

Board of Education of the  
City of Chicago

In Re: The Matter of  
The Proposed Reconstitution of  
Pablo Casals Elementary School

Before  
Fredrick H. Bates  
Independent Hearing Officer

**Background**

**Introduction**

On or about January 9, 2012, the undersigned was retained by the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) of the Chicago Public Schools (“CPS”) to serve as an Independent Hearing Officer in this matter. On Monday, January 30, 2012, a hearing was convened at the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 125 South Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois. The purpose of the hearing was to enable the Hearing Officer to receive public comments from concerned persons, specifically including representatives of the CEO, members of the local school council, parents, students, members of the school’s staff, the Principal, representatives of the Chicago Teachers’ Union, and interested members of the public, concerning the CEO’s proposal to Turnaround Casals Elementary School via Reconstitution. CPS served notice of the hearing on the parents, staff members, Principal, and members of the Local School Council via U.S. Mail, and/or personal service. 117 individuals signed in to attend the public hearing. 38 people to speak at the hearing, and 23 individuals, other than CPS presenters, spoke at the hearing. The record was left open for the submission of written materials to give anyone who was unable to speak an

opportunity to submit their statements and any supporting documentation. The Casals school community made voluminous post-hearing written submissions.

Pursuant to the directives provided in the document entitled “Procedures For Public Hearings On Proposed School Closures, Consolidation, Co-Location, Phase Out, Reconstitution, Or Reassignment Boundary Change,” the undersigned summarizes below the input received at the Public Hearing.

**Relevant Statutory Provisions and Board Policies/Procedures**

The relevant statutory provisions include, but are not necessarily limited to the following, which state in pertinent part as follows:

**Sec. 34—8.3. Remediation and probation of attendance centers**

\* \* \* \*

- (d) **Schools placed on probation that, after a maximum of one year, fail to make adequate progress in correcting deficiencies are subject to the following** action by the general superintendent with the approval of the board, after opportunity for a hearing: ...

**(4) Reconstitution of the attendance center** and replacement and reassignment by the general superintendent of all employees of the attendance center. *(Emphasis added).*

**Sec. 34-18. Powers of the board.**

The board shall exercise general supervision and jurisdiction over the public education and the public school system of the city, and, except as otherwise provided by this Article, shall have power:

\* \* \* \*

- 7. To apportion the pupils to the several schools; provided that no pupil shall be excluded from or segregated in any such school on account of his or her color, race, sex, or nationality. The board shall take into consideration the prevention of segregation and the elimination of separation of children in public schools because of color, race, sex, or nationality.

\* \* \* \*

24. To develop a policy, based on the current state of existing school facilities, projected enrollment and efficient utilization of available resources, for capital improvement of schools and school buildings within the district, addressing in that policy both the relative priority for major repairs, renovations and additions to school facilities, and the advisability or necessity of building new school facilities or closing existing schools to meet current or projected demographic patterns within the district;

The Board's School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012

School Year provides in part:

That the Chicago Board of Education adopt a School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012 School Year.

### **I. Purpose and Goals**

This policy shall establish the standards and criteria for placing a school on Remediation or Probation for the 2011-2012 school year based on assessments administered in Spring 2011 and other performance data from prior school years. A school's accountability status from the 2010-2011 school year shall remain in effect until such time as the school is notified of their new status issued in accordance with this policy.

This policy sets out a systematic means for identifying schools in need of remedial assistance and increased oversight due to insufficient levels of achievement. Section 5/34-8.3 of the Illinois School Code provides for the remediation and probation of attendance centers and for the Chief Executive Officer to monitor the performance of each school using the criteria and rating system established by the Board to identify those schools in which: (1) there is a failure to develop, implement, or comply with the school improvement plan; (2) there is a pervasive breakdown in the educational program as indicated by various factors such as the absence of improvement in reading and math achievement scores, an increased drop-out rate, a decreased graduation rate, or a decrease in the rate of student attendance, or (3) there is a failure or refusal to comply with the provisions of the School Code, other applicable laws, collective bargaining agreements, court orders, or with applicable Board rules and policies.

The Board recognizes that an effective and fair school remediation and probation system considers student test score performance, student growth and progress trends. Therefore, this policy establishes a comprehensive system to assess school performance in order to identify, monitor and assist

schools with low student test scores as well as schools with stagnant or insufficient rates of student improvement.

## **II. Scope of the Policy**

All Chicago Public Schools (“CPS”) shall be subject to this policy, except charter schools under contract with the Board. A charter school shall receive an accountability designation using the criteria hereunder for purposes of comparison to other CPS schools and public reporting. A decision to renew or revoke a school’s charter is governed by the terms of a school’s applicable performance agreement and accountability plan with the Board. Schools newly established by the Board shall receive an accountability designation after the third year of operation or at such time as adequate measures of student achievement become available.

