ENGLEWOOD-GRESHAM COMMUNITY MEETING No. 1

February 18th, 2013

7:00 o'clock p.m.

The Report of Proceedings had in the meeting of the above-entitled cause, taken before PAMELA A. MARZULLO, a Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the County of Cook and State of Illinois, at 7859 South Ashland Avenue, February 18th, 2013, at the hour of approximately 7:00 o'clock p.m.

PRESENT:

MR. PHILLIP HAMPTON, Chief of Family and Community Engagement
MR. ADRIAN WILLIS, Chief of Englewood-Gresham Network
MR. DONELL UNDERDUE, Deputy Chief of Englewood-Gresham Network
MR. ADAM ANDERSON, Office of Portfolio Planning & Strategy
MR. ARNIE RIVERA, Deputy Chief of Staff
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MR. HAMPTON: Ladies and gentlemen, if you could kindly find a seat so we can get started in two minutes. We appreciate your cooperation. We want to start in two minutes. We ask that you kindly find a seat.

Also, Pastor Phillips, if he is nearby, we would like for Pastor Phillips to come forward so we can begin our meeting. Thank you.

PASTOR PHILLIPS: Good bless you. We want to thank God for this opportunity to be in this house. Once again, we want to thank God for the opportunity to be here once again with reference to God today.

Most gracious God, we thank you for this day. God, this is the day, Lord, that you have made and, God, we thank you for; and, Lord, we have already rejoice in it.

God, right now, Father, we ask that you allow us this opportunity not just to tell you thank you, once again, for allowing us this day. Lord, we ask that you take over this meeting on this, my God.

And, lord, we ask you concentrate this room, My Father, with your love and your kindness; and, God, we ask that you bless each and every one of the parents that are represented here, and
children that are represented here.

    And, God, we thank you right now father for all the officials, all the elected officials and all the CPS officials; and, God, we ask that you take over this place and in Jesus name we pray in every heart. Amen, Amen, Amen. Welcome.

MR. HAMPTON: First we want to say that you think so much to Pastor Phillips for allowing us to have this meeting here today. We're going to get right into the meeting.

    It is very important that parents, school resources, those that support students have the opportunity to give us public comment, which will be a part of our official record, as we continue to work around this issue of school utilization.

    We want you to know that we are going to be respectful to you; and we beg you that as we have this meeting, that we be respectful to everyone who comes to the microphone in order that everyone will have the opportunity to be heard.

Chief Adrian Willis will be leading the portion of the meeting and calling up individuals individual schools. Each school, we ask because of the large number, that you comply with us. Each
school will have six minutes. You determine the
number of speakers within that time that you will
have come up and provide us comment.

We beg of you within that comment, to give
us information that the district is not thoughtful
of, may not be aware of, as it looks at the
potential school consolidations.

We have Ms. Pam Marzullo, who is the
official recorder here at meeting. You will you see
her to my right. She will be summarizing each
comment that is made that goes to a report to our
CEO Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett.

We want to begin, before we have the
public comment, I'm going to make sure that we give
Mr. Adam Anderson, who is from our Office of
Strategy, the opportunity just to briefly speak to
you about the handout that you should have.

This handout is very important, because it
provides you the criteria. It gives you the
information as to how the schools, which remain
under consideration, are on the list. So, it's very
important that you have a few minutes of information
relative to that.

But before we do that, it's very important
that you hear from our elected officials and leaders that are here, those that would like to speak. Many of them have indicated that they would like to provide comment.

So, I'm going to call the names basically as they have entered the room and invite them to the center mic to have comment today.

First we'll have Illinois Senator Mattie Hunter from the 3rd District. Senator Hunter.

OFFICIAL

SENTATOR HUNTER: Good evening. I would like to thank CPS for holding this community hearing tonight, and it's so good to so many parents out tonight with their children. So, thank you so much, parents, for coming out tonight and bringing your children with you.

You know, for the past ten years, as a state senator, we've been working real hard with the General Assembly trying to find dollars to bring back home to our district to put into the school system, and it seems like the more we give you all, the more schools you all shut down, you know, and I really don't understand what's going on.

I know that you all have some budget
constraints, the same as we do down in Springfield; but I'm really, really tired, and I know that not only in this district, but throughout the city and throughout my district, in particular, you all are closing down 32 of my schools, 32, and it was more than that beforehand, you know.

That's totally unacceptable. That is unacceptable. I'm telling you, you know. Now, if I'm wrong regarding the number, please correct me, but I believe that I received this number from your governmental relations staff the other day via phone call.

So, whether it's an accurate number or not, if you close one school down, it's too many. I am really concerned what are your plans. You're talking about closing. You're talking about merging schools. I've not heard any recommendations on providing transportation for these kids. The parents do not have any dollars to put their children on a bus, you know.

So, how could you expect for the children to get back and forth to school safely, safely. I'm real concerned about this public safety issue. I know that you have people on the corners, and
obviously that's not enough because too many of our children are getting shot, you know.

I know that three years ago, we passed down in Springfield a capital budget to improve the schools, in hopes that we wouldn't have this problem of using the excuse that the schools are in poor condition to close the schools.

We gave you all dollars down in Springfield for capital development, which means putting new roofs and electrical and just improving the schools all around.

So, I don't know exactly what is going on with CPS. So, Phil, I need to have a meeting with you all. I need a one-on-one meeting with you all, because you all need to explain to me what's going on, you know.

A telephone call is not enough. I need a face-to-face meeting with you all, and please don't contact me again after you made a decision on the schools. Okay?

I think that I, as well as all of my colleagues who are here, we deserve more respect than that, because we all work very hard for you all. We work too hard for this, you know. My
colleagues are here from the house.

They're in session tomorrow, but they're here right now because they're concerned. So, when they leave here, they have to get in their cars and drive home, drive down to Springfield. So you all could have prevented a whole lot of this by talking to us, calling us down to CPS and just having a conversation with us.

We haven't had a meeting with you guys in a long time, a long time. You all need to get on the stick. Okay? Thank you.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you so much, Senator Hunter. We want to call up a Illinois State Rep Andre Thapedi from the 36th District.

OFFICIAL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE THAPEDI: Good evening.

As Senator Hunter said, I just found out about this meeting Friday. I have to get back in my car and get back to Springfield, but this is an essential issue that I had to be here and be heard on behalf of my schools.

My I'm Andre Thapedi. I'm an attorney, and I'm also the state representative for the 32nd district. I'm here today because I'm concerned, and
I'm also here today to get clarification on the methodology and the process for the closing of schools specifically in Englewood.

Currently, there are five schools out of the 129 in my district that are scheduled for remediation, or whatever your intentions are, and those schools are Altgeld, Miles Davis, Hinton, Mays, and lastly O'Toole.

As you know, the state and the city are having serious financial challenges, and for this reason I'm concerned. I'm concerned because I believe that a constitutional challenge for the remediation of these five schools may have merit in the courts, and the state and the city would be on the hook for huge medical bills during the course of this litigation.

I still practice law today; and as practicing lawyer, I see a few issues that need clarification very specifically by CPS.

This past Valentine's Day, this past Valentine's Day, marked the anniversary of oral argument in one of the worst decisions that was ever decided upon in the United States Supreme Court, and that was Dred Scott versus Stanford.
When United States Supreme Court ruled that a slave, who had previously lived right here in the State of Illinois, was not a citizen, but was the property of the master; and because he was the property of his master and not a citizen, he didn't have the right to file a lawsuit to beg and ask the Court for his own freedom.

A few years later, the United States Supreme Court in Plessy versus Ferguson ruled that segregation in public places was okay as long as it was equal. The so-called separate but equal doctrine, and the separate but equal doctrine remained the law of the land until 13 black parents stood up and filed a lawsuit on behalf of their 20 children in Topeka, Kansas. The name of that case is we all know is Brown versus the Board of Education.

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that black children had a constitutional right to a fair and non-discriminatory education; and the failure to do so, to provide them with such an education, was patently unconstitutional and a violation of equal protection clause in the 14th amendment of the United States Constitution.
In reaching this decision, the Supreme Court relied on data studies, and they found, number one, that there is a significant psychological and social disadvantage imposed on black children from the nature of segregation itself, and a sense of inferiority affects the motivation and children to learn.

As you could imagine, the angry southern states, after that landmark decision, started playing games; and, in fact, they did two things that are scarily similar to what CPS seems to be doing right now; and that is, I'm not making this up, they began to close schools.

The second thing that they began to do was that they started to create state financed private schools or charter schools. In response to these actions, those black parents went back to court, and the Supreme Court ruled that these unconstitutional paths taken by these southern school boards had to stop and the segregation was to occur with all deliberate speed.

But what happened? They kept playing games. The black parents went back to court, and the Supreme Court ruled that segregation had to stop
immediately. When I say "segregation," I mean
desegregation had to end, and they had to start
allowing black students the opportunity to go to
those schools.

There were other cases in the '80s and the
'90s which all came up with the same result; that
is, minority students have a constitutional right to
non-discriminatory education.

So, for all of these reasons that I've
talked about, I know my colleagues are here, I know
Monique Davis is here, she'll be going back to
Springfield with me. Mary Flowers is here. She
will be going back too Springfield with me.

I see my Alderman Latacia Thomas here. I
see my other Alderman Toni Foulks is here. I see my
good friend and fellow counselor Alderman Howard
Brookins is here. We're all here. We're all here
because we're concerned.

I'm asking CPS to provide me with the
following detailed information within 14 days:
First, I would like to know what was the methodology
that you used in selecting these schools?
The second thing I would like to know is
what data did you rely upon when you selected these
schools? The third thing that I want to know is where did you obtain that data?

And lastly, and most importantly, after you close a school, what do you intend to do with the building? Will it remain vacant, will you sell it, or will it turn into a charter school?

I would like to thank you very much for your attention, and I look forward from hearing now 14 days. Thank you.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you, sir. Again, I just want to mention that we are calling elected officials in the order that they came in the room.

Alderman Howard Brookins, Jr., from the 21st Ward is here. He asked not to speak. I want to acknowledge that he's here.

Also, Alderman Toni Foulks from the 15th Ward is here. We want to call her up to the mic.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN FOULKS: I'm going to be nice tonight. I'm going to meet with them on Wednesday, so I don't want to get them too upset. I got to have them in my room privately, but thank God for each and every one of you who are who are here, that's here tonight.
I live in West Englewood currently for 41 years, and I've been fighting this battle for a long time; and when I would go into work early, 5:00 o'clock, get off at 1:00, when they wanted to close Ralph J. Bunche Grammar School, and they wanted to close Englewood High School, and I went down and I would go and fight downtown.

And I would ask my organization, I said, "Why do I have to go over to Kinwood Oakland?" And this was years ago in 1999, 1998, and they said, "Because it's going to come to Englewood." And look where we are now.

When I was seven years old, I attended Earle Elementary School, one of the schools that's going to be closed. Slated, won't be closed, slated.

They built Ralph J. Brunche school in 1971 for the kids and where I live that went to Earle four blocks north and O'Toole, another, school that's going to be slated, four blocks to the west. So we would not have to go so far, so they built a school.

Fast forward it. When I was going downtown to save the school that they had built for
us for our kids, now that I'm adult, I don't have children, but you are all my children, my friends' children, people that I grew up with, and they closed the school, made it a charter, and I fought against it.

Last year, only in the charter school, Ralph J. Bunche, we talk about being underutilized, twelve 8th grade kids graduated, 12; and they said our schools are underutilized.

When I granted from Ralph J. Bunche, it was 63. So now you are telling me that you're going to close every school that is on the list from 55th, and this is just the 15th Ward, 55th, to 68th, from Ashland to Western every single school? Every single school? It had to be a mistake. That is insane. That is insane.

So, I'm glad that we have soldiers, but one thing I'm going to tell you, and I'm going to sit down, is that each one of you have to get someone else to come. We need way more soldiers than we got out today, way more soldiers.

When I went down to CPS to save -- to try to save Ralph J. Bunche Chicago and Englewood from Ralph J. Bunch, I was the only person, other than
another teacher that was there that had a daughter that went to the school, I was the only person on that bus to represent Ralph J. Bunche, and I don't have one child.

Now I have over, what, 5,000 children, and I will fight for them. I will fight for them. Now it's my watch. I will fight for them, and that's why I ran to be Alderman, to fight for the community that I live in.

So, don't take it personally. It's all about our kids. It's all about our kids. Thank you.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you, Alderman. Thank you, Alderman.

Next we would like to call up Illinois State Rep Monique Davis 27th District.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you very much. First of all, I'm honored to see so many parents and children out here fighting for our cause. I haven't seen this many black people in a room since Harold Washington got elected. I don't know what it means, but we sure know how to come together when we have to.
The first thing I would like to say is, as you know, I'm a former educator. I taught at Gresham Elementary School. I've been a legislator for a number of years, and the number of schools that you are asking to close in my district is about six, but I don't feel I want to fight just for my schools.

I want to fight for this city. For the city. I don't know who you are, but would each of you like introduce yourselves, because I don't know who you are.

MR. WILLIS: Good evening, Adrian Willis, Chief of Schools Englewood-Gresham Network.

MR. ANDERSON: Adam Anderson, Officer of Planning and Strategy CPS.

MR. UNDERDUE: Donell Underdue, Deputy Chief of Schools Englewood-Gresham Network.

MR. RIVERA: Arnie Rivera, Deputy Chief of Staff to CEO Barbara Bennett.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: I think it's significantly important that when we make decisions about people, that we know those people, that we know that the institutions in their community are significant to them.
Now, a number of housing has been shut
down in Chicago. When you shut down the housing,
then you shut down the schools. You really kill a
neighborhood. You kill a community. You kill a
culture; and it's not how many children in the
building, I hear things like, "Oh, that's level 2
school, a level 3 school."

I taught school, and I know that if
someone is telling you exactly what to teach, and
exactly how many times to test, you are not
teaching. You are not teaching.

We look forward to going to our schools
and seeing programs where the children are
participating in an assembly. They don't have time
anymore. They don't do it anymore, and it creates a
great chaos in the educational system.

