FULLERTON NETWORK SCHOOLS COMMUNITY MEETING No. 1

February 11th, 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 2451 North Kedzie Street, February 11th, 2013, at the hour of approximately 7:00 o'clock p.m.

PRESENT:

MS. LESLIE BOOZER, Chief of Schools North Northwest Side High School Network
MS. LYNDAL WILLIAMS, Chief of Schools Fullerton Network
MR. ARNIE RIVERA, Deputy Chief of Staff
MR. PHILLIP HAMPTON, Chief of Family and Community Engagement
FALICIA SANDERS, Deputy Chief
MR. QUENTIN M. MUMPHERY, Director, Community Action Council Family & Community engagement
MR. TODD BABBITZ, Transformation Office
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PASTOR BURNS: Good evening. We're really glad you're here. My name is Bob Burns. I'm executive pastor here at Armitage Baptist Church. I realize it was a little bit hectic getting in.

I do apologize that it was definitely a greater turnout, which is a good thing, than we had expected, but we definitely needed to work on some logistics. So, please accept our apologies.

We are here as a church in this community celebrating our 50th anniversary in the Logan Square community as a church that cares about the children. We care about education. We care about what happens here with the people of our community, and we are welcoming you, opening our doors, for CPS to come in and have this forum so that we could have a civilized dialogue.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

PASTOR BURNS: So, I just ask that everybody would recognize this is a house of prayer, and we just ask that we conduct ourselves in just a respectful and civilized manner.

One of the great things about America we can agree to disagree, and we can do it in a
respectful manner. Again, we're welcoming you here. We are so glad you are. Here we're praying for an outcome that everyone is encouraged and blessed by no matter what happens here.

So, once again, welcome in the name of Armitage, welcome in the name of CPS, and I pray that we have a wonderful dialogue and evening tonight. Thank you so much for coming.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

PASTOR BURNS: I would like to introduce Phillip Hampton, who is the Executive Director of Family and Community Engagement.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. HAMPTON: Good evenings, everyone. Good evening again, everyone. We just want to thank Pastor Bob, and also so for those of you who would like to have this meeting.

It is our intent from Chicago Public Schools, it is our intent to be respectful, to come into your community, and have the meeting. I'm sure that there's a number of parents that would like the opportunity to speak.
So, if we're going to try to move forward with this meeting, and that we hope we invite parents and the community members up to have the opportunity to speak, then you will respect them and allow them to share with us their concerns that they have.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. HAMPTON: CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett charged us to make sure that we came to this community. As you came in, you should have received two documents that are very important, and we want to make sure that you get those.

One document addresses the utilization crisis that we have. The second document provides you a list of all the schools for the Fullerton Network. It is very important you have this information.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. HAMPTON: So, I'm going to quickly get out of the way, but I must share with you we're here because we have a billion dollar deficit, and we need your input to help us make decisions regarding
our schools.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. HAMPTON: So, we want to just quickly introduce our leaders that are here, Chief Lynda Williams from the Fullerton network, Deputy Chief Falicia Sanders, Chief Leslie Boozer from the North Northwest School District, Mr. Arnie Rivera, who is the Deputy Chief of Staff of CPS, and also Mr. Todd Babbitz from the Transformation Office.

So, here is our process tonight: We again want to make sure that we hear from parents and community members and leaders around this issue.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. HAMPTON: So, here is our process tonight: We have a microphone here in the center. Mr. Mumphery is going to announce each school, announce the process we set for each school.

You have three representatives that will speak, and this is to insure that every person or every school in this room is represented.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)
MR. HAMPTON: We also have Ms. Rebecca Gibson who will be our time keeper, and our first speakers will be several elected officials who are here and we will announce them by name.

The last thing I want to mention is it is critically important that we get your input. This young lady to my left is Ms. Pam Marzullo, who is our official note taker who is here tonight. The information that she is taking will be put into a report for Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett.

So, thank you for your cooperation.

MR. MUMPHERY: We have Alderman Sposato of the 36th Ward.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN SPOSATO: I'll take a bullet proof glass to protect myself for a couple minutes. Hi, everybody. My name is Nicholas Sposato. I am the alderman of the 36th Ward. I have a little splatter of applauds. I think a few of you know about me, and you know where I stand.

I'm here to support you, so I appreciate it, but do I have to ask one thing, and that is respect. We're in a house of worship. The pastor asked everybody already to please be respectful.
I know you want to say what you want to say, but we're not going to get anything accomplished if everybody is yelling tonight and everybody doesn't get a chance to speak.

So, I appreciate everybody coming out, bringing their families, wanting to be heard, standing up for your schools and your communities. Thank you very much. So, I would like to give everybody a chance to talk and be respectful.

Thanks again.

MR. MUMPHERY: Next we have Alderman Scott Waguespack from the 37th Ward. Followed by Alderman Reboyras from the 30th Ward.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN WAGUESPACK: Good evening, everyone. Ladies and gentlemen, children, who braved the cold to come out tonight. The battle that you are fighting tonight didn't start this week, last week or a couple months ago. This has been going on for decades, and there's a long list of schools that are possibly on that closure list.

I'm here tonight because I picked up for Brentano Elementary in the new ward map. If you watch what happened over the last few weeks, it was
the parents, the community leaders, the kids, the neighbors, and everyone getting together and fighting for one cause.

It's a cause that everyone in this room that represents their children's school, and the children that go to those schools, can accomplish tonight and in the future.

Some people call it saving your schools. I call it having successful schools with the resources you need to have every child get a fantastic education, like every child in this city should have.