## **III. Definitions**

**Remediation:** An accountability designation assigned to schools where the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) determines that a school’s budget or any amendment thereto may compromise the implementation of the school’s No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) Corrective Action measures or Restructuring Plan.

**Probation:** An accountability designation assigned to non-performing schools where the CEO determines, utilizing the criteria set out in this policy, that a school requires remedial probation measures as described in this policy, including increased oversight, to address performance deficiencies.

**Good Standing:** An accountability designation assigned to schools where the CEO determines, based on the criteria set out in this policy, that student performance and improvement meets or exceeds district standards.

**Adequate Yearly Progress:** School rating issued by the Illinois State Board of Education that identifies if students are improving their performance based on the established annual targets.

**Achievement Level 1:** Shall mean the rating for:

- an elementary school with a total performance score of thirty (30) or above or with at least 71% of the available performance points; or
- a high school that obtains a total performance score of twenty-eight (28) or above or with at least 66.7% of the available performance points.

**Achievement Level 2:** Shall mean the rating for:

- an elementary school with a total performance score of twenty-one (21) to twenty-nine (29) or with 50%-70.9% of the available performance points; or

- a high school that obtains a total performance score of eighteen and two-thirds (18.67) to twenty-seven and two-thirds (27.67) or with 44%-66.6% of the available performance points.

Achievement Level 3: Shall mean the rating for:

- an elementary school that obtains a total performance score of twenty (20) or below or with less than 50% of the available performance points; or
- a high school that obtains a total performance score of eighteen and one-third (18.33) or below or with less than 44% of the available performance points.

Value-Added: Shall mean the metric that assesses school effects on students' academic growth, controlling for student characteristics, grade level, and prior performance through a regression methodology. Academic growth is measured by the change in scale score points on the ISAT from one year to the next.

ISAT: means the Illinois Standards Achievement Test.

ISAT Composite: means the composite score from ISAT Reading, Mathematics and Science test results.

PSAE: means the Prairie State Achievement Examination.

PSAE Composite: means the composite score from PSAE Reading, Mathematics and Science test results.

EPAS: means the series of three assessments (Explore, PLAN and ACT) that are administered to high school students in the following order: (1) Explore – administered to high school freshmen, (2) PLAN –administered to high school sophomores, and (3) ACT - administered to high school juniors.

Freshmen On Track: Shall mean the percentage of first-time freshmen students who earn five credits in their freshman year and fail no more than one semester core course (English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science).

One-Year Drop-out Rate: Shall mean the percentage of students who drop-out in a given year who have not previously dropped out.

Membership Days: Shall mean the number of days that the students on a school's enrollment register should be in attendance. Membership days will end for 8th and 12th graders on the date of graduation authorized by the Board and shall be adjusted for students with medically fragile conditions.

Attendance Rate: Shall mean the total number of actual student attendance days divided by the number of total student membership days.

Advanced Placement (AP) Class: Shall mean a college-level course approved by the College Board to be designated as AP in accordance with established requirements.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Class: Shall mean a college-level course approved by the International Baccalaureate Organization to be designated as an IB class in accordance with established requirements.

AP Exam: Shall mean the end of course exam established by the College Board that is administered upon completion of an AP Class.

IB Exam: Shall mean the end of course exam established by the International Baccalaureate Organization that is administered upon completion of an IB class.

#### **IV. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM**

##### **A. Calculation of Score**

Every school shall receive a performance score based upon its level of current performance, trend over time and student growth as described in Section V below. A school will be evaluated on each of the accountability indicators identified in Section V using best available data and will receive a score for each indicator as well as a total performance score that accounts for the school's overall performance on all accountability indicators. The total performance score will be used to determine whether a school qualifies for an Achievement Level 1, 2 or 3 rating. A school shall receive an accountability status hereunder whereby the school shall be identified as either on Probation, in Good Standing or in Remediation, as further described herein.

##### **B. Determinations**

**1. Scoring Exceptions:** Schools that do not qualify for all performance points hereunder due to the following circumstances shall have their Achievement level determinations based on the percentage of available points earned rather than the actual points earned: (a) if data for the two previous years is not available for a particular metric measuring change over time, the school will not get a score for that metric; (b) if data is available but not reliable due to no fault of the school, the CEO may remove the affected metric from consideration and the school will not get a score for that metric. ISAT and PSAE scores of students who are English Language Learners in program years 0-5 will not be factored into current status or trend scores hereunder.

