual credit and dual enrollment high
6 school students now to serve over 4,700 students,
7 expansion of Safe Passage, new art and PE teachers,
8 new options programs to help re-engage students and
9 bring them back into our schools because they may
10 have not been engaged in or have dropped out, safe
11 schools, new parent universities to help families
12 navigate CPS and support them in supporting their
13 students with early childhood or college
14 preparation.

15 And obviously our budget does include
16 support for our teachers with a 2% salary increase
17 and also a 2% salary increase for principals and
18 assistant principals.

19 Let me take a moment to explain some of
20 the challenges that we're facing. What this chart
21 shows you is how much CPS has to contribute to the
22 pension fund each year and it shows this beginning
23 in 2005. You can see what has happened since 2013.

24 We have spoken about this in the prior

1 budget; but between 2013 and 2014, we had an
2 enormous jump in the amount we had to contribute to
3 the pension fund. Similarly, we have seen an
4 increase between 2014 and 2015. It's offset a bit
5 by the amount that the State gave us, about
6 \$50 million this year, but we still have to
7 contribute \$634 million in the pension system.
8 That's the same number as in the yellow part that I
9 showed you just a little bit earlier.

10 What you can see how the pension costs
11 continues to step up and continues to grow, and
12 they're going to keep taking larger and larger
13 chunks out of our budget unless we come up with
14 some structural changes that help us address that.

15 So even with the steps that we have taken,
16 because of the pension challenges and because our
17 revenue from the State and Federal governments has
18 been declining, we have had to use one-time
19 resources in order to balance this budget, and the
20 main source of those resources this year is a
21 change, as I mentioned, in our accounting policy.

22 What that is doing is recognizing that we
23 collect most of our local revenues, our property
24 tax revenues, in July and August because that's

1 when property tax bills are due. That wasn't
2 always the case. It didn't change until 2012.

3 Prior to that property tax bills were due
4 in November or December, which didn't make a
5 significant difference for our budget, but when
6 this was changed to August when the property tax
7 bills were due, because our fiscal year ends on
8 June 30, we count revenue through the end of July,
9 a lot of money comes in during the month of July
10 and August. It make sense when property tax bills
11 are due at the beginning of August, and that's when
12 people pay them. So that's when CPS gets money.

13 When our fiscal year ends right in the
14 middle of that, it makes it very hard to predict
15 how much money we're going to get. It's very hard
16 to plan a budget, and it means that sometimes the
17 money that we get shows up in the next year's
18 budget. It's very difficult in order to plan.

19 So this accounting change allows us to
20 capture the money consistent with the plan that we
21 have in the budget, but it also provides one-time
22 resources. We're able to count that August money
23 in the budget for this year for the one time.

24 So what you see is that has enabled us to

1 balance this budget; but it means we're using even
2 more one-time resources than we have in the past
3 years, which means we're getting further and
4 further away from being able to balance our budget.
5 Our revenues are spent -- our revenues are just not
6 keeping up with our expenses in large part, again,
7 due to those pension costs.

8 So what happens as we look forward? What
9 you can see is that the deficit just continues to
10 grow. As we look at what is happening out in the
11 Fiscal '16, next year and the year after, you see
12 that the deficit increases because of the one-time
13 resources that we have used, additional declines in
14 our State and Federal revenues and also additional
15 costs -- again, the yellow showing the pension
16 increase that is being added that we'll have to pay
17 as we go forward.

18 So we're facing significant challenges, as
19 we have said, for a number of years that we really
20 need to focus on and try and address, and those are
21 some of the challenges that we continue to work on;
22 but, yet, while we present to you a budget that
23 does make significant investments in the classroom
24 this year and doesn't continue to make cuts in

1 areas of operations and central office.

2 Let me just shift for a moment and talk
3 specifically about the investments that we're
4 making in our buildings and in our capital
5 infrastructures. We talk about the capital
6 improvement plan and what we have budgeted for
7 that.

8 It relates to the operating budget; but it
9 isn't covering the same day-to-day expenses as the
10 other numbers which I presented to you just you
11 moment ago.

12 This chart shows you a summary of the
13 capital plan that we have for Fiscal 12, 13
14 and 14, so those are prior years, and what our
15 proposal is for this fiscal year.

16 It's a total of \$510 million of projects
17 that we are proposing -- we'll go into a little bit
18 of detail in a moment -- and over five years we
19 present a one-year plan and budget and then a
20 five-year plan of \$1.2 billion of total investments
21 in our infrastructure. That's on top of about
22 \$500 million worth of projects that are going on
23 right now.

24 As you can imagine, fixing our buildings

15

1 sometimes takes more than one year. So a project
2 might start in a particular budget year but takes
3 several years to complete. We have \$500 million
4 worth of projects underway right now and we will be
5 adding another \$510 million more.

6 Our capital budget is funded in part by
7 money we raise ourselves that we borrow and in part
8 by money that we get from outside funding sources
9 like the State. The State dedicates money to TIF
10 funds, also supports a number of schools. We also
11 have some other resources that help us build our
12 buildings.

13 So that is what the different colors of
14 the bar show you, how much CPS is funding through
15 our own borrowing, that \$261 million; how much we
16 expect to get from outside sources where we have
17 commitments, that is \$214 million; and then there
18 are some projects that sort of pay for themselves
19 over time because we don't really need to borrow
20 those costs. They will just pay back over time.

21 So we do have some new projects that were
22 added since the budget was released. The capital
23 budget was released May 1st. So there were a
24 couple of things that were added. We got new

1 funding from the State of Illinois, particularly to
2 be for construction, and we have some additional
3 money from the State as well that helps us with
4 other investments and infrastructures.

5 So where do those investments go? Into
6 three major areas; quality education programs,
7 overcrowding and modernization repairs, and we just
8 put up some examples here of what those would be:

9 Further investments in selective
10 enrollment, IB interactive schools, career-focused
11 education, college counseling suites for our
12 quality education programs, modernization and
13 repairs, those kinds of things that you would think
14 of typically as capital investments -- air
15 conditioning, learning technology, playgrounds,
16 labs, investing in our bricks and grooves and
17 chimneys, as well as accessibility and security,
18 and overcrowding where we've visited multiple
19 schools in combination of the investments.

20 So that's a very quick highlight of the
21 kinds of things that we're doing in the capital
22 budget.

23 We would like to turn it over to you to
24 take your comments and questions. Again, we'd ask

1 that you comment if you have comments on either the
2 operating budget or the capital budget, and if you
3 would like further details on any of the
4 information that I presented here, they are
5 available on our Web site and the Web site is
6 listed there.

7 In addition, you can submit comments on
8 our Web site and we will respond to all of the
9 questions there. And, as I mentioned earlier, a
10 transcript of this hearing will be posted on the
11 Web site.

12 We do have a list of speakers who have
13 signed up; but first I would like to ask Alderman
14 Dowell who has a presentation if she would like to
15 share her remarks with us, and then we will go to
16 the other speakers who have signed up in the order
17 in which you signed up.

18 Alderman Dowell.

19 ALDERMAN PAT DOWELL: Good evening. My name is
20 Pat Dowell. I'm the Alderman of the Third Ward,
21 and I'm a strong supporter in the schools in my
22 ward.

23 It's part of my responsibility as an
24 Alderman to do what I can to ensure that each of

1 our schools have the resources they need to best
2 serve their students. As such, I work very closely
3 with all of the principals in the Third Ward for
4 the sake of accountability and advocating on their
5 behalf when their schools need something to help
6 students succeed.

7 We have several schools in the Third Ward
8 that have recently undergone some major changes.
9 Last year, Mollison, Drake-Williams and Wells Prep
10 Academy were welcoming schools that took in a
11 significant number of students from shuttered
12 schools.

13 Although the budgets were tight, each of
14 these schools have done an outstanding job to
15 acclimate their students to their new environment.
16 In fact, all of them have made significant progress
17 on NWEA and other performance metrics.

18 The per pupil funding helps address the
19 influx of students, but the schools I am advocating
20 for tonight are facing unique and exceptional
21 circumstances.

22 Mollison and Wells Prep are both IB
23 schools. This means that in addition to the
24 physical education and art mandates all schools

1 face, they also have additional requirements
2 associated with being an IB school.

3 Without the needed resources, students
4 will likely fall behind in the more rigorous IB
5 classes.

6 As it is now, now year Wells Prep will not
7 have the funding it needs for three positions
8 relative to both the regular mandates and the IB
9 requirements, and they will have to cut funding for
10 after-school and Saturday enrichment programs.

11 Mollison only has about \$75,000 after
12 paying out salaries, which does not leave them very
13 much funding for needed programming.

14 Although not an IB school, Drake-Williams
15 also faces unique challenges that requires
16 additional funding. Drake-Williams has the
17 highest -- one of the highest concentrations of
18 special education students in the district with the
19 percentage of students with IEPs being higher than
20 that of the district.

21 These students need extra resources that
22 go beyond per pupil and other budgetary formulas
23 and are no doubt still adjusting to their new
24 schools. This is especially true considering the

1 loss of their principal and assistant principal.
2 They were trusted adults and new relationships will
3 have to be built.