We all know that Springfield, as my
colleagues have stated eloquently, we send money to
CPS, and we send it for public education; and I am
disheartened when I see 89,000,000 planned for
charter schools. We don't know who they are.

We do not want privatized education. We
don't need it, and you know what? Because we're not
property, you're not going to force it down our
throats.

I would urge, I would urge my friends and
my colleagues, not to meet with you individually,
but meet with you with all of us, because the whole
city is affected by what you do.

And I'm going to conclude by saying I
think it's time for an elected school board.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you, so much,
Representative Davis. We would like to call
Illinois State Representative Mary Flowers from the
31st District. Senator Flowers?

OFFICIAL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Good evening
everyone. First of all, to the parents, to the
young people, to the parents and to the young
people, it is truly my pleasure to stand before you
this evening; and like my colleagues have spoken
ahead of me, I'm so glad to see you out here
fighting for our children.

It hasn't been that long ago that somebody
stood and fought for us; and to all you gentlemen, I
want you to understand that you're sitting on our
tax dollars. I want you to further understand that
you are talking about my children. I want to let
you know I'm here tonight to say I'm sick of tired,
and I'm not going to stand for it anymore.

I've watched you disrespect me and my
daughter back in the '90s. No more. I've watched
you not give the kids toilet paper to clean
themselves with my tax dollars. You didn't do that.
I'm sick and tired of it. I've watched you take the
soap and the water out of the schools. I am sick
and tired of it.

Mr. Willis, when you invited me to the
school on 67th Street with Mr. Brossard, I
respectfully and quietly showed you the reason why
the children was failing. It had nothing to do with
the building. It had to do with materials that was
in the building.

I told you. In 2010, you saw a book that
was in the school, the copyright was 1987. I told
you the school was going to fail. I'm sick and
tired of being sick and tired. Math books outdated,
computers not working.

You will give an animal air conditioning,
and you will make our children go to school in the
cold, in the heat. That's unacceptable. I'm sick
and tired of it. I'm sick and tired of watching a
mother cry because a child was not given the
necessary social skills that they should have been
taught in school because you told them to keep their
hands to their side.

You told them to shut up, sit down and
don't speak; and when it's time for them to stand up
and speak, they cannot articulate because they was
never taught. They was never called on in school.
I saw the books. I saw the books.

I told you about the books with the
missing pages, brand new books that my tax dollars
paid for. I said I'm sick and tired. Enough is
enough.

It is not in the constitution no place
that it's our responsibility to balance the books of
the State of Illinois with putting these children in
jail. That's number one.

It is not the responsibility of these
children to create jobs with charter schools for
businessmen who have failed in the private sector,
for businessmen who do not have the money to start
their own business, and they come and take our tax
dollars. Enough is enough.

I'm here to let you know that I don't want
to meet with you. I have no reason to meet with
you. I pay your salaries, so I'm telling you leave
my schools alone. Leave them alone. Thank you very
much.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you so much, Representative
Flowers. Next I want to call the Alderman of this
ward, Alderman Latasha Thomas. Thank you. We want
to make sure we're able to hear from each person
that asked to seek.

Next we're going to call up the Alderman
of this ward, Alderman Lathasha Thomas from the 17th
Ward, who is also the education chair for the City
Council. Alderman Thomas.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN THOMAS: Good evening. I want to say
first to everyone here, every time CPS takes or
tries to take an action for schools, especially in
my ward, but schools in the city, we come out and
fight.

But I'm going to tell you, this is the
first time I saw you all back it up with so many
people. I am so glad to see you. I'm proud of you,
and I want you to know that the way they hear us is
if we make sense when we come up here and talk.
Tell them exactly what we want, and then
to you guys, I want to say, first off, I don't
usually say this, but I've been telling you all this
for a while. You haven't been listening. What
you're about to hear, I told you.

Now, you're got you're going to hear in a
lot of different ways. I want to put in
perspective, from what I've been hearing going to
these meetings. I want to make sure you hear these
categories, because I know that we talk about
performance, but you all are talking about
utilization. Right?

So, let me tell you what we've been
saying, as it relates to utilization. In your
formula, you need to add in the special needs
children. Those classrooms are smaller in your
formula. You need to add in when the principals are
using classrooms for parents. Those classrooms
don't have children, but they are helping the
children in that school.

In your formula, you need to add in those
classrooms that the principals are using for
wrap-around services for the entire family, because
those kids are walking in with issues they need
In your formula, you need to add in those children that are moving within the school year, the high mobility of students. In your formula, you need to add in the homeless children that come to the school after the 20th day the school starts.

In your formula, you need to add in that walking a mile is not safe for our schools, and to make sure that you try to start -- we don't trust you. If you're going to try to start building trust, you got to tell us the truth.

So, when you say that you took out, as part of the number that you pulled down from whatever it was to now 129, when you say you took out schools that experienced significant school action, you did not.

I stood here, you know, I stood here and told you you shouldn't have turned around Stagg. You turned them around last year, and they are on this list. There are several schools on this list that had a school, we call it a turn-around.

If you do something like that, it's drastic to our children, it's drastic to the families, it's drastic to the community.
If you are going to take schools, you said it right here, No. 6, if you're going to take schools out that experience significant school actions, then for us to believe you are telling the truth, you need to take all the schools out that have significant school action in the last three years, and I see them here.

There's no way you're going to close Stagg when you just turned it around. Why would you close, I'm talking about the schools in my ward, why would you close Altgeld when you just put all that money in it?

I'm telling you what I've been telling you, and you all have got to listen and do it. We've all been telling you the same thing, and now we're upset, and now we're mad, and now we got 2,000 people in the room telling you the same thing that you're all about to hear.

I'm just putting it in perspective so you know what they're going to be saying and what you need to have in your formula. Thank you.

MR. HAMPTON: Thank you, Alderman. We want to make sure we hear as many parents as possible. We beg of you your attention, if you give us just two
minutes to have Mr. Anderson describe the
information that you have in your hand.

Everyone, as you came in the room, should
have received this. So, Adam Anderson, our Office
of Strategy, will talk to you, and then we'll turn
it over to Mr. Willis.

MR. ANDERSON: Good evening, everybody. I just
need two minutes, two minutes. This will give me an
opportunity to respond to a few of the statements
that have been made already by our elected
officials, so we can hear from the community.

I want to make sure that everybody in the
room -- a few minutes, please, and I'll also respond
to a few of the comments that were made already --

Everybody should have the handout that was
provided when you walked in. Before I talk about
the handout, and I'm not going to read it I just
want to make sure everybody knows what's on it.

I want to make one point. On Wednesday of
last week, we announced that there are 129 schools
that are under consideration for further
conversation. I want to emphasize that none of
those are currently recommended for closure. We
will not close all 129.
There are 19 of those 129 that are listed in the Englewood-Gresham Network. I want to emphasize all 19 will not close. None of them are currently proposed for closing.

I understand, I understand, I understand and hear the lack of trust. Announcements will be made by March 31st. At that point in time, you will see that what we are saying tonight is true; and I understand, I understand that that will not be believed until it happens, but I do want to state that.

Now, what the front of this sheet shows, that's in response to the elected officials that brought up the number of schools in each areas, again I emphasize they are not all slated to close, and they will not all close.

Now, in response to what has been the criteria, stick with me for one more minute here, in terms of what has been the criteria to get to the 129, we started with 330 underutilized schools.

Now, based on feedback that the Commission received, give me 30 more seconds, I want to emphasize that based on -- let me make one more point. Based on feedback that we've heard --
MR. HAMPTON: Ladies and gentlemen, we will now begin our public participation, because it's important that we hear from you. We made an attempt to provide you with the content of that document. We will be around at the end of the meeting if you want to ask questions.

We want to turn it over to Chief Adrian Willis so he can begin to call the schools, and the parents can come forward and make your comment. Chief Willis.

MR. WILLIS: At this point, we'll move to our public participation. I want to make sure that when you come to the mic, we have a court reporter here that you speak loudly, so she can record information.

Mr. Shannon will be right here to actually monitor that. We want to make sure also we get through all 19 schools. So, in doing so, Mr. Shannon will be the time keeper.

We are asking for each school to bring two or three people to be represented for the amount of time that is allotted and move through that list. After that, we'll have our other visitors in the house to come to the mic at that time.
So, without further ado, we'll start with Altgeld Elementary. Altgeld. Following Altgeld, we will have Banneker. One more thing, if you have written documents, can you please present those here to the court reporter, and Mr. Phillip Hampton will collect them.

We'll make sure Barbara Byrd-Bennett receives that with the team of the central office. So again, to expedite the process, to make sure all 19 schools get a chance and opportunity at the mic, we want to make sure the schools are ready to come behind each other one behind each other.

So, Altgeld, can we start?

SCHOOL: ALTGELD

SPEAKER: Good evening, everybody.

MR. WILLIS: Good evening.

SPEAKER: My name is Carmen Marshall. I represent Altgeld as a parent, chair of LSE, and a member of the community.

We gathered some information just to let you guys know what we do as a school, the progress we've made to implement programs and initiatives to get parents involved, to just make it a better place.
I could go down the list of things that we do. We implement attendance programs, find ways to get the parents involved. Like you guys stated earlier, we use classrooms to give parents resources to, you know, do things for employment, work on computers to better themselves as a family unit.

I wanted to just speak in terms of being a parent and a product of CPS. It's really disheartening to see how times have changed, how schools are being transformed into just useless -- you know, the way you guys look at it, you look at it as a number, data; but as a parent, as a product of those schools, we don't look at it like that.

We look at it as the education for our children, a way that they better themselves and go on to success. You know, data drives what you do but what about the human side of it? You know, it seems like there's no humanity, and the decision making on that end, you know.

We wake up every day. We go to work, we go to school, to make it a better place for our children, and it's just really sad to see that at the end of the day, all you guys look at are numbers because we're more than numbers. We're more than
data.

Our children mean more to us than data, you know, and it's -- I really want you guys to tap into that. Tap into your heart. Tap into the human side of the decisions you are making, because it affects more than just you.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. My name is Ms. Durham. I'm a teacher at Altgeld Elementary. I've been teaching there for six years. Altgeld School is part of the Englewood-Gresham Network under the leadership of Mr. Adrian Willis, Chief of Elementary Schools.

Within the Englewood-Gresham Network, Altgeld is classified in the math, science and technology cluster. With the use of intense data analysis of all available student and school data, it is required that teachers deliver data-driven intentional challenging and engaging instruction every school day in every content area.

The multi-dimensional, and thus multidiscipline nature of many school challenges requires a team approach.

It is the goal of Altgeld to implement this approach by contributing skills and
coordinating efforts towards the most positive and
to valued and interactive culture and climate as
possible.

John P. Altgeld Elementary School will
provide a nurturing and safe environment that will
motivate students to strive for academic excellence,
college and career readiness through
differentiation, technological and inquiry-based
instruction.

All stakeholders will be committed to
developing divers learners that possess independence
through appropriate academic and social skills to
become cultured and productive members of society.

Over the past three years, Altgeld has
undergone several changes that have affected Altgeld
stakeholders, students, parents, staff and
community.

As of 2012-2013 school year, we have been
able to establish a strong foundation with new
administrative leadership, newly appointed staff
members and communities partnerships. Through these
changes we, as a school, have made critical but
necessary changes that have yielded increased
student performance within the first half of 2012
Altgeld adopted balance literacy as our reading curriculum, Everyday Math, mathematics as area our math curriculum, and Sallie SePup, Foss, and It's About Time as our science curriculum.

We have established a strong foundation and are gradually increasing in reading throughout all grade levels.

Additionally also, we have incorporated components of our Balance Literacy Program into the math and science instruction. With this approach to providing reading instruction, it allows us to meet the individualized needs of all of our students.

Altgeld provides additional support to at-risk students by implementing the following: Small group instruction, reading interventionist, paraprofessional pull-out support, intersession academic enrichment, after-school programs, cluster planning meetings, scheduled data analysis on professional development days.

Interventions are modified and discussed by the ILT, teacher reflections vertically and horizontally. Altgeld develops a focused plan for whole school staff professional development based on
the school's assessment data priorities and growth targets.

MR. WILLIS: Can we bring it to a close, Ms. Durham, because you have another speaker.

SPEAKER: In closing, Altgeld provides parents a variety of opportunities to gain knowledge regarding school performance, current goals, action plans and daily expectations of students.

MR. WILLIS: Ms. Durham, you have a document?

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Samaria Stewart, and I'm the president of the newly-elected student council at John P. Altgeld Elementary School.

I am in eighth grade and have been a student at Altgeld since kindergarten. I would like to take this opportunity to let you all know that Altgeld has a staff of educators that are hard working, caring and committed; and they have created partnerships with outside agencies and implemented programs such as W.I.T.T.S, which stands for What it Takes to Succeed.

W.I.T.T.S. is an in-school program that exposes the students at Altgeld to colleges and universities through various activities.
Also, the students at Altgeld strive to live by our school creed, which is: We believe, we are the students of Altgeld, we are college bound, we are exception, not because we said but because we work hard at it. We will not fall to the face of any opposite place before. We are dedicated, committed and focused. We never succumb to mediocrity or certainty of fear. We never fail because we never give up. We make no excuse.

We choose to live honestly, non-violent and honorably. We respect ourselves; and in doing so, respect all people. We have a future for which we are accountable. We have responsibility to our families, community, and work. We are our brother's keepers. We believe in ourselves, we believe in each other, and we believe in Altgeld community.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Can we get creed? Banneker next. Thank you so much, Altgeld.

SPEAKER: Also, standing up here with me, we have Justin Crafts and Javar Montomery.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. At this time we'll hear from Banneker School.

SPEAKER: I'm still from Altgeld.

MR. WILLIS: There's three speakers, sir, in
the six-minute time. So, we went over the six
minutes. Thank you.

SCHOOL: BANNEKER

SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

MR. WILLIS: Good afternoon. Good evening.