And when you see the people here tonight who are listening, they're going to listen to your testimony. Individuals are working within the system that we have, and the system is bad, the system is broken. So, the work we're doing tonight, we're here to fix that system.

We need to show people that our schools are worth saving, and it's not the first time it's been done. I've worked with a lot of these people in the room on other schools that were on a closure list as well.

In particular, Hamilton School and
Prescott. Both of those schools were readied to be closed, shut down, and let the kids go somewhere else. Let somebody else figure out the problem, and none of us have to accept that for the schools that are represented here tonight.

What you're going to do tonight, and in the future, is do what I've seen Prescott, Hamilton and Brentano do just in the last few weeks; and I suspect that with the amount of people here tonight, the amount of colors, you already are well on your way to doing that.

You're going to work tonight and get the word out that your community wants better schools in Chicago. You're going to work with your kids, your parents, your neighbors, and community leaders to prove to CPS tonight, and in the future, that we don't have to close our neighborhoods schools.

Let us start tonight. Let all these kids know that you're fighting here for their future. Because together, what's going to happen tonight, and in the future together, we can accomplish this, but you have to fight for it.

Like we have and we've been successful. You have to fight for it, and you're doing that
tonight. Every one of these children in here deserves a better school.

Don't throw up the white flag CPS. Don't say that after decades of neglect with some schools we have to give up. The fight starts tonight to make our schools the best they can be, our neighborhood schools. Thank you. Let's get to it.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN REBOYRAS: Good evening. Can you hear me?

(WHEREUPON, Alderman Reboyras made part of his presentation in Spanish.)

ALDERMAN REBOYRAS: I want to say thank you Thank you, Mr. Hampton. I commend the Commission and what you've done here. I commend Ms. Bennett. I want to welcome our mentors, our teachers, our school principals that are here, and our students that are here this evening.

I had a recent meeting with some of our teachers, and we are concerned about school closures. We understand about underutilization, but we need to understand overcrowdedness.

We have two schools. I just want to thank
you guys for letting me to be here today. I came here to listen. I came here to hear some of the parents, some of the kids, some of the students, some of the community organizations, because we need to keep our eyes and ears open.

MR. MUMPHERY: Next we're going to call State Representative Berrios, 39th District, 35th Ward Committeeman Schiavone, and I also want to acknowledge Senator Martinez in the back.

OFFICIAL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE BERRIOS: I'll keep it short and sweet. So, I'll have him translate it.

First thank you to Armitage Baptist Church for hosting and CP actually coming into our community. Thank you to all the parents, educators, community leaders, and advocates for coming out tonight.

We need to insure that the community is heard and our resources cannot be compromised. We need to hold a different approach to changes within the education system. This plan can't only be one year. We don't know if the money is going to follow the children; and as the alderman mentioned, has transportation even been considered?
We are here to make sure our children's futures are not compromised. We need answers. We can't allow school closures in our community. We need our neighborhood schools.

OFFICIAL

COMMITTEE MAN SCHIAVONE: Good evening. I'm Nancy Schiavone, and I'm the 35th Ward Democratic Committeeman, and I'm the proud daughter of a public school teacher who taught for 35 years.

And I can tell you my mother worked and toiled and cherished every single one of her students, and I am so proud to see all of the school children here tonight who are there to support their schools.

True, traditional public education is a unifying element of a community, our community.

True, traditional public education is an essential factor in our democratic way of life; and the last I looked, we live in a democracy.

And when I knock door by door, block by block to Brentano School for the last several weeks, I can tell you not one person who answered the door had any hesitancy in signing that petition to keep Brentano open.
You cannot take away the roots from our children by closing Brentano, or any other neighborhood school in our community. Years and years of siphoning our tax dollars in forms of TIF is unacceptable. Closing our neighborhood schools and opening unnecessary charter schools is unacceptable.

We need to save our schools. Okay, okay. This is a community meeting. The community has spoken. We deserve respect, and we deserve a place at the table. Thank you. Keep up the fight.

MR. MUMPERATURE: Okay. We're going to get ready to call the schools up now. As we mentioned, we ask the schools to designate their speakers.

Because we want every school to have the opportunity to speak tonight, so the first school we're going to call is Brentano followed by Darwin.

SCHOOLS: BRENTANO and DARWIN

SPEAKER: Hi, name is Hector Usini (phonetic). I'm an alumni. I am community member and graduate. My name is Hector Usini. I'm an alumni of Brentano Math and Science Academy.

I'm also a member of the community here. I'm also a proud member of East Illinois University
at the Chicago Teacher Center, so I'm also an educator. I'm here on behalf Brentano Math and Science Academy, basically the only school in our neighbored who is math and science.

In addition, the Chicago Public Schools has been forcing all of our other schools to be forcing our schools to implement, meaning it's a fact opportunity for our communities. Why close it? Brentano is definitely in a position to be able to accept our other students from different schools that might be closing; and it also has the opportunity to accept students from our community that have special needs, who have special education needs, who are in our community who do not have a school to go to.

And there's also future opportunity for our students who are still little enough to understand what Brentano has to offer.

So, with that said, I definitely urge you guys to rethink Brentano definitely has the potential, definitely has the ability to welcome any student in any community here in our neighborhood. So, please take that initiative as well.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Sath Lavin (phonetic).
I live in Logan Square. Welcome to our neighborhood. I have a son who turned two yesterday, and my wife and I have a baby on the way, God willing will be here in July.

We're going to send our kids to Brentano. This neighborhood is full of kids, and those parents are going to send their kids to our neighborhood schools. You are here to be a community hearing. I believe that you are hearing us.