**2. Accountability Status Determination:** A school with an Achievement Level 3 score hereunder shall receive Probation status. A school with an Achievement Level 1 score or an Achievement Level 2 score hereunder shall receive Good Standing status, except for the following which shall receive Probation status hereunder:

- a. A school that has not satisfied the following minimum ISAT or PSAE composite score requirement:
  - i. Elementary school minimum 2011 ISAT Composite score - 50% meeting or exceeding state standards.
  - ii. High school minimum 2011 PSAE Composite score - 10% meeting or exceeding state standards.
- b. A school that has not satisfied all applicable sustained academic improvement requirements set out in Section VII. as follows:
  - i. A school with a prior Probation status must receive an Achievement Level 1 rating or Achievement Level 2 rating for 2 consecutive years to be removed from Probation; or
  - ii. A school where the Board has taken an action under 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(d)(2) or (4) must remain on Probation for a minimum of 5 years or until the school has made Adequate Yearly Progress for 2 consecutive years, whichever occurs later.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a school with Good Standing status may be placed in Remediation in accordance with Section IV.B.3.

**3. NCLB School Improvement Status:** For schools not on Probation but that have either “Corrective Action”, “Restructuring Planning” or “Restructuring Implementation” status under NCLB, the CEO reserves the right to place the school in Remediation status at any time if the CEO determines that the school’s budget or any amendment thereto may compromise the implementation of the school’s NCLB Corrective Action or Restructuring Plan.

## **V. ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS, STANDARDS AND SCORING**

### **A. Elementary School Indicators, Standards and Scoring**

An elementary school may receive a total performance rating score ranging from zero (0) to forty-two (42). For the 2011-2012 school year, the current status, trend and growth indicators and standards that determine an elementary school’s performance score shall be as follows:

## ***1. ISAT Mathematics – 6 possible points***

**a. Current Status** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students ***meeting or exceeding*** state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT mathematics results. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT mathematics results from tests administered in Spring 2010 and Spring 2011. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

80% or more meeting or exceeding = 3 points

70%-79.9% meeting or exceeding = 2 points

50%-69.9% meeting or exceeding = 1 point

Under 50% meeting or exceeding = 0 points

**b. Trend** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students ***meeting or exceeding*** state standards on ISAT Mathematics. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2011 score with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT mathematics assessment, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points

Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point

Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points

Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or more of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT mathematics assessment automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

## ***2. ISAT Reading – 6 possible points***

**a. Current Status** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students ***meeting or exceeding*** state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT reading results. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT reading results from tests administered in Spring 2010 and Spring 2011. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

80% or more meeting or exceeding = 3 points

70%-79.9% meeting or exceeding = 2 points  
50%-69.9% meeting or exceeding = 1 point  
Under 50% meeting or exceeding = 0 points

**b. Trend** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students *meeting or exceeding* state standards on ISAT reading. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2011 score with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT reading assessment, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points  
Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point  
Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points  
Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or greater of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT reading assessment automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

### **3. ISAT Science – 6 possible points**

**a. Current Status** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students *meeting or exceeding* state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT science results. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT science results from tests administered in Spring 2008 and Spring 2011. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

80% or more meeting or exceeding = 3 points  
70%-79.9% meeting or exceeding = 2 points  
50%-69.9% meeting or exceeding = 1 point  
Under 50% meeting or exceeding = 0 points

**b. Trend** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students *meeting or exceeding* state standards on ISAT science. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2011 score with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT science assessment, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points

Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point

Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points

Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or greater of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT science assessment automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

#### ***4. ISAT Composite - All Grades – 6 possible points***

**a. Current Status** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students in all grades who are ***exceeding*** state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT Composite. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT Composite results from tests administered in Spring 2010 and Spring 2011. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

25% or more exceeding = 3 points

15%-24.9% exceeding = 2 points

5%-14.9% exceeding = 1 point

Under 5% exceeding = 0 points

**b. Trend** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students in all grades who are ***exceeding*** state standards on ISAT Composite. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2011 score for all students with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students in all grades exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT Composite, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points

Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point

Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points

Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or greater of students in all grades exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT Composite automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

**5. ISAT Composite – Highest Grade Students – 6 possible points**

**a. Current Status** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students in the school's highest grade level who are *exceeding* state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT Composite. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT Composite results for students in the highest grade from tests administered in Spring 2010 and Spring 2011. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

25% or more exceeding = 3 points

15%-24.9% exceeding = 2 points

5%-14.9% exceeding = 1 point

Under 5% exceeding = 0 points

**b. Trend** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students in the school's highest grade level who are *exceeding* state standards on ISAT Composite. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2011 score for students in the highest grade with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students in the highest grade exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT Composite, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points

Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point

Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points

Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or greater of students in the highest grade exceeding state standards on the 2011 ISAT Composite automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

**6. Attendance – 6 possible points**

**a. Current Status** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on its average attendance rate from the two most recent school years. To determine current status, a school's average attendance rates from the 2009-2010 school year and from the 2010-2011 school year will be averaged. If two years of data are not available, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

95% or more attendance rate = 3 points  
93%-94.9% attendance rate = 2 points  
90%-92.9% attendance rate = 1 point  
Under 90% attendance rate = 0 points