SPEAKER: I am Timeysha Buckhalter, and I
attend Benjamin Banneker Elementary School. Why is
Benjamin Banneker important to me?

Benjamin Banneker is important to me
because I practically grew up here. They have
everything you want and need to be successful. We
have every after-school program like Aim High,
Saturday School and many more.

They will make sure your future is
brighter, and that you have options to be what you
want to be. Banneker is a home for many people and
families. They have people that can talk to you
like counselors who understand us.

We respect and enjoy talking to people who
want to help us achieve in life, such as the people
at Benjamin Banneker Elementary School.

What are our goals and achievements?

Benjamin Banneker Goals are to score 75, 75, 75, in
all subjects, reading, math and science, to me, the
to meet the standards that are needed to be met. To have a 95 attendance, we will come to school every day on time, never late and always ready to learn. Also, to make sure that we are safe in our schools.

Benjamin Banneker is all about safety of the children. Benjamin Banneker is a safe place to be. You can come to school not worrying about being hurt and being neglected, because they always have time for each and every one of their students.

Now, with this said, I would like to say please keep our school open for the sake of our kids. Thank you. And once again, I'm Timeysha Buckhalter.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Timeysha.

SPEAKER: My name is Brian Stirgus. I'm a former student after Benjamin Banneker Elementary School, and my heart was truly hurt, and I felt so discouraged when I learned that my alma mater and the school which ensued values in me that I still use to this day may potentially be closed.

I speak on the standpoint of a young man who has encountered several endeavors in his lifetime. If you close Benjamin Banneker Elementary
School, the Englewood community will be set up for failure.

The crime rate is, without question, one of, if not the highest, in the city, especially in this area, but one place it never touched is the corner of 67th and Normal. There is a certain amount of respect that comes with Banneker, from the staff to its students, before, during and after-school hours.

A Royal blue T-shirt have a bear engraved on the front is a symbol of a representative form the school to be seen in one of these shirts let's us know that someone from somewhere cares.

With so much violence, and so much gun violence in the city, you'd believe that the last thing that would be closed would be an elementary school. It's the base and the foundation for the betterment of our community.

The ignorance of young men, directly connected to the lack of education, leads to the greater majority of the crimes in our City of Chicago. I would know, I currently attend Paul Robeson High School, and I am subjected to these injustices every single day.
So, as a senior in high school, who graduated top of my class from Benjamin Banneker, I would like to ask why? My adventures at Banneker began in fifth grade. I walked into the classroom with an elderly Caucasian man, sat down and knew from that time on that I was in the right place.

My eighth grade there I attended an all-expense paid trip to Science Camp in Walt Disney World, an opportunity that changed my life; and from that day forward, I went from troubled inner-city youth to the future eighth grade class president and salutatorian of our school.

My accolades are not the purpose of this speech; but when facing adversity, I know that the entire Banneker staff as a system here are making the right decision.

I'm 17 years old. I finished grade school when I was 13; and upon every given chance, I still walk through the doors of that school and ask for the opinion from each and every staff member, when I have to make a decision.

These are trustworthy individuals, stellar teachers and stand out models for our youth. Don't close Benjamin Banneker because to some children,
this is all we know.

    Even to us teenagers, if we're not in
school there, the doors at Banneker have always been
open to us for recreation or just a safe place to do
homework.

    I'm not on the school board, but I can
speak from a heart of a teenage boy who has learned
while inside the doors of that school that the
phrase "hard work pays off" isn't just a cliche.

    The ladies and gentlemen of Benjamin
Banneker do work hard, and I ask that this school
stays open. Not for me, because I already have my
diploma, but for every boy and girl attending that
school now, and for every person whose life has been
impacted by someone at Banneker.

    MR. WILLIS: Thank you. One more speaker from
Banneker. One more. Bontemps, if you could get
ready. Bontemps if you can get ready, please. We
have one more speaker from Banneker. Please
proceed.

    SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Taneisha Smith. I
am a parent volunteer and a family engagement
coordinator at Benjamin Banneker Elementary.

    I have been a part of the population for
more than five years. I have moved out of the neighborhood, but had my children remain at Banneker because of the support they offer my children.

Last year, I finally transferred my sixth-grade daughter into Banneker because she was not succeeding and suffering with confidence issues, academically and socially at her previous school.

Since she has been at Banneker, she is loved by all staff, engaged in multiple programs, has grown in reading and math and looking forward to high school.

I know if you close Banneker, the crime rate will increase in this community. Banneker provides the students and community members with outlets like no other school. They help students graduate from high school, personally funds' families needs, talk with the young men that hang out, to encourage them to do something with their lives.

Bridge the gap between gang rivalry. Sacrifice time and bring hope into the community. The harsh reality is that there are many individuals trying to improve our youth for negative things.

Banneker spent countless hours trying to
improve all youths to participate in activities in our school to do positive things? They even opened the school for older kids that do not want to be on the street and are looking for something positive to do.

What school do you know stays open six days a week, not just for ISAT testing preparation, but to give kids something to do? If you close Banneker, what resources will would you put in place to replace the gap?

Banneker has 360 students in our school. Our population is growing daily. Our school can support 650 students. The majority of our classrooms are being utilized, because we now have two functioning computer labs and a science lab.

I watch the students laugh and enjoy learning every day. I believe that if we have more staff to support our growing population, we will be able to receive more students. Truly speaking, who wants to enroll their child in a classroom with more than 35 students? However --

MR. WILLIS: Can we give the mic up, please?

SPEAKER: I am about done. The awesome thing about Banneker, they keep accepting families that
provide resources to support every family that enters, from school supplies to counseling services, to personal need.

I sometimes wonder if they ever get tired of giving. The facts you need to know is that besides calculations without exposure to our school is that there has to be something special about Banneker, because I travel a long way to keep my children at this school, and I'm not the only parent that does that.

I pass many schools every day to get my children there. Some special things you do not observe or read about are the principal --

MR. WILLIS: 30 seconds.

SPEAKER: And assistant principal call students, all their students, by their names. The students receive a lot of one-on-one mentoring. They offer opportunities like no other.

They support families that cannot afford Christmas presents. They provide all types of academic tutoring for our schools. Our motto is: Be responsible, be safe and be respectful. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Banneker. Bontemps is
next. Can we have Cook to follow Bontemps at the
mic now? Representatives from Cook Elementary
School. Bontemps.

SCHOOL: BONTEMPS

SPEAKER: Good evening. You won't have to rush
me off. I'm going to get straight to the point.
You see this morning we lost two little
girls, an 18 year old and 14 year old. You closing
the community school?
This is all these kids have, besides their
parents, who work and try to provide certain things.
I know for a fact Bontemps they do their job as far
as the community. The get up, they walk children to
school, from home, from school.
They come knock on your door if your child
is not at school. They take care of their babies.
We take care of our babies. You send our kids to
another community, where don't nobody know them,
they don't know anybody, watch the crime spike. In
our community, we raise our own. We keep our own.
Thank you, and you all have a nice evening.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Second speaker from
Cook? I'm sorry, we're still on Bontemps.

SPEAKER: I am here to talk about closing safe
havens. These elementary schools, that is all some
of our children know; and to send them outside of
things that they know, it just won't work for them.

I challenge you to let your child walk in
the shoes of our children. Mayor Rahm Emanuel,
Barbara Byrd-Bennett, I challenge you to let your
children walk in the shoes our children walk in,
because it's rough.

Two blocks east they are in danger. Two
blocks west, they are in danger. Two blocks north,
they are in danger. Two blocks south they are in
danger. These elementary schools, they are the only
safe havens that they know.

Now, I ask the members do any of you know
Mark Watts, a student named Mark Watts? He's one of
our babies.

Mark Watts graduated Bontemps 2011. He
was gunned down several months after leaving
elementary school at the age of 15. His problem
started when he was in fourth grade, and it
progressed as he got older.

They just don't get to high school and
loose their minds. It starts in elementary school.
We see the problems there. They don't just go to
high school and loose their mind. It starts in
elementary school.

So, you need to work at the elementary
level, instead of closing the safe havens that they
know. I would like for you to take a look at Mark
Watts. This is the one we lost. This is our baby.

It's the only safe haven he knew was
Bontemps. I challenge you to let your children walk
in the shoes that our children walk in. These shoes
belong to Mark Watts.

Let your child walk in his shoes, and then
come out here and tell us you're doing what's best
for our children. I challenge you, the mayor, and
Ms. Barbara Byrd-Bennett, let your child walk in our
children's shoes, then come back here and tell me
you're doing what's best for our children. Have a
good night.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. My name is Malcom
Elliott, and I represent Arna W. Bontemps. I am
surprised to see all the members on this panel, and
this is black history month, where Martin Luther
King fought so hard for our education.

Please don't close our schools. We need
our schools. We need our education.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, sir. Cook Elementary School. Following Cook, we'll have Miles Davis. First speaker for Cook.

SPEAKER: No, I am a parent of Bontemps.

MR. WILLIS: Three speakers, ma'am. If you have documents that you can take, we'll take those at this point.

SPEAKER: My children are documents by their self.

MR. WILLIS: That's fine, and I respect that.

SPEAKER: I have four children that's at Bontemps. If you are going to say you're closing Bontemps, where am I supposed to take my kids? In that district alone you are closing ten schools. That's around my house.

So, where am I supposed to get up in the morning to take my kids? How am I supposed to tell my kids that their education is over with because you are you are so hard trying to budget. It's too much money in this state for you all to say you all don't have no money for these schools, that they need to close, that they are underutilized.

They are underutilized because you all
don't want to come --

MR. WILLIS: Next. Our next school is Cook.

The three speakers for Cook Elementary School.

Following Cook, we will have Miles Davis.

Again, if we can make sure members that we
do the three people per school so we can get through
this evening, we capture all the information. Any
documents that you have, please make sure that you
bring them to the stage.

Can we please begin with Cook?

SCHOOL: COOK

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Evonda Florry
(phonetic), and I am a teacher at Cook School. Cook
School is on the rise. We have been a level 2
school for the past two years. We are off probation
and have celebrated our success.

Our composite scores went up from 62.2 in
2011, to 68.7 in 2012, and we will go further up.

Why send level two students to a level 3 school?

Cuffe, the only school within a one-mile
radius, is the only other school that is in good
standing and also not on probation.

Last summer, we had an eighth great
student who needed to go to Scott Joplin. We could
not fully accommodate that student because he couldn't cross West of 79th and Ashland Street. So you know what they did, you did, you just gave him a diploma.

Let's talk about this utilization rate. It is inaccurate. How do you count the auditorium, the gym room? You can't count those rooms. Don't take those into consideration for closing.

We are using rooms for recess during inclement weather, professional development, grade level meetings, and we also have a refocus room so that we could keep students in the school to curtail out-of-school suspensions.

Why close a school to leave another abandon building in the neighborhood to be a haven for crime gangs and drug activity? Take a look at what has happened to the Guggenheim building. At Cook School, we offer learning services to the low-incidence students; for example, those who have severe and/or profound disabilities, including those with autism.

We could use some more facts. 100 percent of our teaches are certified and highly qualified, including two who are nationally Board Certified,
and even our support staff are currently in school to earn Bachelor's and Master's Degrees.

   We have integrated advanced technology with smart boards. We have two full computer labs and laptops for students to use in the classroom.

   As a matter of fact, I need five more laptops.

   Finally, not finally, let me give you some numbers on a more personal level.

   MR. WILLIS: Can you bring it to a close?

   SPEAKER: I'm about to. I'm about to. I have 104 students in reading, including special ed schools. Not one score an academic warning on the ISAT test last year. We don't talk about Stantron test, because it was a fluke. I had a student with a 92 percent who still didn't exceed on that test.

   Finally, why should the Board of Education close a level 2 school that is on the rise to send those students to a level 3 school? I have given you good and sound reasons why Cook School should remain open to the public. Cook school is cooking. Let's keep the grill burning.

   MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Next speaker from Cook.

   SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Tracy
Baxter Williams. I am Cook School's local council chairperson. Please bear with me, I've been in pain for the last three days, but I am here. I am here.

Cook School faces unique circumstances in serving our special need students who comprise over 14 percent of our students population. We have a low-incidence program with an autistic population of close to 20 percent of significant number of students classified as severe, profound and trainable mentally handicapped.

Who will abrogate for our students? Who will insure that the legal maintain of their IEP are adhered to with fidelity?

This program gives students to function significantly below their age-appropriate peers and generally meets education settings. The curriculum is presented to the student one concept at a time, and further simplifies our great need concept to the child to help with mastering the concept.

I know this program well because I have -- I have five of my children, I have two who have been included in this important program. So, it's important that we grow and keep the learning of these students every day.
MR. WILLIS: You have one more minute.

SPEAKER: Cook School closing, I don't know what we're going to do. Their needs will not be services if Cook is closed.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Following Cook, Miles Davis. After Miles Davis, Earle Elementary School.

SPEAKER: My name is Destiny Gan (phonetic), and I'm a fourth grader at Cook School. I think they shouldn't close our school because there are many reasons why and here are some of them: We are off probation. It is a safe environment; and most of all, our ISAT scores and science and math have doubled since our fourth grade teacher Mr. Telly has been teaching us.

It will be unfair for our students to have to go to another school outside our neighborhood. We are used to our teachers and our friends, and we know the people in our neighborhood and feel safe walking to and from school.

MR. WILLIS: What grade are you in, sweetie?

SPEAKER: Fourth. Our parents depend on each other. They may need help. For example, when my mom can't pick me up from school, and our babysitter won't come out in the snow, she calls Haley's mom.
Haley is my friend, and is in my class, and asks if I can go home with her to their house.

In turn, when Haley's mom has a problem, she calls my mom. Having to go to another school will be a big problem. Both of my parents work, and I don't know how I will get to school and home.

Finding new friends, and having new teachers, will affect my grades. I have been going to this school for five years, and everyone there knows me and looks after me.