4 Next year the school will only have
5 roughly \$63,000 to spend on books and other
6 supplies and after-school programs will have to be
7 cut.

8 Although not a welcoming or IB school, I
9 include Attucks Elementary School in this statement
10 because they, too, face a very unique circumstance.
11 Traditionally it has been the school with the
12 highest number of homeless students in the
13 district, currently over 50 percent.

14 These students often require additional
15 social-emotional support as well as academic
16 assistance. As you know, this school is being
17 phased out and students have been relocated to
18 Beethoven.

19 In order to minimize the disruption that
20 these students will experience, we must make sure
21 that both Beethoven and Attucks are adequately
22 resourced to meet the unique needs of their
23 students.

24 Among other things, the school currently

1 needs additional supports from math, science and
2 reading, as well as a position for an art
3 instructor. There are still 146 students at
4 Attucks whose transition to Beethoven will be
5 extremely difficult if they don't have what they
6 need at Attucks.

7 Despite the mandates, requirements and
8 other challenges that these schools have faced, all
9 of them have made significant academic progress.
10 Attucks has increased their ISAT composite score
11 from 12 percentage points since last year.
12 Mollison, Drake and Wells have all NWEA growth
13 scores that far exceed the national average.

14 In fact, Mollison is in the 99th
15 percentile for math, Wells is in the 96th
16 percentile for math, and Drake is in the
17 99th percentile for both math and reading. You
18 can't do much better than that.

19 After many years of being Level 3 schools,
20 Mollison, Wells and Drake are now at Level 2 and
21 climbing. I can tell you that this much progress
22 in our schools is unprecedented.

23 The success that these schools have had is
24 a result of dynamic leadership, which was no doubt

1 aided by the additional resources CPS allocated to
2 these welcoming schools. Next year we will be
3 asking these schools to maintain the same level of
4 progress -- the same level of progress while facing
5 additional challenges without all the resources
6 they need.

7 Although there will still be great school
8 leaders in place, the parents, teachers and myself
9 are concerned that the tremendous progress they
10 have made will at least be interrupted if not
11 erased completely.

12 The schools in the Third Ward are on the
13 right track and the students are truly benefiting
14 from the education they are receiving. I am asking
15 the Chicago CPS to reexamination the needs of each
16 of these schools and make funding adjustments that
17 will ensure continued progress.

18 I have also given you a written copy of
19 this statement. Thank you for your time. I will
20 forward it to you.

21 MS. OSTRO: Thank you for your comments.

22 We will now turn to the speakers who have
23 registered to speak. Kim will call some of you up
24 to the microphone so we can keep the comments

1 flowing.

2 We would like to ask you one further time
3 whether anyone is requiring hearing interpretation
4 services. We do have hearing interpreter here, so
5 if you need one, please raise your hand.

6 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. One more time, everyone
7 has two minutes for each statement. We will also
8 flash you how many seconds you have left so we can
9 keep it actually flowing so that everyone can
10 actually make their statement.

11 We're going to call Speakers 1, 2, 3 and 4
12 up; Gregory, Brenda, Carolina and Joy. We have two
13 mikes in both aisles if you can come down.

14 MR. GREGORY CLEMENTS: My name is Gregory
15 Clements, G-r-e-g-o-r-y, C-l-e-m-e-n-t-s. I'm with
16 Gresham Parents Students at Community United for
17 Change. Our school was a designated turnover
18 school this past year, but that farce continues.

19 My comment is on the budget, on the
20 capital end of it. The money that was allotted for
21 the improvements and what have you, how much was
22 actually done on -- what levels have been done for
23 capital appointed projects, which is costing you
24 additional millions, as opposed to the original

1 bids for certain projects that are listed on the
2 public subcommittee page? Where can that be found?

3 Also, I have seven years of public
4 transport budgets, eight years with Chicago Board
5 of Trade, nine years with the City of Chicago, so
6 I'm really reviewing your budgets for the last
7 three years and I will make my comments on there
8 and work for the communities that I represent.

9 MS. OSTRO: We may be able to provide a little
10 more specific information to you addressing your
11 question about how much we spend on capital
12 projects. That is available on our Web site.

13 We do on September 30th of each year
14 provide the cost of each project, how much has been
15 spent in the prior year. It's on our Web site
16 under the budget.

17 If you go to the capital link and look for
18 expenditures, you will see that by project how much
19 is budgeted, how much has been spent and what is
20 the projected spending. So I think that provides
21 the data that you asked for. It's available on our
22 Web site. If you have further questions on that,
23 we're happy to answer that.

24 MS. WILLIAMS: Speaker 2, Brenda.

25

1 MS. BRENDA DELGADO: My name is Brenda Delgado,
2 and I'm a mother of three CPS children, LSC member
3 and board member of Illinois Raise your Hand.

4 We're looking at another budget that
5 causes great harm to neighborhood schools,
6 especially neighborhood high schools. This is in
7 great part due to the rapid and irresponsible
8 proliferation of new schools that the district has
9 opened since claiming they had an underutilization
10 crisis in 2012.

11 Since the fall of 2012, CPS has opened
12 21,481 new seats, many in neighborhoods that are
13 experiencing population decline. The fiscal year
14 2015 budget book lists an addition of 9,224 seats
15 at charter contract, alternative high schools and
16 district schools.

17 This takes away resources from existing
18 schools. In 2012, CPS promised they would redirect
19 substantial resources to existing schools. Of the
20 42 neighborhood high schools in Chicago after
21 subcontracting the custodial line that is being
22 shifted to central office, these high schools will
23 receive 35 million in cuts. So-called welcoming
24 schools lost 5% of their budget.

1 We ask that you greatly reduce the
2 portfolio department, which still has 29 million in
3 the budget and redirect funding to neighborhood
4 schools.

5 CPS must stop irresponsible school
6 expansion. The accountability and bank department
7 could also be reduced. Both received increases
8 this year. The 20 million new contracts should be
9 cancelled.

10 Most importantly CPS should get to work on
11 figuring out how to solve the structural deficits
12 by fully engaging state voters across the City.
13 Shifting funding from one type of school to another
14 type of school does not address the need for fully
15 funding high quality schools for all children.

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you for your comments.
17 Speaker 3, Carolina.

18 MS. CAROLINA ALS: Hi, my name is Carolina, and
19 I finished fourth grade at a Salazar Bilingual
20 School. I want to ask you to give more money to
21 schools that don't have PE teachers.

22 At Salazar we have too many classes full
23 of books and paper we can't even throw a ball.
24 That doesn't make sense. There was more PE --

1 every school needs more gym teachers and gym
2 classes. I wish we had an auditorium as well. We
3 have to use Walter Payton's. My sister goes to
4 school at Skinner and my little brother will go to
5 Pritzker. They have a nice auditorium for general
6 assembly. It's not fair to our many other schools.

7 Every school should have enough money to
8 have these things. It's not fair to treat schools
9 differently. You give less money to Salazar last
10 year and they got rid of the two teachers that
11 helps kids with extra math and extra reading. We
12 don't have a library either, and we have to share
13 computers. Our school is full of students, its
14 classrooms are all full and we still don't have
15 enough money for these basic things. That's not
16 fair.

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you very much.

18 Speaker 4, Joy.

19 MS. JOY CLENNING: Good evening. My name is
20 Joy Clendenning. I live in Hyde Park, and I've
21 been a CPS parent for 13 years. I have four
22 children. The oldest just graduated from my
23 neighborhood high school, Kenwood Academy, after
24 attending a neighborhood elementary school, Ray.

28

1 Every child in every family deserves the choice of
2 a well-resourced neighborhood public school.

3 I realize that's not necessarily all of
4 you; but you can take this back, you have an
5 obligation and a responsibility to prioritize
6 resources for neighborhood schools. You have an
7 obligation and a responsibility to listen to public
8 school educators and the community who are at
9 public schools when you're setting your budget
10 priorities.

11 I really as a parent in this system for so
12 long, I'm asking you can you please stop with the
13 unfunded mandates. Please stop spending so much on
14 high-stakes standardized testing and everything
15 that comes with it. Finally, stop destabilizing
16 our neighborhood schools while increasing the
17 number of charters and while continuing to do
18 turnarounds.

19 An example of this would be a neighborhood
20 high school near me, Dyett High School. It's an
21 example of the destabilization. With this
22 destabilization closing, children as far south as
23 67th Street and as far north of the South Loop will
24 be expected to attend high school at 39th Street.

1 This is really not acceptable. These
2 children should be able to attend public high
3 school in their own neighborhood.

4 Finally, I do want to say to you that you
5 have an obligation and a responsibility to use our
6 tax dollars to keep our public school buildings
7 open as public institutions for our communities.

8 Please do not approve this budget until we
9 have reworked it to address these public
10 priorities. This is your obligation and your
11 responsibility.

12 Thank you very much for your time.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

14 Now we have Speakers 5, 6, 7 and 8, Megan,
15 Kimberly, Maria and Marie.

16 MS. MEGAN CUSICK: Good evening. My name is
17 Megan Cusick. I'm a teacher, librarian and a CPS
18 parent. I'm also a member of the CTU Librarians
19 Task Force, also known as high school librarians.

