

Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Reed Elementary School

January 20, 2012; 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Location: Antioch Baptist Church; 6248 S. Stewart Ave

CPS Staff in Attendance

Steve Gering, Latonya McDade, Angela Washington, Christopher Mays, Cammie McDaniel, Sonja Griffin, Debbie Taylor, Shelly Brim, Laura Farr

Brief Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Reed Elementary School in accordance with Public Act 097-0474. CPS officials made a brief presentation regarding the proposal. There were approximately 19 speakers during the public comment period.

CPS Presentation

Latonya McDade, Department Chief Englewood-Gresham, for CPS, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. She also explained that by law, the community meeting could not be cancelled or rescheduled due to the inclement weather. She then provided an overview of the proposal.

Public Comment

Barbara Whigman

Ms. Whigman asked why it took so long to do this. She said there are 200 failing schools in the district. She volunteers and works in the school. She asked why there were no parent liaisons. Parents can't help students because they need to help themselves.

Shirley Brown

Ms. Brown wanted to know why they are being transferred from their school.

Sharon Weathers

Ms. Weathers supported the school closing because the students are not getting a quality education.

Latoya Darden

Ms. Darden does not support failing schools and the school is failing children.

Latanya Hines

Ms. Hines does not support failing schools. She is concerned about safety. She told a story about her son being jumped by 3 boys, yet her son was arrested for defending himself.

Larry James

Mr. James does not support failing schools.

Lorraine Tolbert

Ms. Tolbert said that a 50% graduation rate is not supported. She wants Nicholson to be an option for children to attend.

Francine Jackson

Ms. Jackson does not believe that the community should accept failing schools.

Peggy Turner

Ms. Turner stated that Reed has had years of academic failure. She hoped Nicholson will have test preparation for students.

Alix Guevara

Ms. Guevara is a SPED teacher of 8 years. She was there on behalf of the Chicago Teachers Union. Instead of closing Reed school, CPS should give the school resources, or the community is going to lose out on a good building. Johnson Charter School is already in the building and the community will not have access. Johnson is able to accept and expel any students they see fit. She gave an example of on a snowy day like today students will have to walk blocks instead of going to school in the neighborhood.

Jamel Weathers

Mr. Weathers does not support the closure. Parents should be made to come into the school to assist. High school students can assist with community service hours by helping out at Reed.

Danielle Neal

Ms. Neal agreed with Ms. Guevara. The school should be fixed up and given the same resources as other schools instead of being closed, which will create a void in the neighborhood.

Jeanette Harrison

Ms. Harrison stated that the Mayor walked thru Guggenheim when he was running for election and said that it would not be closed. He is a liar because her son is going to have to transfer to Bond now. She stated the \$1.5 million CPS claims to have provided to the school and afterschool programs was non-existent.

Carolyn Homes

Ms. Homes stated that the need is to help those students left behind instead of closing the schools.

Tony Davis

Mr. Davis stated that when students do not receive a quality education they will join gangs, push drugs and get into trouble. As parents, everyone needs to be more responsible and keep children in school and hold those schools more accountable.

C.J., Student

C.J. does not believe that CPS should close schools. As a sophomore, he thinks what is taught and how it is taught should be changed. The teacher should focus more on the things that interest students.

George Crat

Mr. Crat asked why CPS was not guaranteeing a Tier 1 school instead of a Tier 2 school for students. He wondered what was full proof in that a Tier 2 school would not fail.

Darren Daniels

Mr. Daniels does not support the closing of any school. He views it like a car. If something is wrong with the engine, you do not throw the car away, instead you buy the parts to fix it so it will run like new. He thinks that CPS should keep the schools open no matter what happens.

Steve Shaffe

Mr. Shaffe shared that safety is his main concern.

Closing Comments by Steve Gering, Chief of Leadership Development & Support:

- In no way is it the children's fault what has happen at Reed
- Safety is the District's number one concern
- Resources will be given so that the transition is successful
- Parents and the community are very important in this process