I like Cook School, and I want to keep it open. If the only reason we are on the list is because we are not using all the classrooms, then we will find ways to use them. The schools that should be closed are the ones who are on probation because their students are not doing well. Cook is not one of them, so please keep it open.

MR. WILLIS: I have a message for Earle. If you could come up right after Miles Davis. I have a message for Ethel Robinson, can you go to the registration desk in the front.

Ethel Robinson, please report to the registration desk in the back of the theater.

Next school, Miles Davis.
SCHOOL: MILES DAVIS

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Michael McKinney. I am a teacher and the engineering program coordinator at Miles Davis Magnet Academy. I want to thank for you the opportunity to address you this evening.

Miles Davis Magnet Academy offers its students an education that is unique, not only to Englewood and the south side, but the entire City of Chicago. As the first engineering-focused elementary school in Chicago, our students participate in a curriculum designed to develop their ability to innovate and solve problems.

In creating our curriculum, we work with University partner, including the University of Illinois, UIC, Northern Illinois and Purdue. We form partnerships with organizations that are leaders in engineering and STEM education, including James Dyston Foundation, Project SYNCERE, ChiS&E and the Community Kitchen. Excuse me, the Kitchen Community.

Since the school closing list was published, we received many letters of support and concern from businesses and engineering
organizations that have worked with our school and students.

We received letters from JDF, InSciTE Illinois, Scheri K. Lewis engineers, TC Consulting, Incorporated, a Parker and Hannifin Corporation, Chicago Precollege Science and Engineering, Project SYNCERE, Milhouse Engineering Charities, the Chicago Alumni Extension of the National Society of Black Engineers, the Carl B. Mack, the executive director of the National Society of Black Engineers.

Since our school opened four years ago, our students have filled three trophy cases with trophies from engineering and robotic competitions. Teams participate yearly in First Lego League, or FLL, an international robotics competition.

I'm proud to say in the 325 teams in Illinois that participated in this robotics competition this years, Miles Davis was the only CPS school that qualified to advanced to the state tournament.

In fact, Miles Davis teams have advanced to the state tournament three of the four -- three of the past four years, and our robotics teams have won nine trophies at regional tournaments.
Miles Davis team also won first place in Chicago Regional Botball Tournament last year. Our students have had equal success in engineering competitions. Our teams have been selected as finalists for National Engineer Week Future City for the past three years; and again, we're the only CPS school to achieve this level of success.

I continue to brag about our students, but I know time is limited. Instead I will leave with a quote from an engineer and designer Sir, James Dyson who in a letter wrote, when he heard that Miles Davis was being closed for closure, I quote "Chicago has aims to be the next center for invention.

Chicago Public Schools wants to boost STEM performance. STEM technology, engineering and math must be inspiring first. It begins by recognizing and supporting schools, schools like Sir Miles Davis academy that are getting it right.

MR. WILLIS: Mr. McKinney, we need the document here.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Lauryn Hill. I'm a eighth grade student at Miles Davis Magnet Academy. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight.
Over the three years I have been at Miles Davis Magnet Academy, I have had a great experience and I have had great teachers. I have enjoyed participating in extra-curricular activities, such as robotics programs for the last three years.

In First Lego League, I learned to design and program robots. In the school's first year doing the Botball competition, a competition in which I was involved in, we won first place in the Chicago region.

I have also been involved in Future City for two years and was selected at finalists both times. Through Miles Davis, I've had a special opportunity to meet Sir James Dyson and to participate in the Dyson Engineering Club.

I participated in the pom-pom team for two years, and this was a fun thing to do, and this also taught me team work. The school has taken me places for new experiences.

I have participated in field trips such as the University of Illinois, Engineering Open House, and I've visited the Michigan Avenue Bridge to see the gears and mechanisms that lift the bridge.

In addition to teaching me, some teachers
take the time to help me with my problems and help
me become a better person.

In addition to learning in class, I've
learned a lot about life. The teachers have
encouraged me to be the best I can be. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Last speaker for Miles Davis, last
speaker. After Earle, Goodlow. Last speaker for
Miles Davis.

SPEAKER: Hi. Name is Jacori Garrett, and I'm
currently an eighth grade student at Miles Davis
Magnet Academy. I have attended Miles Davis since
the fifth grade.

During my time at Miles Davis, I have
grown tremendously. The staff and teachers at Miles
Davis are real caring and always put a lot of time
and effort to helping us learn.

Teachers have taught me lessons that have
transcended far beyond the classrooms. I don't
believe the students will be able to receive the
same learning environments or opportunities anywhere
else.

I am the manager of Miles Davis Gek Squad,
and also have participated in other programs such as
Future City, Logo League Robotics, Aquaponics and
Chemistry Club.

If Miles Davis closes, there will be safety issues for many students. Based on I believe this to be true, considering there are enumerable gangs in Englewood; and based on personal experience, each gang has a specific area and location. They are extremely territory when new faces cross their path.

Students will be out later due to longer commute times, especially if they participate in after-school programs. Based on the STEM skills I have learned in Miles Davis, I have decided to continue my education based on engineering.

I also have a younger sister who enjoys learning about engineering at Miles Davis. I strongly believe that Miles Davis Magnet Academy is the place for her to excel and receive a great STEM education.

Many students look at Miles Davis at home. I am one of those students. Even though I am graduating this year, I would like for Miles Davis to remain open so other students may receive the same opportunities that I have.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Miles
SCHOOL: EARLE

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Tachena Chumley and I'm a proud teacher at Charles W. Earle Elementary School, where our motto is no excuses, just results.

I stand before you today in solidarity with my colleagues, our instructional leader and our eternal stakeholders: Children's Home and Aid and our dedicated parents.

This is my first full academic year teaching at Earle; however, I've had the unique experience of providing Earle with math and science support at the district level, prior to joining Earle as a teacher.

It is through that experience I can truly say that Earle is in the midst of a transformation. There is a cultural of calm taking place at Earle that can be attributed to the commitment of our parents, administration, educational support personnel and teachers.

We currently have a 98 percent attendance rate for our staff, and we are a constant fixture in
the community. We will and have walked to our students' homes to insure that their attendance, safety, academics and behavior are on point.

Earle is a Save Haven for our students, and that needs to be protected. Earle is making tremendous moves and our data is trending upward, thanks to the guidance of our instructional leader and dedication of our staff.

We currently have 79 percent of our students meeting their goal targets in reading middle of the year, which is close to our 80 percent end-of-the year goal.

The balance literacy and data-driven instruction is having a positive effect on our students. Although language arts is the primary focus this year, we are also thriving in math and science.

We currently have 61 percent of our students meeting and exceeding at both targets in math. We also attribute our upward trend in data to daily instructional observations followed by reflective dialogue with administration.

These conversations are not punitive, but serve to push our thinking to become more reflective
practitioners. 

Our goal is to become a STEM school, and we are laying the foundation by investing in technology and exposing our students to integrated lessons that connect math, science and technology.

We have also partnered with project SYNCERE and our intermediary students are receiving additional science instruction from engineers. 

No disrespect, but here at Earle, we are not waiting for CPS to turn us around again. We have undergone an internal transformation under the new leadership.

65 percent of the teaching staff and 67 percent of the para-professional staff are new and our highly qualified teachers remain. Administration has taken a conscious effort to enhance human capital. Because of the dedicated and talented staff, we are attracting students daily, as evident by four students that we received today.

So, please allow us to continue to continue the great work that we have already begun.

Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Ms. Chumley.
SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Quintella Rogers (phonetic). I'm the program coordinator at Earle Elementary School with Children's Home and Aid. Children's Home and Aid is a nonprofit organization.

We provide after-school programming within Earle Elementary School, servicing over 250 students, as well as over pouring over $500,000 per year in the school. We provide three different programs for our students there.

We have community schools who provide no work help with the students, as well as enrichment programs such as hip-pop yoga, karate, visual arts, culinary arts and et cetera.

We also have the Carera program is our preventive pregnancy program. That program provides those fourth through seventh grade where they follow them through high school, provide them with different component areas, such as health, sports, self-expression and et cetera.

We also have the pass program, which services pre-K all the way to third grade, and that program provides academic support for all of those students during the school day, as well as providing
parents with support for behavior and emotional
issues that students may have.

Since I've been at Earle the past three
years, under the leader ship of Principle Malendez,
we have did a total 360, from three to four fights a
week to non-existence.

Not to mention the beautician of the
school partnered with Children's Home and Aid to do
mural projects throughout the building, so that the
kids can feel like they have a place to come that's
not only with caring teachers, but a nice place they
can be proud of.

Not to mention the parents' involvement,
bringing parents and getting them involved. We're
in the process of bringing in the GED program. We
also have a parent pantry where we have went out in
the community and brought in those stores who
provided and gave deodorant, bleach, detergents and
all those things that parents can come in and get
those from us, when they can't afford to buy them.

So tonight to say under utilization, I
think not. Earle, we're doing the best we can, and
I guarantee you next week, we'll greater than what
we are doing now.
MR. WILLIS: Thank you. One more speaker from Earle. One more.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Louise Curtiss. I have two children that go to Earle. My son, when he first started going to Earle, he couldn't read and write. He couldn't spell. He couldn't do anything. He had low self-esteem, everything. He's better now. He's reading. He's writing. He's feeling good about himself, and I'm grateful. Please don't close my school. My children need Earle.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Next school we'll here from is Goodlow, followed by Gresham.

Ms. Malendez, do we have the documentation from Ms. Chumley? Can we get that? Gresham. After Goodlow is Gresham, followed by Henderson.

SCHOOL: GOODLOW

SPEAKER: My name is Tyree, and I go to Goodlow, and I am eight years old, and I'm in second grade. Please don't shut my school down.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Bonita Whitfield Shanklin. I'm a school social worker, and I am here to help Goodlow School. Behind me is just a small, small part of the true heart of Goodlow school.
One of the reasons why I wanted to speak is because I, as a social worker, am very aware of the social and emotional ramifications of closing a school. So I am not only asking you not to close Goodlow, I'm asking you not to close any school ever again.

Now, one of the things that really, really, really concerns me is that Goodlow, this is my 14th year as a school social worker there; and before me, there was a school social worker who was there for 14 years.

And, so, how in the world can a school social worker stay at a school that long? Only because it is that good. The environments there is lovelily. People come and have a good time. They enjoy the spirit there. They appreciate there.

Goodlow is not just a school, it's a family, it's a home, it's an environment, it's a community. Their passion just runs deep, and I really, really wish that I could say something that would help you truly understand that you can't close this school.

You can't close schools, period. I'm so -- I'm not nervous. I can speak in front of a
group of people. I don't care if there's 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, I'm not scared, but what I am concerned of is that my words will penetrate that they will actually reach your sole, and that you will feel the passion that I do for this school.

As a 14-year veteran school social worker, I have not only served schools that I love, but I serves some schools that I don't, and good Lord, it's not one of them.

Anyway, so real quickly, because I know I only have two minutes, I would like to say that the passion runs deep, the continuity runs deep, and that you need to consider the social emotional ramifications of closing the school; and that includes consulting with your social worker, in the space, the so-called underutilized space, is not underutilized.

Did you give me an office? No. I don't have an office so that means there's not enough space. I share an office with the counselor, the psychologist, the nurse, the speech pathologist, the OT, PT. We all got to share one friggin room.

Also, in addition to that, you have to have a space for the music teacher, you got to have
a space for the art teacher. Hold on. We don't
have an art program, do we? So, anyway, my point
goes on and on.

MR. WILLIS: Can we bring it to a close,
please, for the next speaker?

SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Willis.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: One last thing, Mr. Willis, I
apologize. One of our parents who was concerned
didn't want to speak. She's an awesome parent,
volunteers there almost every day like it's a job,
and she has put together a nice very well-written
thing to share with you all.

MR. WILLIS: Okay. We got that.

SPEAKER: Good evening. Good evening,
community.

MR. WILLIS: Good evening.

SPEAKER: Public speaking is an art. My name
is Arlis Steen (phonetic). I'm also a
parent-student. First a little ignorance. Whitney
Young, Swift, Sullivan, Lane Tech, Maths, schools in
Rogers Park, uptown, Edgewater, Lincoln Park,
discuss closing them.

That is that's ignorant. You are losing
jobs that ran off. Don't close our schools.

Now I'm going to give you some facts.

When you talk about closing schools, doubling and tripling the class size, this is what you did. When you double and triple them, the teachers can't teach effectively or efficiently. Okay?

So, we definitely don't want to start busing them and enlarging the class size; but when you talk about closing schools, you set the precedence for ignorance and crime.

If my child have to go away to go to school, he might not go. That means he gonna steel, sell drugs, and the jail is going to continue to get larger. That's not what we need in our communities.

So, that's something to think about.

Englewood and Gresham are already training areas for Tach team and police officers, and guess who they are training on? That's what I'm talking about.

Now, although I do have some concerns for some of the teachers and the principals, I can't even voice them concerns to those people if they don't have a job, or if those schools are closed.

All right?
My last concern is this individual finance gain, or whatever that was about, the bottom line is if you really concerned about a better nation, a better town, a better city, then you don't never think about closing schools. You may want to open some more.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, sir. Next school is Gresham. Can we have your document, please? Next school is Gresham, follow by Henderson. First speaker for Gresham, you may begin.

SCHOOL: GRESHAM

SPEAKER: Yes, good evening CPS panel.

MR. WILLIS: Good evening.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Anthony Jacobs, and I'm a parent of a child that goes to Walter Q. Gresham School.

As CPS reports, schools must be closed because of our money is not available to keep them open. I have a request, and in this request -- excuse me, and this request, if seriously considered, could result in more money for the schools.

As you should know, some of the profits from the Illinois State Lottery is supposed to go to
CPS. Therefore, my specific request is would you request an immediate audit of how much money was given to CPS and all the other schools districts in the State of Illinois? That's my first request.

My second request, provide the name and address of which specific schools at CPS received this money and how much.

Three, if this money was not appropriated equitably to the schools, and my concern is for the schools in the impoverished communities, then CPS should immediately rectify or correct this disparity; and as a result, some of the schools considered for closure could remain open.

