PILSEN-LITTLE VILLAGE COMMUNITY MEETING No. 1

February 6th, 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 2800 South Western Avenue, February 6th, 2013, at the hour of approximately 7:00 o'clock p.m.

PRESENT:

MS. THERESA PLASCENCIA, Chief of Schools
MR. WILLIE MONTE DE OCA, Director of Local school Council relations
MR. STEVE ZRIKE, Chief of Pilsen Little Village
MR. EUGENE CRAWFORD, Director of Parent Support
MR. RANDEL JOSERAND, Deputy Chief of Schools
MS. KATIE WELSH, PILSEN Deputy of Pilsen Little Village
MR. TODD BABBITZ, Chief
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MR. MONTES de OCA: Would you please listen to me. Can you hear me now? All right, everybody, can you hear me now in the back? If you give me one second, please. We are here. We want to hear everybody.

That's the purpose we are here. We want to hear what you have to say. I do believe now you can hear me in the back. Let's say that we are going to have two hours meeting between 7:00 and 9:00. This is the opportunity that we all have to listen to each of your schools.

We are going to provide this in English and Spanish, and also what we're going to do is we are going to call each of the schools with three representatives to be lining up right here.

I'm going to be calling the name of the school, and we also are going to be translating in Spanish and in English, according to the needs of the audience.

One more thing that I wanted to say is that the problem is we don't have more space in this room to accommodate more people. We have until 9:00 p.m. to listen to what you have to say. I'll say this in Spanish.
We need to do this in an organized way, in order for us to listen to everybody. We have a lot of people right here that have come tonight, and we want to respect you that you have come, and Everybody has to be out of this building at 9:00 p.M. We want to honor that time. Okay?

MR. RIVERA: I am Arnaldo Rivera. I'm the Deputy Chief of Staff to CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett. Obviously there's a lot of passion. There is a lot of attendance here. We want to get to the people who want to speak.

We're certainly here to listen. We are not hear to talk to you. We're here to hear your concerns, your feedback, your input. There are individuals, we have a court reporter, we have myself, all the CPS leadership.

We certainly want to make sure we hear everything that everyone has to say. We will keep the public comment open for as long as people want to speak. So, as orderly and as respectfully as we can meet, the quicker we can get through this process I would like to introduce some of the senior leaders that are here today.

We have Dr. Steven Krike, the Chief of the
Pilsen-Little Village Network. We have Randall Josserand, the Deputy Chief the schools of the West Side High School Network.

I would now turn the Mike over to Willie Montes de Oca, who will start the meeting. Willie.

MR. MONTES de OCA: We are going to start the meeting. In order to start the meeting, I am going to have with me a translator who are going to summarize in English or in Spanish.

I said summarize, because otherwise everybody is going to have two minutes, right, and we want to give everybody the opportunity to speak tonight.

What I am going do is I'm going to call by alphabetical order the name of the school and three representatives from that school to come in the front and provide testimony.

Cardenas, Castellanos and Cooper?

SCHOOLS: CARDENAS, CASTELLANOS and COOPER

SPEAKER: Before I start, I want to make the document as part of the public record. Thank you.

Good evening everyone.

My name is Alfredo Calderon, and I'm a teacher at Cooper Dual Language Academy. Cooper
holds a very special place in my heart, not only as an educator, but as a former student and a resident of this community.

I am here on behalf of the Cooper School family to share with you what makes Cooper unique and irreplaceable. Cooper has been and continues to be a school on the rise.

Our school has shown consistent academic growth over the last eight years. Cooper has been categorized as a level two school; and based on CPS's own criteria, is only four points away from becoming a level one school.

Our school services over 62 percent English language learners the largest ELL population in our community. It is a great challenge for these students to master content in their native language and learn a new language at the same time; and yet, given the fact Cooper students have excelled and made gains resulting in meeting or exceeding state standards. That is the result of hard work and dedication.

These gains are due to staff members, so they need provide a highly quality education rooted in best practices. For example, in 2011, Cooper was
the only elementary school in Pilsen to be selected by CPS as a Common Core Early Adopter school, developing units of study that later served as examplars to the district.

Cooper has established a highly-qualified staff. There are currently 23 teachers who hold more than one master, four National Board Certified Teachers. There are 22 teachers with bilingual ESO endorsement.

Although CPS is facing a major budget crisis, our school has worked hard to find additional resources. Over the past eight years, Cooper has acquired multiple grants through Donors Choose, Chicago Foundation for Education, the Fry and MacArthur Foundation, to name a few.

Cooper is proud of many partnerships that it has acquired and maintained over the years. This includes American Reeds Tutors, Old Town School of Music, the Chicago Children's Choir and Chicago Commons, among others.

These partnerships have contributed to the student achievement by providing innovative programs and service. According to the CPS utilization data, Cooper is 63 percent.
However, Cooper’s classrooms are not being underutilized. Classrooms are being used for walk-in reading, science labs, specialized services, adult education classes for parents.

On behalf -- my last point -- of the Cooper community and our 711 students, we ask that you consider the information provided tonight. Your decision will not only impact students, it will you undo the years of work that we have invested in making Cooper a dual-language academy, a great school, a school that our students need and deserve.

Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good evening, everyone. My name is Brenda Reyes, and I currently have two children attending Peter Cooper Dual Language Academy.

I would like for the CEO to consider the following points, when evaluating school closings: The emotional impact our children are going through already, already.

Our children are used to a familial useful environment provided at Cooper that cannot be replicated elsewhere. The majority of students at
Cooper are English language learners, as you've heard, and Cooper has a high number of teachers that are ESL certified.

This allows our children to receive a high quality education. What will happen if Cooper school closes? Will bilingual children to continue to receive this high quality education?

Cooper offers full-time kindergarten and has six groups of half day headstart. Not all schools are for full-time kindergarten. This will impact working parents who might need to search for additional child care. Do not close schools at a level two that are on the rise.