20 Just a few weeks ago, my husband and I
21 spoke at the board meeting to raise awareness about
22 the removal of librarians at CPS Schools. Since
23 that time, the news has gotten even worse.

24 Last year and the year that we were

1 promised better resources for our students, after
2 the whole truth of closing the 50 schools, CPS
3 schools lost more than 140 librarians in one year.

4 Rather than reversing that tide, this year
5 will be even worse with the loss of 60 additional
6 librarians. That's more than 200 librarians in
7 just two years, leaving more than half of our
8 schools without professionally staffed librarians;
9 and, in fact, leaving many with no librarian at
10 all.

11 Why is this a problem worth solving?
12 Because research studies show that professionally
13 staffed librarian have a positive impact on student
14 performance. Moreover, students having access to a
15 well-managed collection of print and online
16 resources is critical to students building a
17 continuum of literacy in schools. In short,
18 libraries help students succeed in school and in
19 life.

20 The good news is that this is a problem
21 that can be solved, and CPS has the money to pay
22 for a solution. Some of these recommendations
23 you've heard before. In comparison to other
24 districts in Illinois, CPS spends a

1 disproportionate amount of money on testing, tens
2 of millions of dollars. Let's move some of this
3 money back into the classrooms. A portfolio office
4 at a cost of \$29.5 million? We serve children, not
5 investors. Let's move that money back into the
6 classrooms.

7 Finally, let's take the more than
8 \$105 million in increased funding for charter
9 contracts and alternative networks and return it to
10 our neighborhood public schools. Our students
11 deserve better.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Speaker 5.

14 MS. KIMBERLY WELLS: Hi, I'm Kimberly Wells.
15 I'm a CPS parent as well as a CPS middle school
16 science teacher.

17 I come to the budget hearings, I go to the
18 CPS board hearings; but, you know, today I'm
19 just -- I'm just tired, so I'm just going to send a
20 message instead of me going through the figures --
21 you know the figures, I know the figures, we know
22 you made up the budget, but this is really your
23 last -- so right now we don't want the lies. We
24 don't want your lies.

1 Right now we're going to let you know that
2 you can package your Plan B, just like every other
3 parent whose school closed had to have their
4 Plan B, every teacher you laid off had to get their
5 Plan B because we're (inaudible due to audience
6 noise).

7 We want to take back our public schools.
8 We want to stop expanding charter schools after you
9 close our schools and you tell us to hell with us
10 and then you come here and, you know, you -- I
11 really think Black people be in the room who are on
12 the panel just like nobody talk to them (inaudible
13 due to audience noise). I don't care if I lose my
14 job tomorrow because God is on my side. We're
15 going to take back CPS and this office is
16 (inaudible due to audience noise).

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Speaker 7.

18 (Whereupon, Spanish is being
19 interpreted into English.)

20 MS. MARIA ORTEGA: Hello, my name is Maria
21 Ortega. I'm from the Brighton Park Neighborhood
22 Council. I have testimony and it's based on my
23 children. They said they couldn't go to pre-K
24 because there was lack of space at one of our

1 schools.

2 I went to the office and asked if I could
3 sign up my children. He said, ma'am, we can't sign
4 you up right now because all our spaces are taken,
5 but we can put you on the list. The list is 245
6 kids. I asked when will this happen. He answered,
7 we don't know. And that's why my children didn't
8 go to pre-K.

9 And that's why we're asking for more
10 resources per child for education. That's why
11 we're asking for more resources for the children of
12 the southwest side of the City so there will be
13 more spaces for early education and early education
14 centers. In the Zip code of 60632, it's one of the
15 highest need areas in the State of Illinois.

16 We understand that there is a lot of cuts
17 in the City of Chicago, but we don't want them to
18 affect our children. We understand that these cuts
19 historically always affected mostly Black and Brown
20 or Latino kids. As a parent I want to ask you
21 please send more resources to our schools and our
22 communities in the City of Chicago.

23 Thank you, and I expect -- I hope my
24 testimony will be taken seriously.

1 MS. WILLIAMS: Speaker 8, Marie.

2 MS. MARIE SZYMAN: Good evening. My name is
3 Marie Szymon, and I'm a teacher/librarian at
4 Nathanael Greene Elementary. I'm here today to
5 tell you about the disappearance of our school
6 libraries.

7 As of this date less than half of the CPS
8 schools now have school libraries, and I fear that
9 more school libraries are disappearing every week.
10 With the budget constraints we are dealing with at
11 present, it seems that libraries have been chosen
12 to take the hit. This is unacceptable.

13 Most parents and the public are not aware
14 of what is happening to their school libraries. By
15 the time they notice, it may be too late. I am
16 here to ask you to save the school libraries.

17 At this last school board meeting in June
18 it was stated that CPS is not closing down the
19 libraries but that there was a lack of qualified
20 librarians. This is, in fact, absolutely not true.
21 As the president of the Chicago Teacher-Librarian
22 Association this past year, I can attest that there
23 are -- well, I was going to say scores, but now I
24 should say about 200 -- librarians who have had

35

1 their libraries closed. There are scores -- no, I
2 should say almost 200 experienced, qualified,
3 certified, licensed librarians available right now.
4 Put them back into the libraries.

5 With the common emphasis on literacy, I'm
6 mystified that the libraries are closing. How can
7 our students become college ready without adequate
8 instruction and research and exposure to the
9 literature that libraries provide?

10 I've done a lot of research on this topic,
11 and it confirms that students attending schools
12 with libraries and librarian score higher on
13 standardized tests. I know that there is no line
14 item in the budget for libraries. Maybe there
15 should be.

16 But you are the ones with the power. You
17 control the budget. I stand before you here today
18 to ask you to please prevent principals from having
19 to make that dreaded decision do I hire -- do I
20 close the library so I can hire another PE teacher?
21 The children of Chicago deserve more. Save the
22 libraries.

23 thank you.

24 MS. WILLIAMS: Speakers 9, 10, 11 and 12,

1 please.

2 CARL FERGUSON: Good evening, ladies and
3 gentlemen. My name is Carl Ferguson. I graduated
4 from my neighborhood school, and I'm speaking on
5 behalf of the concept situation.

6 I believe we should not open any more
7 concept schools. The reason is (inaudible due to
8 audience noise). One is already too many. Opening
9 another school would not be safe for the students.

10 Neighborhood schools are losing money
11 while concept schools are taking money. We don't
12 trust the school that the government doesn't trust.
13 We are asking to open up the concept schools on
14 39th and Western. This money should not be -- this
15 money should be used for two neighborhood schools,
16 not two schools under investigation.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Speaker 10.

19 MS. REYNA CASTALAN: Good evening. My name is
20 Reyna Castelan. I have children. I am a volunteer
21 in my children's school. In 2009 I started working
22 as a volunteer at my children's school.

23 Since then, I have been witness of the
24 performance of the students and the part that the

1 school administration has done to obtain these
2 results, as well as other schools in our community
3 has the same to support of our students even though
4 they don't have enough resources. The Chicago
5 public schools are essential in our children's
6 lives.

7 This is the reason why I'm here today. As
8 a mother I want you to stop the construction of
9 concept schools because it's currently under
10 investigation by the FBI. You are choosing
11 institutions that we, the community, do not trust.

12 And our schools that have been successful
13 you continue to cut. That's not right. As a
14 homeowner, I demand that the property taxes that I
15 pay are being invested in our community public
16 school, and I ask you to reconsider your decision
17 in support and invest in our community schools.

18 Why is CPS investing in schools that is
19 under investigation?

20 MR. ELSEY: My name is Jack Elsey. I can say
21 that we're following that situation very closely.
22 I, unfortunately, don't have more details to
23 provide for you at this time on that; but when we
24 do, we will be providing those details.

1 MS. REYNA CASTALAN: So I'm just saying that
2 our money should not be invested in institutions
3 that are under investigation.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

6 Speaker 11, Asean Johnson.

7 MR. ASEAN JOHNSON: My name is Asean Johnson.
8 I'm from Marcus Garvey School going into fifth
9 grade.

10 And now we have experienced due to budget
11 cuts from last year, we have lost our computer
12 teacher, our library teacher, our seventh grade
13 teacher and including my fourth grade math teacher.
14 And now what happened this year in fourth grade, I
15 had -- we had to use a parent as a library teacher.
16 We have to use a counselor as a computer teacher.

17 And what hurts the most is that it seems
18 that you don't really care. I can see by all your
19 faces that you just don't care. As that nice lady
20 asked a question, nobody didn't answer until
21 everybody stood up and told you that it was a
22 question.

23 And now you're cutting budgets from high
24 schools like Simeon, their electrician program.

39

1 How are you going to say you want students to be
2 career ready and college ready if you taking away
3 their programs? An electrician is a career and you
4 can go to college for that.

5 So you're basically thinking backwards by
6 saying, oh, we want them to be college career
7 ready, but we're going to take away that program
8 from the kids. There's people in high school who
9 want to go to college -- and I can see you in the
10 light green shirt rolled her eyes. I see that.
11 And then I want to talk about -- and I'm going to
12 talk about how this affects schools. I know I have
13 ten seconds left. All right.