You are looking at the data. You've said Logan Square lost population 2000 to 2010, but you're looking at the data. So, I know you know that the last five years this neighborhood has grown; and in the last five years, the number of children under five in this neighborhood have grown.

You're looking at the data, so I know that you know that Brentano has standardized test scores better than the average for CPS. You are looking at the data, so I know you know the central survey.

You listen to the Chicago surveys. It says we're organized for our improvement. That our NWEA scores are above average. We love this school. This is a wonderful school. We need this school. We need all the schools in Logan Square.
You said you came here to hear us. We gave you 1,000 petitions for Brentano. I believe you're hearing us. You have our trust in our hands. Don't lose that. Listen to us. Don't close our schools.

THE TRANSLATOR: I'm going to give a brief summary in Spanish of the English speakers, if that's okay, so we make sure as many people thoughts get into the record.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name Rosa Posari (phonetic) and I'm a parent. I've been over 20 years at Brentano School. I've been fortunate enough to work with 90 percent of the schools behind me as a parent organizer under housing and other issues in Logan Square.

I've been very fortunate to be able to move back into Logan Square, after having to move to Pilsen, because of economic reasons, but my son never left Brentano.

He was in second, third and fourth grade, got on the bus and drove across the city to stay at Brentano. He did what he had to do to stay at Brentano. He has perfect attendance. He is on the honor roll, and I cannot tell him that he might have
to graduate at another school because CPS is closing
his school.

Our school is behind us to do what they
have to do to go to school every day, and CPS is
telling them that's not good enough. Our kids are
doing their homework, and CPS is telling them that's
not good enough.

Our kids have 20 to 25 students so they
could learn properly, and CPS is telling them that's
the not enough students in there, you need 36 in my
son's bedroom, and they will take my kids away, but
you want to stuff 36 kids in a classroom.

That is ridiculous. Brentano he has a lot
of students, but we utilize that building for play
dates, for community meetings. We, as a community,
get together there.

We just have a brand new beautiful play
lot, but CPS wants to tell us what we just wasted
our money, we're going to close Brentano. That's
ridiculous.

So, will you please tell our students
behind us that they can sleep tonight because we're
not closing Logan Square schools, and the little
kids who are two years old they have a future.
Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. MUMPHERY: Darwin, followed by Goethe.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Lydia Gonzales, and I'm a proud parent of Darwin School.

This school is an important part of this community.

Closing this school or overcrowding it would be a big mistake. Darwin School has been here for many years, preparing kids for their future.

Many have graduated and succeeded. Yes, thanks to the school, parents, mentors, volunteers and teachers and principal who have educated all those children.

I know my daughter has graduated from Darwin, has gone to college, and is now working. I thank Darwin School for that. I'm sure all these parents feel as I do about this school. Please, don't close Darwin School.

It would be like taking away a part of the American dream. Darwin is diverse, united and going every day, and we're here to stay. Thank you for your support.

Please, please, let's not forget our
children. Like I was saying, thank you for your support, but the most important thing is please let's not forget our children is our future.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Hi my name is Catalina Rivera. We are parents of Darwin Elementary, and we have children that currently go to Darwin. Our principal Mr. Sergovi is very engaged with our students, parents and community.

Darwin wants small size classes. According to CPS formula, Darwin is underutilized. We, as parents and community, want small sizes for our children, so our children can learn better and the teachers can provide better care.

Darwin is one of six schools in the city that have dual language in their school that teaches English and Spanish simultaneously. We also have Spanish. We also have music, art classes, science club, culture exchange program and healthy eating.

We also have programs for our patients and community, like parent mentor, patrol, English classes, computers classes and self-esteem classes, also nutrition classes.
We, as parents, do not want our classes to have 30 kids or more. As parents, we want small size classes. Please don't close Darwin.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. MUMPHERY: Goethe followed by Ames.

SCHOOLS: GOETHE and AMES

SPEAKER: Hi, I'm here tonight as a parent from Goethe, but I'm here on behalf of all the schools in Logan Square that are threatened by closing.

It is so important that schools like Goethe that are operating at or, in fact, above capacity stand in solidarity with the rest of the schools in Logan Square and the rest of the schools across the city.

We have a basis. Schools are closing and consolidated in our neighborhood. There will be even more enrollment school demand for our schools that are already operating at capacity.

According to CPS, we're at capacity; but, in fact, our art classes are held in our cafeteria. In fact, our principal is deciding what walls could be pulled down last summer to figure out how we could fit in another first grade class.
The important thing to know is that actually five years ago, we were very, very low in enrollment, and people were worried about being closed, and then we grew 40 percent in the last five years.

Darwin and Brentano are in a position now better than it was five years ago. They are under capacity, but they are opposed to closing with obviously incredibly well-organized parents, the parents who recognize the increase in demand for community schools, for neighborhood schools, with deep roots in our diverse and thriving neighborhood.

So, I just want to give the rest of my time obviously to schools who are threatened, but know that we are all standing as one in this neighborhood. Logan Square is united.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Delia Bonilla. I'm a parent from Ames School. I have two kids and I'm here, I think all of us parents are here for them because we're raising our voices because it is not just for them to roll over them without them having the right to defend
themselves.

In our school, we're working very hard as parents and with teachers and with the principal, so that every day our kids can make progress. It's not just for them to close our schools. In the case of Ames School, to try to turn us into a military school.

92 percent of our parents are completely against this, and I want to tell CPS that we're working very hard so they will sit down with us so that you will listen to us. We don't want to have to fight. We want you to sit down so we can put the resources our kids need into our school.