I mentioned already Cooper is currently at a level two, and has not been on probation for over a decade. Our attendance has been consistent above 96 percent for the past three years, compared to 94.3 CPS district average. Why? Because we love our school.

Current support and research is provided to students and parents at Cooper, programs such as chorus, ballroom and folkloric dance, mariachi band, and I can go on and on. What do these do? They provide cultural pride, social skills, and enhances
academic performance and self-esteem.

Me and many parents want to keep our children safe and enhance their learning. The Commission recommended that CPS not close schools with more than 600 students. Cooper has 711 students, 711. The large amount of early childhood and primary students at Cooper require teachers with expertise at this age.

You cannot easily move them to just any school. Many parents have children in more than one school, as you can tell, Cooper and Orozco. We will be sick by having our kids walking longer distances to different schools. How will you insure the safety of my child, our children? Attendance and academic achievement will suffer. Thank you.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Dulce Orozco. I come here with the parents of Cooper, who are very worried about the decision that you are going to be making. My son asked me, "Mom, what's going to happen if they lose Cooper?"

I think there is a lot of our families that are going to be affected by this change and
worried that ours kids are going to have to suffer bilingual special services like we have at Cooper.

In our school, 13 percent of the students receive special education, my son is one of them. The program is so good, the kids come from different parts of the city.

My son has auditory hearing troubles, and this is a school where they are able to help him. Now he is progressing and he has excellent grades.

As a mother involved in our school, I can tell you that Cooper has parents who are very dedicated and participate in classes in English and computers and the monthly workshops, about different themes and activities and volunteers in the school.

Cooper has staff committees who work with organizations like the National Museum of Mexican Art, the Resurrection project, and the Mexican consulate and others who bring special programs to our schools.

With so many programs, Cooper really doesn't have empty classrooms. All of them are being utilized. We provide services to the students and for the parents. For example, we have our own computers for parents.
MR. MONTES de OCA: All right. Now Corkery, a representive from cookery? Farragut High School, Corkery, Farragut, are they coming? Finkl?
Somebody here from Finkl? No? All right.
Let me do this first before I call the rest of the schools. You know that we have elected official here tonight. So, I'm going to call first Danny Solis, our alderman of the 25th Ward.

OFFICIAL
ALDERMAN SOLIS: Good evening. Let me announce this in English. Since the strike, I've been able to come to Union members, to parents, to principals, to community organizations and even here.
We have won a tremendous battle here at Pilsen. We beat overcrowding, and now we have an opportunity, and that opportunity in the schools that we have, when we have rooms that are available, we should now bring in programs, whether this be language, science, computer.
The schools that are magnets, the schools that are selective enrollment in our city, that is what they have, and that is what I want, and that is what my community needs, and I'm going to fight for that.
Now, since I've met with everybody, and most of the principals have agreed to give me their programs that they have in their school, their needs and their arguments. I will put that into a report in a packet and send it to the superintendents of schools, in addition to what you testified today.

When I finish, I'm going to meet with the people outside. Maybe they'll hear. Today I'm going to be an advocate for the schools that are closing. Thank you very much and good night.

MR. MONTES de OCA: 22nd Ward Alderman Ricardo Munoz.

OFFICIAL

ALDERMAN MUNOZ: Commissioners, members of the committee, thank you for being here today. I represent the 22nd Ward, which is the Little Village Community, and I just want you to remember that 25 years ago, rooms like this were full to relieve the overcrowding problem.

And in Little Village and Pilsen were able to build a number of schools. Within two miles of Little Village, there was five new schools Finkl, Zapata, Madero, Little Village Academy and Santo De Dominguez.
Some of those schools, even though they
opened in 1995, '96, '97 they are still overcrowded.
So, I can't fathom how consideration of the closing
any schools in Little Village is even considered.
So, I urge you to take that into consideration and
not close those schools.

Let me also address another issue that's
come up in this conversation in school utilization.
We want to make sure that as we fill these campuses,
and Santo Dominguez is on the campus of Gary, as
Castellanos is the sister school to Burns,
Castellanos; and as Little Village Academy feeds
into and also has an attendance boundary shared my
Castellanos, that no thought, that no consideration
be given to any sort of school consolidation because
we fought way too hard for these schools.

We, for example, have a campus known as
the Little Village Lawndale High School. We fought
for four high schools all in one campus. There is a
rapid rumor that it is being considered to be
consolidated, to be put in one unit.

We designed that campus for four schools:
School of social justice, school of math and
science, and school of cultural and arts, and the
school of world language. We want to keep them separate. We want to make sure those units continue.

As the alderman of the 22nd Ward, I will fight arduously against consolidation or school closings because we deserve our community schools.

Thank you.

MR. MONTES de OCA: Excuse me, let's continue the meeting. Now I would like to introduce -- can you hear me in the back?

Now I would like to introduce Cook Commissioner Jesus Garcia.

ALDERMAN GARCIA: It's at capacity. Ladies and gentlemen of the commission, I will be very brief because tonight I think you want to hear most importantly from the parents and the students and other educators and community residents that are here this evening.

I hope that as you listen to the testimony tonight, you will hear clearly that all of these schools have come about because of tremendous community efforts and partnership with many partners.
There are caring students, there are caring parents and caring teachers who are all here tonight. We cannot simply go by formulas that are made in the abstract, but we should understand that these schools are the most important building blocks and institutions in our neighborhoods; and we should be very sensitive to every testimony that is given here tonight and not make any arbitrary decisions disconnected from the realities of these communities. Thank you very much.

MR. MONTES de OCA: Now, the three representatives from Gary and Hammond. Is there representative from Benito Juarez High School? The three Jungman Elementary.

SCHOOL: JUNGMAN ELEMENTARY

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Can you all hear me? I have the translation to that. Good evening to all. My name is Martha Ramirez, president of the local school council at Jungman School, member of the academic parent leaders, member of the Gamelia Metro Chicago, mother of two CPS students.

