GARFIELD-HUMBOLDT COMMUNITY MEETING No. 2

February 27th, 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 2622 West Jackson boulevard, February 27th, 2013, at the hour of approximately 7:00 o'clock p.m.

PRESENT:

MR. PHILLIP HAMPTON, Chief of Family and Community Engagement Chief
MS. WANDA WASHINGTON, Chief of Schools
MR. CHIP JOHNSON, Deputy Chief of Schools
MR. RANDEL JOSSERAND, Deputy Chief of Schools
MR. ARNIE RIVERA, Deputy Chief of Staff
MS. SHONDA HUERY HARDMAN, Chief of Fullerton
MS. THERESA PLASCENCIA, Chief of Schools
MR. ADAM ANDERSON, Office of Portfolio Planning & Strategy
MR. STEVEN ZRIKE, Chief of Pilsen Little Village
MS. KATIE WELSH, PILSEN Deputy of Pilsen Little Village
MS. TRACEY GINWRIGHT, Assistant Deputy for Garfield-Humboldt Park
MR. LORENZO RUSSEL, Deputy Chief of Fulton Network
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REVEREND BRADY: Good evening,
Garfield-Humboldt Network. Good evening, public schools. We got a house full of excited people. Good evening, CPS. We'll have our voices to be heard tonight. Can you make some noise? That's good stuff.

I have to remind you of something very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very important. I have to remind you we're in the House of the Lord tonight. We have 175 people in the room that's going say Halleluiah.

Since we are in the House of the Lord, we must be reminded of things will be done decently and in order. Notice I didn't ask you. Things will be done decently and in order. We don't curse in here. We don't fight in here. We don't belittle in here. We build up in here. We encourage in here.

We let our voices be heard in here, and if it gets good, we'll even praise in here; but we came here tonight to let the city now we are here and our voices will be heard. Let me hear you make some noise.

They told me there are two types of schools, there are thermometer schools, and a there
are some thermostat schools. The thermometer
schools, those are the schools that just kind of go
with the flow, whatever the temperature is in the
room. That's just what you are going to get from
them.

We need some thermostat schools.
Thermostat schools are the schools that set the
temperature. We know what it's going to be up in
here. All right, here we go. We're going to have a
word of prayer. We're moving forward. You all
ready? Let us pray.

Father, in the name of Jesus, we thank you
for safety tonight. God, we thank you for a spirit
of unity. God, we come into everything that is not
like you. We thank you right now we lift up our
children before you. We lift up what's important
before you. Your words say train up a child in the
way that you should go when you go. He will not be
apart.

God, we thank you for our children. We
thank you for the favor tonight. We thank you for
the schools that need favor that you'll move on
their behalf, in the name of Jesus. God, we lift up
our administrators before you. We lift up our
leaders before you. We lift up our teaches before
you. We lift you up our students before you.

    God, pray for those that have ruled over
us because they have worked for our souls. So, we
thank you for them tonight. Now, God, have your way
in this place. Every voice that needs to be heard,
let it speak.

    We thank you for everything that needs to
be said will be said, and we thank you for a spirit
of peace, and unity, and it is in Jesus name we
pray.

    Everybody who believes in shouting, amen.

Do me a big favor, can you put your hands together
and welcome Alderman Irvin, as he comes to welcome
you.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN IRVIN: Thank you, Pastor. I have a
got a little different role this evening. I want to
welcome you all to the Mount Vernon Baptist Church.
Pastor Johnnie Miller is not with us this evening.
I'm standing in his stead to welcome you
to our facility here at the JLF Center. I want to
thank pastor. I want to thank you all for coming
out to voice concern about what is happening in this
community. I'm going to turn it over to Chief Washington. She's going to start the program from here.

MR. HAMPTON: Good evening, everyone. I'm not Chief Washington. She's much prettier than I am. I'm Phillip Hampton. I am the chief of the Family Engagement for Chicago Public Schools.

I want to first thank the pastor who opened it up. I understand. I understand. Hold on now. We want to thank Pastor Brady, the gentleman who opened it up for us with the fine prayer, and also just remind you that we have children in here.

We know that this is a very contentious issue. We understand that, but everybody sitting up here in front of you will be respectful to you, and respectful to our children, and we just pray that you will do the same.

Also, we appreciate Alderman Irvin, who also in his capacity here at the church opened up the meeting. We want to thank -- personally thank Reverend Johnnie Miller, the pastor of this church, who allowed us to have both of these meetings here. We do recognize he's out of town, but we want to say thank you for that.
The reason that you are here, we're going to get right to it. This your meeting. Chief Wanda Washington is going to give you the directions on how we're going to hear from representatives from each and every school under consideration.

The only thing I beg of you is you allow us to just take two minutes and give a brief presentation on this document, the one that you should have in your hand, which explains how we got to this process from over 30 schools to the 129 that are currently under consideration, and recognizing that it will be less than that.

That when the final recommendation comes out from Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett, it will be much smaller than 129. So, it is important that you know that. So, as we said, this is your meeting; and in order for you to be heard, we want you to be respectful to one another. All right?

So, just quickly, who is here, so you understand that we are listening. You have Ms. Marzullo, who is here, who is the official court reporter, who is taking notes of each and every comments that is made, which will be formed into a report that goes to Dr. Barbara Byrd-Bennett.
She can't raise her hand because she's typing as we speak. Also, quickly, Chief Wanda Washington, just raise your hand, please, who is the chief of this network, Garfield-Humboldt Park. Her deputy, Chip Johnson, who is the deputy here. Chip, it's nice to see you tonight.

Also we have Randel Josserand. Randel, I apologize every time for that, who is the Deputy of the West Side High School Network. His chief, Theresa Psascencia, who is the Chief of the West Side High School Network.

We have Mr. Arnie Rivera, who is Deputy Chief in the CEO's office who is here tonight. We have Chief Shonda Huery Hardman, who is the Chief of the Fullerton Network. Her deputy, Mr. Lorenzo Russell, who is here; and then also Mr. Steven Zirke, who is the Chief of Little Village Network.

So, you needed to know who is here and who is listening. I'm now going to turn it over to Ms. Wanda Washington, who will give us further instructions. We appreciable your support.

MR. ANDERSON: Good evening, everybody. I want to be very, very brief. My name is Adam Anderson. I'm the Officer of Planning and Strategy.
I just want to quickly walk everybody through the handout, and I'll hand it over to Chief Washington to facilitate the rest of the conversation.

First I want to echo the thanks of everybody that's here today, parents, teachers, communities members, but especially students. Thank you all for coming. I want to very quickly walk through the handout. There we go.

Very quickly, the front of the handout, which has two lists of schools. Give me one minute to quickly walk through this handout, please. I would like to move on to the presenters, so please give me one moment. Thank you.

The front of the page outlines a set of schools that were initially under consideration, and 14 schools that we're here to talk about tonight.

The middle, and I'm not going to read this to you, the middle is the list of criteria that we're currently using that we heard from the community through the Commission on School Utilization, as well as our first meeting.

I want to emphasize what Mr. Hampton said. These 14 schools, 129 across the city, none of them
are currently recommended for closure. They will not be all recommended for closure tonight. This is a continuation of the conversation.

The last point I want to make, on the back of the sheet where there is a data table, I want to emphasize tonight is the continuation of the conversation. We had a court reporter at your first meeting. We capture every comment that was made at the last meeting.

CEO Byrd-Bennett outlined the questions on the bottom, as the questions she wants to start to hear more from the schools to keep the conversation going.

Now I want to also call, this is my last point, call attention to the final question. Of course while the other questions are all questions the CEO has asked to hear more about, we do of course want to hear any other comments or concerns or thoughts about your school that you think are important.

So, this is a continuation of our conversation. We will continue to listen; and again, if there are any recommendations made, there will still be additional meetings after the
proposal.

So, again, I want to thank you all again for coming. I look forward, just as everybody else does, to hear from you. So thank you again. I'm going to hand it over back to Chief Hampton, Chief Phil Hampton, to keep the program going.

MR. HAMPTON: Okay. Before Chief Washington lines everyone up for your comments, we must acknowledge our elected officials. You heard from Alderman Irvin from the 28th Ward. Also, Alderman Michael Chandler from the 24th Ward is here.

So, we would like to invite our elected officials to make comment. Alderman Chandler, if you please come to the center and make comment.

I don't know if Alderman Irvin, you will make subsequent comment, and then we'll go right into our public comment.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN CHANDLER: Thank you. Save our schools. Save our schools. Save our schools. The people united will never be defeated. We're fired up. I won't take it no more. We want all of our schools to say open.

That is the message we want to say to CPS,
and that the schools on the west side, south side
they need more resources, just like the schools the
north side.

We need some computer labs. We need
science labs. We need libraries on the first day
school. We need textbooks. When the principal
rings the bell for school to start, we need our
textbooks in our classroom.

So, this is the message I want to send.

We do not want CPS to balance their budget on the
backs of our children. Thank you.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN IRVIN: Thank you. This is the sixth
meeting that where we've been to myself, personally,
with these schools, between this network, Fulton,
and the Austin Network. The process that has been
laid out is the same.

This process pits schools against one
another, pits communities against one another, pits
people against one another, and this is no way to
run a school system in this day and time.

As Alderman Chandler said, we want the
same resources that Lincoln Park has, we want it in
Garfield Park. The same thing they have up on the
northwest side, we want it at Austin.

We want the same stuff for our people in our community, because they're not going through this same type of mess that we're going through right here. We understand the Board has a problem. It's not a problem that we created. It's not a problem that should be solved by us.

It's not a problem that needs to be balanced on us. It needs to be that the school system needs to respect these communities, respect us as people, and respect these children.

We've got little kids, and they're going to come up here and say, "Hey, please don't close my school." What on earth are we putting kids out here as pawns for what's happening in our school system?

So, we want the Board to know that we want resources for our children. We want the Board to know that like Chandler said, we want the textbooks, the computer labs, the iPads, the whatever pads, and whatever else that those kids up north have, those kids on the south side have.

We want the same thing for the children here on the west side of Chicago. So, we will not sit back and allow folks to dictate to us what they
want. It's our job, the people in this community, to tell them what we want. We want the same resources that other kids have, because I'm tired of watching our children go to the penitentiary, go to the grave yards, and go to everywhere else but to college.

Three percent, three percent of the boys that graduate out of this system get a college degree. So, 97 percent of our children are boys that are without college degree. Something is wrong with that.

We want to create a system that allows our children to be successful, because they are building penitentiaries left and right for our kids, and it ain't right.

So, we want to make sure that our kids get the best start, and the best start in our community, not somewhere else, but in the neighborhood they live in, the neighborhood they grew up in, the people they know, the teachers they know, and the school they know. Thank you very much.