**b. Trend** - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement of its average attendance rate. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2010-2011 attendance rate with the average rate of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with a 2010-2011 attendance rate of 0%-94.9%, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points  
Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 0.5 percentage points = 1 point  
Improvement of at least 0.5 but under 1.0 percentage points = 2 points  
Improvement of at least 1.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with a 2010-2011 attendance rate of 95% or greater earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

**7. Value-Added – ISAT Reading – 3 possible points**

**Current Status** – An elementary school shall be evaluated on its Value-Added scale score gain for ISAT reading and shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

At least one standard deviation above the district average in 2011 = 3 points

Greater than or equal to the district average, but less than one standard deviation above the district average in 2011 = 2 points

Below the district average, but by no more than one standard deviation in 2011 = 1 point

More than one standard deviation below the district average in 2011 = 0 points

**8. Value-Added - ISAT Mathematics – 3 possible points**

**Current Status** – An elementary school shall be evaluated on its Value-Added scale score gain for ISAT mathematics and shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

At least one standard deviation above the district average in 2011 = 3 points

Greater than or equal to the district average, but less than one standard deviation above the district average in 2011 = 2 points

Below the district average, but by no more than one standard deviation in 2011 = 1 point

More than one standard deviation below the district average in 2011 = 0 points

\* \* \* \*

## **VI. SCHOOLS IDENTIFIED AS NEEDING REMEDIAL ASSISTANCE**

On a date to be determined by the CEO or his designee, after school performance data is available, schools will be notified as to their accountability designation hereunder.

### **A. Schools Placed on Remediation**

Any school that receives a Remediation status as described in Section IV.B. hereunder shall participate in a remedial program in which a Remediation Plan is developed by the CEO. A Remediation Plan may include one or more of the following components:

1. Drafting a new school improvement plan;
2. Additional training for the local school council;
3. Directing the implementation of the school improvement plan; and
4. Mediating disputes or other obstacles to reform or improvement at the school.

In creating a Remediation Plan, the CEO or designee shall monitor and give assistance to these schools to ensure that all aspects of the plan, including the school budget, address the educational deficiencies at these schools and ensure the development and full implementation of a school's NCLB Corrective Action measures and/or Restructuring plan.

For all schools placed on Remediation, the CEO or designee shall approve the final Remediation Plan, including the school budget.

### **B. Schools Placed on Probation**

1. School Improvement Plan and Budget: Each school placed on Probation shall have a school improvement plan and a school budget for correcting deficiencies identified by the Board. The CEO or designee shall develop a school improvement plan that shall contain specific steps that the local

school council and the school staff must take to correct identified deficiencies. The school budget shall include specific expenditures directly calculated to correct educational and operational deficiencies identified at the school.

In creating or updating the required plan, the CEO or designee shall give assistance to Probation schools to ensure that all aspects of the plan, including the school budget, reflect and are tailored to the individual needs of the school and that the plan addresses the educational deficiencies at these schools. For schools with a federal school improvement status for failure to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), the school improvement plan shall also include strategies and activities to achieve AYP and ensure the development and full implementation of the school's NCLB Corrective Action measures and/or Restructuring plan, as applicable.

The Board shall approve school improvement plans and budget for all schools, including schools placed on Probation, as part of the annual school fiscal year budget resolution. Any updates to such school improvement plan or school budget to address new data on the deficiencies at Probation schools and schools with a federal school improvement status shall be approved by the Board in accordance with the state's timeline for Board approval of federal school improvement plans. Thereafter, any amendments to the school improvement plan or budget shall be approved by the CEO or designee.

Except when otherwise specified by the CEO, the Chief Area Officer (CAO) and CAO designees shall serve as the probation team that will identify the educational and operational deficiencies at Probation schools in their Area to be addressed in the school improvement plan and budget presented to the Board for approval.

2. Monitoring: The CEO or designee shall monitor each Probation school's implementation of the final plan and the progress the school makes toward implementation of the plan and the correction of its educational deficiencies.

3. Additional Corrective Measures: **Schools placed on Probation that, after at least one year, fail to make adequate progress in correcting deficiencies are subject to the following actions by the approval of the Board, after an opportunity for a hearing:**

- a. Ordering new local school council elections;
- b. Removing and replacing the principal;
- c. Replacement of faculty members, subject to the provisions of Section 24A-5 of the Illinois School Code;
- d. Reconstitution of the attendance center and replacement and reassignment by the CEO of all employees of the attendance center;**

- e. Intervention under Section 34-8.4 of the Illinois School Code;
- f. Operating an attendance center as a contract turnaround school;
- g. Closing of the school; or
- h. Any other action authorized under Section 34-8.3 of the Illinois School Code

The Law Department shall develop and disseminate hearing procedures for hearings required before taking any of the corrective actions specified above. (*Emphasis added*).