14 So now, this affects schools by you saying
15 that -- this affects schools mainly because we
16 don't have a lot of students --

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Can you please wrap up, please.

18 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: I have time. Take it.

19 MR. ASEAN JOHNSON: Okay.

20 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

21 MR. ASEAN JOHNSON: Let's talk about how this
22 affects our schools. This affects our schools
23 because you're cutting teachers that knew their
24 students and who have been in that community. If

1 you cut them off, what job are they going to have?
2 If they love that and they went to college for that
3 and that was their job and you cut it away from
4 them, that's disrespectful and not right.

5 And you laid off 1,000 teachers this
6 year -- 1,000 teachers because of budget cuts this
7 year. I guess that mayor is going for money again.
8 They give money -- why do you give money to charter
9 schools?

10 MS. OSTRO: We provide funding for whichever
11 schools the students and the families choose to
12 attend.

13 MR. ASEAN JOHNSON: I understand that, but I'm
14 saying if you say that you don't have enough money
15 and then you give budget cuts to the public schools
16 and then you turn around and give it to a charter
17 school, that doesn't make no type of sense when you
18 could have just kept that money in there and
19 instead of investing it in a charter school, invest
20 it to that public school that is already there.

21 And then on top of that, it's messing up
22 our schools and communities. If we need programs
23 to get college and career ready, can't you give it
24 to us and invest in it? Like we had a charter

1 school -- no, not a charter school -- a Wal-Mart
2 built into our neighbor, isn't that right, and --

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Can you wrap up, please.

4 MR. ASEAN JOHNSON: And I want to talk about
5 social-emotional learning --

6 MS. WILLIAMS: Your time is over. If you have
7 any other comments, you can write your questions
8 down and we will respond to.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He can have my turn.

10 MS. WILLIAMS: Ma'am, the one that you're
11 giving, what number are you?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 21.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: So he can come back at 21.

14 MR. ASEAN JOHNSON: You can take my key notes
15 and learn.

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for your
17 comments.

18 Speakers 13, 14 and 15, please.

19 MS. SHONEICE REYNOLDS: I'm Speaker 12.

20 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. Go ahead.

21 MS. SHONEICE REYNOLDS: So as we look at this
22 budget dog and pony show that you gave us, you said
23 several times that it was the pensions, the
24 pensions, the pensions are the reason why CPS does

1 not have any money.

2 Well, CPS has been on a pension holiday
3 for ten years. You cannot continue to blame that
4 this affects our schools and our community and give
5 us some corporate -- some corporation off the backs
6 of working people. This is money that is owed to
7 people retired and current retirees, people who are
8 going to retire.

9 Our schools are not invested in equally.
10 Over half of our schools do not have librarians and
11 computer teachers. We have a school on the west
12 side that has skipped the first for air
13 conditioning -- all the schools should have air
14 conditioning. Every year we hear that at that
15 budget hearing. They still don't have air
16 conditioning.

17 We still -- they don't have the resources
18 that are needed; but you want to give millions and
19 millions of dollars to concept charter who has been
20 raised by the F.B.I. across three states -- 19
21 schools and their offices; but, yet, there's no
22 money for neighborhood public schools.

23 You closed the last electrician program in
24 the City at Simeon High School as well as the

1 automotives. That's a career. Those children want
2 to be career ready. Children were in those classes
3 and they were learning. We had a beautiful meeting
4 with those children last night. CPA was invited,
5 but no one was there.

6 So does CPS really care about our
7 children? The answer is no. We know they don't.
8 We know that you are all here to take notes.
9 Nothing is going to happen. We are going to
10 continue testifying. We're going to continue to
11 give you the message to pass on to them, to pass on
12 to the mayor to invest in our neighborhood public
13 schools.

14 Stop dumping money into charters that are
15 being investigated by the F.B.I.. Stop blaming
16 working class people for the deficits of your
17 budget when you give corporations like Wal-Mart
18 \$8 million, you give tax breaks to Office Max.
19 Whole Foods is coming to the City. It doesn't look
20 like we need a Whole Foods.

21 We had an alderman here talking about
22 receiving schools, but how many schools within her
23 ward closed last year? We had 50 schools closed,
24 and, yet, you're still turning around schools,

1 firing teachers, firing school clerks like myself.
2 Our children deserve a chance.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

5 Speaker 13.

6 MS. LATISA KINDRED: Good evening. My name is
7 Latisa Kindred. I was the teacher of the
8 electrician program that the last two speakers
9 spoke of.

10 As they said, the program was the last
11 electricity program in the City -- in the Chicago
12 school system. The program was performed -- my
13 layoff was not based on performance. I exceeded
14 every expectation of CPS.

15 92 percent of my seniors were certified in
16 OSHA-10 construction. My EOY and BOY testing --
17 the performance tests showed 60-plus percent growth
18 I attended every professional development required
19 of me. I did everything that I was asked to do.

20 So this here in the face of violence here
21 in the City, students are given hope when they're
22 working with their hands. They're learning skills
23 that can't be taken from them.

24 The last two years -- I have been with 134

1 since 1995 -- reopened their apprenticeship. Last
2 year two former Simeon electricity students got
3 into the apprenticeship. This year two more are
4 members of Local 134. So performance was not an
5 issue.

6 I saw on slide No. 14 that career-focused
7 education is part of the fiscal year 15 budget. I
8 would like to ask you what is career-focused
9 education in your eyes?

10 MS. OSTRO: That does refer to the investments
11 we are making in new career-type labs. I can get
12 you the specifics. I don't have them with me right
13 now.

14 MS. LATISA KINDRED: And my next question is
15 the reasoning for my layoff was that it was a
16 budgetary decision decided on by the principal and
17 the network to meet the goals of the school.

18 Simeon houses 13 career tech -- well, it
19 housed because, as I said, the auto mechanics shop
20 closed as well -- 13 career technical education
21 programs. What focus could the school possibly
22 have had but on career technical education
23 programs. It's the biggest vocational career
24 technical school in the City. I can't even think

1 of all the programs they have.

2 But my question is how are budget
3 decisions regarding CTE made? Because, as I said,
4 my layoff was not based on the performance of the
5 program. It was not based on the postsecondary
6 performance of my students.

7 What the guidelines are principals given
8 when they make these autonomous decisions regarding
9 career technical educational programs?

10 MS. OSTRO: I don't know if we have anyone on
11 the panel that we can answer that right now, but we
12 will get back to you with an answer to your
13 question.

14 MS. LATISA KINDRED: I'm in the electrical
15 industry. I bought my home at the age of 23. I
16 have a pension. My whole purpose of saying all
17 this is that it's a gateway to middle class, and we
18 have children being murdered in the streets on a
19 daily basis -- 82 people in one weekend shot in the
20 City of Chicago.

21 My students have been given hope. They
22 have careers now. They are able to provide for
23 their families because of what they learned in the
24 classroom. This issue must be addressed.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. WILLIAMS: Speaker 14, please.

3 MR. HERB SINGLETON: Good evening everyone. My
4 name is Herb Singleton. I'm an organizer for the
5 Chicago Teachers Union.

6 I'm very happy to see Ms. Kindred's
7 students last night -- there were ten of them, and
8 I would say at least eight of them have graduated
9 from college. So I take my hat off to you,
10 Ms. Kindred. Back in the day students said over
11 and over again that she was very tough on us, and
12 Ms. Kindred said, the tough ones always come back
13 to say thank you.

14 I would like to speak on the violence that
15 is going on in our community. I've heard the word
16 cut, cut, cut, and now I'm hearing eliminate. What
17 we've eliminated is what is called wraparound
18 programs. I don't know if you remember them, but
19 wraparound programs identified children with anger
20 management issues.

21 They provided social, economical and
22 clinical programs for those children in addition to
23 mentoring programs for those children. Well, let's
24 see. If that child was 12 years old four years ago

1 when you would have eliminated that program, guess
2 what? He's 16 now. And if you look at the
3 violence in the streets, who is doing it?
4 16-year-olds, 17-year-olds.

5 The wraparound programs also included
6 clinical, social, emotional programs for families.
7 I would like to know, first of all, I heard two
8 years ago that Washington donated \$40 million for
9 mentoring. Where is the money?

10 Secondly, when you -- the only way you can
11 identify children with anger management issues is
12 probably in a school. We spend a lot of money on
13 IEPs to identify children that are have learning
14 issues that also identify children with anger
15 management issues in our schools.

16 I've spent 30 years working with chronic
17 juvenile delinquents, 12-year-old boys with
18 32 arrests or murder, and I tell you that when they
19 do not -- are not identified at an early age and
20 services provided, we can cut, cut, cut, cut,
21 eliminate, but we will pay later.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

24 Speaker, 15, please.

1 MS. MARIA MORENO: My name is Maria Moreno.
2 Approximately two years ago the Board of Ed
3 announced massive school closures. Meetings were
4 set up throughout the community financed by the
5 Walton family, which is Wal-Mart.

6 They had parent input as to ways to
7 resolve this issue without closing schools, yet the
8 board had a policy targeting the south and west
9 sides of the city to close schools. For years the
10 board disinvested in those schools, targeting those
11 schools, laying off hundreds African-American
12 teachers, the backbone of the middle class in the
13 City.