MS. WASHINGTON: Good evening, everyone. It's time now to hear from you; but let me give you the ground rules. Let me give you some protocol here.
We're going to start with the schools that are here tonight that have proposed action. So, the 14 schools that you list listed that Adam just talked about. You have six minutes maximum each school. You can do one speaker six minutes, two speaker three minutes each, three speakers to minutes each.

We're going to do the schools in reverse. When we had our other meeting, we started off. So, in all fairness, we're going to do it in reverse tonight.

If you have any documents, when you are speaking, if you have any documents that you want to turn in to us, make sure you leave them at the table here, once you come up to speak.

Is all of that understood? But more than anything, we're going to do a decent and what else? And in order. Decent and in order. So, let's start our public comments tonight.

We are going to start with Webster School. Webster, where are you? Come to the center aisle, and let's hear from your speakers; and following Webster, will be Laura Ward. So start getting ready, Laura Ward.
SCHOOL: WEBSTER

SPEAKER: Good evening. I represent the community for Daniel Webster School. I'm also an alumni from there. I just want to talk about how important the school is to our community. If you really look at the demographics and what goes on around there, about two blocks north, there is a lot of violence and a lot of drugs and a lot of things that goes on over there.

If you shut Webster School, and you go to the closest school -- if you shut down Webster School, you will have to go through a lot of gangs and drugs and things like that to get to the next school in the community.

They are really safe schools for the people of that community. Another thing about that school, though, is that it's really special, and it's really a family there.

Every year, past teachers and alumni come back and work with the president, in order to serve food to the community, and do different community programs like GED program in the past. That's just all on top of what they've done with the students.

They have done a great job. If you look
at the scores over there and see they out performed the whole CPS. They are doing wonderful things over there. This is a great school for a great community.

I am a product there. I graduated from Northern University. My degree in English. I'm working for CPS now at College Academy. I am a product of these teachers and their hard work that they have he dedicated their lives to.

Please save Webster. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone. My name is Alex King. I'm in the seventh grade and a student from Daniel Webster. I'm also on the executive board of my school. Our student council is here today. I am here today. I am here today with you to talk about some issues concerning my fellow students at Webster School.

Our school is on the list to be closed; and since the school can't speak for itself, we're here to take a stand and speak for it. Most schools on the west side are on the list because our schools are underestimated and misjudged; but did you know that my classroom achieved 100 percent meets and exceeds on the ISAT reading and math?
We are proud of that. We are not on probation. We are proud of that, too. We are proud of all the achievements and gains our school has made, and we have more to come.

We believe, as a matter of fact we know, that Webster does not deserve to be closed. It has been stated that our school is only 68 percent utilized, meaning that 32 of the school is not being used.

I can attest that our school and our classroom has 31 students in it. We are jammed packed. Our classrooms are being used to better our education. We have two computer labs and two science labs.

Our school is not underutilized. We benefit from our responsible class size. We also hear lectures at school from people who come all over just to talk to us because they believe in us. They always tell us that we are the children of the future, and what we do now in our young stage accounts for our future. Our school has always -- has allowed us to get a good education started, and start our lives off on the right foot.

But if our school gets closed down, and we
have to go to a new school, we basically have a zero percent chance to become valedictorians, or receiving our sports awards that we have worked hard for. Myself and most of my students have attended Webster since the age of three, three years old.

There are many gangs and rivals between west side schools. I don't know about any other schools, but I feel safe at mine. If I have to attend another school, if I have to attend another school, I believe I will fear for my life, and I don't want to be bullied.

Bullying is not tolerated at our school.

I love coming to my school. I love coming, I love coming to my school. Our class has 95 percent attendance rate, one reason is because we feel safe.

If you close our schools, I'm afraid this will change. Please, for the sake of my life and others, please, for the sake of my life and other persons' lives keep our school open.

We also have a lot of history. If you ask them about Webster School students, they will tell you that most of their families attend and graduated from Webster, and also let it be known that there are many of our schools who take -- of our students
at our school who take at least two or three buses
to get there.

That is dedication. We love our school, and it deserves to stay alive for more children to prosper and to make new history and memories.
Please don't allow our legacy to die. We have much more to show and prove, Alex King, Grade 7.

MS. WASHINGTON: At this time we're going to have Alderman Walter Burnett speak, and following him Laura Ward School.

ALDERMAN BURNETT: Good evening again. I know I was just with you all last night. First of all, I would like to give honor to God. I know this is Reverend Miller's church, and we would like to honor the pastor who allowed you all to use this place. I want to thank him very much.

I'm here representing Beidler, Calhoun, Ryerson, and Ward, Laura Ward. So, like I said last night, and again I want to thank all of you all, I want to thank all of you for taking your time to listen, you all listened before.

You put down some of the schools so that we're asking you for more consideration. In a lot of these schools, it will be very dangerous for you
to consolidate them. It would be dangerous not only for the kids, it would be dangerous for the people who live in the community.

You know, some of these -- just about all of these schools are in the 11th District. They have the highest crime rate. I think they have the highest homicide rate in the City of Chicago, which tells you that there is a lot of gangbanging going on in the community, but I want you to know all of these parents feel safe when their kids are at these schools.

That's one thing that they don't have to worry about. They don't have to worry about their babies being shot, being killed, being recruited by a gang, because they have a lot of good parents and all of these schools working for them.

All of these schools, and even one of the people on your board, was the principal at Ryerson, and he actually put Ryerson on the right track; and Ryerson has been continuing to grow ever since and getting a lot of extra resources.

The new principal that is there has been getting a lot of extra resources in that school. I was just there with the foot depository. We just
put in a new library over there. There is a lot of
good things happening over there.

I was just at Beidler last year when you
proposed to put Beidler with another school, Canter
and we stood up and we told you about all the
wonderful and great things that are happening at
Beidler.

We just spent millions of dollars putting
in a new playground in there, a brand new building.
As a matter of fact, as a matter of fact, just this
winter we was there with the mayor, and we did a
press conference and Mayor Rahm Emanuel was talking
about how great Beidler was.

I just don't understand why they're even
on the list. You know, so we say Ryerson -- I was
just at Calhoun. Now you know Calhoun grades are up
there. As a matter of fact, I think they one of the
highest in the state, above the state average. They
are one of the highest in their area, and they are
in a gang-infested area.

As a matter of fact, you know, the ironic
goingenuous to me, because me and the community, we
allowed for charter schools to open in the area.
As a matter of fact, Calhoun -- I mean Calhoun is doing better than the charter school that's opened up down the street from them as far as grades goes.

I tell you, it's disingenuous for us to push for people to have more choices in our ward and not knowing that you are going to use that against them because the kids come from their school and go to the charter school.

That's not right. That is disingenuous to the aldermen. This is disingenuous to the community that they let these charter schools open. We didn't want these charter schools to open at the sake of other schools closing up. That's just not right.

So, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have started mentioning the names. I said Ryerson. Laura Ward, now Laura Ward is doing fantastic. Laura Ward's grades, you all have them at a level 2 right now.

They were at a level 1. You all keep raising the bar. As soon as they get at level 1, you all raise the bar, now they're at a level 2.

I think this is terrible the way that you all raise the bar on those SAT scores three times, and you put all these -- I'm going to tell you all
of the hoops that you asked all these schools to
jump through, all the things that you have them do,
you change the scores on them. They get up there,
you change them again. They get up there again, all
of the hoops that you put them through. I'm going
to tell you even having the charter schools around,
you have made all these schools better.

I ask all of you all, and I beg all of you
all, give these schools another chance. Give them a
chance. They will meet any guidelines that you all
meet, but you cannot put them out because their
populations are low, because you allowed for other
schools to open up and take their kids. Thank you
very much.

MS. WASHINGTON: Just before Laura Ward comes,
we want to acknowledge the presence of Alderman
Waguespack from the 32nd ward. He won't have
anything to stay. Where ever you are, would you
raise your hand? The alderman is in the back.
Thank you so much for your preference.

Let's go with Laura Ward. Tilton School
will follow Laura Ward.

SCHOOL: LAURA WARD

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Janay
Lowery, and I'm from Laura Ward, too. I'm an eighth grade student. My school is Laura Ward S. Ward School has been put on the closing list due to under enrollment, but Laura Ward is a great school. The teachers are understanding and caring. They are nurturing, and they push us to our absolute best.

I have been on the honor role since preschool, and I am now in eighth grade. I know that we will never find teachers who are so caring and determined to help us excel in life.

I travel from the far south side of Chicago to the west side of Chicago just to go to school, only because Laura Ward is my home. I know you are probably thinking why I care about our school closing, since I'm going to be graduating soon; but I have three younger siblings going to Laura Ward, and they are devastated to hear that their school will be closing soon.

They are learning so much at Laura Ward, so why take them out of their environment and put them in another one? Since my younger brother and sister started going there, I have really seen development in their reading, math, writing and people skills.
I've seen such an improvement in them since before they started school. I know that every school you close is an extra of 400,000 to 800,000 saved, but you're gambling with our education.

Closing schools at our expense, it's not even like they are using the money to better our schools, because the majority of the schools still have outdated books and ancient computers.

I know you see it as more for money in your pocket, what about us and our future? Laura Ward has prepared me for high school, and the teachers have pushed put me to be my best.

We might not ever find a place we can call home again, and the teachers and staff members who care so much about our lives and future. I really hope that you take into consideration how we feel about and the damage that closing our schools has on our lives. Sincerely, is Janay Lowery.

SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone. My name is Officer Harold Peete. I'm retired from the Chicago Police Department. I have been at the Laura Ward school for over 19 years. I have a passion for these skids.

Currently I'm one of two security
supervisors at the school. Myself and Officer Gamble, we work closely with the principals and teachers and students, staff and community. I'm also involved with say the and security on our campus.

We have established a very strong and safe and supportive school environment, according to your "My Voice/My School Survey." So don't close our schools. We are on the rise.

We are doing great things to address our safety and security issues that will impact our student achievement, 9 point bullets.

From 2000 to 2013, we've implemented an Junior Police Program through the CAPS and also a Police Explorer Program. In 2011 to 2013, we partnershiped with Junior Achievement. From 2012 to '13, we have lawyers in this the classroom.

2012 to 2013, myself and Officer Gamble are constantly always implementing conflict resolution, because we are monitoring and building relations to support our students. It's not just socially but emotionally.

Right now, we interact with our students not just at school, when we are out in the beat, we
interact with them out on the street. Right now we have parent volunteers that do mentoring as well as tutoring at our school.

And this year before the end of this year, we are going to have a school forum that will provide our young people from five to eight to be able to give input on issues in our community.

Also, we're going to implement peer jury for our students by the end of the year. Please don't close our school. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Jacqueline Levit (phonetic). Dear Barbara Byrd-Bennett and Rahm Emanuel, our school, Laura S. Ward, is on the list of closing due to under enrollment.