I'm here today to express my concern and
represent the families whose children attend Jungman Elementary School, a school on the list of underutilized schools. I would like you to take into consideration this school was a level three school and went up to a level two school on probation, and this year maintained level two status out of probation.

This means that the school is progressing and making an effort to achieve a higher level of academic success. I want our school to stay open.

Let's demonstrate what we are capable of achieving. I have a daughter who has been affected emotionally so much regarding the closing of schools that every day in the morning, afternoon and night she asks me, "Mom, I don't want to transfer to another school. Why do they want my school to close? I feel safe here."

My question for all of you is have you taken into consideration the physical and emotional well-being of our children when you make the decision to create a list of schools closing? I don't think so.

We don't want charter schools. They are not better than ours. We want our public schools.
We don't want our school closed. We want people to help make it better. Education is a right not a business.

The solution to this problem is called educational quality and academic improvement and for this our school must remain open. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Luz Quadadro (phonetic). I've been part of the Jungman family as a teacher for 16 years and have witnessed growth and the hard work of the Jungman school community.

What is it that our school needs? Before I can answer that, let me tell you what he have would. Jungman Elementary School has 271 students with a desire and to learn and excel beyond the walls of our schools.

Some of you may think 271 students is a small number. To us, it's the right number. We're not underutilized. We are perfectly utilized. Jungman has demonstrated educational growth and success over time.

Jungman is a level two school on the rise, placing in the 94th percentile in the district, giving us a value added score of 1.5. This score is
among the highest in the PLV network.

Our first quarter attendance rate was 97.86 percent, proving that our students want to attend Jungman School. In 2012, our composite ISAT scores rose to 62 percent from 54 percent in 2009.

In addition, Jungman has achieved the highest growth from beginning of the year to middle of the year on the NWEA and the PLD network this year.

To add, in 2012, 33 percent of ELL population scored with the meeting or exceeding expectations on the ISAT, with our ELL population being 50.9 percent. This significant academic progress is a direct result of the implementation of QTELP, Quality Teaching in English Language Philosophy. Jungman is one of three schools in PLPN implementation of QTELP strategies in our literacy curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

Our vision for the future is to offer a dual-language program of instruction, having the population to do so effectively.

Furthermore, all classroom teachers at Jungman having Master's Degree of Education, and 95 percent also hold a bilingual certification
Finally, Jungman has exceptionally unique educational programs, over 26 community partnerships, some of which are two fully equipped science laboratories, a 21st ready computer lab with new Mac computers, partnerships with Midwestern Generation UIC, Novel Series.

MR. MONTES de OCA: Ma'am, your time is over.

SPEAKER: We ask the Board of Education to please keep in mind that we are a school on the rise. This is evidence that Jungman Elementary School is succeeding, and will continue to succeed, given the opportunity to do so. Therefore, I ask that the CPS Board give great consideration to the Commission's recommendation that all level two schools on the rise should remain open.

Knowing what Jungman Elementary has, I hope it is clear that what we need is to remain open as a Chicago public school. Thank you.

MR. MONTES de OCA: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hello, my name is Hector Mandoza. Jungman has been my school for about nine years. Seeing eighth graders in the year made me want a
future.

I want to graduate. Knowing that your

class graduation picture will not being hung on the

wall of the school of the school that you may be

thrown out because the school will be closed.

How would you feel if you've been -- I've
been attending Jungman school for nine years. I
have some memories. Sometimes I look back and say,
"Oh, I can't believe I actually did that." Those
memories only live in Jungman.

Jungman is not only our school, it's also
our second home. It's where we come to work,
socialize and grow as individuals. It is also where
we come together. Let us say you have a problem
with your family, you can go up to any teacher that
you trust and tell them your problem. They tell you
to go to the right teacher and tell your problem.

She will help you as much as she can.

Now, tell me that is not family? Seeing Jungman

close will not only affect teachers and students,
but also the community. As you can see people care
about the school.

You are not only closing Jungman, you are
also closing a strong family. If you decide to
close Jungman, go ahead, but just know wherever we go, we will always have the love of the eagle, the human eagle.

SPEAKER: My name is Elaine (phonetic). I started at Jungman when I was three years old. At first I didn't want to stay because I didn't know anyone, but then the teachers started to gain my trust.

They played with me when I was little. They helped with work when I was older. When I had problems at home, they helped there as well. My teachers encouraged me when I looked gloomy. They told me not to worry, if I put mind to it, I can achieve my goal.

And they added, "One day I will have the honor to watch you walk down the stage and receive your diploma." In Jungman, we are all united.

Every staff member knows a student by name. Our security guards even gives us nicknames, and is friendly to both students and parents.

Every time I see one of my older teachers, they remind me and my friends how small we were. Now we're all grown up, but the important thing is they gained our respect and trust.
I don't want my teachers to suffer. I assume that you don't want me, or any classmates, to go through drama. You say you gain community trust by the process closing schools.

I believe this is not well thought out. You are still closing schools. What trust will you gain? Trust is gained by making the right choices for the community, and it takes time for choices to be made between people.

Meditate for a while. The four schools that are closed will cause disorder among CPS parents and students will be created. Handfuls of teachers will be unemployed. Our school family will be destroyed.

Closing schools will split our family apart. Go head, close schools in abundance, the question is: Will the Board of Education take the risk of upsetting parents and possibly creating a conflict?

MR. MONTES de OCA: That was Jungman. Now we have a parent representing Finkl and Benito Juarez.

SCHOOL: FINKL and BENITO JUAREZ

SPEAKER: My name is Cathy Vasquez. I have six kids. Two of my kids go to Benito Juarez High
School, and four of my kids go to Finkl Academy.

Both of these schools should be reconsidered. Both of these schools do everything on a family basis. We were new to both of the schools and both schools welcomed us. I have three kids with special needs. One of them is in high school, two of them are in grammar school.

Benito Juarez and Finkl have gone out of their way to help my kids. Not many people actually take the time out. Both of these schools I can honestly say, as a mother, they go beyond. They go above and beyond their students; and I think it would be a good idea if some of the people here can actually go to these schools, sit with the staff, sit with the students, and see what it's like to be in these schools before you guys judge them on numbers.