Our school is a level two school, and we're working very hard, and it's the only school in Logan Square that has a clinic for the community, and we're not going to stop. We're going to get there so all of our schools are open for our community.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Juan Carlos. I'm a sevenths grader from Ames Middle School. I'm here to say no to closing Illinois schools. No to changing names. They are our beloved schools.

It should be our choice to keep them
neighborhoods schools. Each student, parents, community members are like a branch. Part of that branch could be broken easily.

Today not even a rock, not even CPS, not even the Marine can break us. Our voices will be heard. Today we'll make a difference. My favorite school, which Alderman Maldonado wants to change it to a military school.

60 percent of the people polled in the neighborhood said no. Isn't seventh grade too early to militarize our students?

The great teachers, janitors, lunch ladies, administrators at Ames will lose their jobs, and students will lose their mentors and power. If schools are closed, we're the ones that are going through hassles. We students want CPS and politicians if they're thinking about changing our school, they should think again.

Ames is a unique and good for kids and our parents. If Ames changed to a military school, current students be sent back to overcrowded schools from which they came, or will they be forced to travel far from home to attend another school.

Some people think Ames is a phase school.
We are level two working to be the best in the city.

We made great progress. We have great programs at Ames.

It offers orchestra, sports, bears club, snowboarding, bicycling, chest club, leadership and monitoring scholar level and first-year-students that focus on high school and college readiness.

This is not to mention some.

I love Ames Middle School as it is. There are a lot of kind people in this school. Our lunch ladies, administrators, security, are really good and professionals. I would like to tell you about two teachers, their names Mr. Shackman (phonetic) and Mr. Deboss (phonetic). They helped me become a better person, and I would like to thank them for that.

We're in this together. Let's stick together and save our schools. Thanks for listening to our and my ideas about this very subject. Thank you for listening.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good evening everyone. My name is Christina Torres. I am a parent of three children
in Chicago Public Schools. I'm also an alumni of Funston Elementary school. I'm here to talk about the Logan Square Neighborhood Facilities Council and our organization.

As you all know, I handed out some data. As you know, Alderman Maldonado has been lobbying to replace Ames Middle School, which serves the Logan Square neighborhood with selective and citywide Marine Academy. We oppose this.

Alderman Maldonado and Mayor Emanuel are supporters of Marine. We understand Marine would like to move into a Latino neighborhood. We are sure that they can find a different site for Marine in a Latino neighborhood, or even in the 26th Ward, without destroying Ames, a good level two community school.

But since our testimony to this committee has become even more convinced that the future of Ames lies elsewhere. Marine, just a few statistics, Marine is underutilized. Its space utilizes negative 36 percent, and it's classified as underutilized.

So, it does -- it doesn't have to be moved, and why does it have so few students?
Perhaps because Marine is -- Marine has poor retention records.

So, meanwhile, parents, community reps, teachers and Logan Square Neighborhood Association, along with the School Facilities Council, we've met with Ms. Williams and also with Mr. Hampton, to talk about different opportunities, different ways to use our building.

So, again, we met with the council. We are looking at better models for Ames. One of those is we're looking closely with Community Links, a high school built by the principal Dr. Carlos Azcoitia, a new CPS board member at Spry School in Little Village.

Community Links is last level two school. Unlike Marine, it has bilingual services which our community needs. 87.1 percent of freshmen graduate within five years, compared to 72. -- 78.2 percent to Marine. 100 percent of freshmen are on track to graduate compared to 89.9 percent at Marine.

So, of importance to parents and community is also the following: 37.3 percent of misconduct results in suspension compared to 24-and-a-half percent at Community Links.
So, again, we urge you and beg you to please let us work together with CPS to approve Ames, through an appropriate community-based model such as Community Links. Thank you again.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.

MR. MUMPHERY: We have another one of our elected officials that is here, Alderman Moreno from the 1st Ward, Joe Moreno.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN MORENO: Thank you all. Thank you all. I apologize. The Fullerton Network was scheduled at the same time. I was at that meeting first, and this one now, and then I'll go back to that one.

I want to specifically talk to you about three fantastic schools that are in the first ward, and that's Goethe, Yates, and Otis. These schools are here tonight with resources that they want to present to CPS, resource requests.

These schools, three schools in my ward, are doing fantastic job and need to remain open.

So, I'm here tonight to tell CPS that our community schools, our three community schools, are here to
ask you for resources.

They are their schools. They are not CPS schools. They are their schools. So, please, for the folks that Goethe, the folks at Yates, the folks at Otis, I appreciate you coming here.

I also want to talk to you about Brentano School. Brentano School is not in my ward. Right over here we helped this city. We went out on the cold night to save this school, because my parents, my children, are going to Brentano and Brentano needs to stay open.

Even though it's not in my ward, Brentano needs to stay open, and needs to continue doing the things that it's doing well; and I've been there with you, and I'll continue to be there with you.

Thank you very much for letting me speak.

Save our schools. Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. MUMPHERY: The next two schools we're going to call we'll have first Belmont-Cragin, followed by Northwest Middle School.

SCHOOLS: BELMONT-CRAGIN and NORTHWEST MIDDLE SCHOOL

SPEAKER: Thank you for listening. Thank you
for inviting us. I want to say I'm a teacher, and I have been teacher for 23 years.

I taught 10 years at Goethe. My name is Barbara Ramirez. They used to call me Goethe from Goethe. My daughters went to Goethe, and I had a daughter who graduated from Darwin Elementary. My other daughter attended Belmont-Cragin. I'm a parent. I'm with you.

Dear members of this school, the Belmont-Cragin Early Childhood Center opened in 2003. It educates 360 preschool children between three two-and-a-half hour sessions.