Even though I'm an eighth grader, this is my last year at the school. I still have younger siblings and other families that still be attending the school. Laura S. Ward is a great school.

They teach us beyond what we need to know, prepare us for the next chapter in our life. They not only provide us with scholastics, but prepare us for the world which you know will be ours.

We have learned of the challenges of reality, and believe that education instilled us,
that we will overcome all and any obstacles. Laura
Ward teachers have brightened our horizon by taking
us on trips, like last year to Washington DC, and
this year hopefully Toronto, Canada.

Closing down our school will be a
travesty. We are a level 2 school, with 81 percent
of our students at grade level or above. We have
out performed any level of the schools of CPS, and
we need Laura Ward to continue this success.

SPEAKER: My name is Aaron Bennett. I
graduated from Laura Ward two years ago, and I now
attend Lane Tech College Prep.

I'm not here to reminisce on the past, or
beg people to keep these schools open. I'm here to
talk right about right from wrong, the decisions
that effect our people, the rights and wrongs that
will make or break our future generations.

Today, more than ever, time and decisions
are most crucial. We can't waste time testing
waters, making decisions, hoping it works out.

Already short on time, we need to make
decisions that will leave us better off for
generations to come. Laura Ward needs to stay open
not for the teachers, not for the jobs, but for the
greatest thing anyone can offer, and that's a great mind. Thank you, have a nice evening.

MS. WASHINGTON: At this time before Tilton comes, I want to acknowledge the Cook County Commissioner of the Second District, Robert Steele. Will you stand? Thank you for your presence. And also at this time Alderman Waguespack is here.

After he completes, we'll go to Tilton; and following Tilton, will be Ryerson.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN WAGUESPACK: Ladies and gentlemen my name is Scott Waguespack, Alderman of the 32nd Ward north side.

This isn't my ward, but I do have two schools or three, if you count the ones surrounding my neighborhoods that are on the closure list.

Like you, I don't want to have to beg to keep my schools open, and I'm not going to beg. This type of assembly should be happening every couple months, and all of you should be coming forward; and talking about all the great things that you are doing, instead of all the great things you are doing and begging to keep your school open.

They should be left open. They should be
given the resources they need to do this every day of the year. I was just talking to the kids from Melody back there. Now they are going to petition letters to the elected officials and people that are going to make the decisions about whether their school stays open; and I hope you do send them to me, because I want to read them.

But the one person in this city that should be here tonight is Rahm Emanuel. He should be at every one of these meetings to listen to these kids and parents talk about their future.

That's all I've got to say, where are you?
Thank you.

SCHOOL: TILTON

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Mrs. Ray from George W. Tilton. I'm a parent Volunteer, LSC and NCLB member. I just want to stand before you tonight to let you know why you shouldn't close Tilton.

Tilton has made great progress. Our attendance has been the highest for the past five years. The last four years we have had the highest composite scores on the ISAT, and we have moved from a level 3 to level 2 school. We currently have
music courses offered to our third-grade students through a grant from the Phil Harmonic Orchestra. The instructor says the students are excelling, that they are three weeks ahead of the program.

Tilton offers social emotional programs to our students as well. We have had many renovations done at this school. Our auditorium has been restored through donations LaSalle Bank.

They gave a donation as well for our library so we could revamp it, but we do not have a librarian. We have a beautiful art room, but we do not have a teacher to fulfill that placement.

I ask that you all give us the resources that we need in our school. Tilton is a place where our students consider to be home. Tilton is not just a school, it is a landmark. It has been in existence for over 100 years.

We have a strong alumni and parent support. So, don't close our doors. Keep Tilton open. Allow us to continue to grow. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hi, everybody. My name is Joan Lowe. I don't have a student at Tilton, but my daughter did graduate, my son and my daughter. I think I was before you guys three years ago and Tilton was up on
the list also.

I asked for safety patrol for our skids, we never got it. You was talking about closing Marconi. Leave our schools alone. Leave them alone. We're fine. We don't need you.

I have an after-school program where kids from high school come to Tilton to be in my after-school program. They feel safe with me. I call the police, they don't come.

They're selling drugs right across the street from Tilton, and you guys talking about putting charter schools there. Is it going to be safety for them? No. Leave our schools alone.

MS. WASHINGTON: Ryerson Elementary School.

Ryerson will be followed by Piccolo.

SCHOOL: RYERSON

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is a Emanuel Thomas. I stand before you tonight representing the student body of Ryerson Elementary School. Ryerson is the home for many of us.

We've grown up and matured over the years. We can't even imagine the doors abruptly closing on us for. For many of us, Ryerson is our legacy. Not only have I attended Ryerson since pre-K, but all of
my siblings also attended Ryerson.

I'm a seventh grade student anticipating graduation next year. I can't even imagine starting ninth grade year in a different elementary school, in an unfamiliar place where there is no one who knows me by my name.

The teachers at Ryerson care about me. They have watched us grow into the young men and women we are today, and they are more than just teachers, they are family.

I remember a time when one of the teachers at Ms. Robinson helped me to advance in reading and math. She helped me realize my potential, and ever since then I have soared.

I am one of the top students in my class, and I'm happy to push my friends to do their best, just like my teachers have done over the years. I have seen great work done at Ryerson over the past eight years.

Our school has made tremendous progress over time, but it is not fair to be punished for a year of going through the turmoil of three different principals. Aside from being 58 underutilization from this year, we have dropped from one-level
school to a two-level school, but who wouldn't under
up these circumstances.

This school year has brought us stability
of a new principal who truly cares about us. We are
for all the children. She has put structures in
place. We are moving in a positive direction
bridging academic gaps and where there are
consequences for negative action. She reminds us
every day that there's greatness in all of us.

We still have work to do, and many things
to accomplish; but by putting all the pieces
together, I know it can be done. I'm asking you to
take into consideration the many things you will be
doing by closing the doors, if you close down our
school.

To those of you here tonight, I want you
to hear me when I say that we have a remarkable
family of teachers and staff and members at Ryerson
who care about us and our futures. To shut down the
doors of Robinson will be to shut down an entire
family and its great future.

We are critical pieces of the with a great
future, and so are you. Hear us CPS, keep Ryerson
open.
SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Pastor Bernard Clark. I'm the pastor of the New Community Baptist church, 3421 West Chicago Avenue, and I'm here on behalf of the Ryerson School.

I'm not begging. I'm just saying to you keep our school open. None of our children, none of my biological children attend, but some of my parishioners attend; and yet within six months, I've walked through the school and I've seen within three principals that this new principal that they have is bringing about a change.

There's a new library. There is a fine arts program. There's an art teacher, and now they have art; and then she did something that I've never seen in probably the last 20 years, that she allows everybody in the building, there is something called all hands on deck.

Art teacher, gym teacher, everybody during the course of reading, they'll go and assist with reading. Nobody is saying nothing to that.

Back then, people were begging for preps and shooting for preps; but at Ryerson School, where Mr. Russell made a big change, and now the third principal, I knew the new lady, Ms. James, she's
making a total difference.

Keep it open. They've added a new clinic, the Erie Clinic. They are opening themselves up to the community; and not only that, they are making a change. Keep Ryerson open.

SPEAKER: Hi. Name is a Janice Clark. I'm the chairperson for Ryerson LSC. You have the data in front of you, and I will quickly go through this.

Chicago has been unvalued because of the crimes plagued in our community. A parent's worst fear is sending your child to school, and they do not return home.

This is something as a parent we agonize every day, as we open the doors and send our kids off to them. Safety is a very important concern to us. I'm going to ask you to look over to your right.

Student red lives in the 3800 block of West Huron. That student will have to walk a total of 12 blocks 1.2, miles, 24 minutes to get to and from school B, cross five main busy streets, Chicago Avenue, Augusta, Division, Hamlin, Central Park, walk from seven differently branches of gangs.

Student blue lives in the 500 block of
Monticello. That student will have to walk a total of 16 blocks, 1.4 miles, 28 minutes to get to and from school C, cross four main busy streets, Hamlin Chicago Avenue, Austin and Division and walk through eleven different branches of gangs.

Student purple lives in the 900 block of North Harding. That student will have to walk a total of 15-and-a-half blocks, 1.4 miles, 30 minutes to get to and from school F, cross four main busy streets, Hamlin, Central Park, Homan, Chicago Avenue and walk through eight different gangs to get to school.

Our children will have to go through colossal of elements where they do not understand and should not understand because as an adult, I do not understand. They will be sent out into a battle field, a war zone.

I am tired of hearing about kids dying, every time you turn on the TV. We need to protect our children. Give them a safe and quality education that we promised them.

As a parent, we should not be losing a student every week. We should not have to plan a funeral for our children. We should be picking up
the high schools they are going to, the college that
they are going to, wedding details and celebrating
them moving into the world to make a difference.
You need to reconsider closing our schools.
MS. WASHINGTON: Piccolo school, followed by
Melody. Piccolo will be followed by Melody.
SCHOOL: BRIAN PICCOLO
SPEAKER: Hello, everyone. Good afternoon. My
name is Jakeya Pittman. I'm an eighth greater at
Brian Piccolo school.
This year our school has been so much
better since we have been turned around by AUSL.
Now that it has been changed to where our school has
been a safe learning environment and our school has
become a family.
We as students learn better, listen better
and behave better in class. At Brian Piccolo
school, the teachers staff and ESPs encourage all
students and push them more harder to exceed and
grow academically.
Our teachers believe in us and take us
seriously. Last year the teachers who listened to
us actually helped us change or improved our
weaknesses.
Now that we have new teachers, they enjoy listening, helping and understanding what we're going through as students. The teachers also push our thinking, help us be creative and discuss the lesson so that we can understand.

Not only do the teachers teach the students, they go a mile and care about the students and individual. Besides studying, besides being in class, staff members are a way to connect with the children, pass over them at the same time.

At Brian Piccolo School, we have school events. We have three labs and students work toward student behavior. More important, we have websites to help students lead and exceed on the NWBE ISAT test. They come to learn and study.

As far as eighth grade, teachers help us apply and achieve high school so that we cross the right road to graduate.

Principals and teachers honor the students for coming to school every day. Each class has a goal of 96 percent attendance or higher. So far every class has met or exceeded the goal at our school.

This is because teachers sitting in the
classroom, and Ms. Campbell encourage us to come to school every day on time. Ever since then, I've seen the bar high and reaching the bar at 100 percent every day. So far, our school has been going good. Please don't close our school. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Taeisha Duke. I'm a parent at the school. I'm also the president of the PAC meeting. I also volunteer at the school. I've been involved with Piccolo for over 20 years, because I went there, and my kids also go there. The best thing that ever happened to Piccolo was when they turned it into AUSL.