14 At those same meetings two years ago,
15 parents came out in like communities where schools
16 were overcrowded where the Board failed to keep up
17 with the growth of those populations at those
18 schools.

19 Not one parent asked, oh, build me a
20 charter school. That's how we want our communities
21 to deal with this overcrowding. But what did the
22 Board do? Last year said, oh, guess what, you know
23 how we're going to resolve underutilization? They
24 did it by building more charter schools because of

1 overutilization.

2 Now we're going to -- we didn't ask for
3 those charter schools. The past two years the
4 Board has cut the budget two years in a row at
5 neighborhood public schools. What did the Board
6 do? Increase funding for charters.

7 And charters are under SEC investigation,
8 Securities Exchange Commission, and the F.B.I. are
9 the charters. We don't need our taxpayer money
10 going to facilities under corruption. All right.

11 I live in the Chicago community. Now the
12 Board is announcing over two and a half million
13 dollar cuts in my community. There is violence.
14 Our kids are traumatized by violence, and we don't
15 have the counselors and social workers. This is
16 outrageous. That's it.

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Speakers 16, 17, 18.

18 MS. SUSAN ZUPAN: My name is Susan Zupan. I'm
19 a CPS teacher, a CTU member and a reporter for
20 Substance. I just have a few general comments.

21 When a City and its nation continually
22 present nothing but austerity budgets for its
23 children, that City and its nation are in serious
24 trouble.

1 When a City and a nation continually
2 presents austerity budgets or pretend austerity
3 budgets because we know there is money for other
4 things for public education, not charter schools
5 because those are their single most goal is to make
6 a profit off of the education of children, that
7 City and its nation are in serious trouble.

8 Shame on everyone and especially
9 politicians who are in these positions to do
10 exactly something greater and different than what
11 you just continually and abysmally continue to do.

12 When our City and our nation do not
13 demonstrate the interest, creativity, stomach,
14 backbone or intelligence needed to come up with
15 something other than austerity budgets for our own
16 children and our own system of public education,
17 this City and nation are in trouble.

18 To stop this public education Armageddon,
19 if anybody has seen the movie, I've got five words
20 for you A.J., we need Karen Lewis for mayor.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. WILLIAMS: Speaker 17.

23 MS. REYNE POWERS: I'm Reyne Powers, and I'm a
24 teacher assistant, and I have a question for each

1 and every one of you up there. Each and every one
2 of you has applied for your job and to apply for
3 your job you have to be highly educated and
4 prepared. On your first day of work, to show up
5 with no pencil, no paper, no iPad, no computer, you
6 could not perform.

7 Now, I'm looking at the children with no
8 materials for the first day of school and the rest
9 of the year, how are they going to be prepared for
10 the future?

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Question.

12 MS. OSTRO: When you talk about the children
13 not having materials, can you explain more of what
14 you mean.

15 MS. REYNE POWERS: As a teacher assistant, I
16 have to go in my pocket to provide materials for
17 the children. Okay? I don't make a lot of money,
18 but I care for the children. So when you think
19 about cutting the budget, the budget requires
20 pencils, papers, things that are important for the
21 students.

22 You have to prepare for this meeting
23 because if you weren't prepared, you wouldn't be up
24 there.

1 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

2 Speaker 18.

3 MS. SHARON WEST: I would like to address -- my
4 name is Sharon West. I'm a teacher at Hurley
5 Elementary School. Our library position was cut
6 this year and it bothers me because the library is
7 where the children learn their foundation for
8 research in high school and college and everyone
9 does not have a computer.

10 Our library teachers are very important in
11 our school. I found that in the past when they
12 have cut programs in African-American communities,
13 and replaced it without -- without replacing it
14 with anything else, crime goes up.

15 I'm from a predominantly low class -- I
16 mean, low income population of Hispanic students.
17 They're starting to cut the library programs and
18 other programs. What do I see coming down the
19 line? And I've been working that the school for
20 over 29 years? Crime has started increasing in the
21 neighborhood.

22 Another thing that I would like to address
23 also is the vocational schools. I took in a kid
24 whose mother died. He was at that time at Chicago

1 Vocational School, CVS. He was in the diesel
2 program -- the last diesel program. He was able to
3 go on and he is now a diesel mechanic.

4 We need these hands-on programs in the
5 community for our children who are not ready to go
6 to college and need hands-on skills to maintain and
7 to provide for their families. This young man
8 right now is able to provide for his family because
9 he had experience of working at a vocational
10 school.

11 So all I'm asking the Board to do is to
12 think about our children, think about the parents,
13 think about the community, and think about all of
14 us working together because teachers who work
15 together -- and we spend our weekends grading
16 papers and sometimes not spending time with our
17 families working hard for CPS.

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

19 Speakers 20, 21, 22 and 23.

20 MS. KAREN BYNUM: Good evening. My name is
21 Karen Bynum. I am a product of Walter Dyett
22 School. I owned my business at the age of 12
23 because Walter Dyett programs taught us how to sew,
24 taught us how to cook, wood shop, speak Spanish and

1 typing.

2 You want to take those programs away from
3 our neighborhoods and put \$76 million into a
4 charter concept charter for what? So our children
5 can be destroyed on the streets of Chicago because
6 they have no ability to learn anything with
7 hands-on except to shoot a gun, and when they make
8 the news every night -- murder, death, kill, it's
9 like this racist system that is destroying our
10 children, destroying all the Black and Brown
11 children of Chicago.

12 You bring in this kind of stuff, these
13 people that are even not qualified to teach our
14 children. If you want to teach our children of
15 Chicago you have to almost be part of Chicago, not
16 from Turkey. I do not want anybody teaching my
17 grandchild from Turkey. They don't even know
18 English in Chicago.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you explain that?

20 MS. KAREN BYNUM: Why? What is the -- what
21 does Turkey have, the people over there, that makes
22 you put in \$76 million and take way from our
23 children? I guess I can get that answer on-line,
24 too. What is the answer?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you explain it?

2 MS. KAREN BYNUM: Right.

3 I'm an owner of my own business due to
4 sewing at Walter Dyett. I came out of Walter Dyett
5 college career ready, but you want to take it away.
6 Nothing that we had coming out of this school
7 system then we have now.

8 You never heard of this back in 1974 and
9 '75; but you get to the mayor -- whatever his name
10 is -- you get him to come here and he's going to --
11 his child is going to be in Hyde Park at this big
12 lab school, why doesn't he put in his children in
13 the school that he wants to shut? Why don't he go
14 into school without security and stand up in the
15 school and then he can see what they need in the
16 schools.

17 But you all can never answer any questions
18 that anybody asks you.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They got it online.

20 MS. KAREN BYNUM: It's sickening. But you got
21 all the answers when you are closing the schools.

22 MS. WILLIAMS: Speaker 21.

23 MR. ASEAN JOHNSON: Again, I want to talk about
24 SCL and how we need it in every school so we can

1 have peace centers and peace classes so children
2 can learn how to control their anger and use it in
3 a different way that is not violent. If we can
4 invest and do that into all those schools, we can
5 make that happen and make a more peaceful place in
6 Chicago instead of us hearing -- as this nice lady
7 said, instead of hearing somebody getting shot
8 every day in the news.

9 Now, it's all up to CPS -- it's all up to
10 you. You guys make the decision. It's all up to
11 you to do this, and if you don't, well, we're sure
12 enough going to have somebody else who will do it.

13 Now, I want to say to everybody think
14 about this when you go home, should -- do we want
15 to be on the right side of history or on the wrong
16 side of history? Now, we need --

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Question.

18 MR. ASEAN JOHNSON: And now -- wait. Yes, that
19 is a question. Question right there. That is a
20 question. All I hear is crickets.

21 MS. OSTRO: You asked us to reflect on it and
22 we're reflecting on it.

23 MR. ASEAN JOHNSON: I know. You can think
24 today. You don't have to answer out loud. Just

1 keep thinking about it.

2 And here is some more information that I
3 would like to bring to you -- and while I still
4 have some more minutes or seconds or whatever, I
5 would like to say that we need more money in our
6 schools and our communities because if we don't,
7 this City will fall apart.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

9 speaker 22.

10 MS. DARLENE O'BANNEL: Good evening. My name
11 is Darlene O'Bannel. I'm the local school
12 counselor at Earl Elementary. I spoke to Christina
13 at the front, and I'm asking to talk to someone at
14 CPS tonight. I was here last year at the budget
15 meeting and I wrote down some questions, and no one
16 never contacted me, nobody never called me. That's
17 why I'm asking to talk to someone tonight.

18 I'm also asking you all to please -- I
19 need some help with school closings. My grandson
20 has been put on a radar that he got to choose what
21 gang he's riding. This would never happened if the
22 school hadn't closed and you put the two schools
23 together.

24 If it hadn't been for Mr. Steven Long from

1 Network 11, he came to the school to give a plan --
2 a safe plan for him. Now I'm asking you all to
3 help me get him in the right school because he
4 can't live with me anymore because you put the two
5 schools together and if he don't choose who he
6 wants to be with, they're going to kill him.

7 So that's why I'm asking can I talk to
8 someone from CPS on that, and why did we lose this
9 \$482,000. So can I see someone today, please?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Question.