My fourth request: Please make all of your findings public information to all CPS families, since you all are data driven, and I would like that in 14 days.

MR. WILLIS: Second speaker for Gresham?


SPEAKER: Good evening, distinguished Chicago public school parents. My name is Tina Barbers Walker, and I'm a teacher at Walter Q. Gresham
Elementary School.

I also graduated from Gresham, and I also live in the community. I am accompanied by Rhonda McCloud, who is also a Senior Teacher. We are here representing the Principal Dr. Brown and other teachers and staff members at our school.

There are two points I would like to make tonight, and one solution to the financial crisis facing CPS and the utilization of our school which will help the financial crisis.

My first point is regarding student achievement and school performance. Gresham has had a steady increase in the achievement of the students at the school since 2004.

In fact, there has been nearly a 100 percent increase in the number of students that have met or exceeded the standards on the ISAT. Please take note that in 2004, it was 34.7 percent; and last year in 2011, it was 64.4 percent, at which time we became a level 2 school for the first time.

Although this past year, our scores went down slightly to 58.8 percent. We resulted in us becoming a level 3 school. This will change this year, because we will become a level 2 or a level 1
school.

This is no disrespect to my fellow teachers, colleagues and administrators from other neighboring schools, but Gresham had been on probation for fewer years than all of them except for one, and we are the only school that became a level 2 school in as recently as last year.

My second point is regarding utilization. In response to the utilization crisis, Gresham solution is we have two buildings in which one of them could be closed, and our building -- one of our buildings was built in 1895, and our newer building was built in 1967.

All of Gresham students, which are approximately 345, can fit in one or the other building. I am submitting to you tonight a plan in which you can see that all of the students can fit in one building with room for growth because our capacity for both buildings is 900.

If your directive is for utilization of the older building, there will have to be fewer accommodations made for the older building; but however, the administration feels that the new building would be more accommodating for our
Dr. Brown and the engineer can plan this move during spring vacation. The students can easily transition out and into the building utilized after the break.

If you take this solution, we will be at 90 percent utilization by using one of our buildings. Dr. Brown is aware that this has been done that at several CPS schools, and she will make it happen at ours.

These four plans are respectfully submitted tonight, so that you all can have a current visual of our two buildings and a plan that will not disrupt our neighborhood, keep our students safe; and lastly, solve the utilization concerns surrounding Gresham School. At Gresham School we expect attendance.

Thank you for listening. We look forward to your response. We're giving you the data to drive your decision. Will Gresham School please stand and thank Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett and the CPS panel for considering our solution to the utilization crisis and for your hard work in making your tough decision?
MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Eddy Purlak (phonetic) I'm a former student of Gresham Elementary School. When I left the school, I went on to Whitney Young High School. I went into the United States Marine Corps. I'm now a disabled veteran.

What I wanted to say is for my time in the military, I've learned that the best way to get people to do things is to encourage them. So, my question is: What are you all doing to raise the morale of students at one of those schools so they can do things like Miles Davis with engineering and things like that, instead of telling me they are not good enough so you are closing the school and putting them off in the corner?

So, I don't see how there is this solution that you all are offering to close the schools is helping any other problems that are going on. They always say to make money you got to spend money.

You got to spend money, instead of building jails and stuff like that, put it into the school building. The kids in our neighborhood deserve a chance that in kids in other neighborhoods
have.

I firsthand saw that going from Gresham, which is in the Englewood area, to Whitney Young, I see the difference in the types of schools of what each school has to offer. So, I know there is better to be offered.

So, I ask that you not only for Gresham, but for all schools, make that fair equal opportunity so all of our children will have an opportunity to learn.


SCHOOL: HENDERSON

SPEAKER: My name is Lula Baker. I'm here from Henderson. Thank you. My name is Lula Baker. I'm from Henderson. I come here today to make sure that you all don't close our school.

Our staff, teachers and leadership of our school, Henderson, teachers and principals, Ms. Ivy, has been demonstrated consistent leadership by providing an open-door policy by working with parents on local school council, providing parents support and training. The principal and the
teachers work closely with the schools and parents.

Students and parents to help provide
academic and community support services.

Parents feel welcome and are considered to
be an important part of the school. Teachers
provide after-school programs for the students, and
tutoring and on Saturday school. We have our doors
open when kids are out of school on the off days to
come in and get tutoring. I'm going to turn the mic
over to one of my parents.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Leslie Johnson.
I've been a parent in the Chicago Public Schools
since 1989. Student, too.

My thing is our kids need Henderson
because if you close down Henderson, where are they
supposed to go? They don't have no other schools
because all the schools in the vicinity you all
closing down. So, where are our kids supposed to
go? That's all I want to know. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Last speaker for
Henderson.

SPEAKER: Excuse me, gentlemen. We have six
minutes and I'm going to be short on what I have to
say. So, one of the other parents can get her say
in.

First and foremost, hello everyone. Thank
you for coming out. Thank you guys for listening.
I'm Vershon Arnold, Vershon Arnold from Henderson
Elementary. I am a parent volunteer there, as well
as a former teacher, not from Henderson, but with
the Catholic Board.

My question to you guys today we're here
stating everything we can and everything we can
think of to indicate why our schools should stay
open.

What I want to know from you is: How long
are you going to make us wait to find the answer?
Two, why are we in such a pinch to give you guys
answers, issues, concerns, about closing the school?
This is a very, very important topic and
subject. We shouldn't be rushed. We should be able
to take our time and give you everything we need,
and also elicit what you think some of the plans
should be.

You should give back to us so we can go
back to the drawing board and give you more
information on why the school should stay open.
MR. WILLIS: That concludes our Henderson representatives, three speakers.

SPEAKER: We still have two minutes left.

MR. WILLIS: It's three speakers per school.

SPEAKER: Good evening.

MR. WILLIS: There's three speakers per school.

SPEAKER: You stated that. You also stated we still have six minutes.

MR. WILLIS: Go ahead.

SPEAKER: As I was saying, I'm a parent of seven CPS students, all which are males, who have one who has graduated from Henderson Academy and went to Harlan, a honor's program, a child who has autism who has been taught by this lovely educator, Ms. Shields, who when he arrived at Henderson couldn't read, write, spell.

He could barely tell you his name, but he's excelling beyond belief in the sixth grade now. Henderson is being slated to be closed for underutilization. What's underutilized by Henderson?

We have two science labs, two computer labs. We're teaching karate. We're teaching algebra to third and fourth graders. Mr. Hudson and
Ms. Ivy, the principal and vice-principal go beyond, beyond their way to make sure that every student at Henderson is given a great education.

I have been a CPS student, and some schools I graduated from I can say, yeah, they probably do need to be closed; but Henderson, I'm at that school every day. I leave school to come to that school to make sure that school is doing what it needs to be done.

So, Henderson, what's going on? Underutilized? What about the renovation costs? You put millions of dollars into Henderson just this past year. New elevators. For what? To turn it around, to bring someone else's child in there to use it?

No. No. The police protection that Henderson has, we don't have any of that fight, any of that humbug that some of these other schools may have, because parents like me, Ms. Vershon, Ms. Bett, Ms. Joseph, we're there every day, and I do mean every day. This education, we don't play when it comes to Henderson.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you so much.

SPEAKER: And our goal is 90, 90, 90.
MR. WILLIS: Next school Hinton, followed by Holmes. Holmes, if you could come to the center. Our next speaker will be from Hinton Elementary School.

SCHOOL: HINTON

SPEAKER: Good evening.

MR. WILLIS: Good evening.

SPEAKER: My name is Constance Roberts. I'm a teacher at William A. Hinton Elementary School, which is located at 644 West 71st Street.

I've been a faculty member there since 1988. Over the past 25 years, I have witnessed our community become destabilized, due to the housing crisis and increased violence; but in spite of that, we at Hinton had managed to provide a quality education, and the many social services needed to the families we serve. Under current leadership, we took on the motto of no excuses.

In spite the changes in Englewood, we would not let it impact our mission for you our students. We were selected as one of 20 schools out of 100 to partner with communities and schools. This agency provides much needed support for our students, classes, medical, social, emotional
support, cultural enrichment with free plays, et cetera, and presenters that enhance our social justice curriculum.

We have also partnered with Becoming We the People. They have provided us with a wealth of resources and activities to aid in our quest to develop socially-aware students.

According to our 2012 school progress report, we have an overall rating of level 2. Student growth is above average. In fact, our principal was one of the 82 that received the first Merit Award from CPS for exceptional growth in reading and math.

Also, according to this report, our school is organized for improvement. Students feel safe and supported, ambitious instruction is strong, and our school cultural and climate is organized as well.

So, needless to say, we are bewildered as to the fact while we still remain on the list. Our students do not have a higher performing school within one mile that is safe for them to attend. There are safety issues relating to gangs.

If our students cross Lafayette to the
east, Halsted to the west, anything north of 69th
and anything south of 74th Street, do we want to put
their lives in danger?

Again, based on our 2012 school progress
report, the school force is strong and the area is
safe, and our students feel safe and supported. Our
mission at Hinton is to establish a culture of
integrity that supports academic success to reach
and teach the whole child creating a community of
life-long learners.

The Hinton School will concentrate its
efforts to achieve its mission through utilizing the
common core standards, use data to drive
instruction, use collaboration to foster team work.
This will cultivate active, capable, independent and
socially-aware learners.

A curriculum infused with social justice
themes school wide will allow students to develop a
voice utilizing literacy, writing and technology.
So, my question remains: Where will our level 2
students go?

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Second speaker for
Hinton.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Louise Mills. I'm a
part of the local school council. I'm also a parent of a school, a child who scored 95 percent on ISAT testing for 2012, took her to another school, they had nowhere to place my child because her grade level was so high.

But if our students have travel to another school in the network, it will place our student in a lower-performing school that has been removed from the list.

Where is the equality of the education for the students of Hinton, who will loose their home school? Has there been any consideration of how these schools will get to another neighborhood school?

The majority of them are currently walking two to seven blocks to get to Hinton. The next local school is seven blocks west and two blocks north of Hinton.

Given the total average walking distance nine or ten -- nine to 16 blocks away from the school, that's too far for the kids to walk, because all of school violence. It's Englewood. It's a lot of violence. We got to get it together, people. This ain't the way.
MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Final speaker for Hinton. Can I ask, too, as people are departing the building, if you can be respectful of people in the microphone so our court reporter can hear.

   So, if you leave, can you leave quietly, out of respect for people that's at the mic. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Dornetta Walker. I'm a teacher at Hinton Elementary School. I just came to talk about some of our priorities.

   Number one, we provide reading and math intervention for students who perform below grade level on beginning year assessments.

   Number two, we increased science performance teachers. Our science performers teachers will be required to implement guiding, reading and science utilizing level techs.

   Teachers will also be expected to focus on reading strategies during science instruction.

   Thumb three, continue to assess and strengthen best practices to increase teacher capacity.

   Number four, continue to have conversations and professional development to further develop understanding of common-core
standards.

Teachers will develop units of study to implement across grade levels. Number five continue to increase student attendance percentages. How do we reach our priorities? As of today, we provide additional reading and math intervention for students in grades three to six.

Students receive additional support using competent learning software. Teacher facilitate student progress and make necessary judgments. A qualified teacher provides daily reading and intervention for students in grades three to four.

She uses local literacy interventions by Fontas and Pannel (phonetic). Students in grades five and six participate daily in reading 180.

Students in grade seven and eighth receive additional support in reading and math during the intervention block, using guided reading and guided math strategies.

Grades K to 4 also receive additional support from Read America. Teachers are trained in guided reading and administrating benchmark assessment, BAS.

Administrators track student academic
progress to determine if additional supports or
special education services are needed.

MR. WILLIS: Ms. Walker, if you could to bring
it to a close.

SPEAKER: To bring it to a close, I would like
for Hinton Elementary students to say something.

Their lives are important.

MR. WILLIS: Ms. Walker, can we get the
document? Thank you. Our next school we'll hear
from is Holmes, followed by Mahalia Jackson.
Mahalia Jackson, if you could start your way to the
center aisle. Holmes?

SCHOOL: HOLMES

SPEAKER: Good evening.

MR. WILLIS: Good evening.

SPEAKER: My name Juanita Washington, and I'm
the LSE chairperson of Oliver Wendell Holmes School.

I'm here to appeal to you to remove Holmes
School from the closing list. Our number of
academic priorities is to increase student
achievement in reading, math and science.

Yes, it has been a challenge, but we plan
to get there. We plan to get there through the
following: Unit planning and curriculum alignment,
rigorous instruction, use of academic interventions
and providing a safe and nurturing environment for
our students and hopefully with your help.

Our professional development focus has
included unit planning with common core standards,
analyzing student data to inform instruction and
utilizing research base best practices in affected
classrooms.

Our leadership in teaching staff has been
consistent. We have not had any recent turnovers.
We have staff members who know and care about the
students in our building. We recognize our
shortcomings.

We are currently focusing on improvement
and in leadership and management. Teacher
effectiveness has increased in parents and community
involvement in local school decision making.

I have been a parent volunteer of Oliver
Wendell Holmes since 1996. I'm working on my third
and last child to come out in 2013. Our school is
our home. This is just how we feel, at home and
with family.

So, please do not close our school. Our
parents, or past president will inform you of our
challenges, current resources and resources as needed. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Ms. Washington. Second speaker from Holmes.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Safia Hollis. I want to talk about some of the challenges that we face at Holmes, which includes high mobility, high poverty, high crime rate, which are from some of the gang activity in our community that involve some of our own students.

We have targeted some of these students in their challenges in the learning environment. We have been working with CPS, along with the juvenile just system, to provide intervention for these students.

We want to avoid another tragic death which we had experienced years ago with our fifth-grade student who was shot and killed in a gang rivalry.

We have partnered with several organizations to provide academic as well as social and emotional support. These programs include the following: The Chicago Psychoanalysis Institute for small group and individual counseling, 21st Century
and After-School All Stars for academic enrichment
and recreational support, Saturday school which is a
focus on the test-taking skills, before and after
school reading and math intervention, Gear up
provides academic support for tutoring, team
building and high school readiness activities.