\* \* \* \*

Finally, the role of the hearing officer, and manner in which he or she is to receive comments, are set forth in the “**PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PROPOSED SCHOOL CLOSURES, CONSOLIDATION, CO-LOCATION, PHASE OUT, RECONSTITUTION, OR REASSIGNMENT BOUNDARY CHANGE.**” Those Procedures state:

1. Upon considering to recommend to the Chicago Board of Education (“Board”) that a school be closed, consolidated with another school, co-located, phased-out, reconstituted or subject to reassignment boundary change, an independent hearing officer shall be appointed consistent with 105 ILCS 5/34-230(f) to conduct a public hearing.
  - a. The hearing will commence and conclude at the time designated in the notice of hearing;
  - b. The hearing will be transcribed;
  - c. The hearing officer will be solely responsible for conducting the hearing and will conduct the hearing in an efficient and impartial manner.
2. Chief Executive Officer’s Presentation
  - a. An attorney will present the Chief Executive Officer’s proposal by marking an opening statement and submitting evidence in support of the proposal to be considered by the hearing officer.
  - b. The attorney may also introduce witnesses, who will present statements regarding the proposal. The hearing officer may ask the witnesses questions to clarify any statements they made.
3. Public Participation

- a. The hearing officer will receive relevant statements, comments, documents or written proposals from members of the public.
  - b. All those wishing to comment on the matter being considered will be required to sign up to do so as provided in the notice of hearing.
    - i. Registration must be made in person by the individual who will be commenting on the proposal; and
    - ii. An individual may not complete a speaker registration on behalf of another person.
  - c. The hearing officer will determine the order of speakers.
  - d. When called by the hearing officer to speak, the speaker shall proceed promptly to the microphone area where s/he will have two minutes to present his/her remarks and materials to the hearing officer.
  - e. The total number of persons speaking at the hearing will be subject to the sole discretion of the hearing officer.
  - f. The hearing officer may impose any other reasonable procedures or limitations necessary to ensure that the proceedings are orderly and efficient.
  - g. Courteous, respectful and civil behavior is expected from all speakers and all persons attending a hearing, and individuals who are disruptive may be removed from the hearing.
4. Hearing Officer's Written Report
- a. Following the hearing, the hearing officer will prepare and submit to the Chief Executive Officer a written report summarizing the public comments and the documents received at the hearing.
  - b. The hearing officer's report will also determine whether the Chief Executive Officer complied with the requirements of 105 ILCS 5/34-230 and the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Actions.

**SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE**

**Testimony Received at the Public Hearing**

| <b><u>Name</u></b>   | <b><u>Affiliation</u></b>                              |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Adam Anderson</b> | <b>Officer of Portfolio Planning and Strategy, CPS</b> |

Mr. Anderson testified as follows: "I am the Officer of Portfolio Planning and Strategy for Chicago Public Schools. My primary responsibility is to develop and execute the strategic plan to meet our goal of ensuring all students, in every community, have access to high quality schools. I have been designated by the Chief Executive Officer, or CEO, to discuss his proposal to reconstitute Pablo Casals Elementary School, hereafter referred

to as Casals. Reconstitution is commonly referred to as a turnaround. In a turnaround, students are not displaced, they remain enrolled at the same school and the Board of Education authorizes a removal and replacement of the staff at the school.

Casals is eligible for reconstitution under the Illinois School Code, 105 ILCS Section 5/34-8.3 because it has been on probation for at least one year and has failed to make adequate progress to correct its academic deficiencies. In fact, Casals has been on probation for five consecutive years. You will hear testimony this evening from Jacare Thomas, data strategist for the Garfield-Humboldt Elementary School Network, detailing the academic performance of Casals. You will also hear a statement from Denise Little, Chief of Schools for the Network, who will provide you with more information regarding the basis for the CEO's proposal and the previous supports that the District provided to Casals in an attempt to accelerate student achievement at the school.

If this proposal is approved, the CEO is also recommending that the Academy for Urban School Leadership, or AUSL, take over operation of Casals. You will hear testimony tonight from Keisha Campbell, the principal of Howe Elementary, an AUSL turnaround school, who will describe the proven success of AUSL turnaround schools.

We understand that staff and families are concerned any time this kind of change is proposed. We take these decisions very seriously. When we ask the important questions around equity for all students district-wide, and around our ability to provide a better education for our students immediately, we strongly believe this reconstitution is in the best interest of our students.”

**Jacare Thomas                      Data Strategist for the Garfield-Humboldt Network, CPS**

Mr. Thomas testified as follows: “I am the Data Strategist for the Garfield-Humboldt Network of Chicago Public Schools. In this capacity, I assist Chief of Schools, Denise Little, in analyzing data and advising on strategy for the 25 schools that we serve in the Garfield-Humboldt Network. I have acted in this capacity since September of 2009.

I am appearing before you today to present specific data highlighting the low academic performance of Pablo Casals Elementary School. This data will be displayed on the PowerPoint presentation currently being shown.