Our center is one of only two of early childhood preschools programs in the Chicago Public Schools that had been awarded with NAEYCA Accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Every day 100 percent of our parents are engaged in parent-child activities during arrival time, becoming our partners in education.

This partnership has been the cornerstone of our success. Our students need the experience of seeing their parents participate in the teaching and understand that the parents and the teachers are a
great team.

Our center is a pioneer in providing bilingual education for preschool students as a response to the linguistic and cultural needs. 90 percent of our students are English language learners, with 71 percent of them being Spanish speakers only.

Our staff is highly qualified and certified in early childhood education with endorsements in bilingual and ESL instruction. Our unique early childhood special ed program or inclusion classrooms are model programs that are sought after by parents in special education placement specialists.

Our school provides a curriculum that engages the children in meaningful projects and studies that help our students develop early literacy and mathematical skills, along with scientific and social knowledge.

This curriculum meets national early learning and developmental standards. The Belmont-Cragin Early Childhood Center is a Reggio-Inspired school implementing the philosophy of Reggio Emilia, Italy, has been recognized as one
of the best pedagogies in the world.

Our center has become model to be emulated and has received hundreds of visitors over the years from around the world. The center has inspired many preschool teachers and administrators to change their learning environment and their teaching practices.

For nine years, our center has proven that quality education is possible with the dedication, the preparation, and the experience teachers. We believe in the potential of our children.

I know I would like to finish by quoting President Obama's letter to me when I won the Kohl McCormick Early Childhood Teaching Award. He said, "Giving a child a quality education is perhaps the greatest challenge that we face as a nation today," and at Belmont-Cragin have met that challenge. Let us continue. Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: I have testimonial letters, and I also have the letter in English and Spanish that I have for each of you. Thank you so many.

SPEAKER: Hi. You know, I really should have
I just thank God that I'm here tonight in his house, and you know I just wanted to be very brief to allow time for everybody else, since we've already taken up so much time, to give you a parent's perspective; and the parent's perspective of the school it's amazing, from the second you pull up into the parking lot until you get out of your car to go into the school, it's just incredible, the family environment that you have.

I need to clarify that are two facilities. There is one facility that is just dedicated to the pre-K is what you've heard so much about, but there's also another school for the bigger kids just a couple blocks away that is equally amazing.

When I walk into those doors, I'm just as happy as I am in that school. So, this community has two schools to remain open. I just want to show the principal support and the head teacher support.

You know, when you are looking at what kind of schools you want to keep open, you want people who are actually going to be there, and these are the people that are going to be there.
Look at them, they are here for your, and
here for me, and here for my children, and your
children, and their children. Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was
made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Arlette
Arroyo. I'm from Belmont-Cragin. I'm a sixth
grader. I wrote something. It's called "The Speech
of Our Home."

Belmont-Cragin is a school full of hopes,
dreams, faith, happiness and hundreds of memories
from the good to the bad. Although the school maybe
small, it has big means to many hearts.

At this school, I learned that sometimes
you have to get out of your comfort zone to be able
to experience new possibilities. I learned about
loyalty, confidence and trust, and how those things
are not just simply given, but things we must earn.

The students, teachers, parents, everyone
has helped make this school a big success. We can't
just let all their efforts go down the drain.

The teachers here enjoy seeing their
students make discoveries and explore the outside
world. They're also so supportive and a huge
inspiration to many. Without them, we wouldn't be able to learn about the many things we know, and we wouldn't be able to open our eyes and see how intelligent and bright each and every individual is.

Yes, we've all made mistakes, but that's how we learned many life lessons from each other. The school has security, and all the staff members make sure we're safe and know what's best for us.

The school has given us so many opportunities, such as giving us a chance to visit the Illinois Math and Science Academy, also the DePaul University, Northwestern University and participate in Brookfield Zoo science Fair.

Another opportunity would be to enjoy our childhood by giving us extra-curricular activities and field trips to amusing places, such as the Winter Wonderful Fest at Navy Pier.

Our principal, Mrs. Stewart, is a big part of the reason we're a big success at Belmont-Cragin, everyone feels like family. The tiger is fierce, full of pride and won't give up automatically, which is just how we are.

It's a school full of second chances and hope. Belmont-Cragin has helped students set aside
side their differences and realize we're also alike, yet unique in our own. Belmont-Cragin is a school of pride and joy and doesn't deserve to be taken away from any of us.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. MUMPHERY: At this time thank you all Belmont-Cragin. I'm going to invite Northwest Middle school up. As Northwest Middle School is coming up, for those schools who have spoken already, we have facilitator here.

If you want to have a more specific conversation about your school, you are welcome to. You don't have to. If you would like to participate, you all may go to the break-out rooms to have that conversation. Northwest?

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Steven Carapreso. I'm the assistant principal at Northwest Middle School.

I want to talk about a couple of the numbers that appear on the space utilization report. First of all, it states that it costs $24 million to
maintain or update Northwest Middle School.

Northwest Middle School, as we see it, has -- we have three fairly new computer labs. We have science labs in our school.

We have handicap access to our building. We have a school elevator in our building. We have air conditioning in our rooms. This $24 million seems to us to be inflated, and so we do disagree with that number to maintain or update our building.

Another number is we are, according to the report, 34 percent underutilized. That could be attributed over the last few years to new schools, charter and public schools, that are opening up in our area.

We have gone from about 1100 students down to about 700 within the past few years; however, we are flattening out now. Our projections for next year is what we currently have enrolled at our school. So, if everything remains the same, we will be there.

The other schools that house sixth, seventh and eighth graders in our area are overcrowded. They are overcrowded. Rachele School, Hanson Park overcrowded. If you are looking to ease
their problems, they are overcrowded. We do have space in our building.