They are also offer a Black Roses program
where seventh and eighth girls receive mentoring.
We recently were approved for the Fidelity Grant,
which allows us to provide additional support for
our students.

We are a PBIS school where we promote and
reinforce positive behavior. We are trying but we
need your help. Additional resources that we can use
are funding to help increase student access to
technology to prepare our students to compete with
national and global peers, a full-time literacy
coach to help provide differentiated teachers.

Full-time social workers for our students,
additional security personnel to help address
problem directly related to gang activity inside and
outside of our building.

We believe one factor that contributes to
our low enrollment is not being able to offer early
childhood options to our parents. We can only offer one-half day Head Start program. Many parents have jobs or are in school and are not able to participate in a half-day program.

We applied for the Ready to Learn Grant so that we can provide a full two full-day programs. We are hoping to see increase in our enrollment to receive this grant. With the resources we currently have applied for and wish to have support, and we believe changes can be made to improve our academic achievement at Holmes School.

MR. WILLIS: Is there another speak for Holmes?

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Donna Carpenter. I'm also the LSE co-chair at Holmes school, and our primary concern is the safety of our children.

No one wants their children to go to different schools where there is a potential encounter for new gang activity, or other issues that presents a serious concern with the city possibility moving of students.

Four years ago, Holmes School received a $3.5 million upgrade through the generous support of our Alderman Joanne Thompson. This upgrade primary
consists of a new lunch room addition, a new
playground, an upgrade gym room, and a current ADA
upgrade.

We would like the opportunity to continue
utilizing our current building with its upgrades,
and we'll welcome additional students and staff in
our building. We welcome your continuous support.

I'm not only coming to you as an LSE
chair, co-chair, but as a concerned parents. Don't
close our school. Don't let us lose anymore of our
children. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Final speaker from
Holmes. Mahalia Jackson is next.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Alexandria.

MR. WILLIS: Excuse me, are you from Mahalia
Jackson?

SPEAKER: No, you said final speaker.

MR. WILLIS: What's the time, Mr. Shannon.

MR. SHANNON: There is no more time.

SPEAKER: Well, it just ran out. I had 20
seconds. I saw the clock. My name Alexandria. As
I stated, I graduated from Holmes Elementary School
in 2006.

I graduated from John Hope College
Preparatory in 2010. I am currently a student at East West University, and I graduate in the year 2014, June of 2014 to be exact. I have 110 credits at my current school; and when this semester ends, I will have 126 credits.

Holmes School was a community. It was a home before you all came in and turned things around. So, before you sit here and try to close the school because you made a problem, you need to fix it instead of turning it off to somebody else.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Thank you.


SPEAKER: Followed by Langford. Langford, if you can prepare to come to the center aisle. First speaker, Mahalia Jackson.

SCHOOL: MAHALIA JACKSON

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Nadi Sanders. I'm a teacher at Mahala Jackson Elementary School.

Under our new leadership of our principal Mr. Hubbird, Mahalia Jackson staff, students and parents have a common goal for this school. Our goal is to sore to level 1, insuring all students
are college and career ready.

   We will reach this goal by driving
instruction with data, and giving all students
access to art, music, technology, engineering, and
self-development in a second language.

   The leadership has been transparent with
where our students are academically and home
schooled with individualized instructions to meet
each child's individual needs.

   As a result, 71 percent of the students
have positive growth from fall to winter on the NWEA
math MAP assessment. 69 percent of the students
have positive growth on the reading assessment.

   That's the only cluster, that and hard of
hearing program on the south side of Chicago,
Mr. Hubbird services as a role model for our
students, because he is hard of hearing also.

   At Mahalia Jackson, 2.3 percent of the
staff is certified to work with students with
special needs, to insure all students have access to
a high-quality education.

   The proof is in the data. For example, a
hard of hearing student has made a 20-point gain
from fall to winter on his RIT reading score. The
academic growth our students are experiencing is a result of individualized instruction at Mahalia Jackson.

Mahalia Jackson where failure is not an option, and excellence is required each day. The academic priority of Mahalia Jackson is to insure our students or college and career ready through a holistic curriculum: Math, reading, science, art, music, engineering and technology. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Ms. Sanders. Second speaker from Mahalia Jackson.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Jametta Penson (phonetic). I am a former parent, employee, parent current PAC chair, and LSE, co-chair person for the school and I am there every single day.

The leadership and staff at Mahalia Jackson has been very consistent this year. Since July 1st, 2012, together we have received over $100,000 in additional resources for our students. These things are new at Mahalia Jackson this year. All students take art, music, technology sign language and self-development. Our third through eighth graders have access to our Columbia College Center for Community Arts after-school
programs for the performing arts, mentoring in academic enrichment.

All students have access to a new science lab, two new computer labs, access to online enrichment intervention learning program.

They also have access to online Spanish language learners. We have new partnerships with U.S. Bank, Home Depot, PR Store, gear MX, Junior Achievement, Delores' Place and Columbia College.

Our great expectations room is now being piloted for the network for in-school suspension. 40 percent of the school staff is new to the Mahalia Jackson family.

We provide a continuum of services for our students with special needs. We have a full-time counselor to meet our students social and emotional needs. We have a full-time behavior, positive behavior coach, to provide restorative practices.

We have a full-time case manager to insure our students with special needs have access to a high-quality education. We have weekly vertical teacher meetings and weekly 101 meetings with administration.

All meetings and PD are focused on data to
insure academic priorities are met. The proof is in our current data. My grandchild has exceeded her winter projected growth target on her middle-of-the-year NWEA math reading assessment. With the new mentoring of the percentage of students on track at Mahalia Jackson, Mr. Hubbird has shared with us that we have increased the percentage of students on track from August to January by ten percent this school year. This is not found at a school that is underutilized.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hi. I am Angela Johnson, a fourth grade teacher from at Mahalia Jackson; and for us, the fourth graders in 2011 were the highest scoring in science for 2011. They were the highest score on the ISAT.

We also were the highest score for reading, math with 75 percent of our students growing in the fourth grade. This meeting is about utilization.

However, I'm going to talk about how that applies to Jackson. According to your report, we are only utilizing 40 percent of our building; however, we have two classes of special education
programs autistic and deaf or hard of hearing.

We are the only deaf and hard of hearing cluster on the south side of Chicago. We got 44 rooms in the building. 22.7 percent utilized for general. 25.4 percent utilized for special education programs. 20.4 percent utilized our ancillary classes, and 13.4 percent all the licensed for offices.

So, only 22.7 percent is actually not being utilized. Therefore, we're taking into account more than just student population and square footage that factor in to our cluster of special ed programs.

We are only 76.9 percent utilized. Our student population has unique circumstances, and we address those needs by having an elevator, updated light fixtures that controls the current in the light, that do not interfere with hearing aids, rooms with carpet to decrease noise pollution for our deaf and hard of hearing.

We have accessible entryways, doorways, and rest rooms. We have many safety concerns with sending our students to another school on this list.

MR. WILLIS: Can we begin to wrap up?
SPEAKER: Do either of these schools surrounding Mahalia Jackson have elevators? Are they handicap accessible? Can they accommodate our class for our special ed program? What is the safe path plan for our students on Halsted and under that underpass?

According to the calculations, we meet the district's criteria to no longer to be under consideration for closure, as our utilization rate 70 percent or higher. So, why are we still on the list? Especially when we're so into being an STEM school, which is science, technology, engineering, and math. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Can we have your documents?

Langford is the next school followed by Mays. First speaker from Langford.

SCHOOL: LANGFORD

SPEAKER: My name is Martin Lockly, and I attend Langford Academy at the age -- I mean, at the grade level of seventh grade.

The reason why I love Langford is because it helped me improve for my education. Another reason why I love Langford is because my family, teachers, friends, and principals all support me to
do better; and the last reason why I love Langford
is because I live in a safe community where I can
count on others to help me.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name William Baker. I am a
seventh grade, and I attend Langford Academy. I
love Langford because it is a family-friendly
school. It gets me closer to my goals in life and
it has a high population for succeeding in life.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, William.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Tonya Leak,
and I'm a special ed teacher at Langford Academy.

The reason why you should keep Langford
open is, number one, we are a turn-around school;
and at the time, our and academics were the reason
why we should stay open. Now you're talking about
utilization.

However, the ISAT scores, when you first
took over in '09 for reading, math and sciences, is
30 percent, 39 percent 43 percent, and 25 percent
respectfully.

Last year, in 2012, our school has jumped
in reading to 59.9 percent, in math 71 percent, and
in science 65.3 percent. Our attendance growth has
grown last year from 92 percent to 94.2 percent.

This year, over 65 percent of our students are meeting or exceeding the projected growth in NWEA. Also, we have a lot of partnerships in our schools. We have Children's Home and Aid, Salvation Army, where they have a choir.

We have the Chicago Children's Choir. We have drama, dance and drill team. This year they going to be dissecting pigs and frogs. We have the fact innovation program, where children create their own animations through technology.

We have clickers and white board and inspire calculators to help our students achieve in math. Also, we have the Europe Program, project SYNCERE, Urban Getaway, Black Star Projects, and they come out almost every month to listen to our children.

We also have college students from DePaul University to come out to help our students with writing and poetry.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you so much.

SPEAKER: And we're a level 2 school.

SPEAKER: Good team. My name is Carl Walker.

I'm security at Langford Academy. When I first
arrived at Langford Academy, the climate there was very hostile.

In that process, now the climate is beautiful. Parents, children, teachers, and all other staff work together to accomplish all the achievements that you require of us. Seeing us on that list is disappointing.

It's only disappointing because the mere fact we've worked so hard to change Langford Academy. It used to be Capernicus. I remember it when I was a kid.

My grandmother used to live down the street. My siblings, cousins, used to go there. Now it's back the way it was. Don't close our school. You will be making one big mistake.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Mr. Walker.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Kenneth Fanbra. I'm here tonight to speak on behalf of keeping Langford Academy open.

Since it's turnaround in 2009, the test scores have increased, as you already know this. Not only does Langford provide a positive learning environment for the students, but a catalyst for the entire community.
In closing I would like to say because we're here tonight is evidence of the need for an elected school board.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you so much. Our final speaker from Langford.

SPEAKER: My name is Sherry Peoples. We shouldn't close the school because the people need to get their education.

MR. WILLIS: All right. Ms. Baker, you want to finish your time out?

SPEAKER: So, can we consider because you're looking for solutions, can we consider schools with two buildings closing one and filtering the people to one building?

Can we then look into level 3 schools? I don't understand how you want me to send my child to go to from level 2 school, to a level 3 school. Help me with that one.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. We have one more minute.

SPEAKER: I'm going to keep it simple and short. My name is Betty Lochlan, and that was my son that spoke earlier. I would like to see Langford stay open, and the reason why I would like
to see it open is they have great teachers there.

The students are learning. They're getting their education. My students have all kind of opportunities there. My daughter is an honor roll student, been an honor roll student for like three years now.

She loves the school. She loves the programs. She loves the teachers and everything. My oldest son, east going to ITT Tech, and he also graduated from Langford Academy. He got a good education there, and I did it all by myself with no help and everything.

I always teach them it's not where you learn, it's that wherever you go, you learn something from wherever you are. Those teachers have worked hard.

Last of all, Dr. Garner, she's a wonderful person. You can always go to her. If you have a problem or anything going on in that school. So far, I haven't had any problems with those teachers. Thank you all.

I'll wrap it up because I know all got to go, but keep Langford Academy open because we love that school; and that school is helping our
students, and we need that school in our neighborhood. If anything, we need to put more schools in our neighborhood, not close any of them down. Thank you. You all have a blessed night.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Langford Academy. Our next school Benjamin Mays. Following Benjamin Mays. We would like to hear from Morgan.

First speaker from when man Mays at the mic, please.

SCHOOL: BENJAMIN MAYS

SPEAKER: Good evening.

MR. WILLIS: Good evening.

SPEAKER: Can the parents that support Mays please stand up? My name is Duane Jones, Senior. I am a father of three students at Mays Academy and one graduate.

I'm a member of the local school council at Mays Academy, and I'm standing here to support the removal of Mays Academy from the underutilization list.

The problem I see at Mays Academy should not be included on this list at all. Despite the dropping score due to failure in science, Mays is
still listed in above average and student growth on our student report card that says we're a level 3 school.

How can this be true when the scoring are nearly 73 percent of our math scores have increased, and the scores -- wait, and our math scores are 80 percent now.

I want to leave you with this letter of support from our esteemed partners and signatures from over 375 parents and community supporters who also believe that Mays is -- it's wrong to close Mays.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone. My name is Latoya Goodrich. I am the chairperson from Benjamin E. Mays local school council.

The reason to remove Mays from underutilization closure list, Mays has a utilization rate of 76.9 percent. Mays has discussed with the chief of Englewood-Gresham Network its plans for opening a comprehensive early childhood program.

There is room for two full-day preschool classes at Mays. Students for the preschool program
would come from the many private daycares in the neighborhood and from reschool classes operating half-day programs.

In the spirit of president Obama's quest for increased attention to the underserved children, Mays plans to begin closing the gap that exists in the area of school readiness for children ages 3 to 5.

In the previous two years, Mays has been designated as a welcoming school for students whose parents have opted to seek improved academic opportunity for their students, qualified under NCLB from underperforming schools throughout the district. All students that apply for this transfer had to be accepted.

Mays 20-day enrollment was 307 students. Mays Academy has maintained a 70 percent or better ISAT composite score for the school year 2011-2012 and school year 2010-2011.

Students at Mays are performing at or above their peers at reading, 72.9 percent, and math 79.8 percent for each of the last three years.

Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you.
SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Ms. Griffin. I have four children that attend Mays and one is graduating Morgan Park, and the other go to Princeton University for a full ride, and went kindergarten all the trough eighth grade from Mays. I'm the chairperson and CLB. My thing is to talk about utilization. If you know our school, our school Mays is not a full school. Before Mays Academy housed the building that was originally build at the Englewood community vocational training center.

