Chicago Public Schools  
School Utilization Community Meetings  
Breakout Session Notes  

Date/Time of Meeting: February 5, 2013  
Network: Garfield-Humboldt Park  
Schools represented by audience: Stowe, Cameron, Lowell  
Round: I  

Disclaimer: The following are notes of the discussions in the individual break-out sessions. They do not provide verbatim records or a comprehensive summary of what was said. Also, these notes do not represent the point-of-view of the facilitators or of CPS personnel. Any questions about these notes should be addressed to CPS staff.  

General Learning  

Overall, Latino parents are concerned about their schools closing. According to them, the Sun-Times published a list of schools that were believed to be under consideration for closing. This list included schools such as Cameron which is 80% efficient and a Level 2 school. Lowell is 61% underutilized but a Level 1. Certain parents believe their schools have not achieved a higher performance level due to students who are recent arrivals (knowing little English) and have difficulty taking tests.  

Concerns regarding closing and consolidation are:  
- Children's safety crossing gang boundaries  
- Physical conflicts, fighting among children from different areas  
- Stress for students, not feeling safe in a new school or with new students  
- Students feel their school is their home, they would feel uprooted if they were to change schools  
- Empty school buildings that could end up becoming drug houses  

Parents stressed the need for better communication from CPS via the schools and a more consumer friendly website (some of these parents have limited computer experience, if any) with up-to-date information. Additionally, these taxpaying Latino parents state they want more disclosure regarding CPS's financial spending.  

In terms of the affect on the community, parent are also concerned closing schools would cause less possibility of gentrification, with families moving away in search of other schools.
School-specific Learning

Lowell
Issues/Concerns
- Safety - school is currently in a hot spot (gang activity, shootings)
- Want financial support for the school. There is a feeling other schools receive preferential treatment

Favorable Aspects
- Teachers are in contact with parents. They call if a student is behind
- Teachers demonstrate interest in students in and outside of class

Cameron
Issues/Concerns
- Overcrowded classrooms
- Safety - more police needed outside of the school
- No nurses (e.g. moms have to go to school to administer medications such as insulin or inhaler)
- Need more school advisers to help children experiencing psychological, family, peer issues
- Current counselor uses a closet as his office
- Would like school to offer IB Programs (International Baccalaureate) for a more rounded education and beneficial for college entry
- Need a better sports facility
- Need better computers and computer classes for students
- Bilingual materials are needed in order to integrate Spanish only students into the English system
- Bilingual teachers are needed
- ESL classes for parents
- Need an assistant principal

Favorable Aspects
- Involved parents - good show rate at PTA meetings
- Teachers call parents to keep them informed of children’s progress
- Teachers go to the students homes to tutor
- Elevator installed used for students with disabilities or recovering from injures
- Students and teachers have a mutual respect
- After school activities are enjoyed by students
- Children report feeling at home in school
- Saturday classes for advanced courses
- School fared well on ISAT