Numbers to us parents that don't matter. What matters to us is the principal, the home. The schools are like a second home. The lady just said herself, "These schools are homes to our kids."

When our kids are not with you. We rely on the staff. We rely on the principals. We rely on everybody to keep our kids safe.
Both of these schools do this for my six kids. My six kids are my heart. The school is the same way. They treat our kids with respect. They teach them. I can't express to you enough, coming from a parents, what these schools have done for my kids.

So, please reconsider your action on closing them. Talk to more parents, get involved with these grammar schools and the high schools and see what they are about before you guys try to shut them down.

MR. MONTES de OCA: Anyone from Kanoon or Little Village academy? Little Village Academy?

SCHOOLS: KANOON and LITTLE VILLAGE ACADEMY

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Sylvia Delgado, and I'm a very proud parent from Little Village Academy. We're not overcrowded. We're super overcrowded.

Our school was built for 630 students, and we have 880 students. In one week, we got 11 students, and we're expecting 7 more. Next year, we need additional classroom, but we don't even have
the space for it.

In one second grade classroom, we have 34 students, and a third grade classroom we have 33. How can these kids, these students, be in a classroom with so many students?

I'm just very upset, you know, just here, we're overcrowded. Just imagine our kids in the classroom.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. MONTES de OCA: Is there a representative from Kanoon?

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Yella Ranicki (phonetic). I'm a teacher, a third grade teacher, at Kanoon School. I'm here with my friend Syliva Espinoza. She's teacher to speak for our parents, for our students and our staff.

I'm here today to bring you a message.

Stop our school closings. Stop the proliferation of charter schools. You cannot say you are going to close even one of our public schools; and in the same breath, say you're going to use our resources that belong to our schools to fund privatized schools. Private schools that will be funded with
public monies, our money.

We are not stupid. We know what you are doing. This is a travesty. The fact that we have
to come here and beg for what already belongs to us
is outrageous. Stop closing our schools, support
our schools. Honor what you promised our children
and our communities. These are our kids. These are
the people who will run our future.

You have an obligation to us, and we work
for you to see that obligation come to fruition.

Thank you.

MR. MONTES de OCA: The representative from
Madero.

SCHOOL: MADERO

SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Virginia
Cogan, and I come to you as a teacher who has been
at Madero for 13 years. I'm going to be very brief
because this is about the children, and I want you
to be able to hear from them about their experiences
at the school.

We are a neighborhood school that offers
choice. Now that choice is something that the Board
of Education keeps talking about. We have an
international baccalaureate program. We have a
military academy. We also have a general education program. Yes, we are a level two school, but it is no doubt we are almost a level one school.

Madero has made me an educator who has made me better. I am more than just a teacher to these students. I feel as though I am their parent. Anyone who walks into my room from the network, whether it be Dr. Miller, I put my heart into it every single day, as do all of the other teachers at Madero; and most importantly, most importantly, it is for them.

That is why we try every single day. Now I'm going to share my time with my students while I'm up here on the stage, because this is a lesson in progress right now, something that they are learning right now that they have to stand up for their rights, because if they don't, you're going to get something that is going to be taken away.

SPEAKER: My name is Miquel Gutierrez. I'm 13. I am in seventh grade. Today I would like to say a few words regarding my school. My school is a very caring and safe place. It is run by some of the most caring and sweetest people you could ever meet.

I remember once I was in the cold -- it
was a cold frigid afternoon after school and after
ROTC, waiting for my mother's arrival. It was a
very frigid. I was not well covered up. Our school
engineer, Dom, opened the school to let me warm.

He let me inside and that is when I
thought he could have just left me outside to wait,
when instead he was kind enough to let me in. I
know it may not seem much to you, but it matters to
me.

Many of you mostly have felt the kindness
of others, so you should know how it feels. If you
take away the school from me, you are taking the
kindness of our school.

We also have a ROTC program, in which I am
enrolled in. I have to say I am working, sweating
and crying in it. It's all worth the result. Our
program has been successful in two citywide events,
and we have achieved rewards and put it in places;
and the drill competition, we have won third place,
and the sports challenge we won first place.

Our school is very proud to win both. We
shed so many tears at the sports challenge. Seeing
my group win was a gratifying moment.

We may be a poor school, but we are a
great school. The part I remember most is seeing my instructor breaking in tears. It was so much he cried. He was proud. Madero is also my home away from home.

If you take this building in which I hold my happiness and memories, you are taking away my home. Madero is where my friends and I have accomplished and shared so much to just lose.

When you think of Madero, think of me and how I care and cherish this. Madero is a place where I can share what I feel, I can share what I think. I remember when I presented my journal, I started to ball up into tears and nobody laughed.

Instead, they lent me a tissue and applauded my entry. I am very comfortable and happy at my school. It isn't my choice what to do with my school, but I hope my speech can change your mind.

SPEAKER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Marco Reyes, and I attend Madero School. Like my classmate said, there is many memories in Madero. If you close down my school, you shove me into another school, I'm pretty sure I'm going to give up. I'm going to give up on myself. I'm going to be by myself, and I have to drop out.
That is the future you want? Listen to these people. They are counting on you. They are counting on you. I don't want my school to be closed down, just because he hasn't experienced what I experienced.

The last seven years, my parents worked very hard for me, so I can have a better future. You're closing our school? I don't think that's really fair.

SPEAKER: We are not overcrowded like many other schools. We work hard like everybody else. We do things that people can't do in the streets, and we're kept in the streets, not in the streets, like many people at other schools are.

We have a program called ROTC that we stay in school until 6:00 o'clock at night just working, just keeping us out of the streets, taking away our influence of violence.

People should just stay as they are and learn how to stay here. We have after-school programs that teach people how to do many things. We have music production, we have dancing, we have basketball teams, soccer teams. We have programs that most schools can't achieve.
Most of us can't even do the things we can't do today. When at Madero, I want to be the person I am now. Many other students in my school would say the same thing, too.