By that, when the training center closed, it left the building vacant. Then it was a temporary house for schools, like, Hines that were undergoing renovations. The design building is non-traditional elementary school. The first floor has many offices; and on the second floor, you have a medical building, a medical training center. The building has been refurbished many times. Reconstruction has been so many times it's unbelievable. I know when my brother was going there, it was so many times when he had been there it was called another schools.

Therefore, Mays has been sitting here for
eleven years with the same principal fighting for
the rights of kids. We are a school that believe in
our children, making sure our children succeed; and
when they leave our school, they just don't go to an
area school, they go to schools outside of their
area.

So, I believe in our children in our
school, and we believe in them, and they believe in
us. So, if they believe in us, we got to keep them
open. We got to keep the faith our kids can make it
because they live in the Englewood area, and they
live inside a box.

If we take these kids outside of this box,
it is a war beyond them. That is why I school
should be open. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: You should keep my school open
because if you don't keep it open, I won't be able
to go to third grade.

MR. WILLIS: All right, thank you.

SPEAKER: Mr. Willis and the dais, in this last
minute of conversation, I have learned so much about
utilization and what it means.

I just wanted to make a comment about the
entire Englewood-Gresham Network. I came to the
Gresham Network at the time our chief came. We came
together I believe.

I just wanted to speak to the enormous
amount of growth that has happened in Englewood in
the time that I've been at Mays Academy. I have
seen schools turn around.

When I came to Englewood, it was written
off as the community that was going nowhere; but
under our chief, the people that he brought into our
area 14, and then into our network office, I have
seen tremendous growth.

I would hate to see the momentum at
Englewood stop or change as a result of disruptions
in the community. A lot of wonderful, wonderful
things have happened, Mr. Willis and Mr. Underdue,
since Mr. Wills has been there. Okay, I'm a done.

I'm just going to say I would just hate to
see the momentum change. I ask you take a look
carefully. I know you have some hard decisions to
make, but I ask you make them with prayer. Thank
you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Dr. McCann. Morgan is
next, followed by O'Toole. O'Toole, if you can
begin to come to the center aisle to prepare for
your statements.

SCHOOL: MORGAN

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is just Justin
Rook. I am one of five special education teachers
at Garrett A. Morgan, which has an elevator for
those who need it.

This is my first year teaching there. I
have a question for you. Why disrupt something that
works? Why disrupt an environment where 50 percent
of the staff is new; and yet through hard work
differentiating instruction and dedication, they
have pushed 70 percent of the students to exceed or
meet the end-of-year NWEA target.

The parents you see before you in this
auditorium show this improvement. If you look, they
are all wearing their student NEWA scores over their
hearts to show they care about how much progress
their students have made at Morgan.

Why disrupt school that works? Why
disrupt a school that is sought the by CPS art
department to be a case study, because they have
discovered we are one of the few schools in the city
to implement arts as a major priority in our CIWP.
Why disrupt something that works? Why disrupt a school whose priority has become number one by expanding students exposure to the arts, dance orchestrated by our kindergarten teacher, through film and production led by our math teacher, enrichment led by our resource teacher. Even our security officer has taken a role as a cheerleading coach. These people put in extra hours and research to make sure the students get the absolute of their education.

We've created partnerships with Ravinia and VH1 save the music. Our goal is it to offer our students more and more and more. We won't stop. We can't. We will exceed every last one of our goals. We all know that due to unofficiated circumstances outside our control, Garrett A. Morgan did not have a principal for a large portion of last year. However, she is back with determination and a winning streak, and she and her team are making a difference. I mean, this principal has convinced us that there is no such thing as limitations, and that we are responsible for setting our bars high enough for students to compete with
the world, not just Chicago.

We are even attracting students from gifted schools and even teachers have transferred here from gifted programs. Why? Because we have an approach that drives everyone to give their all and go beyond our perceivable limitations.

We are exceeding our goals, even with our special ed department, and have out performed district averages for inclusion.

We have expanded our partnership with the in-house Chicago Park District, and they will now be bringing an after-school arts program for our students, as well as outside students that come to Garrett Morgan for after-school enrichment.

Now the Chicago Park District programs in our school has a waiting list, a first in years. Parents of students feel safe coming through our doors. We have some of the lowest misconduct stats in the network.

Everything we are doing is working. One, two, three, why disrupt something that works?

MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name Kiara Statton (phonetic). I stand before you as the chairperson
of the PAC of Garrett A. Morgan Fine Arts Academy.
Not only am I the chairperson, but I'm an active
volunteer there. I am their daily.

I am welcomed with open arms at Garrett A.
Morgan. My kids, as you can see, I am wearing their
scores where they meet and exceeded in the NWEA.
Enough of said from me. Let the children speak.
Who are we?

SPEAKER: We are Garrett A. Morgan Academy
School. I have made significant progress in math.
Yes, I matter, you have to be because together we
are learning and growing. Discover ourselves and
dedicating ourselves to making the world a better
place.

I am a Garrett A. Morgan Fine Arts Academy
Student. I will repeat, I am determined, and I will
be successful today and every day.

SPEAKER: Let's continue to make Morgan matter.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Morgan.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Latasha Cambell and I
want to know why it seems like since maybe 2006, all
the way until now, you all want to close the
schools.

You all want to go visit these high
perform elementary, high schools, and you all can't sit up here and help the schools that are performing.

We have 25 percent of our school kids that have disabilities, and my kids are those two, and also I am aware what my kids have made a difference and accomplished.

And also, it's like what are you all doing? You are not trying to help. You want to close the schools down. What can't you all help? Where these kids books at? Where are their books at?

My principal, Ms. Lowe, she brought in music, art and Spanish to the school. Now if I my kids wasn't doing well at the school, I would have tooken my kids out.

My kids are reading at this point. As a volunteer, as a parents, and as a chairman of the LSE, I am able to volunteer and come up to my kids school, and I am a very big participant at the schools.

SPEAKER: I just want to say my name is Jacqueline Casmir (phonetic), and I'm the vice-chair, and I also want to say we cultivate our
children. We specialize in our special ed, and we're teaching them to mainstream into the regular sector.

This is what CPS wants, so this is what you are getting, and we are gifted and trained and experienced, which I know I am for 22 years in the special ed at giving what our children need; and as to learning, and the cultivating, and the growth, and the safety and the mothering and the love which they need all of that, they get to their at Garrett A. Morgan.

My son is grown and out of school from a product of CPS, and so am I with a special ed. He is a culinary and also a caregiver, and all our children here make Morgan matter.

As I told you before, come on down and see our children. Feel the family and love that's there. We matter. So, keep you us on the map. Read our shirt. It says, "Morgan putting us on the map," and we will be on the map because we are what you need.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Morgan.

SPEAKER: Can I say something? I am not from the school, and I have to go. I can't wait until
the community speak because I have a child, as you can see now.

MR. WILLIS: You can't wait for who to speak?

I'm sorry.

SPEAKER: For you all to open it up to the community. My name is Ebony Blare. I am not representing any school because currently I have a newborn baby and my concern is with CPS, because I am a prospective educator. And I chose the field of education because I'm concerned about the students me.

I just found out about what was going to happen here by members Morgan Elementary School, and I've am standing here now with you all to let you all know we say solutions is not excuses, but these are excuses while we're closing 100 and some plus schools.

It should be solutions to this and different things that we should be able to do rather than sitting here having us sitting here and listening why you shouldn't close the schools.

We should be sitting here with you all giving us solutions on how you can better the schools, and hold the parents more accountable for
what's going on, instead of blaming the principals and the teachers for what's going on with these students.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. O'Toole.

SCHOOL: O'TOOLE

SPEAKER: Good evening.

MR. WILLIS: Following O'Toole, sorry, can I get the next school ready for parents after O'Toole we have Ryder. Do we have any members from Stagg? Very good. After O'Toole, we have Ryder and Stagg. Please get prepared.

SPEAKER: Good evening.

MR. WILLIS: Good evening.

SPEAKER: Current utilization, two buildings. Building A, main, houses pre-K through grade 5 gymnasium, auditorium, three computer labs. Building B, demountable, houses grade 6 through eighth grade. Several unoccupied rooms. Built in 1973, was set only to last for ten years. Structure is deteriorating and is approaching 40 years of abuse.

School data: Population 450 children to 500. Trending upward. Attain level 2 status in fall of 2012. On the rise from prior year
Only level 2 neighborhood school within a mile radius. Student growth identified as above average. Most teaches are Master's Degree plus ISAT composite. Meets and exceeds trend values that indicates increase in student proficiency.

Proposed utilization, building A underwent a massive capital improvement project in 2011. Merge all students from building B into building A. If steps suggested are taken, it would drastically increase the scope of our school utilization rate. O'Toole priorities and goals:

Craft a teaching culture of architects around optimal instructional design and delivery.

Building a seemless bond with families and communities using external partnership for ongoing development. Provide an oasis and explorative learning that propels our children pass college into career sustainability. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you. Make sure we get that.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Urica Gardener (phonetic). I'm a parent of O'Toole Elementary School. I've been a parents there for six years, and when I approached my kids at O'Toole Elementary
School, their test scores was really low.

    Ever since they've been at O'Toole, their
test scores has risen for the sky. Please do not
close my babies' schools because they need their
schools, and their test scores is rising above the
sky, and they are making good progress in doing
everything that you all expect them to do.

    MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Under the leadership of principal
hall and assistant principal Morris. I got a little
nervous. This is my first time as a public speaker.
Thank you. Have a good evening.

    MR. WILLIS: That concludes the speakers from
O'Toole. Ryder. Following Ryder, Stagg and Woods.
We will be with you shortly.

    SCHOOL: RYDER

SPEAKER: The reason why Ryder shouldn't close
because the kids need to learn so they can get -- so
they can get a good education occasion so they can
go to college; but if Ryder closes, they wouldn't be
able to get a good education, and they won't be able
to go to college.

    SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Charee
Hardaway (phonetic). I am the eighth grade homeroom
teacher at William H. Ryder. I am also the sixth, seventh and eighth grade math teacher. I am a member of LSE, ILT and I am the math leader at Ryder.

At William H. Ryder, we have a very high population of special ed. We have 30 percent of our students are special ed, and we currently have an inclusion model in which all special education students are succeeding.

Last year, one of our students started off in a self-contained environment, moving into resource as an eighth grade. She graduated and was our salutarium. She also went on to Sullivan Academy. William H. Ryder, our students are going to Walter Payton, Wendeline Brooks, Lindblom, King College Prep, Whitney Young.

We have a program that is working there; and for the past year-and-a-half, our teachers have been involved in com cote. We were an early after school. We have roll-out curriculum maps, unit planning and we have seen success.

We currently got a new principal, Mr. Garrett, welcome, and we are asking for that change to show you what those com core standards can
MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Ms. Hardaway.

Mr. Hunter?

SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Diadra Kruter (phonetic). I'm the kindergarten teacher at Ryder School. I just wanted to say I taught kids about slavery and how they came from Africa, came over to America, and how the people felt about getting separated from their parents, their friends.

And to read when I'm sitting there listening to everybody, it sounds like that's was happening here. We are area separating. We're trying to ask the kids to go somewhere else.

They don't know anything about -- they don't know -- they are separated from their friends. They are separated from their teachers that they know, all the preschool teacher, and these are my students right here.

And I've taught them, and I've been Ryder School for 11 years, and I'm getting ready to see my first preschool students graduate from eighth grade, and that's a lot. I just want to say it feels like separating is just too much. I don't think the kids should have to go through that. Thank you.
Mr. Wills.

MR. WILLIS:  Thank you.

SPEAKER:  My name is Michele McDaniels.  I'm a fourth and fifth grade teacher at Ryder School.  CEO Byrd-Bennett has proposed a number of criteria for exempting schools for closure, and I would like to propose she add one more.

I would like to propose she add having new leadership as a criteria from removing the schools from closer.  We just selected a new principal.  He needs to be given an opportunity to turn our school around.

Mr. Aaron Rucker has only been principal at Ryder for one week, but in that brief time period he's already been a catalyst for positive changes at Ryder.

During Mr. Rucker's one-week tenure at Ryder, both student and staff attendance has measurable improved.  Student enrollment has increased.  The instructional leadership team has sprung into action.  Parent and community members have reconnected with the school, and the school's culturing climate has been transformed.

Given the necessary time, resources and
support, we are at certain Mr. Rucker can transform Ryder to an academic powerhouse.

Ryder is already showing signs of academic improvement. At every grade level students have made measurable gains on the MAP assessments.

Furthermore, our dedicated teachers and rigorous instruction have help prepare our students for enrollment in some of our schools, top high schools, including Walter Payton, Whitney Young Wendeline Brooks, Lindblom and Key College Prep.

The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute has determined that Ryder is, quote, well organized for improvement.

Faculty staff and community members at Ryder have worked hard over the years for forge connections and build alliances and have helped students remain safe, despite significant gang activity in the immediate and surrounding communities.

The attendance areas of Ryder, and several nearby schools that are currently on the closing list, cross rival gang territory. Closing Ryder, or even transferring students into or out of the community through consolidation, could place
students at risk for violence and other negative outcomes.

Mr. Rucker is working with the local school council, the parents, advisory committee team and other stakeholders to develop a plan to fully utilize every square foot of space at Ryder, and the physical plan and facilities of Ryder are in little raw condition.

Ryder is poised for success. With time, resources and support from our district we know we could become one of the top performing schools in the district just gives us a channel.

MR. WILLIS: Thanks, Ms. McDaniels.

Ms. Hardaway, thank you. Mr. Archer, thank you.

So, Woods, if prepared.

SCHOOL: STAGG

SPEAKER: My name is Kimberly Smith, and I'm parent of a second grader at Stagg. I'm also the chairperson of the NTLB, and I also hold a CMS.