Last year, the police have been up to the school every single day from 10 to 15 times. This year they had to walk up to the school to ask the principal and everybody, "Is everything okay, because we haven't got a call yet?"

All the violence has stopped. Last year we didn't have anything for the school. This year we have a football team, basketball team, cheerleading team, dance team and so on.

There are so many activities that go on to keep the kids forward. We also had the kids where
Ms. Campbell, our principal, had Brandon Marshall from the Chicago Bears to come practice with our kids.

You have people riding past the school asking, "Why is the police up here? What happened now?" Ain't nothing happening now, everything is happening right now. That's what's going.

I just want to let you all know that we have scored the AUSL. We have the highest MAP ISAT test at the school. In reading, we are at our goal in reading, and I'm letting you all know before you all think about even closing it down, just be prepared to open up that third floor, because we got people overflowing and coming in.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Lynashia Lindsey, and I'm currently a proud Piccolo School of Excellence parent. I am a parent volunteer at my school. I'm asking that you reconsider closing Piccolo.

Piccolo just underwent an action. The school went through the turnaround process, the first year turnaround school. This is our six month, and we are making huge gains. Before the turnaround school, I would describe the school as
chaotic.

The students did what they wanted to do.

He walked out of the classrooms when they wanted.

They roamed the building. There were violent fights
leading up to eight students being expelled last
year.

There were food fights at least once a
week. There were parent fights. The parents were
fighting the students. The police stay at the
building and work their beat from inside.

Some of the fighting has to do with the
teachers fighting -- I mean the children fighting
the teachers, and this was a sad place to call a
school. This year, it appears that the light switch
has been turned on and began a new era.

We have some of the students, but at a
different level of accountability. I attribute this
to structure, high expectations and support. We
began this year with Ms. Campbell setting the tone
being firm and fair.

We have an active PAC parent involvement,
computer classes, ASL classes for our bilingual
parents, starting a health and yoga fitness class.

We have volunteers to provide teacher
support. There are expectations for every level of the building, like hallways, bathrooms, lunch rooms, computer labs, auditorium, a play lot, playground and enter and exit the building at a level zero.

With these culture and climates and instructional structures in place, we have found our MAP achievement data has increased from August 2012 to January 2013. Over 74 percent of our students met or exceeded their targets in reading, and over 87 percent of our students met or exceeded their targets in math.

We have the highest scores in math in our AUSL network, and the second highest growth in reading in our AUSL network. Our attendance is up by 1.5 percent points. Our attendance is currently at 94.7 percent, a drastic increase from the 93 percent at our last year.

Our enrollment increased from 424 students to 534 students. We have more than 100 students currently enrolled in our school.

MS. WASHINGTON: Melody School, followed by Marconi.

SCHOOL: MELODY

SPEAKER: Good evening, community leaders. It
is the laughter in the hallways. It is the
resounding voices. It is the everlasting sites of
learning and growth. It is the breath and heart
beat of our community, our unified and improved
community.

Melody School is not just a building. It
is a spirit in our community. I am just one voice
of Melody. I am Beck Chiusolo, and I have been a
part of Melody for the last 15 years. Melody
adopted a new philosophy, don't let change happen to
you, be the change.

Find your spotlight. Strive for success,
and with that change, Melody took hold of new
methods and looked to the future of our students to
prepare them for high school and college.

Melody has received rigorous professional
development and training. We have been an early
adapter school for three years, implementing the
common core state standards. Melody was one of the
first of three schools to stand up and utilize the
extended school day.

Our data will speak for itself. Melody
has improved steadily. We are on the rise. Level 1
status is within our reach now. Melody has faced
challenges and defeat, but we have stood up, dusted
ourselves off, and took pride in our community and
school to make our change possible.

Melody took on this endeavor with
perseverance and determination. We are moving
uphill, gaining momentum. Please, do not be the
reason we have to stop.

I am only one voice. Please, the most
important voice are our students, our own children.

Listen to their voices.

SPEAKER: I am a voice of Melody. I am
Ladonya. "Mama, I want to go to school." "No,
honey, you can't." "Why not?" "You can't because
they shut down."

Personally, would you like to have to say
this to your child? It will be heart breaking,
wouldn't it? Closing Melody means you are sending
little kids farther than they have to go.

They will have to pass sad memorials of
people have who died, drugs selling on the corners,
and even some gang lines. Closing Melody will put
the students at the risk of being shot, hurt or
worse, killed.

Melody is home to many children. Melody
is the place that is safe haven and serves to protect and guide the students.

SPEAKER: I am the voice of Melody. I am Emoni. Melody has modern technologies such as classroom sets of iPads, laptops, charts and posters.

Melody is setting children up to be high school and college ready by using technology. We have after-school programs, Saturday school, family focus, Real Man Read, Walk for Kids, yoga and Junior Achievement.

We have a strong partnership and support for Mr. and Mrs. Pepper, founder of Pepper Construction. These programs prepare you for the real world life experiences that we will need to conquer. Melody is also the place where moms, dads, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters have attended.

It is a family school.

SPEAKER: I am a voice of Melody. I am Tiance. Let's talk numbers. Melody School increased by 15 percent, a double-digit gain of students meeting or exceeding state standards tests.

We are increased 14 percent in reading and 18 percent in math and 11 percent in science. Can
you believe it? This shows Melody is getting closer
and closer every day to becoming a level 1 school.

We can and we will become a level 1
school, but we need you to let us remain open to
reach the very high expectations, hopes and dreams
we have had for Melody.

We are above average in expected gains on
the NWEA assessment test. Nationally Melody's
misconduct resulted in suspension percentage started
at 84 percent in 2011. It has decreased almost half
to 47 percent in 2012.

This shows that Melody students have taken
this new change seriously and are learning more.
Here at Melody we don't only learn academics from
our teachers, but we learn life lessons as well. If
a student or faculty member falls down at Melody, we
all have to rise back up and try begin.

SPEAKER: I am the voice of Melody. I am
Monesha. Melody has received recognition
achievement and award. Melody received a 2012
academic award from the State Board of Education of
Illinois.

Melody has been spotlighted in the
newspaper. Our students have their lesson plans and
unit plans posted in the large central room of CPS.

Our Melody teachers were in the spotlight in the CPS video, Chicago Public Schools move to common core; and we have received the Outstanding Teacher's Award.

We have honor roll assembly, perfect attendance recognition, world censorship award, recognition for growth, for gains in reading and math NWEA monitoring.

Melody is not just a school. It's where we come to learn, have fun, eat and have a bond like no other. There is no other school like Melody. If we stay open, we will continue to improve and be the best we can.

We are the change we've seen. If you want change, you have to fight for it, and Melody is fighting the best fight to keep our school open.

Our actions speak louder than words.

MS. WASHINGTON: We have Marconi School, followed by Goldblatt.

SCHOOL: MARCONI COMMUNITY ACADEMY

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Daniele J. Pattie-Horton. I'm the local school council chairperson for Marconi Community Academy.
I come to you tonight to say that Barbara Byrd-Bennett and Rahm Emanuel should be ashamed of themself. We are taxpayers. Our voice needs to be heard. This Board here is not fair.

Today they give us three minutes, February 5th they have gave us two. This was not enough time for us to prepare to get our point across. We demand to meet with Barbara Byrd-Bennett and Rahm Emanuel to get up there now. Our school is more important to us and the community and its service as a resource for our children.

Put more money back into these schools, through a ten-year master facility plan before you to school closure. Ms. Barbara Bennett, gangbangers start in public school. School gangs and drugs all are together.

It is not safe for any child to walk from Marconi to Tilton. He or she cannot cross Maypole and Kostner on the east side because of the different gangs.

Tilton can't cross the west side of Kostner and Maypole. Now you want to rob the community, it's also our community, our network.

Now you want to rob the community to serve your
political agenda.

Barbara Byrd-Bennett makes $240,000 per year from CPS and works Broad Foundation. It's charter school, people. She has a book called "Tool Kit." Check the news, people, and count the news, too, because school closure got it.

Ms. Bennett we know you know how to close schools, and you leave poor communities of color without hope, just like you did in Cleveland and Detroit.

Barbara Byrd-Bennett and Rahm Emanuel's hatchet man, I say to you all today, they didn't do the utilization right. I had someone help through me through that. God is good. They don't count special ed rooms and different things.

So, we're going to continue this, but I say do a ten-year master plan. Bring the LSCs and these parents to the table before you start closing these schools. It's a shame. It's a shame that our little babies. If you save the children, the school will be saved.

I got a handout. It's a shame, just a shame. But I'll tell you, I'm suing you all; and when I sue you all, and I sue the Board, I'm suing
every last one of you all, too.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Andrea Baldwin (phonetic). I'm a parent at Marconi School. Can you hear me? I'm a parent at Marconi School.

You can not be surprised by the voices of the people in the room. You're coming -- since I've been here, we've been asking for transparency. We've been asking to really to be able to see what is going on and what your plan is; and year and year after year, you give us the same thing.

And then you look in this room, and you want people to show respect and be happy and joyful about the fact that you want to close our schools.

You're asking our children to walk through crime-infested, drug-infested, gang-infested neighborhoods and act like everything is going to be okay.

When you, yourselves, will not put your children or your grandchildren, our your neighbor's children, and get up at 8:00 or 7:00 o'clock in the morning and walk your children through these neighborhoods. You want to talk about facts.

That's just it. The facts is this, the fact of the matter is we know what these
neighborhoods are. We know what is goes on in this
neighborhood. You know what goes on in the
neighborhood.

Turning a blind eye doesn't make things
changes, it just means you turn your back. That is
all it means. You talking about save passage. This
ain't safe passage. You know what this is, this the
middle passage, because when our ancestors got on
the ship, they were supposed to have safe passage.

This is ain't no school you are giving up.
This is straight up genocide. Quit playing with
people in your community.

This is where the majority came from. We
came from Africa. Our ancestors were hard-working
people. It don't matter what color you are up
there, you know where you came from. You know
hard-working it took your great parents to get here,
and now you want to hand us any old thing and say,
"Accept it," and walk around like we ain't supposed
to fight. Time now for planning. Be for real with
us.

SPEAKER: My name is Darien Thomas. I'm the
community representative on the local school council
of Marconi Community Academy.
First of all, I want to thank Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Tracey for coming to our school on Monday at our local school council meeting to meet with us.

We are here in this community as stakeholders, our parents, community, elected officials and more importantly students.

When we think about the community, we think about the stakeholders invested in our community. I'm a resident of the West Garfield Park neighborhood and a by-product of Marconi Community Academy. Indiscriminately close to our schools, you are ignoring the problems of drugs, gangs, violence that have been the most ubiquitously pervasive things in our community for over the past 30 years.

At Marconi Community Academy, there are teachers developing the children, to prepare them for their future. We have programs that are enriching the lives of our students. We have debates. We have Chicago Children's choir. We have student council.