SPEAKER: Hello, name is Natalie Flores, and I'm from Madero Middle School, and I'm in the ROTC program. I just want to say if you close down the school, you are closing down a lot of futures.

If you close down the school, you are going to be stopping doctors from wanting to become doctors. You don't know what the future holds. Do you think we're going to want to continue going to school? They give up on us, we're going to give up on ourselves.

Just like Marco said, our parents are here working hard all these years have gone by, they want us to have a really good future. They work their butts off just for us. Yeah, we're here, complaining because they're going to close down our schools. How is that even an option?

Closing down our schools is closing down millions of futures. You don't know what the future holds for every one of us. Many people in our school is not a very good influence. We have many
bad influences, yet we decided to enroll in the ROTC program.

One of our teachers, many of our teachers, stay after school just to teach us when we don't get a lesson, yet they waste their own time and get no money. They just do it for free. We're there taking them, and yet they're going to fire them?

What is that any good? That is just hard work going to waste. I just really want you to think about if closing the school is a very good idea.

Gangbanging is going to go up. You guys are going to have to pay much more money for the cops to go around and police our schools.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

MR. MONTES de OCA: McCormick, a representative from McCormick? Orozco, you can come over here this way.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: I represent the teachers and the parents from or Orozco. I was a product of or Orozco. That is why we are here. We are here to
stop this.

Orozco is the only school on the south side of the City of Chicago that serves the Spanish language bilingual gifted students. Where are you going to send our gifted students. Orozco, that's the only community middle school in the Pilsen network. Historically Orozco has been one of the best performing schools in Chicago area, and in the Pilsen Little Village.

Orozco has been a level one for the past years. According to the last NWEA, testing of 2013 results, the passion shows, the school shows an upward trend.

Orozco was the first school in the community to adopt a uniform policy. In partnership with the Alivio Medical center, Orozco provides health care for all our students and for our parents.

Orozco offers a well-rounded education.

Orozco has the highest rate of parental and community involvement. That means that we need parents. The school cultural and climate that has been developing at Orozco is the school of a high academic and discipline and expectations for both
all our teachers.

Thank you very much for giving us this opportunity. Let's end keep Orozco open together with all the schools in Pilsen.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: My name is Robert Resner, and I work in this community for 21 year ago. I've worked as a coach, a mentor, a friend. I've been out there and I am shocked. I cannot believe I'm stand standing in front of these guys after 21 years to have to tell them what we're doing out here in this area. They should know already. They see it. They've been there, and now we have to tell them all what we're doing, every single one of us.

Orozco Academy is a very special place. It gives students an amazing opportunity to grow, as a person, with extensive after-school programs. Over the past 21 years, living in Orozco, I've watched our school grow from only eight basic programs, with only a few students, to over now 40 programs reaching more than 400 students, and this did not happen by chance. This didn't.

Each and every teacher of the school
worked hard to secure funding for grants to make this happen. Orozco Academy was selected as one of five schools in all of Illinois to receive funding.

We received this funding for the after-school allstar programs. We put people all over, the Mexican Fine Art Museum, the Challenge Program, the Alivio Medical Center, the Chicago Bulls to run programs at a school. We did that to get money we're not getting.

The Chicago Bulls were so excited by our program, they gave us $100,000 to build a fitness facility in our school, and that says a lot.

We take this money that we are not getting from other people, from our board, for academic achievement, for intervention, for tutoring. We offer programs like dance folklore, visual arts, the Joffrey Ballet wants to work with us, computer animation, volleyball, basketball, soccer.

You know we have those, but there is still more. Five K races, tumbling, technology, two different platforms, Ipad, lots of different things. All of you have to keep up this fight. These schools must stay open, every single one of them.
MR. MONTES de OCA: Pickard?

SCHOOL: PICKARD

SPEAKER: Hello, everybody. My name is Martha Castro. I'm the president of the high school. I am here for all the schools. I know everybody has said I think more than -- we're just so emotional right now.

I have a question, and I hope somebody can answer it. Are our schools being targeted to close to make way for more charter schools in our neighborhoods?

If so, who will pay for transportation to and from the new school sites? Can anybody here answer that question? We need an answer, please.

Who is going to answer the question?

MR. RIVERA: I will. Our CEO Barb Byrd-Bennett made a commit the that any facilities that are taken off line through this process this year will not be given over to a charter school or a district.

(WHEREUPON, a presentation was made in Spanish.)

SPEAKER: My name is Elaine Encheck (phonetic), and I'm a community member for 60 years, and I've been a volunteer at Pickard School for 24 years.
My question is: If you close our school, in our Pilsen Little Village neighborhood, what resources will you put in place so no further violence occurs, which could occur in schools that close and students from our neighborhood have to enter different neighborhoods and different gang territories?

We already experienced with summer school where our children entered other areas, and there was gang violence started up because of them entering a different gang territory. So, I don't want to see this happening. Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Alexis Gozalez, the CTU delegate from Pickard School. I just want to start by saying I think it's appalling there are parents out there, this is the only community meeting we have before the school, and they're not allowed to have their voices heard or hear what's going on.

The only thing you have do is decide what schools will be closed. That shows you how much they care about our community. That shows how much they care. I don't care about the time. I'll say everything I have to say.

I am against any further school closing at
all in Chicago. It is very clear to me what we have
gone through in the past ten years, seeing these
school closing, they are not effective. You have
not come up with other solutions. You have not put
the minds of all these million-dollar people, big
members, all the people you hire, consultants to
find solutions to create revenue.

We have individual schools. We as
teachers find ways way to fund our own classes for
the resources, you're not there. Why are you going
to seek out other schools?

When are you going to stop using school
closers as the only way to balance your budget, a
budget that only twice, mind you, since 2005 has
actually ended up what deficit. The other years it
always ended up with a small surplus, but the
problem is the surplus is small, they are not
receiving resources. That means schools are not
receiving resources. I hope you guys address that
problems.