The Board of Education has adopted policies setting forth the criteria for determining when a school is subject to being placed on probation and when it can be removed from that status. Specifically, the Performance Policy is the District's school accountability policy. Under this policy, each school receives an annual rating based on its performance on a variety of student outcome measures, including standardized test scores and student attendance. This rating is based on a point system. Points are received for the school's current level of performance and improvement over time on standardized tests and attendance, as well as the growth of individual students from year-to-year on the state test. There are 14 separate metrics on which schools are evaluated, each worth up to three

points, for a total of 42 available points. Elementary schools that receive less than 50% of the total available points earn a rating of Level 3 and are placed on probation.

CPS began using this structure for the Performance Policy four years ago. In all four years, Casals has been a Level 3 school. In the 2007-2008 school year, Casals received 35.7% of available points. In the 2008-2009 school year, it received 31% of available points. In the 2009-2010 school year it received 38.1% of available points. In the 2010-2011 school year, it received 31% of available points. Prior to four years ago, CPS still had a policy determining a school's accountability status. Casals has been on probation for the past five consecutive school years. The notices of Casals' Performance Policy status for the last four school years, which were sent to the Casals principal, are included in the binder of documents that you have received.

The next slide shows the results of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test, or ISAT, for the 2010-2011 school year for Casals, the geographic network in which Casals is located, and the District. Casals is located in the Garfield-Humboldt network. The term "geographic network" refers to the schools that are currently in the Garfield-Humboldt Elementary School network, as well as elementary schools located within the community, but managed independently, such as charter schools. The reason for using geographic network in this calculation was to show how Casals is performing compared to all other schools within its community.

As you can see, Casals' 2010-2011 ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score, which is the combined result of the ISAT reading, mathematics, and science assessments, was 61.5%, compared to a geographic network average of 69.7% and a District average of 75.6%. In reading, the percent of Casals students meeting or exceeding state standards was 58.2%, compared to a geographic network average of 64.9% and a District average of 72.7%. In mathematics Casals' performance was 66.5%, compared to a geographic network average of 75.5% and a District average of 79.4%. In science Casals' performance was 56%, compared to a geographic network average of 66.9% and a District average of 72.4%.

The next few slides show Casals' performance over time on the metrics used in the Performance Policy. These slides demonstrate that the performance gap between Casals and other schools in the geographic network and across the District has been persistent over time, and in recent years has been widening. Casals' ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 0.7 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 8.2 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' Composite score was 10.4 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 14.1 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

In addition to measuring the percentage of students meeting state standards, CPS also measures the percentage of students exceeding state standards. In 2010-2011 Casals' ISAT Composite Exceeds score was 5.8%, compared to a geographic network average of 11.3%, and a District average score of 18.1%. Casals' Composite Exceeds score was 0.9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 5.5

percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' Composite Exceeds score was 6.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 12.3 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

The performance gap between Casals and the District is consistent across subjects. Casals' ISAT Reading Meets or Exceeds score was 1.3 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 6.7 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' score was 12.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 14.5 percentage points below the District average score in 2010-2011.

Casals' ISAT Mathematics Meets or Exceeds score was 2.3 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' score was 11 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 12.9 percentage points below the District average score in 2010-2011.

Casals' ISAT Science Meets or Exceeds score was 2.3 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 10.9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' score was 9.9 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 16.4 percentage points below the District average score in 2010-2011.

The Value-Added metric, which is a component of the Performance Policy, compares student academic growth on the ISAT at a school with the growth of similar students across the District. This is done through a regression methodology that controls for nine student-level factors, including grade level, prior performance on the ISAT, free or reduced lunch eligibility, race/ethnicity, mobility, participation in the Students in Temporary Living Situations program, Individualized Education Program (or IEP), English Language Learner status, and gender. Controlling for these factors allows us to see how much impact the school had on its average student over the past year. Because we control for prior performance, this metric allows us to identify schools with low test scores where growth is rapid, and schools with high test scores where growth is slow.

The Value-Added metric is a standardized measure with a mean of zero. Standardization means that the score is reported in standard deviation units, which is a measure of how far away the school's score is from the District average. A positive number means that students at the school are growing at a faster pace than similar students in the District. For example, a positive 1 indicates that the school is one standard deviation above the mean, meaning that the school's students are growing at a faster pace than approximately 84% of schools in the District. A score near zero means that students at the school are growing at about the same pace as similar students in the District. And a negative score means that students at the school are growing at a slower pace than similar students in the District.

As you can see, Casals' reading value-added score was -0.1 in 2010 and -0.3 in 2011. Its mathematics value-added score was -0.8 in 2010 and -1.1 in 2011. This means that, on average, students at Casals grew at a below-average pace in reading and mathematics in both of the last two years. As a point of reference, Casals' 2011 value-added score for mathematics was in the bottom 13% of scores in the District.