As part of the our delegation here today, we have teachers that have taught me personally. We also have teachers that have moved on to implement
board policies.

If you guys truly want to educate, if you want to inspire, if you want to transform, you need to invest -- you need to continue to invest in the progress we're making at Marconi Community Academy.

You guys came to our school, and as you guys recently know that our principal submitted her resignation. She submitted her resignation because there is no determination of whether or not Marconi will be open in the next academic school year.

I ask you guys if you are offered a job, and this job told you that you were perfectly qualified for it, that there is a talent to this that you can meet, but they can't promise you that you will be hired next year, why is it that you wouldn't take that job? Why isn't that you wouldn't move on to another job.

The problem we see at our school is that these schools are definitely on the hit list to be closed each and every year. If these schools are continuing to be on the hit list each and every year as a potential of being closed, how is it that we can attract the top talent to come to our schools to teach, to lead us, to be the principals?
We ask you guys to make sure when you are considering closing these schools, you consider the violence that the students have to walk past each and every day they go to our school.

Thank you guys very much for coming out to our school, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Washington.

MR. HAMPTON: Goldblatt followed by Garfield Park.

SCHOOL: GOLDBLATT

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Talisa Walker. And as a parent and a former student of Goldblatt School. I know firsthand about the great work that is going on at our school.

Our ISAT scores have continued to go up each year in science, math and reading. So we know our students are achieving.

Our 2012 school progress report from CPS shows the students' growth at Goldblatt School was far above average, compared to some of the schools across the nation.

In fact, the progress report shows that our students at every grade level surpassed the national average for making expected gains on the district assessment last year.
So, it shows our schools are achieving and
growing. Goldblatt parents always get the help they
need. Many of us go to the school to use the
supplies, computers and printers, parent room, so we
can conduct job search.

The teachers sit down with us and explain
one on one to explain our kids test results and tell
us how they are doing. They even give us work and
websites we can use at home with our children.

They don't just help with our children,
they help with the parents as well. Goldblatt is
very concerned about the school. I am proud to have
my children to go to Goldblatt School.

I volunteer in the classroom and in the
after-school programs. And also, I am a member of
the local school council. Our school deserves to
remain open.

SPEAKER: Our school should not be closing.
It's supposed to be children first, not buildings
first, not budgets first. Goldblatt should stay
open because we moved from being a level 1 school to
a level 2 school. We're on our way up. We were one
of 82 schools that were given award for academic
achievement.
In addition to our academics, we also have a strong focus on the arts. We have a merit music program where our fourth graders are learning to play band instruments; and if our school closes, these children won't be able to continue their music lesson.

We also have worked with the Joffrey Ballet for five years. Our students attended concerts, and our students also perform every year with students from other raises and ethnic groups all over the city.

Our students, because of their wonderful performance, were asked to perform for the Illinois after-school conference, and they were interviewed by ABC news, and our students dances that they created were shown on TV.

Our students have gained so much confidence from these arts programs, that they have been admitted into many selective enrollment schools, including Whitney Young, Lane Tech, and King. Please don't close our school.

SPEAKER: I'm not just security at the greatest school on the west side of Chicago, Goldblatt, but I'm also a pastor in the community; and I get to see
both sides of the story, because the 500th murder in
our city was a member of my church.

What you need to understand is in our
culture, when there's not enough, we don't quit, and
we don't close. When there's not enough, that's
when we start to give our best.

This is not our time to quit. This is our
time to be an example. When our children's book
bags are underutilized, we don't kick them out, we
fill them up.

When there's not enough potatoes, you
don't stop cooking dinner. When there is not enough
gas, you don't give away your car. Goldblatt is not
an underutilized building. I'll say it again,
Goldblatt is not an underutilized building.

It's a greatly-utilized school. Don't get
schooling mixed up with the building. Our
principal, Mrs. Harrington, is there before the
doors open and before the sun comes up, and she
leaves after the sun goes down.

At Goldblatt, we win, win, win, no matter
what. We say up in our books we ain't never giving
up; and every time you step up into Goldblatt,
everybody grades go up, and they stay there.
If you want to see progress, you got to keep our schools open. Keep Goldblatt Elementary School open.

MS. WASHINGTON: Garfield Park School followed by Ericson. Garfield Park followed by Ericson.

SCHOOL: GARFIELD PARK

SPEAKER: My name is Ms. Pauncey. My name is a Ms. Pouncey. I'm a proud parent at Garfield Park Academy, and I'm here to say to say that I'm opposed to the preliminary hearing that they are closing the school, or trying to close the school.

I want to say that our school has improved. The data has went up, and we're asking that you consider that we have a new staff at Garfield Park. Our new staff, they have really helped our children. The scores had went up and are doing a tremendous job.

So, we ask you not to close our school because we need to see the improvement that the children are doing. The principal that's at Garfield Park, Mrs. Miller, and the assistant principal, Ms. Remberly (phonetic), they have been there less than one year, one year, and the scores are already up.
This haven't been a year yet, compared to what they have, the scores that they have had once before. Okay? So, if you have a principal, a new staff, and you have an assistant principal coming in there less than one year to go from this to that, you all need to consider keeping our school open and give them the opportunity to continue to do work that they're doing with these children.

Don't close our school because we stand together. We appreciate that if you take that into consideration, that these are new staff. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Janice Jordan, and I would like to say can you please keep our schools open?

SPEAKER: My name is Ms. Hines. I have two children currently attending Garfield Park Preparatory Academy. In mid February of this year, Garfield Park was suddenly listed as one of 129 public schools recommended for closure, due to what's being called under utilization crisis.

In fact in 2009, CPS was shuttering neighboring schools because of what was called the underperforming crisis. Now it's being called the underutilized crisis.
So, in 2009, many CPS parents believed in underperforming crisis, and that Garfield Park Preparatory Academy was then established as a contract charter managed by TCS Community Education, Incorporated.

We saw that this not-for-profit organization as a positive option, quality seats, a viable alternative to what CPS was then characterizing as an failing and underperforming neighborhood school.

Well, the word "failing" cannot begin to describe what TCS Community Education, Incorporated, did to our children. Because in 2010, the percentage of our children who met or exceeded as measured on ISAT reading was 60 percent.

By 2012, only three years later, under charter contract reading met or exceeded as measured by ISAT has dropped, plummeted to 38.7 percent from 60 percent to less than 40 percent and only in only two years.

So, between 2009 and 2012, reading scores fell under the charter. Science scores dropped. Math scores plummeted. The total percentage of students met or exceeded standards as measured by
ISAT campsite fell from 67-and-a-half percent to 43 and a third percent, the lowest average of Garfield Park Humboldt Park Network.

It took three long years of academic disaster to our children before CPS could place the school on academic probation.

In July of 2012, CPS finally terminated the charter contract. The entire staff was fired, administrators and teachers. One fell swoop. What CPS likes to call turnaround.

Not surprisingly, the parents of Garfield Park was suspicious. We believed in CPS' school choice suddenly. Our children had the lowest test scores at Garfield Park Network. Well, maybe it was by accident, maybe by design.

CPS replaced our charter administration with experienced principal, and a experienced principal who hired experienced AP and experienced teachers.

By October 2012, it was evident that everything about the school had changed. Formerly barren hallways were suddenly lit up with three-dimensional educational bulletin boards.

Children were talking about poetry and
literature, algebra, geometry, winning prizes for behavior, attendance, wearing school uniforms, weekly awards for academic achievement in science, writing and math, reading and art.

At the beginning of the year, Garfield Park NWAE hailed by CPS on the website as a superior tool for measuring student growth in career readiness. The test results were the lowest scores in the entire network.

By winter, early February, under the school new leadership and experienced staff, 46 of second graders met and exceeded reading goal target. 67 in third grade, fifth grade students, met and exceeded in reading.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Guendolyn Haversham, and I have two babies in Garfield Park Preparatory. On paper, Garfield Park Preparatory falls into the troubling gather category of unutilized schools.

We cannot allow you to mistake digits on a spreadsheet for absolute evidence for underutilization. Accounting must never be allowed to substitute our community, any more than dirt on a windshield determines the quality of an engine.

Present-day student head count without a
full and comprehensive community impact analysis is
certain to leave our students and community
substantially compromised. It is a fundamental half
truth to look only at where our school has been
without consideration for where we are headed.

First, don't close our underutilized
schools that are adding a grade. Currently Garfield
Park Preparatory Academy K through sixth will be
adding seventh grade in 2013 and, eighth grade in
2014.

Closings our school, while we are in the
midst of adding additional grades, is more than
absurd. Garfield Park Preparatory is growing on a
grade-by-grade basis.

Technically, this building may be
underutilized today, but tomorrow we cannot be
content with throwing the baby out with the bath
water, nor will we ever accept this spectacle of a
plan reasoned and thoughtful reform.

Garfield Park Preparatory has a short-term
plan. It is on pace to establish and is vibrant
well-utilized school.

Second, do not close underutilized schools
that are recently experiencing a significant school
action. Students who have been subjected to significant school disruption should not have to face additional disruption in their education career, especially within a short timeframe.

Data suggested to do so places students in an educational disadvantage to those students who have not had to contend with multiple disruptive action.

Our students experienced tremendous change during the 2012-13 school year. Garfield Park Preparatory went from being a contract charter school, to once again serving under the umbrella of CPS. The entire new administration, new staff, was hired as well as its instruction change.

In addition, while these are technically beyond our change to look solely at utilization, we strongly suggest that greater analysis and consideration is needed before you propose action is warranted.

It is deliberate and unwavering conviction that at this time. A hasty decision is not preposterous but destructive.

For utilization of 70 percent of it's capacity, it's technically unutilized. However, it
would only need to increase utilization about 15 percent to reach efficient status.

For instance, 13 percent of elementary schools are schools in less than 50 percent utilization with split classrooms, between 50 and 60 percent utilization, that number drops to 8 percent.

Only 3 percent of the classroom in efficient utilization schools are split grades. With a small change in the neighborhood demographics, a school at 70 percent utilization could easily rebound to efficient utilization.

Thank you.

MS. WASHINGTON: Ericson School, followed by Delano. Ericson followed by Delano.

SCHOOL: ERICSON

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is a Malcolm Green, a seventh grade school from Leif Ericson. Ericson attendance has improved the last two years from 94.7 percent to approximately 96 percent.

Our percent of misconduct resulting in suspension has gone from 92.1 percent to 46.2 percent. Our math scores have increased the last two years from 79 percent to 81.5 percent.
Enrollment has increased from the last two years from 770 -- no, from 470 students to 500 students.

We have went on five collage trips last year, University of Chicago, Chicago State University, Northern Illinois University, no, Northern Illinois University, DePaul University and UIC.

We established a partnership with Malcolm X College Trio Program. Students take summer classes and participated in workshops and enrichment trips.