SPEAKER: My name is Ivan. I'm security guard
from Pickard School. I am not as good as a speaker.
I'm tired of this bullshit from the board. I'm
tired of it. Stop feeding us bullshit. I have six
years in the Marines, 14 years as a fire inspector. I hate politics. Don't feed me bullshit. You feed them to schools. People deserve it. I know people from higher top, they support me. I'm sick and tired of it. I got kids in Cooper. These are all my kids. These are my kids. Don't disrespect them. Hear them out.

I don't need a microphone. I can speak loud so you can hear me. You understand me? I'm not trying to intimidate you or nothing like that.

This is the voice. This is the future. Listen to them. I don't want to say something, but I got to say it, sir, this is a letter from the board stating that I was terminated. A school needs security guards. I am more than a security guard. I'm a mentor. I'm dad, I'm a father.

So, listen to them. Listen to the community. Can I get my job back? Why is my job cut? This is proof.

MR. RIVERA: Let's talk afterwards.

MR. MONTES de OCA: Thank you, sir. We have someone from Paderewski, Parez and Pilsen?

SCHOOLS: PADEREWSKI, PAREZ and PILSEN

SPEAKER: My, may name is Ms. Williams. I am a
power parents from Paderewski. I am a parent of five, which two have graduated from Paderewski.

I have two more who loves their school and their teachers as well. We teach our children that education is important. We, the parent, can't stress enough about how important it is.

So, when the kids hear that their schools is going to close, there goes hopes and dreams. It's deeper than that. Does that mean we have failed them? No. CPS has, by talking about closing their schools.

This is not a debate. This is a plea to say Rosa Parks fought to keep from going to the back of the bus. Women fought to have the right to vote. Martin Luther King fought for civil rights.

Civil rights are those rights which are considered to be unquestionable, deserved by all people under all circumstances, especially without threat of race, creed, color or gender.

Our children have the right to have their school Paderewski not closed. When will CPS stop putting dollars signs before our children's education? Why are we still fighting? Just two years ago, we had to fight to keep Paderewski from
consolidating.

Now we have a new principal, her name is Ms. Lewis that deserve a chance. She deserve a chance to continue her art work on turning Paderweski around.

Barbara Byrd-Barnett, if you could only see inside children's eyes and see their souls, then you would know that closing schools are not the answer. Why not open the boundaries?

SPEAKER: My name is Rosco (phonetic). I am a student of Paderewski. What are you all doing? You all want to close our schools to turn them into drug houses. What are we all doing about it?

CPS needs to stop. We as students at Paderewski are trying our best to pull our grades up, trying our best to move from level three. What are they doing in trying to close us back down?

Thank you.

SPEAKER: Hello, I am a proud fifth grader parent of Paderewski, too. I am also the chairperson for local school council there.

Okay, well, Paderewski we have a new principal there, and what she brought into our school we have a full day kindergarten.
ACL is changing for our literature
program, music for our youth choir, beginning band,
international foundation, like music and theory,
Boys and Girls club of Chicago, my Old Town middle
school initiatives.

We have a fourth class solid program,
Efferan College career preparation, after-school
Crochet Club, achieve rebound and A list programs,
an SES after-school academic program, a New Book on
Wheels, Six Flag Red America. The new Paderewski
Academy, we are one.

SPEAKER: I am just sitting here and I just
really couldn't let this moment pass to speak about
the school that I love and the community I love.

I'm a teacher at Paderewski Elementary
School. My name is Ms. Riley, and I've been there
eight years. I just want to say that I love that
school, I love the kids and the community, and I've
been there for eight years.

The kids I taught, I taught family of
kids. Some of the kids in my class are maybe the
third, fourth, fifth kid in their family that has
gone through their math teacher. I would hate to
have the school close down.
It seems like it's underutilized, but I don't want to underestimate the importance of family and community and roots and how many kids come back, and to see us how would they feel if their school wasn't there.

You know, it's family and community and having roots is very, very important. I also just want to add all the dedicated staff that we have, all these teachers that come in day in and day out, deal with all the children and all the issues.

The kids deal with us and all the things we're going through, and we learn from each other and love each other and help each other, and all the teachers that I taught we're like a family.

Even teachers that don't work there anymore we're like a family. It's really our community. It is going to upset the balance. It is going to upset children, families.

And finally, I just want to say that over the years, Paderewski has shown quite a bit of a role. You know, we can look at the numbers and all that, but one thing that stood out to me was how much role our upper grade made last year, and then the metrics were changed.
We are thinking we are off probation, hearing the numbers and things are changing. So, let's talk about how you look at things. I really want our school to stay open.

Finally, as it was said before, we do have a new principal, and I think she deserves a chance and we deserve a chance to continue the role and make gains and continue the type of school we're trying to deal with.

She just got there. It's not really fair to shut it down. You all believe.

MR. MONTES de OCA: Thank you, ma'am. Parez and Pilsen. Anyone from Parez? Pilsen? A representative from Pilsen?

SCHOOLS: PAREZ and PILSEN

SPEAKER: Let me talk, please. I would like to start off with good evening. I'm Rosemary Sierra (phonetic), and I represent Pilsen Community Academy. I'm president of the LSD and proud of it.

Here at academy, we added a seventh and eight grade based on 87 percent agreement vote.

We have consistently been level one school for years. This is the first year that we're at level three. In reference to underutilized
school, we had two buildings: The main building and annex modular. The annex which was put in place by CPS for a temporary period of three to five years now has passed 25.

There's a great safety concern that is not safe on solid foundation. Given the maintenance of this structure is costly and widespread.

Our recommendation is proposal one: Tear down the annex module in an effort to accomplish the following school, community and district goals:

Take advantage of the main building by relocating the students from the annex module to the main building, increasing students' learning time, as students will not have to be forced travel between buildings.

Increase students' safety as the result of students not trapped between the buildings and increasing security personnel to one building, create a well needed graph for students and community use.