Northwest Middle School has a tremendous school community. Sitting behind me here tonight for Northwest Middle, yes, we are teachers. Yes, we are parents. Yes, we are LC members.

My school clerk is here tonight. My lunch room manager is here tonight. My teacher aide is here tonight. We have a great school community at Northwest Middle School.

For parents, as part of a school community, we offer GED classes. We offer ESL classes to our parents, book clubs, technology classes. So, our building does serve as a community center.

I will end on this note: That I do invite the Fullerton Network, yes, you have been in our building. I invite other CPS officials Mr. Hampton, Mr. Babbitz, to please come and let us show us our school. Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Melissa Niano. I'm a supporter of Northwest Middle. I volunteer every
day. My son has been a part of the school since last year, and he has made great improvement. He also tells me that he finally feels that he's a part of the school community and not an outsider.

He told me on his first day of school at Northwest Middle that he was never happier. So, I decided to go inside. In that, my sister has twins. They are in seventh grade also this year.

They came last year in February. My niece was pretty much a D student. My nephew was F and D, and because Northwest Middle, my niece, within the last two quarters of last year, she became an honor roll student.

She's high honor roll, first two quarters of this year. My nephew has made great improvement because of the special education program that we have. He is now a B, C student. It's just a great school, and I would hate to see it close.

We don't deserve it. We need that school open. We deserve it to be open. Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Julio Cintron. I kind of want to tell you my story. When I sent my
son to Northwest Middle School, I sent him there to fail. I sent him there because I wanted him to go to North River. All of his friends were going to Northwest Middle.

I'm sorry, I sent my son to Northwest Middle so he could fail. My intentions were for my son to go to North River, because they had an opening holding for him; but he urged me to go to Northwest Middle and see what the school was like, because his friends were going there.

Ironically enough, that night he came home and told me, "Dad, it was the greatest place I could be." That sparked my curiosity. So then I went to the school.

Last year, I volunteered and taught an art class in Northwest Middle, the reason being because these children needed it so much. I took a year off of work to volunteer at Northwest Middle. The children are crying for me to do it now, but I can't because I got to support my family.

These children need this school. You have to understand I look at our school, and look at the children around, a lot of them need special education. We have one of the best special
education teams.

I know we can improve in a lot of other things, but I believe with the help of the network, that we can save this school, and that's where I'm at. I'm sorry. Thank you.

MR. MUMPHERY: All right. The next schools that we have are Manierre, followed by Yates, and then Jenner. Manierre, Yates and Jenner.

SCHOOLS: MANIERRE, YATES and JENNER

SPEAKER: Good evening. I would like to talk to you about a school. The school is called Ferguson Child-Parent Center. It's a grant from George Manierre Elementary School located in the old town community.

Ferguson Child-Parent Center continues a long-established tradition in providing high quality education through the use of the child-parent center model. We provide comprehensive education and family support services to children ages 3 to 5 years old, as well as the full-time parents development program for families.

At present, all rooms at Ferguson are being utilized. Thanks to the collective effort and work of our school staff and families, many children
at Ferguson enter kindergarten scoring at or above
district averages on the Kindergarten Readiness Test
in areas of language, literacy math, and work
habits.

This year we have been able to expand
these services to families through a grant from the
U.S. Department of Education. We now offer three
full-day classrooms for four-year-old children
entering kindergarten in the fall.

Here at Ferguson we emphasize the
importance of developing the whole child by
providing opportunities for family participation at
schools, and as well as at, home during these
formative years.

This is the story of one school, Ferguson
Child-Parent Center. This story could be echoed
around this assembly tonight and throughout our
city.

As we examine the many facets of the
school utilization process, I urge you to keep all
of our early childhood centers open. We must find
the resources. We must find the resources for
preschool education, or we will be forced to find
resources for prisons. It's that simple.
We have to educate our children. It's a shame that we're standing here fighting for the right to educate our children when they are dying in the streets day after day after day.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone. My name is Margarita Miranda. I'm a PAC parent. Also local school council vice-chair at Manierre School Elementary.

I stand before you today to ask you to ask that you keep the doors of Manierre School open. We have a new administration who are working diligent to improve our schools.

They have motivated teachers to teach beyond their comfort zone, so that students could learn beyond their comfort zone. Manierre serves as a safety zone for our students.

Our doors are open pour students as early as 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We have programs available for all students. We have forged many partnership. Our new administration has been in charge for six months, and we see the improvement.

Our NWEA results shows gains for our
students. Students were given a back-to-school picnic, along with their families.

Parents have also received Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. We are really afraid that if our students have to travel to another school, their lives can't be as safe.

A change in school means a major change in livelihood, which means it's not for the better. There is an attack on students, and we don't want to take that chance. Please do not close our school.

Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Susan Spodoro (phonetic), and I'm an art teacher at Manierre Elementary School.

Each one of our students are precious and enthusiastic to learn under the new leadership of the Principal Mr. Ore and the assistant principal Dr. Davis.

Tremendous progress is being made and continues to uplift the students educational experience and enables them to realize the full potential that each of them has.
Most of our kids come from the housing association across the street from the school. This close proximity helps with improving attendance on the students and establishing closer communications with parents and guardians.

Because students are from the same neighborhood, they are familiar with each other. It is noticeable to me that the younger students, as well as the older students, develop a friendship and enthusiastic for learning that is highly desirable in a public school environment, and would likely not exist if this bond were to be broken by attending a school in other areas.

I brought examples of the quality work being done in art by very young children at Manierre, and I would like to take the opportunity to show you a couple samples. These are good luck hands from the children in first and second grade.