11 MR. ELSEY: If you want to wait, we can follow
12 up with you after the meeting or if you don't want
13 to wait until the conclusion of the hearing, you
14 can give your contact information to the man
15 sitting back there and we will follow up with you.

16 MS. DARLENE O'BANNEL: Okay. I need a card
17 because I said I attended the meeting --

18 MR. ELSEY: I will give you one of my cards and
19 we can follow up with you. Okay?

20 MS. DARLENE O'BANNEL: Okay.

21 MS. WILLIAMS: Speaker 23.

22 MR. TOMMY DAVIDSON: Good evening. I'm Tommy
23 Davidson. I ask the Board one question -- I ask
24 you honestly and humbly, what are the plans for

1 career technical education? That's the CTE
2 program. At one time I got my Ph.D. at the City of
3 Chicago -- my Ph.D. is a public high school
4 diploma. I got it at Simeon High School in 1975.
5 Simeon was the only school in the City, again, with
6 this program career and technical education, and
7 it's been wiped out.

8 I was fortunate enough then that we had
9 resource training in school where you did what we
10 call discovery every ten weeks. Instead of picking
11 your major you had to go to exploratory shop for
12 ten weeks. This was in 1975. This has changed.

13 Again, I'm a certified welder who can do
14 it independently or for another company. What I'm
15 saying is you must get back into school the CTE
16 program. You have a program that, again, makes
17 money, and imagine you have -- how many of you see
18 truck drivers that you see are women? How many
19 women do you see driving a truck? How many women
20 electricians do you see that are doing this? It's
21 about the talent that you have.

22 How many of you went to a Chicago Public
23 School and got their Ph.D.? Only one person raised
24 their hand. That's not right for us in the City.

1 I say that humbly because we are killing our
2 exploratory programs. I mean, right now how many
3 of you all can go into your own house and fix an
4 outlet or put up a ceiling fan? How many of you
5 women -- we have women mechanics. How many of you
6 can change the oil? I ask you that.

7 How many of you all took that program?
8 Again, I am very happy that I got my Ph.D. from
9 Simeon Career Academy Vocational where everybody
10 cares. Okay. So I really appreciate that. I
11 respect that. You are the only one that raised
12 your hand. That getting a Ph.D. from Chicago
13 Public Schools means a lot.

14 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

15 Speaker 24.

16 MS. ANDREA PARKER: Good evening. My name is
17 Andrea Parker, and I stand here as a proud parent
18 of a Chicago Public School student. Raise your
19 hand, Eric.

20 just here to say that I am tired -- I'm
21 tired of coming to these meetings every single year
22 begging you to do something you know you're
23 supposed to do that you know you're not going to
24 do. So I'm tired, and you should be tired sitting

1 there knowing that you're not going to do anything.

2 Okay.

3 So I'm just standing here as an advocate
4 for the public schools. I'm also a graduate of
5 Dewey Elementary, Hyde Park, I went to SIU, and I'm
6 working on my Ph.D. right now. So I'm a product of
7 Chicago Public Schools. It has deteriorated.
8 We're 21st century without any money.

9 I'm just confused as to why every year we
10 don't have any money. I'm really confused that CPS
11 is not in the business of educating our kids,
12 they're in the business of contracts. That's what
13 you're all in the business of, giving your friends
14 contracts. So tell me that.

15 And, again, I'm confused about how you're
16 still crying broke. You closed 50 schools, you cut
17 teachers, raised 4 percent to 12 percent, you fired
18 teachers and staff every single year. I don't
19 know -- I believe you do have a surplus, but I
20 believe it's hidden somewhere under someone else's
21 contract.

22 My suggestion to get the budget intact is
23 I suggest that you stop all these tests that you
24 continue to give somebody a contract to make. I'm

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1 a elementary teacher and one of my students did
2 poorly on one of the tests and had to go to summer
3 school, but she had to take another test to get
4 out, which was confusing to me. It doesn't make
5 sense.

6 Also I need to suggest you don't give --
7 they have CPS giving somebody a \$20 million
8 contract to distribute condoms to several high
9 schools in poor neighborhoods. I want to be on the
10 back of what that company is getting.

11 And stop doing charter schools. You all
12 say they're quality schools, and there is a
13 wait list. They're on a wait list for charter
14 schools, and you're trying to take away the
15 neighborhood schools and make it quality? How can
16 you have a quality charter school --

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

18 Speaker 25.

19 MR. LEE EDWARDS: Good evening. I'm Lee
20 Edwards with the Chicago Citizen Newspaper. The
21 only question I have is how is CPS's budget
22 prioritizing individual school needs throughout the
23 years including the budget, including the loss of
24 the teachers?

1 An example of this would be Coles
2 Elementary had a leak in the ceiling and a
3 representative from Coles said they put in a
4 petition to have it fixed, but no such thing has
5 happened.

6 So is there a need for CPS to be more
7 accountable for those sorts of things or is there a
8 task force in charge of that action?

9 Again, the question is how is CPS
10 prioritizing the individual school needs throughout
11 the year including the loss of teachers, people and
12 manpower?

13 MS. OSTRO: I'm sorry? The example you gave
14 related to a facilities issue of a leak, and so how
15 do we address those issues?

16 MR. LEE EDWARDS: Yes, ma'am.

17 MS. OSTRO: Mary, could you speak to that one
18 when an emergency happens.

19 MR. LEE EDWARDS: Before you begin, could you
20 identify who you are and the rest of you, can you
21 do that as well.

22 MS. DE RUNTZ: I'm Mary De Runtz. I'm the
23 deputy chief facilities officer. The first step
24 would be that the principal should contact their

1 FM, who is manages the building for them, and if
2 it's an emergency, then some action should be
3 taken.

4 We have a central number at facilities,
5 (773) 553-2900. If you have an issue with your
6 school in terms of facilities, you can call that
7 number (773) 553-2900 and they will respond.

8 MR. LEE EDWARDS: Does that also incorporate
9 the loss of teachers as well as the other faculty
10 members?

11 MS. MARY DE RUNTZ: I deal with buildings. I
12 don't have that answer.

13 MS. OSTRO: So that's how we address a
14 facilities emergency that happens in a building.

15 Other funding is provided at the beginning
16 of the year and the budget is done at the beginning
17 of the year, the principals make the decisions on
18 how those funds should be allocated and then that's
19 a budget the school will work with during the year.

20 MR. LEE EDWARDS: Also, can you identify
21 yourself.

22 MS. OSTRO: My name is Ginger Ostro. I'm the
23 chief financial officer of Chicago Public Schools.

24 MS. WILLIAMS: Speakers 26, 27, 28 and 29.

1 MS. DONNA PAYNE: Good evening. My name is
2 Donna Payne. I have five children that is in CPS
3 schools ranging from ages -- well, first grade,
4 third grade, fifth grade, sophomore and a senior.

5 My question is how can you actually say
6 that you guys did this budget and you didn't have
7 any parent input and community input and teacher
8 input? How is this a true budget? How is it? How
9 do you answer that.

10 MS. OSTRO: For each of the budgets that we do,
11 we do a proposal which we make available to the
12 public through this process and --

13 MS. DONNA PAYNE: That's the -- I didn't say
14 that. I didn't ask you that. What I'm asking is
15 why wasn't it offered to like several schools and
16 seeing what parents wanted to come in and sit down
17 with the budget table with you guys and community?
18 Why wasn't it offered out from the beginning?

19 MS. OSTRO: We do provide the budgets to the
20 schools and the principals. We do that early in
21 April --

22 MS. DONNA PAYNE: I understand that you provide
23 it to the schools. I'm saying sitting at a table
24 line by line actually saying what is going to be

1 cut, where are you going to put money at, why
2 wasn't that's offered out?

3 MS. OSTRO: The opportunity that we provide is
4 through the school budget process with local school
5 councils and communities to help prepare their
6 budget --

7 MS. DONNA PAYNE: What are you talking about?

8 MS. OSTRO: I'm talking about the school
9 budget, we provide the student-based budget where
10 the people funding the other money going into the
11 schools are provided to the principals. After
12 viewing, the local school council will submit it
13 back. We provide that information publicly and
14 summarize it, provide the opportunities for
15 comments through the public hearings that we're
16 having tonight as well as on the Web site, and that
17 information is provided to the Board.

18 MS. DONNA PAYNE: Okay. Well, I would like for
19 you to go back to the mayor and ask him that you
20 have a parent here tonight that actually wants to
21 be at the table when you're cutting schools, when
22 you're giving charter schools money, giving concept
23 schools money. We need to be at the table. I'm a
24 big stakeholder in CPS. I have one daughter that

1 came through CPS school and she's at DePaul on a
2 full ride.

3 I quit my job to stay at home so I can see
4 them through their education. So I would like to
5 be at that table line by line seeing where the
6 money is going to and what schools gets what.

7 Thank you.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

9 Speaker 27.

10 MS. PATRICIA BOUGHTON: Good evening. My name
11 is Patricia Boughton. I'm the vice president for
12 Chicago Teachers Union. The frustrating thing I
13 think for most of us here is that we know that you
14 all are not in a position do anything about this
15 budget, that you just present it.