We opened three additional computer labs, two mobile carts and one classroom. 24 new sixth grade students will be taking a class in the medical program at Rush this summer.

I've been at Leif Ericson Academy long enough to know that the teachers there are very hard working, helpful and inspiring. If I were to need something for reading or math, it's the teachers I could go to that will help enhance my understanding.

Such as the librarian, the seventh and eighth grade math teachers even the fourth grade math teacher. All of them will give you an extra push to help me achieve my goals. If I need
assistance before or after school, there's teachers at our school that are willing to come in to make sure we get what we need to be successful.

Knowing that we have teachers that are willing to go the extra mile means a great deal of success to me and our students who really admire teacher dedication to commitment to excellence.

They will push their students to grow, exceed and be the best they can be. That's one of the main reasons why I think Leif Ericson Scholastic Academy should remain open.

Thank you all for your time and consideration.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Hasaan Prentiss. I am an eighth grader at Leif Ericson Academy. I'm also the vice-president of Leif Ericson student council.

Tonight I want to talk to you about why Leif Ericson should remain open, because the student attendance is at 96 percent; and most recently, 81 percent of our students are meeting and exceeding in math and science.

Also, our math ISAT scores have seen growth in the past two years; but my main concern is
the students will fear other schools, because they
do not take time out to work with the students.

After all, it is for the students. They
are our future doctors, lawyers, and politicians of
our nation, and it will decline if our students have
to find a new school in a new environment and start
over again, just to barely have any memories of the
school they once came from.

So I say to you tonight, do what's best,
but keep in mind what if it was your child. Please
don't tell us, as they did during slavery, families,
siblings and life-long friends will be separated.

Is that fair to us? The schools in lower
poverty communities, if any of our schools close, we
will be separated from our friends, families and
staff who we know trust, and love. Thank you all
for coming. Have a pleasant evening.

SPEAKER: Hi. I'm a volunteer parent from Leif
Ericson School. I am at Leif Ericson School from
8:45 a.m. to 3:45 volunteering, helping the teachers
with whatever they need.

Just this year alone, Leif Ericson has
established music and art program. We have
established partnerships with West Side
African-American Police Association for Mentoring and Enrichment.

We established a relationship with the West Side Garfield Park Community for Boys and Girls. We also have hired two reading teachers this year to help to improve the reading and strategies for the teacher.

We also have a teacher that came up with an idea for our children to respect themselves. Every morning, before we start class every morning we have a creed that we say. If I can give Leif Ericson to repeat after me.

We will succeed. We are the youth of Leif Ericson Academy. We are upward bound. We will succeed. We are outstanding, because we work hard and to stand out. With the guidance and support of our parents and community, we will succeed.

Nothing will keep us from our goal. We will not allow any obstacles in our path. We will conquer our fears. We choose to live an honest, non-violent life, a life that matters.

We will succeed. We respect ourselves, as well as others. We have a bright future ahead of us. We have a responsibility to our families,
community, and ourselves. Success is ours.

We will succeed to let you know how our teachers teaches our kids, this creed was established and adopted by one of our teachers, Ms. Lula King. Thank you for your time.

SPEAKER: Hello, everyone. I am a parent from Leif Ericson Scholastic Academy, and everything here is supposed to be about our students and teachers and hoping that they get the best education possible.

Well, I'm here to let you know I went through Ericson Academy, and today I hold a degree in occupational therapy. My son, my oldest son, went to Ericson Scholastic Academy, and he holds a Bachelor's degree.

My second son went to Leif Ericson Scholastic Academy, and he holds a degree in kinesiology, and he works for the Chicago Park District working with Special Olympics.

My daughter goes to Leif Ericson, and I sent her there because I know she's going to get the best education possible. What she can't learn there, no one else can teacher.

So, please, keep Leif Ericson Scholastic
Academy open.

MS. WASHINGTON: Delano School, followed by Calhoun Elementary School. Delano School, followed by Calhoun.

SCHOOL: EDWARD C. DALANO

SPEAKER: Hi. Good evening, everybody. My name is John Miles, and I'm here to speak on behalf of the alumni of Edward C. Delano Elementary School. I am also a concerned business owner and life-long resident in the community.

My father, aunts, uncles, cousins went to Delano where my nieces now attend. My son will begin a three-year old program at Delano child-parent center in the fall where I also started school.

Delano is an important part of the lives of every child that grows up in the Garfield Park area. It has been the only safe haven in a war-zone neighborhood for over 40 years. Gangbangers and drug dealers for some reason respect the school grounds and do not carry their activity near the campus.

The blocks that border the school are all violent high-crime areas. Delano's playground is
the only place where kids can play after school and
call their own. Our community has run out of these
places.

This is the only safe place basketball
court in the Pulaski-Madison area. Delano has also
provided a family environment for under-privileged
kids. I can speak of this because I was one of
those kids.

Delano had a program that paid for me to
attend P.S.M. and attend barber school. I now own a
barber shop that ironically sits behind Delano where
we cater to these kids, parents and staff.

We also have the opportunity to serve as
mentors for the kids, when they are in the shop, as
all my employees and majority of my clients also
attended Delano.

Delano staff have always been made up of
strong teachers and volunteers who go beyond their
job titles, because like a lot of schools in
under-privileged neighborhoods, there is little or
no parents participation or collaboration in some
situations.

It's twice as hard on these teachers to
keep the kids respectful enough to teach them. This
fact alone tells you we have people who care at Delano. Delano has placed on a list for a school action because of unutilized, but we are a school on the rise.

I'm not saying this without facts to back it up. This is how we fit Chicago Public School's criteria are on the rise: Greater than or equal to 300 students enrolled 20th day school year 2012-2013, according to your records, Delano had 395 students on the 20th day.

Same or higher performance level with school year 2011 through '12, and school year 2010 through '11. Delano was a level 3 on probation in 2010 and 2011. Level 2 on probation 2011 through '12, and currently level 2 off probation this year.

ISAT composite meets, exceeds trend value that indicates an increase in student proficiency. Delano ISAT trend value over the last three years has increased from 53.5 percent to 68 percent to 73.7 percent.

Schools are performing at or above their peers in reading or math for each of the last three years. When compared with the two other schools, the two other level 2 schools in the Garfield Park
area, serving predominately in African-American population, Delano was either performing at or above level of their peers, assuring steady growth as measured by students exceeding or meeting state standards over the past three years.

This is according to information on Chicago Public Schools website. To close the school down is like a slap in the face for those who work and gave their time to change the children of Delano.

We don't need to get rid of Delano. We need better after-school programs and more parent activities, field trips and activities for our kids. I know for a fact this is the vision of the new administration at Delano as they focus on each child and the community as a whole.

SPEAKER: Good evening, parents, teachers, Board. My name is Tiszar Green, and I am the LSC chair at Delano Elementary School.

This has gone far enough. We as parents must stand up and be heard. We as taxpayers must realize that CPS Board is here to serve us and not us serving them.

I feel that CPS is picking on the poor.
I'm going to say it again, I feel that CPS is picking on the poor. Instead of cutting the pay of CPS six-figure employees, they are cutting our kids and their schools. We deserve better.

It is because of our tax money and our children that this Board, CPS employees, and the mayor have a job. It is not our fault that they mismanaged the money to the point that our children have to suffer.

Delano is located on Pulaski Adams, which sits between three different gang territories. To the west of Delano is Pulaski. This is the dividing line of territories of the different gang.

If a child has to walk this way to school, he or she is in trouble. To the east is Garfield Park, which functions as another line dividing line for gang territory. To the south is the 290 expressway, which functions as also a gang territory boundary.

We cannot risk the life or bodily harm of any of our students. If anything happened to any student, we will hold CPS responsible. As a result of the closing of our school, our children will be in the street, which will cause crime rates to rise,
Students will have an enormous amount of stress for not feeling secure by their new teachers and staff. It is also -- it will also put Delano in jeopardy and disrupt our continued academic growth. If CPS closes any school, it would just add to the increasing problem of empty buildings; hence, our neighborhood is becoming a ghost town.

I think CPS is aware that every time one school closes, a charter school will try to obtain that building. Therefore, charter schools are increasing and continuing to impact CPS. This action makes me think that CPS is slowly privatizing our school.

We, as parents, need to force CPS to make the right decision, and give our children what they deserve, a quality education. In conclusion, the only thing that is being underutilized is the rights of student, parents and teachers.

SPEAKER: Hi. Good evening, everybody. How are you doing? The administrative staff and faculty Delano we have Ms. Jessica. I am a resource coordinator for family focus. We are an
after-school program that is currently in Delano.

Since we've been there, we've currently been there for one year, our students have had a chance to go to not one, but two colleges.

They went to Southern Illinois to participate in STEM activities, which if you don't know is science, technology engineering and mathematics, as well as Columbia College and participated in arts integration, which increases their speaking skills by participating in one of Chicago's largest slam poetry prep schools, the partnership of young Chicago authors; and, yes, we do have a team there.

Also, since we've been there, we are still partnered with Columbia College and doing more studies with STEM, with our scientists for tomorrow program. Delano has been great to us as far as supportive with our-one year gain there. We've seen increase in parent activities, offering workshops for our parents. We have also, with the help of Ms. Irvin next here to me.

We have secured a lot across the street from the school to start a garden, we garden, which we have actually been working on, and will continue
to work on this coming spring.

We would love to stay there. I would love
to stay there. Delano has been great. The staff,
the faculty and all the students have been pretty
darn awesome, and I want to keep that relationship
that we have.

SPEAKER: Good evening, everybody. Thank you
all for being here and see all the parents are here.
We have a new principal in our school, and he is on
the rise.

I would just like to say my saying is
we're fighting the wrong people about things. The
mayor gonna to do what he gonna do, and he gonna
have his aldermen doing what he want done.

Let me tell you, who is involved of our
children's education? The state is. The state is
responsible for our children education.

So, what we need to do now, as all of us
heard tonight, is get it into action and let the
state know, along with the city, take care of our
children.

MS. WASHINGTON: Delano, Calhoun Elementary
followed by Bethune. Calhoun followed by Bethune.
SCHOOL: CALHOUN

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Maureen Hallagan. I'm the executive director of Marrilac Social Center, which has been serving the west side for over 98 years. We're directly across the street from Calhoun School. We've been partnering with Calhoun for decades, way before it was even popular to partner.

What I wanted to say tonight, I know so much has been said, and so much passion has been shown, but we really have developed a safe haven between Marrilac and Calhoun. Our children are the same as their children.

They attend our after-school program, our mentoring and our tutoring. We are really able to bring together issues that are going on in families and share our resources. It's a very important thing.

You know, the saying it takes a village to raise a child is a great over use, but we actually have developed at the corner Adams and Francisco.