If I could read a couple little notes that goes with it. It says, "Good luck to my friends at Manierre, good luck to Manierre School and good luck on your test."

Here is another one. One of our drawings by one of the first grade students, and this one I'm
particularly proud of is done by one of our special need students.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was, made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: I just wanted to finish by saying again the new principal, Mr. Ore, and our assistant principal Dr. Davis, are bringing in energy and professionalism that will enable Manierre to improve performance levels.

Please give us the chance to continue good work on behalf of these deserving students by giving them a chance. Thank you.

MR. MUMPHERY: Yates.

SPEAKER: I am an alumni seven years at the Manierre. We the first people that send and started the parent patrol and the city caught on to us. I don't feel it's right that I'm an alumni, and I'm 65 years old, and I can't speak for my community.

MR. HAMPTON: Ma'am, we ask you to leave. Time is running out.

SPEAKER: That's not right, Terry. You know that's not right.

MR. HAMPTON: One minute.

SPEAKER: Hello, ladies and gentlemen. I'm
I'm old time protest. I am alumni. I'm 65 years old, seven generations come from Manierre and Ferguson, 30 and 40 in a classroom.

We were the first one to send a class to Walter Payton High School when it got built. We also from Manierre and Jenner. We also feel that you should not close Manierre School, or Ferguson by any means necessary, any means.

We're not transit. This is family. Familia. This is not about teachers, social workers and all this. When they come to our school, we embrace them as a family.

You know what a family is? Generation to generation to generation. I'm sorry, when you close Near North High School, we was down there in Paul Vallas' face. Terry, I remember you from long, long ago. I am tired of having to come back out here and fight again because freedom is not free.

SPEAKER: My name is Charise Mendoza. I'm also a parent of Manierre. I would just like to say that by closing our school, you are not helping us at all.

We have new administrators who are working
for the community for the teachers. They are helping educate parents. The parents are there doing a better job for their children. You have to give us a chance.

You're supposed to work with us. You can't put a knife in our back. I don't have the finances as a single parent to send my child out of the neighborhood on CTA. Where is the money coming from? Okay?

We're working really hard. I'm asking that you give us that chance to prove that we are also someone.

SPEAKER: My name is Mildred Walton. I have been a teacher at Manierre School for the past 24 years. Manierre is a community school, and has always been a community school, and has been there for where kids can go where they were not wanted.

We sit smack dab in the middle of triangle of three magnet schools, now a charter school and a classical school in our area. Where else will our children go?

We demand that our schools stay open, because we have been there for the families and for this community for many years. 24 years I have
taught there. We have some of the most dedicated parents and teachers in our school. So, we are asking that Manierre School please stay open.

MR. MUMPHERY: All right. I'm going to ask Yates to come up.

SCHOOLS: YATES

SPEAKER: My name is Amy Garcia. I'm a third grade school teacher. I am a Nationally Board Certified Teacher. I just want to say wonderful things are currently happen at Yates. Please don't close our school.

Currently a bilingual classroom has made 75 percent growth, and the other two third grades maybe 68 percent and 62 percent growth respectively. So, 75 percent of bilingual classes is pretty significant.

We also have an amazing administration. We have a principal that has been dedicated to our school for so many years, 25 plus years as a teacher and vice-principal, and now currently principal.

She's completely invested in our school and so willing to try so many different things, especially ways to differentiate the classroom, especially on Fridays with NWEA parent instruction.
So, please do not close our school. We are working on many programs and projects to improve student growth at Yates.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: My name is Maria Pena. I'm a mother at the Yates School, and it's a shame that they are trying to close our Yates School.

I also have three kids that have graduated from Yates School, and one has become a nurse, one has become a social worker, the other one has become a paralegal from DePaul, and they all graduated from Yates.

So, I have proved Yates makes leaders. If they say we are all equals, why are they treating those who are from these schools as enemies?

We want us to be all united. We want you to look at us at partners to invest in our education and make progress. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Antoinette Jackson. I stand before you for two reasons: One, Yates School is not a school that I graduated from. Surprisingly enough, I came here from another school, and then I see that they are here.
It's ridiculous that we are putting a price over their heads of our children's education. You know, Yates School is a place where I formed life-long relationships with.

I have lifelong relationships with friends and teachers to this day. There are teachers that taught me that are still there. One of them is sitting in the audience right now. I don't understand why it is that we're choosing to do this to our children and generations to come.

On behalf of Jenner, I'm a parent of Jenner. I have a child that goes there. I have siblings that go there. I have two siblings that just transferred to that school from another school and love it, so much that they want to go tutoring after school. You don't find that. You really don't find that in this day and age.

To maybe at the end of this year to have to tell them the school is going to be closed, I don't want to do that. I'm not going to do that. Keep the schools open.

SCHOOLS: JENNER

SPEAKER: Hello, everyone. My name is Josh.

I'm an eighth grade student at Jenner Academy of
Arts and a lifelong resident of Cabrini-Green.

We have seen school closed around us by
Byrd Truth, then Shiller and buildings that once
housed our families and memories face to rubble.

We are excellent students that love our
family schools, community and teachers. A school is
more than just books, desk, chairs and whiteboards.

A school is a strong hold, a staple in a
healthy community. School closing means you have
turned your back on teachers, communities and
students. We are the future. Many kids in our
school look up to us; and when we graduate from
Jenner, we want to come back and lead by example.

These programs make Jenner special:
Igniting minds, Payton Math Partners, algebra, math.
We have two Murphy Scholar Winners, tutoring
programs like Rocket Learning, Brain Hurricane,
Orient Mind, Sinai scholars, and sports like
basketball, cheerleading, softball, volleyball,
tennis, football and double dutch.