16 The people that we really need to be
17 talking to are not here. They're out trying to get
18 us to vote for them, and I certainly hope that we
19 reconsider some of these people asking for our
20 votes.

21 I wanted to speak about a couple of
22 things. One of the sisters touched upon the union
23 issue, and I'm glad -- I mean the pension issue,
24 and I'm glad she did.

1 . She mentioned the pension holiday.
2 What a lot of people do not understand is that the
3 Board of Education in lieu of granting teachers a
4 pay raise about 15 years ago said that, we'll pay
5 part of your pension. Up to that point teachers
6 were paying 9 percent of their pension. The Board
7 said, we'll pick up part of that. The agreement
8 was they would pick up 7 percent of the pension and
9 teachers were paying the other 2 percent --
10 remaining 2 percent.

11 Well, shortly after they came to this
12 agreement, Mayor Daley, with the connivance of the
13 state legislature was able to get a pension
14 holiday, and they took these pension holidays for
15 ten years even when times were good because we know
16 during the Clinton years we were in a boom period,
17 and when they could have easily afforded to pay our
18 pensions, they did other things with the money.

19 And I was likening that to somebody, you
20 know, being a gambler, spending all the money at
21 the Horseshoe and then telling the landlord, I
22 ain't got your rent right now, you know, something
23 came up. That's what the Board of Education has
24 done.

1 So we believe it's not the teachers or
2 pensioners who are responsible for the messes
3 they're in, it's politicians and those people
4 sitting up there that are on the Board who agree to
5 this stuff, and that is why we want to run the
6 school board.

7 MS. OSTRO: I have one clarification for you.
8 CPS does continue to pay the 7 percent of the
9 teachers' shares. The teachers are still paying
10 2 percent -- all employees are. The numbers that I
11 presented in the presentation today don't relate to
12 that.

13 It's an addition to the chart. So that's
14 the share that is the amount that CPS has to pay
15 directly to the pension fund. In addition to that,
16 there is about 135 million which we pay which
17 reflects the amount that you're talking about, the
18 teachers's share.

19 So we actually pay both. I wasn't
20 referring to the portion that we pay on behalf of
21 the teachers. This is on top of that. I just want
22 to clarify that.

23 MS. PATRICIA BOUGHTON: I just wanted to
24 clarify for people who may not be aware of the

1 history of how this came about.

2 Teachers are not greedy, grasping shilots
3 (sic) trying to grab all the money and stuff for
4 themselves. This was an agreement that the Board
5 came up with, and if it was a bad agreement just
6 like the law says, you are responsible for whatever
7 you sign your name to. They signed their name to
8 it.

9 And they didn't want to pay the pension to
10 pay Social Security because teachers do not earn
11 Social Security. So you throw out our pension,
12 you're throwing us in the poor house and the
13 chicken coop.

14 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

15 Speaker 29.

16 MR. MATTHEW LUSKIN: Hi my name is Matthew
17 Luskin. I'm a parent of three sons in the Chicago
18 Public Schools.

19 You mentioned three ways that you're
20 attempting to balance this budget that I heard, one
21 is a change in how you calculate the budget. You
22 call it changing our revenue recognition period. I
23 think the rest of us would call it lying to make
24 the mayor look good. You told us this is a

1 one-time offer, and we (inaudible due to audience
2 noise).

3 You talked about slashing retirement. We
4 should be clear in cutting pensions, in the City of
5 Chicago when you cut municipal pensions and cut
6 public employee pensions, it disproportionately
7 impacts African-American neighborhoods. You're
8 talking about balancing the budget by cutting
9 retirement pay to exactly the same communities in
10 this City with the highest unemployment rates and
11 most savaged by the Mayor's choice to close 50
12 schools in the City.

13 And then, thirdly, you say you're going to
14 balance the budget by cutting from our schools.
15 You told us that you did everything you could to
16 keep cuts from the classrooms, and apparently the
17 Chicago Public Schools are a little less failing
18 than you all thought because none of us are stupid
19 enough to believe that.

20 I mean, when you sit here, a budget is not
21 just a set of statistics. It's not an automatic on
22 what outcomes come out of it. It's a set of
23 political decisions. The budget is students, the
24 budget is the people in this room, and it's the

1 plans we have been telling you.

2 Your job and the Mayor's job is to educate
3 our children. It's not to pay the bills, it's not
4 to protect the bank, it's not to protect the
5 charter companies or those that have invested in
6 real estate. Your job is to educate our children.
7 My job as a father is to raise my children.

8 If I didn't have the money for dinner
9 tonight, I couldn't do what the Board does and say,
10 I'm going to choose which son to feed based on the
11 (inaudible due to audience noise) I couldn't choose
12 to feed my children that way.

13 My job is to fight for the resources for
14 my kids. My job is to organize a union to give my
15 damn boss -- (inaudible due to audience noise). My
16 job would be to put foot on the table. Where do we
17 see a leadership for the public schools that is
18 fighting for our kids.

19 You mentioned the TIF money. You said
20 we're getting money from the TIF funds for the
21 schools. That's in the tens of millions, but there
22 is hundreds of millions of dollars that could be
23 coming to the schools instead of going to the TIF
24 funds. And we're supposed to say thank you when

1 you -- we're not going to talk to you, we're here
2 to talk to us in this room. We're going to
3 organize and we're going to fight for the money
4 because clearly we have a leadership that isn't
5 fighting for the children, but it's fighting for
6 the bankers downtown.

7 MS. WILLIAMS: We are down to our last four
8 speakers.

9 MS. RHONDA McLEOD: I'm Rhonda McLeod. I'm a
10 nationally board certified teacher, which means I
11 have gone through some very vigorous training to
12 prove that I am highly qualified.

13 That is said -- the president of our
14 United States has said he wants highly qualified
15 teachers in front of our students. We can't do
16 that if we keep turning around and closing the
17 schools with seriously experience qualified
18 teachers, of which I am one.

19 I'm wearing a shirt from Gresham School.
20 I was a national board certified teacher at that
21 school. Now, I serve low income, highly challenged
22 children in special education. I will define for
23 those that don't understand. They don't speak,
24 they rarely -- they have high cognitive issues,

1 they have autism, they may be deaf or hard of
2 hearing issues, they have families who struggle to
3 provide for them. One of the things you're doing
4 in the budget is to change how the bus aides are
5 organized. I'll directly speak to that.

6 Parents trust me to take care of their
7 children. They put their children on a bus, they
8 have an aide on the bus who they know by name who
9 hopefully they have known for a number of years who
10 they trust to take care of their children. Should
11 there be a snowstorm, they know their children are
12 safe. Should there be a flood, they know their
13 children are safe.

14 If you're going to cut those positions,
15 are you going to pack the buses? Where are these
16 children going to be? We have a history of
17 children being, oops, we forgot about you, can you
18 join school about 10 to 12, 14 days when downtown
19 gets their here stuff together? Can we deal with
20 the fact that we don't know where this child is.
21 You didn't send him to school. Yes, I did. He
22 gets left on the bus for three hours.

23 There is a child I had who was transferred
24 to another school while you consolidated the

1 children to save money on buses. Can you answer
2 the question, how is this budget change going to
3 address the relationship the children have with
4 their caregivers and their teachers if you
5 eliminate it and you're handling it downtown, which
6 has a history of poorly managing and dealing with
7 the children's needs.

8 MS. OSTRO: We will have to get back to you on
9 the specifics. We're managing the bus aides
10 because we're trying to improve the service.

11 MS. RHONDA McLEOD: How are you going to
12 improve the service when there is no relationship
13 between the parents, the children and the school
14 because it's downtown and they have not been -- it
15 takes two weeks to get a child processed for the
16 bus.

17 MS. OSTRO: We'll follow up on that.

18 MS. RHONDA McLEOD: We can call the bus company
19 to do the change; but, no, it has to go through
20 central office, they have to do the paperwork, the
21 computer falls apart, and the children are sitting
22 at home, the parents are struggling to get them to
23 school to a location where they're going because
24 it's not their neighborhood school, and they're not

1 being addressed.

2 And I've had a parent whose child was left
3 on the bus called us because she got no answer.
4 The grandmother called us because the child had
5 been moved less than a month earlier. I'm pulling
6 this poor woman off the ceiling. She was in panic
7 because her grandchild was missing. I grabbed my
8 keys looking for him. We found him on the bus.
9 They locked the bus.

10 I can't trust downtown and the bus
11 companies to do it. I have to have some input on
12 this t because ethically I'm responsible for these
13 children. Ask this parent. She knows. It's not
14 her grandchild, but she knows.

15 MR. ELSEY: We appreciate what you're sharing.
16 If you want to share your contact information, we
17 don't have representation from the office right
18 now, but I am happy to share your contact
19 information to folks that can talk to you.

20 MS. RHONDA McLEOD: I know Ethel and the other
21 people. I can call them, but transportation is a
22 problem. I hope you recognize that.

23 MS. WILLIAMS: Speaker 31, please.

24 MR. MAHIRI ANDERSON: Good evening. Mahiri

1 Anderson, teacher and parent. I have a quick
2 question that speaks to the budget.

3 What is the philosophy of why CPS is
4 investing in charter schools and contract schools?

5 MR. ELSEY: Charter schools are one of many of
6 the strategies that we use to bring high-quality
7 education to students.