That is not to mention the benefit the newly-acquired grant from Midwest Generation to enlarge the parking lot, a contribution to the district costing, but not spending money to maintain
a temporary older annex module building.

Proposal two, keep the annex module and improve safety to accomplish the following school community and district both. Provide quality adequate space for additional Chicago public school students new to the neighborhood and consolidation of closing of the schools in our community and to the students centered around learning environments. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. My name is Miguel Sugaro (phonetic). I just to talk about the Pilsen Academy responsive recommendations.

According to the recommendation of CPS No. 3 states, "Do not close underutilized schools that are in the process of adding grades." Our response to this is we're still adding classes in our school. We are awarded the middle school grade. We used to be 3K through 6 school, now we have become pre-K through eighth grade school. Our recommendation in No. 5 states, "Do not close schools that are underutilized and close to efficient."

Our response to this is: Our enrollment has increased since the beginning of the year by
almost 90 percent. We were at 65 percent utilization, but the enrollment as increased by 42 students, which is almost 500 students total. Also we're still adding to the middle school and are actively growing with the added middle school students. We expect be to be retaining 5 percent utilization.

Another concern it was indicated by CPS that we could have up to 750 students based on the certain data collected. The maximum safety capacity totals 660 comfortably, 760 of the absolute maximum. Based on this, we are questioning the validity of CPS stipulation that we can safely and productively accommodate 650 students, unless we are a crowded classrooms which will hinder teaching resulting in only decreased test scores for students but also decreased academic and social performance. Recommendation No. 7, do not close schools that are on the rise. Our response to this is based on scores from the last ten years, we're in fact a school on the rise. If our scores had not increased, the last year would be a level one school. These are composite score: 2001, 37;
2007, 71; 2008, 71; 2009, 79 percent.

On the recommendations we believe that Pilsen Academy should be taken off the table for potential school closing. Thank you.

SPEAKER: My name is Dianna Less (phonetic), I'm a teacher at the Pilsen Community Academy. If Pilsen Academy were to close many parents and students would suffer.

It would be especially detrimental to our students with special needs. We four pre-K classes, which are separate, and two each contained pre-K classrooms.

We also have a large special ed population in grades K through 8 that we are committed to serving in the least-restrictive environments.

Our students with special needs comprise 21 percent of our student body, which adds our total to over 100 students. Pilsen also fully implements intervention programs to increase student achievement.

To further support all of our students, we are the only parent school in our neighborhood that opens on Saturdays. We also have evening classes
for parents as well as before school, after school and tutoring programs available for all students. We keep our students in school until about 5:00 o'clock so they are in a safe and nurturing environment. All of our teachers are committed to success, and we have administration and teachers that are nationally Board Certified.

Overall, we have tremendous parent support. If Pilsen were to close, it would be very dangerous to cross busy streets such as Ashland to attend a different school. We have had tragedies in the past because kids had attempted to cross Ashland to go to a different school.

Traveling to different schools also increases students exposure to gangs is actually going to be crucial. Based on our successes, opportunities for students and the community, and commitment to academic success and safety, we believe that Pilsen Community Academy should be excluded from potential school closings.

MR. MONTES de OCA: Ruiz, any representative from Ruiz? Saucedo?

SCHOOLS: RUIZ and SAUCEDO

SPEAKER: My name is Erica (phonetic). I'm
from Delvedo Academy. Who wishes to start? First of all, where is the Board of Education? Where is Barbara Byrd-Bennett? Where is Rahm Emanuel? The master of all of this. They are the ones who are making the decisions over our neighborhood schools.

We know that you all are not making these decisions. If they are not here, what is it to say how much our input is valued?

I am going it translate this because we didn't have time to translate. The Board is not asking us whether or not the school closing is a valid option. They are asking which schools should they close.

They want us to plan our own funeral. Are we going to let them do this? Our schools have been in our community for decades and generations. Can the board say the same thing? The board is a constant revolving door staying a couple years, tearing down our schools, privatizing our schools and making money off of our tears.

The Board of Education you might be here for a year or two, we are here to stay.

SPEAKER: The first thing I can say if someone on the Board planned this event, if they were my
student, they could actually put something together
that might have worked for the community.

Like my fellow marine, I was in the
military for six years as an infantry on two
deployments. I chose education to continue my
service to communities. My first year in education
I was instantly hired and instantly fired in a turn
around. I'm now facing the same exact threat of
when I went into education.

For years, CPS has been holding these
little community events because they want to hear
your opinion. Year after year, the communities say
we do not want any turn-around, we do not want
charters. We need air conditioning, we need small
class sizes, we need typing programs, we need
section he had.

Every year, they ignore. How many of us
hear actually think they really care? Year after
year after year, and they ignore. So, here is an
idea for CPS, hold the community forum where they
say, "Hey, community members, what do you need?
Hey, teachers, what do you need to succeed?
Students, students, what do you want to see at your
school?" Have they done that?
They've never done that. So, let's
actually start a dialogue on what real education
looks like.

SPEAKER: I'm going to be a little brief here.
I am with the school closing for Marshall High
School, and I saw people kind of with the same
expressions you guys have with the disinterested,
apathetic, like they're really not listening.
The school are closings here. They are
going to give you the illusion that you have
community input, and they are listening to you and
they close the school anyway.

What is the point of that? The only way
this is going to work is if you listen, and you put
a hault on it. Some of these schools have too many
students. What are you going to do, close down the
school and send them to a school where there are too
many students and have 35 kids in a class, and then
you are going to say they are underutilized?

You have a special ed class with 15 kids
in it instead of 35. You're basing your ratio on 35
kids in a class. That's stupid.

Also, one kid from one school and you put
him in another school, you'll increase violence in
the city. In case someone hasn't noticed, then you are also putting those kids in danger.

You are disrupting the community. What is this chaos? This need is chaos. You couldn't even plan the meeting right. You can't even plan the meeting?