SPEAKER: I'm a proud educator, proud resident,
proud teacher these young people who I am teaching
just on this day about social justice, about what it
means to stand up for your community.
What pains me is that we are educators standing on the frontline that have to gravel to keep community schools open, schools that stay open because they are there to educate the entire child, the entire parent, not charge fines, not build more charters.

We need the money from the charters. We are tired of privatization of public education. We are tired of community schools being closed. We are tired of these racist practices and this apartheid educational system in this school.

It's time for these practices to end, to truly look into the eyes of these children and tell them what you want for their lives. This is not about teachers today. This is not about just these children today.

This is about changing the landscape of this city the way that we know it. It's about these children being able to live in the communities that they live in right now five, ten years from now.

This is about these children's children being able to come back to go back to Yates and say, "I graduated from here." It's about pulling up roots of the people, the very people who built this
city.

So, let us be real clear what's going on here. We got to come out and hear you, but are you really hearing us, or are you just taking notes? Are you looking into the eyes of these babies? Are you looking into the hearts of these parents?

Are you really talking about the jobs that will leave this city, the teachers? Are you talking about that? Nobody has mentioning that. Teachers of color, black and Latino teachers who came back, who had opportunities that said, "No, I am going to educate the children in my community. I am going to educate them like me, so they can go to college."

Are we really about this business, or are we just here to do the mayor's bidding so we can play nice with others? So we can say we had an opportunity to be heard, but you don't really hear us.

You don't really make changes. You just roll over us and steam roll us in this city. It is time for the people of the city to stop playing nice. Take the blinders off. Get serious about what's going on.

If you do not stop this machine now, you
will not be in this city in the next five years.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Hi, my name mail is Rosa Rodriguez,
and I a parent volunteer of Jenner Academy of the Art. I have been a volunteer at Jenner for several years.

I feel our school should not be closed down because, as a parent, I have witnessed firsthand dedicated teachers and staff who work closely together that go above and beyond to the point and teach the whole child.

I have also observed that our teachers truly care about the children we serve. Closing our school we will have an impact on our community. Our children's safety and education will be at risk. Closing our school will over populate another community school.

Our kids will not benefit from an overcrowded school. Community schools need proper resources, adequate facilities, so all of our children can learn and become the best they can be.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)
MR. MUMPHERY: We have next Chase, McCauliffe, Mozart, LaSalle.

SPEAKER: I was told to come up and speak.

MR. MUMPHERY: Which school are you?

SPEAKER: For Darwin. I had to find the principal to see if it was okay, because my daughter a long time ago used to go to Darwin School. Okay?

MR. MUMPHERY: Wait. Are the other schools here? Are any of the over schools are here?

SPEAKER: They asked me to come after the interpretation.

MR. MUMPHERY: Are Chase, Mozart, McCauliffe, LaSalle here?

SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Bess Retifield (phonetic). A long time ago in the year 2000, my daughter has gone to Darwin School. We were homeless for over two-and-a-half years.

She made it there during the time of her first year in first grade or second grade, I think. It was in second grade. Anyway, she made honors in that school. Even though we went through the homelessness and going through seven shelters, and went home in Berwyn, she was making great grades and was passing.
Now she's 19. She's in college. She happens to go to Champaign, U of I, majoring in psychology. It wouldn't be possible if you close the school. If they closed the school when we were homeless, I can't see how a charter school would support the homeless.

Are they going to let people go from one distance to another to stay in one school? I don't think so. You need to not to be closing the schools like that. You need to keep the public schools open because they help us support even the homeless. She probably would be out on drugs right now if they did the same thing during her time.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. MUMPHERY: All right. If none of the schools that I called previously are here, that means we are at the end of our public participation. Thank you all. Lincoln.

SCHOOL: LINCOLN

SPEAKER: Hi, name is Lisa Barrow, and I'm an economist, and I've worked in education research for past 15 years.

Tonight I'm here as a parent of two
students at Abraham Lincoln Elementary, a school that is one of the overcrowded schools in our network. I'm here to voice my belief that small, safe, walkable neighborhood K to 8 schools are the best model for Chicago.

Given the complexity of the factors that impact school performance, it is difficult to show statistically some of the benefits that accrue to smaller schools.

However, we know from research by the Consortium of Chicago School Research that students in the small high schools that were created under the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative. Those students reported better relationships with adults in their schools, stronger connections with other students.

They indicated they felt challenged and supported. They had better attendance rates and were more likely to graduate from high school.

Teachers in these small schools consistently reported more positive working environments, marked by collegiality, innovation and trust.

I also believe that parents may be more likely to participate in a smaller school, where
they can more easily see the benefits of their efforts.

Finally, schools with walkable attendance boundaries, reduce transportation costs and are more environmentally friendly. At a time when this committee and the district are considering closing and consolidating schools, I hope you will remember there are also schools within our network that are overcrowded, that small K to 8 neighborhood schools are a good model, and that the best solutions may involve redrawing boundaries around overcrowded schools and shifting attendance to existing school buildings in our network.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. MUMPHERY: All right. We are at about 9:15. We went a little bit over our time. We thank you all for that.

Pastor Burns is here, the pastor of Armitage Baptist Church. Pastor, you want share an closing remarks?

PASTOR BURNS: Good night.

MR. MUMPHERY: Thank you all.

(WHICH WERE ALL THE PROCEEDINGS HAD.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS )
COUNTY OF COOK )

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

____________________________________
PAMELA A. MARZULLO
License No. 084-001624

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

Notary Public