To conclude, Casals Elementary School is on probation in accordance with state law and the Performance Policy. The school has low performance, this performance is consistently low across subject areas, and the school is not making progress in catching up to the District."

**Denise Little**

**Chief of Schools Garfield-Humboldt Network**

Ms. Little testified as follows: "I am the Data Strategist for the Garfield-Humboldt Network of Chicago Public Schools. In this capacity, I assist Chief of Schools, Denise Little, in analyzing data and advising on strategy for the 25 schools that we serve in the Garfield-Humboldt Network. I have acted in this capacity since September of 2009.

I am appearing before you today to present specific data highlighting the low academic performance of Pablo Casals Elementary School. This data will be displayed on the PowerPoint presentation currently being shown.

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**Keisha Campbell**

**Principal Ward Howe Elementary School**

Ms. Campbell's testimony was primarily for the edification of the Casals school community, and did not bear on whether 5/34-8.3(d)(4), and the Board's Policies and

Procedures applicable to the proposed school action, have been complied with. Ms. Campbell testified: “The CEO has asked me to appear at this hearing today to convey to you, and the Casals school community, as well as interested members of the public in attendance, information on the Academy of Urban School Leadership, otherwise known as AUSL.

By way of background, I am currently the principal of Howe, a turnaround school in its fourth year. I have been a principal of Howe since AUSL took over management of the school in 2008. As principal, I have seen the Howe students accomplish 29.1 points of growth on the ISAT resulting in a composite of 72.0% of students meeting or exceeding state standards. Prior to my principalship at Howe, I served as an elementary school teacher and a lead literacy teacher in the Chicago Public Schools for five years. I also worked in central office as a Striving Reader Coordinator, where I coordinated and implemented the Striving Reader Research Project in Chicago Public Schools. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education and a Master of Education in Instructional Leadership with an emphasis on reading, writing, and literacy.

AUSL is a non-profit agency that partners with CPS to manage schools. AUSL is a proven turnaround provider that has a great deal of experience improving student achievement at chronically under-performing Chicago Public Schools, both on the elementary level and, more recently, at the high school level. AUSL manages 19 schools, seven of which are “dual mission” CPS training academies for teachers to work in turnaround settings. The remaining 12 schools are turnarounds; 10 elementary schools and 2 high schools.

While the turnaround process is a multi-year journey, experience has shown CPS that AUSL turnaround strategies create better schools with accelerated student academic growth and other indicators of student achievement. AUSL has transformed schools with environments not conducive to learning and persistently low student achievement into schools with school climates that are inviting and conducive to increasing student achievement and accelerated student academic growth.

The PowerPoint presentation currently being shown illustrates AUSL’s multi-year journal in implementing turnaround strategies. As seen in the first slide which provides the percentages of students meeting or exceeding state standards before AUSL to the 2010-2011 year, AUSL turnarounds have produced the following:

- At Howe School of Excellence, only 42.8 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards on the ISAT before the turnaround. In year 3, 72.0 percent of students are meeting or exceeding state standards.

- At Morton School, only 41 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards on the ISAT prior to the turnaround. At year three of the turnaround, 74.0 percent of the students are meeting or exceeding state standards.
- At Harvard School of Excellence, only 31.8 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards on the ISAT before the turnaround. Today, in year 4, 65.5 percent of students are meeting or exceeding state standards.

The second slide compares the schools' performance growth from the 2009-2010 school year to the 2010-2011 school year. As you can see, every school demonstrated increased student achievement, and Bradwell, Curtis, and Deneen saw increased scores even in their first year. This slide also shows that AUSL schools make even further gains by year three, and one school is continuing to demonstrate growth five years after being turned around.

AUSL has developed a data driven framework that is the basis for its plan to improve academic performance outcomes at Casals including:

1. First, the development of rigorous, transparent goals for schools, teams, and individuals, including a high expectations and no excuses climate and culture;
2. Second, the use of performance management systems with cycles of inquiry and data driven intervention;
3. Third, the inclusion of high-quality instruction through implementation of Common Core State Standards to ensure a rigorous instructional program that gives students knowledge and skills needed to be college and career ready;
4. Fourth, efforts to recruit, retain, and motivate high-quality staff to meet the needs of the school community, including educators with the appropriate bilingual language skills;
5. Fifth, intervention and tutoring services for students who need extra support in reading and math;
6. Sixth, advanced data systems and aligned assessments that allow staff to identify students who need additional assistance early and give them the help they need to stay on track;
7. Seventh, after school programs to give students access to additional instruction time to further accelerate student achievement;
8. Eighth, professional development and coaching that give teachers the strategies and tools needed to address diverse needs of students in challenged urban environments; and

9. Finally, extensive curricular enhancements, including fine and performing arts and athletics, to round out the curriculum and extend the students' time at school learning.