What I do want to say tonight I know there is a lot of passion and a lot of issues about violence, and everything else that we're all seeing;
but the unfair thing that's happened to a lot of these schools, but particularly Calhoun, is they did what they were asked to do.

They were on probation. They are now -- their ISAT scores are now higher than the city and the district and the state. They moved forward under the leadership team of Ms. McClenton and her previous leadership; but because of the teachers, the staff, the families and the passion to keep that school open, it is a really important anchor on the west side of Chicago particularly in our area.

So, please consider that when you are looking at what you are going to do. These children that attend Marrilac and Calhoun really, really need to have the two connected; and if they go to all different schools, that will not be possible. Thank you.

SPEAKER: I'm Mrs. West, and I have been teaching are at Calhoun North Elementary for 30 years. We're bounded by Marrilac Social Center, Deborah's Place, and Mount -- I'm sorry, The new Greater Exodus Baptist Church.

To think of our beautiful school and professionally landscaped campus sitting empty and
idle among these giants in our community is a
nightmare we cannot even fathom.

Calhoun is our home to our own African art
museum. It greets you into our building and walk
upon our shiny terrazzo floors. Our auditorium has
served as the stage for countless professional and
student productions.

Our fully-equipped gymnasium and
basketball court has been host to WGCI during school
and community events countless times. It's been
host to Jesse White Tumblers school, school and
community socials, science and literacy fares, and
countless intramural competition for our Boys and
Girls Basketball Teams, volleyball teams, and that
doesn't even cover most of the sports.

We have a beautiful library right now,
containing a multitude of books and a number of
computers for students to use.

The days of six tiny rows of six students
being lectured by a teacher standing in front of the
caulk board are a thing of the past, thank goodness.
Our spacious classes are designed for 21st century,
not mid 1960s, education.

Our classrooms have library centers,
science centers, technology centers and writing
centers. In addition to that, each classroom in our
school is home to an animal. Each classroom has
either aquarian or terrarium containing one or more
living creatures.

Our classes are set up so that students
can use the learning centers throughout the day, as
our teachers work intensely with small groups of
children using differentiated instruction to give
our children the education that they deserve, the
education that we would want our very own children
to have.

Because, you see, we at Calhoun look at
our students as though they were our very own.
That's who we are at Calhoun. We have more special
education classrooms. Of course the numbers in
those groups do not fit the Board rule of 36 to a
room. That would be against the law.

We have a Head Start classroom, which is
home to two half-day classes of three and four year
olds. We have a parent room, computer room, two
science labs, two computer labs and data room for
teacher meetings and regular collaboration, an
adjustment and attendance office, and note that our
attendance rate on our school score card was
94.6 percent last year.

We have laptops for all our children,
which are stored at the end of the day in the
resource room on the first floor and second floor.
This is great for us to have, because in the mid
'60s, that would be unheard of, because there were
no laptops back then, and we wouldn't have to store
them.

We have two rooms for wrap-around
services, speech, social work, school psychologist,
brain injury specialist occupational Therapist. Our
kindergarten and Head Start classes are the envy of
all that see them.

Bright, spacious, featuring skylights, six
private bathrooms for use by our little ones. Close
the school, sell the school, raze the building,
ever.

As I went to the principal and
instructional leader, Ms. Linda Johnson McClinton,
said in our previous community meeting, Calhoun is
very well utilized, and might I add this level 2
with 82 percent of our students meeting or exceeding
the state standards on the IST, number four in the
area overall, number one in math, constantly on the rise, not on probation, on the west side uses its building very well.

We do not have bars on our doors. We do not have solid metal doors. We have glass doors seeing out of and seeing into our beautiful school, and we welcome any new school or committed staff that wants to join us at this jewel on the west side.

I've also dedicated to care of the wards in some current student shelters. Thank you.

MS. WASHINGTON: Bethune Elementary School, and finally Beidler Elementary School.

SCHOOL: BETHUNE

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Latasha Petty, and I have been blessed with the opportunity to teach middle school math at Bethune School of Excellence since the AUSL turnaround in 2009.

Being the math teacher, I wanted to share some numbers with you. Tracking the Bethune scholars since the turnaround, 97 percent of the students that were sixth graders who remained at CPS were promoted on time to the ninth grade level or better within three years.
Out of the 38 original Bethune sixth graders, four are no longer with CPS, so we're not sure of their promotion outcome; however, 33 of the remaining 34 were enrolled in ninth grade or higher at CPS as of the 20th day of this year. And one of the remaining was enrolled in CPS in a grade lower than nine. At Bethune, we prepare our students for the life after Bethune.

In 2009, when the school was turned around, only 36 percent of the students were proficient in math. Two years later, 68 percent of the students were proficient in math, and that made Bethune the fourth highest gainer in Chicago for the 2010-2011 school year.

Our school math data shows that percent of students meeting their math fall to winter growth targets since 2010 has increased. In 2011, we have 46 percent of the students meeting or that makes their goal.

In 2012, we have 50 percent of the students that made their goal; and in 2013, we have 61 percent of our students meeting their goal.

Every year we have an increase of our students meeting their goal. The percentage of
Bethune students meeting growth targets has grown by 11 percentage points in math, and 10 percentage points in reading since last year.

Over the past few years, the enrollment of the outer school science program has also improved. We went from in 2011 with having only 131 students enrolled up until now, 2013, with 293 students enrolled.

Increased participation in after-school programs suggest the connection to increase attendance and academic growth. Our motto at Bethune is to set Chicago on fire.

If you listen to the numbers that I have given you, you can see our numbers constantly grow. They will continue to do that, once our name is taken off this list. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Taylor Mazique, and I'm an eighth grade student at Bethune School. I am here today to address the school closing issue.

To start off, why don't I tell you a few things about my personal experience at Bethune. Bethune is the second school I've attended in my whole life. Bethune staff, students and community
made me feel welcome.

Since this very day, I feel not only safe but comfortable in the school. It's prepared me for life, which is another big reason why Bethune should stay open.

Bethune has shown me why the reality -- what are the realities of the world. At my old school I was very sheltered. They taught you everything was all ice cream and unicorns, and the worst thing you can do is talk when you weren't supposed to.

I really didn't know about the real world. I was very shy and sensitive, but coming to Bethune gave me a much-needed change. Bethune taught me to go more outgoing and to learn to do things like laugh at myself.

Bethune showed me the real world and how to deal with it. If it wasn't for Bethune, I wouldn't be the person I am today, which is a future Jones College Prep student.

Jones College Prep is one of Chicago's best selective enrollment high schools, and I could have never gotten in without Bathune's outstanding, vigorous and talented academics.
I've learned more strategies, formulas, facts and information here in one school year than I would have ever learned anywhere else. Bethune has the best teachers who come to work at 7:00 in the morning and don't leave until 7:00 at night, just so Bethune could have the best education that they can provide us.

I've never had better teachers before, and students have amazing relationships with all the teachers and staff. You can clearly tell that each and every staff member and teacher here cares about every student that walks through the Bethune door.

Not to mention all the parents that have volunteered here every day. Bethune is really a fantastic school, and it deserves to stay open. So, make the right choice and keep our school open. Go Bears.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Paula Shelton, and I'm a proud parent of this little baby right here.

I want to speak to you right now to touch on a couple points of why Bethune is, indeed, the school of excellence. Bethune was identified by the University of Chicago consortium survey on Chicago
school research as one of the safest schools in the district.

Our enrollment has increased by eight percent since 2011. In 2011, we had 351 students. In 2012, we had 363 students. Currently, we have 391 students. These students have come from charter schools.

They catch the buses, parents drop them off, and it's for one reason and one reason only, because they feel safe at Bethune. Because they know their children will be educated at Bethune. Our attendance has increased in the past three years. Although we do face a higher mobility rate, we have implanted an action over adversity attendance plan that has increased our attendance tremendously. In 2011, our attendance was 93.8 percent. Our goal last year was 95.4. Currently, we're at 96 percent. Our babies come to Bethune. Bethune has built several partnerships in the community, including Children Home and Aid, which provides over $100,000 for student, parents and community programs.

United Way, which provides 250,000 for our students to become college ready. UCAN, which
provides social services to our families and our
students through the 360 model, which we received
prestigious wards from Mutual America.

But before I leave, because I know my time
is up, I would just like to say Wednesday last week,
you were in our building; and you made a promise to
me, a parent, you said that Bethune would not face
any more significant action.

Well, were those just words to appease me?
I am not appeased, nor am I amused. I would like to
think that those words were spoken in honor, because
you will be held accountable. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Enix
Daniels, and I am a father and uncle of nine
students at Bethune School of Excellence.

When the Bethune experienced the
transformation under of the AUSL management in 2009,
the community and myself had a feeling of
uncertainty. I can say firsthand, that the
transformation has happened at Bethune.

Our students have two computer labs and
one mobile lab, one middle school science lab that
is comparable to a high school lab, an art studio, a
musical keyboard lab and drum room, a parents
center, three academic and conventional rooms that
are used to provide intervention for our tier two
and tier three schools. Two brand new playgrounds,
teacher resource room.

    The resources provided above give my kids,
our kids, the same enrichment and intervention that
students in rich suburbs receive. There is no
unused empty or unused room at Bethune.

    In fact, even if you took all the
enrichment rooms, there is still not enough space
for an additional 400 students. I encourage you to
keep your word that you told us in 2009, and allow
our school to continue to make strides.

    We need to get our student college and
career ready. Thank you.

    MS. WASHINGTON: Beidler Elementary School.

    Beidler Elementary School.

    SCHOOL: BEIDLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

    SPEAKER: Good evening. For those that have to
say, I really want to set the stage that we are
quiet, respectful, that we're able to hear
everything that we would like to present to the
Board, because once again, here we are again.

    Here we are again with the school action
that we have to go through this all over again. So what we want to do today is just simply state facts without emotion, without being interrupted, but just state our fact.

So, I'm going to ask are have everyone that is here, that you will let them be able to hear all of our facts and our statements. So, we will start now with Ms. Galpin.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Jolene Galpin. I've been a teacher at Beidler Elementary School for the past seven years.

I would like to begin by stating for the record that Beidler refutes the Space Utilization Index that was conducted on our building.

First, their report indicates that we have 33.25 classrooms when, in fact, we only have 33. That other .5 is a bathroom used for students disabilities.

Next, the report states that the number of allocated homerooms is 25, and the number of allocated ancillary rooms is 8.5.

Considering that four of those ancillary rooms are being used as special education classrooms, we are left with only 4.5 for special
Currently, Beidler is using seven rooms for purposes such as music, computers, a parent resource center, and to provide wrap-around services by the counselors, psychologists and nurse.

If you add seven program rooms to the four special education classrooms, Beidler requires 11 ancillary classrooms to properly educate and provide services to our students.