How are you going to plan -- effectively plan to move these kids from one school to the next without getting jumped by gangs with over populated with huge classes.

SPEAKER: Hello, can you hear me? I'm going to look at them because I want them to understand me. I'm here for the community, for Pilsen, not one school, for Pilsen. The community Pilsen.

My name Ariseli. I've been in Pilsen for 16 years. Ariseli Gonzalez. For 16 years, I've been here. I'm here hear to let you know the harm that you're doing closing our public schools.

Gangs are a reality. You are making kids cross boarders. We understand that. If police officers cannot control them, how do you think that parents and teachers can control them? How many more kids have to die, innocent kids have to die, for you to understand there are gangs when police
officers are ready to control them; and they are
professionals, and they are trained and they can't,
how can we do it?

You're counting space bathrooms, closets,
now you are saying they don't have enough room?

My child is not going to take a class in a
bathroom or in a closet. You don't take, you don't
learn in a bathroom. Our empty rooms that you call
are for special education kids, for parents to have
workshops, and for the teachers to have meetings.

Instead of closing them, make smaller
classrooms. Why? Because it's a proven fact that
the smaller classroom, the better learning for the
kids. So, don't close them.

You are always talking about more money.
There's no money. There's no money. There is
money. Surplus money has millions. Where is my tax
money? Where is our tax money going to charter
schools?

Are you supporting charter schools? Our
schools need art, music, social workers. Oh, let's
say maybe even physical items like a roof, air
conditioning. You have air conditioning in your
building. There are schools that don't have air
conditioning.

Let me tell you I would like to teach you
to respect our teachers. Let them teach. Let them
do what they love to do, instead you are putting
more kids in those classrooms.

Support the schools. Don't break the
schools. This is a community, and it's come
crawling to you. We are here. You were not ready
for us. Don't under estimate the Hispanics.

MR. MONTES de OCA: I have our last two
representatives. This the last for tonight.

SCHOOLS: WHITNEY and WHITTIER

SPEAKER: Are we going to let them do this? As
soon as our schools is ready, they have been in our
communities. They have been in our community for
decades and generations.

Can the Board say the same thing? The
Board is a constant revolving door, staying a couple
years tearing down our schools, privatizing our
schools, and making money off of our tears.

The Board of Education you might be here
for a year or two. We are here to stay and our
school is here to stay.

SPEAKER: All right. You all get the idea that
the Board of Education cares what we think. Let's
take a vote. Okay, let's send a clear message to
the Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Stand if you are opposed to these
destructive schools closings. Are you all willing
to March? Are you willing go sit in to protect our
children from these tragedies?

SCHOOLS: SPRY and TELPOCHACALLI

SPEAKER: My children going to Telpochacalli
School. I'm a proud CPS student from Pilsen, Orozco
Juarez. I've been born and raised in Pilsen. My
children go to Telpochacalli School, Fine Arts
School.

I just don't understand. Don't understand
how we have so many parents still in the hallway,
people that can't go to the bathroom. How is a fire
hazard for us to stand by the Board, but you guys
have people, cops, police block being the doors, but
that is not a fire hazard, okay?

You guys are running all these schools,
trying to close them, because you're trying to make
them efficient. Well, you just proved to the whole
community how efficient you do your job when it
comes to holding meetings. That is all of you guys.
One minute, guys.

Let me just tell you what went on upstairs. Nobody could hear any of you guys. They didn't hear anybody. You were there, you were in the hallway. You were there for a little bit. Nobody else was there. Okay?

But we were told that everybody was going to be heard. They get behind ten-year-old children, "Wait, wait, parents, don't go anywhere. The little kids wants to talk to you." That's disrespecting that child.

As soon as I could talk to you guys, why these schools should close down, you're here in front of the cameras trying to contain what's in here, instead of really focusing on those kids, on all of the parents, and all the communities, every single one of us.

Who are you to come out all of a sudden and try to close our schools down? You should be working with us to make them better, not close them down. Where's Rahm Emmanuel. He wants charter schools. Where is he now. He wants charter schools. Where is he now? He's pushing charter schools. He should be here telling us from his
heart to our faces why he wants those charter
schools, why is that so much better than CPS?

We have no money? Our children deserve an
education. Education should be equal for all the
children. Okay? I am a single mom with four
children. I'm going to tell you right now, I will
not have money to pay for all of their uniforms.
Okay?

To pay for their tuition to get into the
charter school, because I don't make enough to make
my rent feed my children. Okay? And still send
them to school. We're going to have them
gangbanging on the street, because I got to go to
work, or is Public Aid going to be supporting me the
rest of my life and my children?

Because I'm trying to create better human
beings that are responsible for their and their own.
This is exactly what's wrong. You make people
dependent on everybody else, instead of trying to
help everybody here.

Let me help you so your kids can be better
off than you are, so you don't have to depend on the
system. You guys have all your kids in private
schools I'm assuming, right?
Raise your hand if your kid in a charter school. Come on. Why don't you guys raise your hand and tell me which ones on the CPS?

You have kids my age. Do you have your kids there? No, right. No. But yet guess what, I'm trying to raise future leaders, and that's what we're trying to do here, future leaders.

These kids, these parents, one day, guess what, they'll take your spot soon. You ain't going to be there forever.

SPEAKER: Hi, guys, I'm eighth grade student. My school is an art integrated school because we're like awesome. Okay, so, my school is may not have thousands and thousands kids, or 70 like the rest of the schools.

My school has only about 300 kids. I am the class of 2013. I am the future. We are the future. You just going to shut us down, you're just going to kill our dreams right there?

Okay, my school is different from the others. My school put signs and art together. We do different stuff. My school inspires me in different ways. I'm pretty sure not all the schools do. Like my school inspired me to make these shoes.
My school is an art school. My school is colorful, bright, murals. It's not just a plain color. It is not just a number. It's my school and I love it. Don't close it down.

MR. MONTES de OCA: Thank you very much. The meeting is over, and I would like to thank everybody.

(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