Chicago Public Schools
School Utilization Community Meetings
Breakout Session Notes

Date/Time of Meeting: January 28, 2013, 7:00-9:00pm

Network: Ravenswood/Ridge

Schools represented by audience: Room dominated by McPhearson. Later on joined by one or two teachers/parents from Stockton, Stewart and Trumbull

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.

Overall Tone of Meeting & Reactions to CPS Presentation:
Lack of Trust of CPS – Need to address issue of what can CPS due to build trust- improved communication is one way to address it. Feelings mainly by teachers is that CPS is favoring Charter Schools which undermines the Teacher’s union.

Frustration, Confusion since didn’t hear presentation and got conflicting information from media—some read that McPherson had not been on the list but was now on the list to be closed

Stress, some Anger, Deep concern, Sadness over breaking up of the McPherson family—most in room had been part of McPherson for 20+ years, the backbone of the community

Racism and Perceptions of Unequal Allocation of Funds – Courtenay Language Arts Center – cited as an example of how funds were being diverted from schools like McPhearson where the Hispanic population is 70% while some of the selective enrollment schools are 51% white compared to neighborhood schools where the perception is that the white population is under 10%.

McPhearson frustrated by CPSs formulas for Performance ratings and Utilization which grossly misrepresent their school.

- Performance ratings – not adjusted for high number of special ed students whose classes have a smaller teacher to student ratio requirement
- Utilization doesn’t account for
  - Multi-purpose rooms + gym (seen as unused space)
  - Smaller classroom sizes for Special Ed students
- Does not take important aspects into account that are not measured
  - Stability, longevity of neighborhood school
  - Full inclusion of Special Ed students
  - Safety, family feeling of neighborhood school/investment in community
“Human capital” – must be observed by Commission

“Must haves” in new school situation/elements of current school to keep:

**Universal** – arts in all school so that a principal doesn’t have to choose between music or visual arts

**McPhearson:** Keep what they already have . . .
- IB program
- Special Ed students included in everything, e.g. theatre productions/classroom ratio of 1 teacher:13-14 special needs classes
- Research based programs, e.g. Everyday Math, Basel
- Unique programs such as bullying
- Arts and Music
- Technology, e.g. smart boards, computers in every classroom, 2 computer labs, multi-media lab
- Collaborative culture
- Family feeling among students, admin, and support staff all know students, look out for each other
- Paid time for teachers, parents, principles to meet/plan together after school

**Stewart:** Needs more . . .
- Support for Special Ed students
- Social workers to support transient and homeless population
- Help reducing the truancy rate of homeless students
- ELL support
- Social and emotional support Art

**Trumbull:** Needs more . . .
- Special Ed support (33% of students are special ed), e.g. equipment for empty Sensory Room; adequate social service support given the homeless and special needs population
- Smaller class sizes
- Art program (no art currently)
- Expanded music program (1 teacher currently)
- Less split level teaching

**If school consolidated, biggest risks/impact:**

**McPhearson:**
- Stability of students that rely on routine – many employees have been there for 10 and 20+ years
- Student regression

**Stewart:**
- Any direction they would walk is gang territory – students afraid to go to after school programs like the Boys and Girls Club, Uplift
If school taking on new students, concerns/impact:

- Important to change the perceptions of students regarding the new students and reduce school rivalry
- Conduct an open house to welcome parents/children to new school (suggested using the New Town, CT. model)

McPhearson

- Would lose space (sq. footage) which means lose everything
  - Higher class sizes
- Compromise safety, resiliency
  - Some schools rougher than others
- How are special needs students accommodated
- Need comprehensive plan well before the move
  - Proper support system in place
  - Team to welcome new students, teachers, admin
  - Need resources/help to unify school

Stockton

- Need very clear communication, included in the process, plan
- Need Commission Member to come to school for Q&A session
- Need dedicated transition team
- Need counseling in place for transition

Steward

- Need safe transportation to new school – out of neighborhood so can no longer walk to school, many parents don’t have cars

Wrap up/Final Thoughts/Suggestions:

- Some would like to conduct Town Hall meetings in the individual schools with a representative from the commission