Taking these facts into consideration, and recalculating the utilization using CPS's formula, our ideal enrollment at Beidler would be 600, making our present utilization currently 72 percent.

We believe that CPS would be remiss for closing Beidler for the following reasons: We are functioning at a 72 percent energy efficiency rate, according to a survey conducted this month. That makes us one of the most energy-efficient buildings in our network.

The cost to maintain our building puts us within the lowest 15 percent of all Garfield Humboldt Park Schools, which includes charter school sharing buildings.

CPS has invested over $14.4 million in
capital improvements at Beidler since 1999, including a campus park built in 2011 that cost over $2 million.

The Department of Specialized services is currently considering Beidler to act as the low-incident site for the west side beginning in the 2013 to 2014 school year.

CPS projected our enrollment to be 375 students. We, in fact, have 440 students as of today, an increase of 17 percent. If we increase of enrollment by another 17 percent, and that .5 classroom is corrected in our calculation, our percent utilization would, in fact, be above 70 percent.

I would like it to be noted that this issue regarding the proper calculation of utilization is the same issue we faced when we were being considered for closure and consolidation in 2011.

We would appreciate, if for once and all, CPS acknowledges that this utilization crisis is non-existent, and that they leave our school and communities alone.

SPEAKER: Good evening, CPS officials,
Garfield-Humboldt Park, and the Bulls of Beidler Entry School.

My name is Antoine Steven, and as a proud father of five that attend Beidler; and a father who grew up on the west side, I have seen many changes that have been instrumental in the school cultural body.

I volunteer time at the school and talk with young men, young males are growing up being responsible and educated. I coach Beidler popcorn league. It's Boys Basketball Team that meets every Friday for boys in pre-K through fourth grade.

These students play basketball after school, and I'm proud as I can be to coach this team; and this has led to a male role model, and the school supporting and guiding our young males.

Now I hear you have TIF money for the old Lucy Flower's money totaling $22 million. The Lucy Flowers building, where our Al Raby just had money poured into it in the last five to ten years. The Lucy Flower's building where Al Raby is located has about 500 students. Couldn't you use that money to invest in our elementary school?

So, you are willing to invest in school
with 50 percent utilization. Also, it's not a neighborhood school, so there isn't a guarantee our kids will be able to attend this school.

At the beginning of the school year, Beidler was projected to have only had 275 students. We now have a total of 440 students. We have passed projections. The school is well because families moving in, the school area and other families list coming back from charter schools.

When we talk about utilization, Beidler has had 95 percent student attendance for over four years. This is 95 of our students come to school. We have been in this school action -- we have been on this school action list before. What do you think it does to a child who has to every year fight for their school to stay open?

What do you think it does when a kid has to walk through different territories? What do you think it does to the staff and in their ability to get excellent teachers?

Finally, what do you think this does to parents who fear that child's education is interrupted? Also, we were told that we shouldn't have to go through this again, since we went through
this last year. Why are we going through this again? School utilization was not an issue two years ago when you tried to close us then. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Jacquarie Williams. I am an seventh grader at Beidler Elementary, and I want to quickly have your attention to discuss a few items about Beidler.

As a student attending Beidler, I can tell you about all the great things we do. I can tell you about our basketball team that are 8 and 0. I can tell you about our Boys to Men Program, our technology class, our proud Men Read Program, the fun we have at recess and all the work we do in class, but I want to tell you about my experience at Chicago Public Schools.

When I was in fifth grade at Chicago Public Schools, and now they want to close Beidler, I did not understand the decision or the consequence of their decision, yet I participated in marches, yelling and making noise. My friends and I enjoy walking around the building and all of the excitement it brought.
Now, two years later, I heard Chicago Public Schools is considering closing Beidler again, but this time I am not interested in marching, yelling or making noise. I'm interested in my safety as a young man. I will have to travel to another area. I'm interested in the additional older boys and men that I will have to pass to get to school. These guys keep trying to make me join their team.

I am now interested in how this would affect my learning. You see my family and school continue to talk to me about being respectful and making responsible decisions.

I have a younger sister that also attends at Beidler as well. I am very disappointed, frustrated and upset that a decision is being made without thinking about my safety. The streets are dangerous, and young people are threatening and getting killed all the time.

To continue to focus on my learning is really hard, when every two years I'm concerned about my school closing.

So, today I ask that you please think of me and my friends and the entire student body at
Beidler when you are thinking about closing our school. Then make the decision for us to live by keeping it open. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening, everybody. I'm Dr. King, former administrator at Beidler School, the greatest school on the west side. I'm also here to represent the west side, and I would like all Beidler people and all west side students to stand. West side stand up and represent.

Education today is under seizure by politicians, bureaucrats and misinformed news media and the mayor of the greatest and the very largest city in America, Rahm Emanuel.

I'm here today to spearhead something that our people and our culture have been lobbying for a long time. Fight. We need to fight to save our kids. Fight to save our school. Fight to save the integrity of the west side of Chicago.

Can I get an amen? I also want to say this, that 88 percent of the students that has been in the upheaval since 2001 have come from the African-American group on the west side and south side of Chicago.

The educational movement to stop all
social misjustice on the west side needs to start
right now. Can we fight? Can we fight west side?
Okay. God, where would the west side -- where would
the world be if no black people ever lived on the
west side?

The west side has been great. What used
to be called skid row is now called the west loop,
millionaire row. We also want to say that we have
nothing against charter schools. We have nothing
against other type of schools. We just simply want
you to leave our children and Beidler School alone.

I'm not here to preach, but Jesus Christ
was tempted over and over again, and I have to say
this; and I told my Beidler people when I left, was
that you're going to be tempted again and here we
are two years later being tempted again.

Inflated costs by CPS has run up a long
list of so-called underused schools. I don't have
to repeat what they said, that Beidler is well used;
but what I do want to say is, Mr. Mayor, spend some
of the millions of dollars that you spend every year
on turnaround schools, that you spend on
reconstructed schools, and that you spend on your
beloved charter schools.
You spend a lot of money to go and get a henchlady, after you had a henchman to close us down here, but we're not going to be closed down. What about the ten-year master plan to save schools? You want to do it after you close down a bunch of schools.

This is not right. We do not want to accommodate a few jealous bureaucrats and vendors getting fat on our kids expense, and I want to say this: We are not going to compromise no way. We're not going to compromise. We're going to say "no" to Rahm Emanuel. We say "no" to closing Beidler and any west side school.

We're not going to stand up for injustice. It's a saying that if you don't have anything to stand for, then you stand for what? Anything. And I want to say a quote from the Bible that King said, one of the favorite statements that I've always said, if you don't have anything worth dying for, you don't have anything worth living for, and we will die for our west side schools.

We will die for our west side students. I see the faces of the educators and people in the front up there. Some are smiling, some are looking
well; but we want you to understand something, leave
the west side alone.

We understand that the pilgrimage and
everybody is moving this way. Most of the areas are
mixed. The United Center is there. People are
walking their dogs and jogging. The truth of the
matter, west side, they walk the west side.

We're not going to let them take it. Are
we going to fight? Are we going to fight? You have
to fight for what you want. Nobody is going to give
you anything. We want every west side school left
alone.

And in conclusion, I want to say this: As
I said, the school we left for five out of the last
six years, was one of the only three schools that
was listed as having continuous increase by the
state.

We posed that two years ago. We had the
highest attendance of every west side school in the
region 3. We had to pose that. We also posed that
we had the greatest amount of parent participation.
We had to pose that.

We also said that the sports and athletic
teams want everything that wasn't nailed down. So,
I'm going to say this, leave Beidler School and the
west side alone, and I thank you.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN IRVIN: Ms. Washington, might we let
two kids from Bethune that didn't get a chance to
speak? They would like to say what they need to
say. These kids are going to speak.

SCHOOL: BETHUNE

SPEAKER: Thank you. Hi, my same Takaya
Taylor. I'm in the most successful class. It has
helped me more than people think.

Bethune has empathy, and they really care
about us. Bethune, according to the NWEA MAP test,
we have above-average growth. This proves the
point. Students are learning and teachers are
teaching. Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Deshaw Roberts, and I'm
and eighth grade student of Bethune School of
Excellence Elementary School.

Before the turnaround, the school Bethune
was horrible. People describe it as just terrible.
All the students did what they wanted to do. No one
ever obeyed the rules, and all the security guards
and all the ESPs, they really didn't care.
But when the turnaround happened, it was a great change for Bethune, and Bethune became really popular and Bethune became better school; and due to that turnaround, I became a better student myself.

My grades improved, and I became -- I started exceeding in all of my classes, and that's what helped shape me to be a future Lane Tech High School attendee who can just exceed and be the person that he wants to be.

I wouldn't want to see the school closing because it's just that I have six brothers and sisters in the school; and when I think about high school, what is going to be left for them if you are closing the school?

How are they going to be raised up, and what schools are they going to go to? I wouldn't say I live in the best neighborhood either, and it is very gang affiliated, and it do have drugs and all of that; but if you take away our schools, what would we have left?

So, I'll just ask that you just leave our schools and let us exceed.

MS. WASHINGTON: Our final speaker this evening will be Commissioner Robert Steele. That is our
final speaker. We are going to have our final
speaker.

We will close right after he has spoken.

OFFICIAL

COMMISSIONER STEELE: Mr. Washington and panel,

thank you so much for allowing this opportunity to
happen.

I stayed so I could listen to parents, so
I could listen to students, and I could listen to
the faculty of these schools. You've heard the most
important voices that you could hear from tonight.

My voice isn't as important as their
voices are, but I don't want to see the alternative
happen. I represent the alternative in Cook County
government. I represent the Juvenile Detention
Center, where a lot of these kids may wind up by
crossing paths in various communities that they may
have to go to, if any of their schools close in our
community. That is not the alternative I want to
see.

Our director said today that the
population is beginning to grow in our Juvenile
Detention Center. I don't want to see that.

Beyond that, it becomes the jail system
that these kids are offered, if they go this facility. I don't want to see that happen either.

Please reevaluate the utilization plan that you have looked at for these schools. Please reevaluate that. You've heard growth. I've heard academic growth for the schools. I heard program growth, and I've heard academic growth.

That is what we want to see in these schools. I urge you to reevaluate these plans that you looked at, and give these kids and these students a better opportunity to stay viable in our community. Thank you so much for having us.

MS. WASHINGTON: Thank you. We would like to thank all of our public officials, schools and community, members, for your participation tonight. You have spoken.

We've listened, and at Garfield-Humboldt, excellence is not the goal, it's the standard. We'll make sure your comments, your passion, and your concern for these schools are held to that standard.

Thanks so much for your participation tonight. God bless you, go in peace.

(WHICH WERE ALL THE PROCEEDINGS HAD.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS )
) SS:
COUNTY OF C O O K )

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