8 MR. MAHIRI ANDERSON: And the expectation of
9 that high-quality -- the expectation of that
10 high-quality education is what?

11 MR. ELSEY: I'm sorry? I don't understand the
12 question.

13 MR. MAHIRI ANDERSON: What is the expectation
14 of those charter schools to produce as a result of
15 that investment from CPS budget department?

16 MR. ELSEY: Charter schools are held to the
17 same performance standards as other -- any other
18 school of any other government type. The school
19 policy adopted by the Board in August, you will see
20 that the charter schools are held to the same
21 standards as all schools of CSR under that CSR
22 policy.

23 MR. MAHIRI ANDERSON: So that leads me to my
24 statement, since 1995 since the institution of

1 Renaissance -- I'm sorry. Since the institution of
2 Renaissance 2010 we have seen contract charter
3 schools perform at the same level as traditional
4 public schools. So that means that there has not
5 been any return on the investment of our children.

6 What I'm getting at is coming from
7 corporate America I learned that if there was no
8 return on investments, that's when we begin to have
9 a cutting budget and we begin to restructure the
10 administration and we begin a new philosophy.

11 So at this point in time we have not seen
12 any changes or any return on investments as a
13 taxpayer, as a teacher, as parent. I'm asking for
14 a return on my money with interest paid because you
15 have disinvested from the Brown community, we're
16 seeing the disappearance of the middle class, we're
17 seeing a philosophy that has not shown a return on
18 investments in terms of taking away career and
19 technology education programs.

20 The schools that have been closed, these
21 new charter schools that are coming up, we want a
22 return on our investment simply stated. And let me
23 tell you how we can get that. Those schools that
24 you have invested in, those private corporations,

1 it's time go back and ask for our money back, and
2 that will give you a surplus of -- and I don't want
3 you all to have to give us the bad news anymore
4 saying you don't have the money. Go back to the
5 charter schools, go back to the contract schools
6 and get our money.

7 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

8 Speaker 31.

9 MS. MELODY FARMER: Hi. My name is Melody
10 Farmer, and I'm the teacher, I'm a community
11 person, I own a home. My concern is that looking
12 at the faces of teachers that you laid off, the art
13 teachers, the music teachers, the fine arts
14 teachers, the libraries that is not funded -- do we
15 have any laid off teachers here?

16 These are the faces that stabilize
17 communities, that stabilize homes, our children.
18 These are the people that in the fall don't have
19 jobs. These are the people that students reach out
20 to them over the summer and look forward to seeing
21 in September.

22 So when you go home tonight understand
23 that these faces you see that touches children and
24 understand that their jobs are more important than

1 what you're doing. Okay. So understand these are
2 the faces.

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

4 We have time for one more speaker.
5 Raymond Lopez.

6 MR. RAYMOND LOPEZ: Good evening, ladies and
7 gentlemen. I'm Raymond Lopez, Democratic Community
8 member of the 15th ward. I represent the community
9 of Gage Park, Brighton Park, Back of the Yards and
10 West Englewood. I'm honored to be here for my
11 residents to my west, to my north and to my south.

12 As an elected official in the room, I just
13 want to say this, I've been here from the
14 beginning, I've been here to the end, I have heard
15 and I have listened. What is going on in our
16 neighborhood schools is a travesty. We must work
17 together.

18 To the budget committee, I want to start
19 by addressing numerous issues that are both capital
20 and fiscal budget-related. They will be
21 intertwined, so I apologize.

22 First and foremost, I have to start with
23 this, when dealing with our pensions, we must
24 remember that pensions are a promise, and I ask you

1 not to view that as just some budgetary gimmick in
2 order to balance the items on the sheet. They are
3 a promise. As an elected official, if you need
4 help raising revenue or addressing other revenue
5 strings to help support the overall budget to pay
6 for all items on there, you have my support in
7 doing that. I look forward to working with the
8 Board of Education to ensure that all of our
9 funding needs are met unilaterally.

10 As I stated, I represent numerous
11 neighborhoods. Unfortunately, their needs are
12 completely different. In Brighton Park and Back of
13 the Yards we are facing issues of nearing or
14 overcapacity by your own CPS standards. In
15 Brighton Park Gonzales and Shields are nearing
16 overcrowding. In Back of the Yards Seward and
17 Hedges are nearing overcrowding. Even the new Back
18 of the Yards high school, which is an IB school,
19 was built almost intentionally to be overcrowded
20 with the capacity of 900 but an annual enrollment
21 population of 1300.

22 In West Englewood we had a far different
23 situation, as Ms. O'Bannel stated earlier, almost
24 all of our schools in West Englewood were slated

1 for closure along with most of them in Great
2 Englewood. I am very thankful to the Board of
3 Education after having attended five hearings on
4 their behalf that we were able to keep Henderson
5 open.

6 However, Earl remains a vacant building in
7 West Englewood, one of now 300 abandoned buildings
8 in the neighborhood. I would like to know from the
9 members here are there any specific plans for the
10 Earl vacant building at this time?

11 MS. OSTRO: We can only speak generally to it,
12 but there is a task force that is looking at all
13 the closed buildings, looking at the community
14 recommendations on what to do with the buildings.

15 MR. RAYMOND LOPEZ: Okay. It is my hope and it
16 is the hope of my residents and my constituents
17 that that remains a publically accessible building
18 used for the betterment of our community and not
19 sold to any type of private entity for anything
20 that is education-related.

21 It would be a slap in the face to the
22 community that lost its schools and now has a young
23 mother whose child is faced with gang affiliation
24 warfare to see that turn into something else other

1 than what it was originally. So I ask you to take
2 that back with you with your budget hearings.

3 Additionally, the other school we were
4 able to remain open in West Englewood is Henderson
5 Academy. Henderson is the only school in West
6 Englewood between Garfield Boulevard and 71st Street
7 between Damen and Ashland. It serves 4,000
8 households.

9 Now, not all of our households attend
10 Henderson. Some go to Miles Davis and some go to
11 the charter schools surrounding this. But
12 Henderson is our premier neighborhood school. I
13 have supported it. I am proud of what principal
14 Marvis Jackson has done in that school, but I'm
15 asking for additional funds and consideration of
16 everything that that school does and could do in
17 the community.

18 I've worked tirelessly to connect them
19 with not-for-profits in the surrounding community
20 in the hopes of augmenting the programs that are
21 there, but I need your help and the Board's help in
22 providing funds and resources to the students.

23 They need funds for uniforms, they need
24 funds for programs and now with the change in the

1 demographics, they need changes in the bilingual
2 program as well because we do have a growing Latino
3 population in West Englewood. So we now have a
4 school that has a bilingual need with no available
5 resources.

6 Lastly, I want to touch on a topic that I
7 wasn't planning on talking about, but that
8 gentleman over there and my good friend Maria
9 behind me reminded me of the importance of a topic
10 that affects all schools in my ward, the wraparound
11 services.

12 Wraparound services are a critical
13 component of what is needed in the community,
14 especially communities plagued with violence and
15 crime.

16 I could think back when I was sitting here
17 looking at my ward now, last night 2 blocks away
18 from Shields Elementary School, a shooting on the
19 porch; last month 65th and Damen, 3 blocks away
20 from O'Toole Elementary, a shooting in the middle
21 of the street; last summer 57th and Wolcott across
22 the street from Henderson Elementary, a shooting at
23 the playground.

24 And when the 15th ward extended to Chicago

1 Lawn we had Marquette School where I first met
2 Ms. Moreno, and we had a young man who was shot on
3 his way to school. His body was left on the street
4 for three hours during when students were going to
5 class. Students had to walk past the body of their
6 classmate on the floor.

7 If there is one thing that I implore you
8 not to cut, not to reduce and to fully fund is the
9 wraparound services because while we cannot account
10 for the crime with just education, we can
11 definitely mitigate the impact it has once they get
12 into that building and how they're able to cope
13 with what is going on in the world around them
14 because the last time I went to Henderson's career
15 day and asked what everyone wanted to be when they
16 grow up, half of them said alive. Thank you for
17 your time.

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

19 So this concludes the public hearing for
20 the 2015 budget proposal.

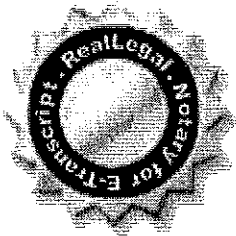
21 MS. OSTRO: Thank you very much for all of your
22 comments.

23
24

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)
4

5 Ailene Barkhoff, as an Officer of the
6 Court, say that she is a shorthand reporter doing
7 business in the State of Illinois; and that she
8 reported in shorthand the proceedings of said
9 budget hearing, and that the foregoing is a true
10 and correct transcript of her shorthand notes so
11 taken as aforesaid, and contains the proceedings
12 given at said budget hearing.

13 IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF: I have hereunto set
14 my verified digital signature this 18th day of July
15 2014.



16
17
18 *Ailene Barkhoff*
19 _____
20 AILENE BARKHOFF, CSR, RPR
21
22
23
24

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