I don't know your colleagues, Mr. Wills, but I know you. We've been down this road before with you. Stagg was turned around last year.

On the list you gave all the schools come in, No. 6 says, "The school has recently experienced
a significant school action." I think that's what a turnaround is.

We've only been in our turnaround six months. There is been showing growth in our attendance, our MAP scores, and our students social work enrollment is up. Also underutilization, Stagg has the highest percentage utilization on this list. It's 66 percent.

Even though we're at a level 3, we're steadily growing every day. You haven't even given us a chance. As your colleague said earlier, just because there is 129 schools on the list, doesn't mean that you're going to close all of them. How can we take your word for this?

You told us before the turnaround that we are weren't going to lose our Montessori program. We lost it to all these people. Our students believed you that their teachers were going to be there for them. They lost them.

Now we've been accepted by AUSL and our BMT team, and a host of our teachers and other parents, and now they're afraid they're going to loose those relationships as well.

So, all we ask is you come to our school.
You see what we have utilized in our building, and you tell us where we're missing that other 31 percent. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Ms. Smith.

SPEAKER: My name is Melony Ferris, and I am the co-chair of Stagg's parent council.

For me, this is very, very personal because I'm a product of Englewood. I was born and raised in Englewood, and I don't remember not one textbook coming through Chicago Public Schools.

Under the AUSL model, our attendance is increasingly -- is increasing tremendously. Not only is our attendance increasing, but we have a kindergarten Leapfrog Program that is designed to catch the children that are not getting their work along with the other children, so we catch them before the get a chance to fall, unlike CPS who pass the children year after year after year.

When they become seniors, they are reading at second grade levels. That is under CPS. Under AUSL, we have a behavior management team that shows each and every last one of our young men what it's like to become a young man.

Under AUSL, our children are growing
towards college readiness. Under AUSL, we have
72 percent of our students who have exceeded the
math target. 71 percent who have exceeded the
reading target.

    We have a counselor under AUSL who is
doing everything she possibly can to make sure every
child is clean, neat, has a uniform, and even has
something to eat. How dare you close our schools.

    MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

    SPEAKER: My name is Jesse Lewis, and I am in
the Leapfrog class.

    SPEAKER: My name is Ken Winfield. I have a
little sister named Hope Winfield who goes to Stagg,
too. She is.

    Now my question to you all that's sitting
up there right now, why are you all trying to close
the schools? You already turned around my school
one time.

    Basically they are doing the best they
could. They did the best they could then, they are
doing the best they could now. Basically right now
you keep on trying to turn these excuse around.

    Basically right now you are taking these kids out of
a safe environment to a bad environment.
You are talking you want to have a safe environment for these kids, basically you are trying to put these kids back in the streets. By putting these kids back in the streets, you will have these kids being shot, killed or worse, or in jail, or selling drugs.

Trying to close down all these schools ain't the right thing. See, right now I'm very Ped off because I am in a university. I go to Robert Morris University. I graduated from Stagg Elementary School before you all even tried to turn it around, and I am highly, highly mad at you all.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Haley Winfield, and I got to say this how dare you to turn around my school. This is what I did. I got to say I dare you, because I have a principal that loves us like a piece of Bologna. Ms. Knox is our principal, and she has --

SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Stagg. Our final school for the evening is Woods Math Academy. Ms. Taylor will be our first speaker from Woods.
SPEAKER: You learned my name.

MR. WILLIS: Yes, I did.

SPEAKER: I'm not going to hold you long. Everybody is tired, so am I. Granville T. Woods, I am a product of Englewood. I am a product of Granville T. Woods. I am vice-chair of LSE Board. I'm vice-chair of PAC.

Granville T. Woods Academy over the past six years has truly become a community school by partnering with several non-for-profit organizations.

Woods is able to serve us and bring us many resources for the entire family. This helps our parents build a stronger voice in their community. Woods has opened their doors and rooms to many families, oriented programs throughout the day and after-school hours.

For example, Cofield, family and teams, six-week workshop help parents develop the skills, confidence and power to set goals to transform their lives and community.

In addition, these are a few things -- these are a few great things Woods offers, on-site counseling and outside counseling service with works
with schools who have concerns that needs attention instantly.

Our science scores in 2012 are 88.6 percent EGN. Lawyers in the classroom. Students learn to roll play and learn the system. Greater Life Mentoring program, which focus on career building. National Honor Society for students that meets and excels here.

Woods has many students that graduated high school and attend college and are successful in getting scholarships. There are many staffs members who have their children enrolled in Woods Academy. Instructors at Woods attend workshops to stay connected with what's new.

Technology, Woods Academy has unlimited technology potential. Woods is equipped with fiber optic called RJ45 infrastructure in each room and recently upgraded to the new CPS newly-enhanced carbon radius system, which enhances our wireless capabilities and prepares us for the latest software and hardware innovations.

In preparation for computerized testing, Woods sent up three computer labs, a media center, 305 lab work, completely rewired by CPS, with new
tables and chairs were added.

All the wireless network cards in the schools were replaced apply CPS and new enhanced standard technology. With the additions made by CPS to the new access point, we were able to add a new lab on the second floor to assist with NWEA testing and supplemental enrichment programs.

Woods Academy, in collaboration with CPS, also added four HP laser jet, 9050 network printers for each floor. Our highly-qualified instructors daily use all our labs as an enhancement centers for math, reading, mandated testing and research for our students.

This is the first time we've been able to have a lab on each floor to enhance instruction and testing. CPS has installed the rapid-eye security system last August. CPS has invested well over $150,000 in Woods Academy in the last year.

With this additional hardware, we will be able to go beyond our sites, and our students will be better equipped to compete in the 21st Century.

Woods would gladly welcome another school and their staff in need. However, we feel the best utilization of resources and funds would be to bring
another school to Woods and to continue to improve on the program and infrastructure.

This message we are trying to relay is that Woods is a community school with the most tools and resources to serve our community. Woods utilizes the buildings to provide many services to your families.

Woods' goal is to serve the whole child by including services for the whole family. The family needs your help by not closing Woods Academy. Save Englewood by saving Woods Academy.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Ms. Taylor. Second speaker from Woods.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Kristin Foster. I'm here on behalf of Woods representing the Lead Partner Family Focus Englewood.

For the past eight years, Woods Academy has been a CPS community school. Being designated a community school for us means that with combined resources from CPS and Family Focus, we have been able to offer our Woods community a wealth of programs and services that have helped our students develop socially, emotionally and academically.

Over the past seven years, CPS Community
School Initiative alone has invested over $500,000 in capital towards Woods Academy Community Schools' goal.

We believe this is because in economic times like this, the need for services that needs social and emotional and our health needs of our students and families are at an all-time high.

Over the years, Woods has formed many partnerships to provide academic after-school programming like 21st Century, free therapeutic growth groups for children and adults, free music instruction through Columbia College, visual and fine arts and physical recreation classes.

This year, as part effort to help teachers raise the academic bar, we introduced language arts teacher professional development through our newest partner, Changing Worlds.

I'm saying all of this to say that Woods is putting all of its resources to maximum use. Every space in our building is dedicated to child direct instruction or wrap-around services for families and students.

Imagine this, you are running through the airport, O'Hare Airport, with your suitcases piled
up on your backs. They are calling your flight.
Your flight is boarding. This is how many of our
students feel when they are coming to school.

They are piled up with baggage, and at
Woods Academy, we feel it is our duty to unpack that
baggage. We are teaching them that they are smart,
they are excellent, and that they hold the keys to
their own future and success.

We are asking you to keep Woods open and
not throw away all the efforts, money and great
improvements that we've made over the past several
years.

Woods is continuously making great
strides, and we cannot stop now. Displacing our
students to our schools will surely slow their
progress. If Family Focus Englewood, an outside
agency, has committed to Woods, surely CPS can stand
behind their investment. Please help us continue to
deliver those services.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: We have our last speaker. Can I go, please?

MR. WILLIS: You sure can.

SPEAKER: Good evening. I am Ms. Teahill, a
parents volunteer at Woods Academy. I would like to
speak on the priority and resources for Woods
Academy.

Woods Academy priority are to insure all
students meet and exceed the state national
standards in math, science reading and writing.
Another priority is to increase both students and
teacher attendance and reduce suspensions, increase
parental involvement and participation.

Woods is currently using math data to help
students that goes to gain ownership of their
success creating life-long skills.

To reach some of these goals, Woods team
has after-school programs such as homework help,
that also helps parents and students, tutoring, also
life skills such as social and business education.

The leadership and teaching staff has been
consistent for at least ten years. This allows a
strong connection between parents, students and
staff because the community is familiar with Woods
team.

Woods needs resources such as college
mentors, retired teachers and administration to help
parents learn new ways to assist with their
children's homework.

In closing, Woods Academy is in the middle -- sits in the middle of Englewood, one of the highest crime areas in the City of Chicago. We have not had a major violent act to take place at Woods.

Therefore, I can say we provide a safe haven for our students with limited amount of security and very dedicated volunteer parents.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, so much. That concludes our schools, our presentations for the evening.

At this time, I would like to ask if Raymond Lopez, 15th Ward Committeeman is still in the theater? Can you come to the microphone now, please?

OFFICIAL

COMMITTEE MAN LOPEZ: A lot short other than month speakers. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, members of the panel, our distinguished legislators that are still here with us. Thank you.

I am Raymond Lopez, Democratic Committeeman of Chicago's 15th ward. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak before you
this evening.

I wish to discuss the elementary school situation of West Englewood, all of which have been slated as candidates for closure. The schools of West Englewood are Henderson and Earle in the 15th Ward, Miles Davis, Goodlow and O'Toole in the 16th Ward.

Closer of any or all of these schools would represent a clear and significant danger to the students of West Englewood. As you'll see in the information that I've provided you, in the 15th Ward, West Englewood has a high number of abandoned and unsecured properties.

By my personal count, there are 285 abandoned home properties in West Englewood, along with 35 abandoned multi-unit apartment buildings. Many of our students walk to and from school each day. Closure of any of these schools will force students to walk farther and farther, passing more and more of these buildings.

We are not talking about theoretical possibilities when it comes to the dangers our children are in. It's real and it's already happened. Not once but twice in the past year two
young girls' lives have been forever changed because opportunity and intent merged to create crimes against them.

Members of the panel, I ask you to consider what any closer will do to the community, and what additional risk it will put our children in. Every additional block that a child is forced to walk creates additional opportunities for crimes against them.

I will not and cannot support putting our children at unnecessary risk. We must do everything possible to insure the safety of our children, even if it means asking that schools remain open but underutilized.

These schools are beacons of hope for our community; and on behalf of our community, I beg you to keep them open. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Committeeman Lopez.

Mr. Grant Newborger?

STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Excuse me, before the next speaker comes, I was given this note by a parent, and I was asked to read it, and she wants an answer.

The note says, "Why must black children
beg to be educated?" I want an answer to this parent's question within 14 days.

You tell me why must African-American children and their parents beg to be educated? I want an answer before 14 days.


SPEAKER: Good evening to the panel this evening. I'm going to be short and brief, because everybody I think has really covered most of the stuff that I really wanted to say.

They've been very articulate about the things that's bothering them in the community. I am a teacher. I currently teach at Bontemps Elementary School. I'm active with CPS on various committees. I've active with CTU with various committees in my community.

The thing that especially bothers me, Senator Flowers hit the nail on the head when she was talking about black children. In reading through the history of the schools that you guys want to close, why is it that there's a
disproportionate amount of schools that is on the
south side and the west side that are closing, and
then there are not that many schools in, if any, on
the north side that's closing?

This is hitting the south side and the
west side the hardest of anybody. Like I said, I've
been teaching for 30 years now, and I also wanted to
talk about the victims as far as us teachers who are
trying to teach these children.

I have been a victim of four school
actions during the course of my career between
school closings, turnarounds, whatever else you
want, reconstruction.

If it looks like a duck, quacks like a
duck, it's a duck. Okay? It's the same thing.

Each time I had to get adjusted to a new group of
students and figure out my goals for these students,
and when I have gotten to become a community with
students in schools, then CPS comes in and disrupts
everything, including jobs and personal community
relationships.

So, I consider myself a casualty of all of
that has gone on. I have been blessed to land on my
feet each time, but it is always with
disproportionate amount of depression, sadness and things that I have had to cope with as a teacher at CPS.

I feel unappreciated. I feel bad, and so I know if as a teacher I feel this way, after I dedicated all these years to teaching these kids, think of what the children feel like.

So, you know, I do not know if these hearings are a sham, or whether you are really listening to what these people in this community said.

If you don't listen, I don't know how you guys can sleep at night, if you don't listen to these people. So, please consider what these people in these communities are saying that are things that this is being done to their schools. Thank you.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you, Ms. Murray. That concludes our public participation for the evening. If anyone has any other statements that we can take here, we have to close the venue for the evening.

We will take those, and we do apologize for those who we were not able to get to, if there are people that are still here.

That concludes our public participation in
our community meeting for this evening. Thank you.

SPEAKER: I need one minute.

MR. WILLIS: One minute.

SPEAKER: I have been here four hours, and I've waited. My name is Alexus Brown. I'm with the National Society of Black Engineers. I am a civil engineer.

I originally came here to support Miles Davis Academy because they are NASBE Junior Chapter, which means their students are on the road to becomes engineers like me.

But as I listen to all of these schools, and I say to myself, "All these schools are doing exactly what you said, get better, do better, excel academically." And NASBE's mission is to increase the cultural of black engineers to excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community, and these schools are doing that.

So, as an engineer, who believes in solutions, because that is what we do, I ask myself: "What's real deal here, utilization?" You're trying to tell me because they don't use all of their rooms they have to close?
You can look on the CPS website and see they are doing better. Something else is going on here. I want to know what it is.

I want to know right now what the underutilization really means when academically they are doing better? It don't take calculus and differential equations to figure out something else is wrong.

MR. WILLIS: Thank you for the private comments. That concludes our session for this evening.

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

PAMELA A. MARZULLO
License No. 084-001624

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

Notary Public