AUSL's full school turnaround plan also includes improvements emphasizing students' social-emotional behavior, with:

- Effective recruitment, attendance and discipline policies;
- Safe and orderly school and classroom environments;
- Focus on skills related to self-management, responsible decision making, empathy toward others, establishing positive interpersonal relationships, and determining positive goals; and
- Partnerships with outside agencies that provide additional supports to students and their families.

As you can see, AUSL's full school turnaround plan is designed to be a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning. If the Board approves this proposal, AUSL would welcome the opportunity to serve the Casals school community.”

**Bridget Tracy**

**LSC Chairperson**

Ms. Tracy is the Chairperson of the Casals Local School Council. Her complete testimony is thus included herein. “I am the chairperson of the Local School Council, and I am also a mother of two children at Pablo Casals School and three grandchildren. And I am also against the proposal to make Pablo Casals school a turnaround. I have seen and experienced the dedicated work our principal and teachers have put in to each student here at Pablo Casals School. I have had two children graduate already from Casals, and both went to Noble Charter Schools, one of which is my daughter. She has gone on to college now to become a journalist, and author of her own book. She likes writing stories. It was because of one of her teachers at Pablo Casals who encouraged her to continue writing short stories after she read one of her book reports. I want you to know that I am for improvement of learning for our students here at Casals, and I believe that that is being accomplished by a dedicated principal who has only been in office a few months, but is doing an awesome job, along with the teachers and staff. Yes, there is much work to be done, but with the positive effort of our principal and teachers and the parents, I believe that we're headed in the right direction.”

**Maria Guerrero**

**Teacher**

Ms. Guerrero submitted a folder of data designed to show that: Casals is not the lowest performing school in the network; Casals is outperforming some AUSL schools; and the student populations of AUSL Turnaround schools declines. She also submitted the

School's Strategic Plan. She stressed that more important than the data is the fact that Casals is not a school where teachers come and go—there is stability.

**Sharon Herod Purham**

**Teacher**

Ms. Purham feels that the school should not be a turnaround school. She points to the Scranton interim test data which shows that Casals is the 10th highest in math out of the 22 Garfield-Humboldt Park Network Schools, and 7th highest in terms of reading. This test is an indicator of ISAT performance. She stated: “With limited resources, Casals continues to forge ahead, however AUSL will receive six million dollars to reconstitute Casals, and CPS has allocated five million dollars for capital improvement renovations. Where was this money when Casals needed toner printers, overhead projectors and bulbs, reams of paper, or playground from the school, I'm sorry, or playground and from the school where the students play in the dirt? Where is the equity of resources to ensure an education for all students, when only 47 out of over 300 students applied for After School, and were given seats?”

**Joyce Eizenga**

**Teacher**

Ms. Eizenga believes that higher performing schools get resources from CPS that schools like Casals do not receive. She feels that the teachers at Casals are the only stable adults in many of these student's lives and that stability should not be interrupted via a turnaround.

**Andrew Mackow**

**Teacher**

Mr. Mackow complained regarding the lack of stability of instructional leadership by CPSW for this school. By way of example, in three years, Casals School has been assigned four Area leaders, each of which required the teachers to change their classroom curriculum and teaching method in order to adhere to their suggested methodology. The current leader of the Garfield-Humboldt Network, Miss Little, has a proven track record, is a highly successful educator and a motivational leader. The teachers have embraced her suggestions, and feel that her methods could truly aid in educating the student body. Miss Little's contract with Casals will be suspended if the school is designated as a turnaround. He opposes the proposed school action.

**Linda Ehgartner**

**Teacher**

She testified that “Blocks Together,” a community organization, held a vote for the approximately 220 parents at Pablo Casals. 183 parents voted, 170 voted against turnaround. 92 percent of the parents are against turnaround. “How many people have to beg and plead to Chicago Public Schools to not have their neighborhood schools turned around? Pablo Casals has a dedicated staff. We have already turned our school around. Going from 33 percent to 62 percent, 33 percent in 2003, to 62 percent in 2011.” She pointed out that Casals scores are higher than five of the AUSL schools.

**Willie Williams**

**Parent of 5 Graduates**

Under the leadership of the new principal and vice principal, they have great ideas, and they are going to make the school better. The teachers have been doing a good job with the students in his opinion. He is against the turnaround. "Leave the school alone and let them do their jobs, and teach."

**Paula Jeske**

**Retired Casals Principal**

Ms. Jeske testified in part as follows: "We have had so many different people telling us to march to so many different drum beats, that some days I didn't know if we were coming or going. You look at those scores, you talk about a lack of progress, a lack of performance, no one has ever removed the principal. No one ever put the principal on a corrective action plan. No one ever lowered the principal's rating, a couple of years, no one even bothered to have an evaluation conference with her. ... [S]ince being switched to Garfield-Humboldt Network, in the two and a half months I worked for Denise Little, I had more guidance, more direction and more support than in the previous six years put together. That woman has a phenomenal record of turning schools around. You don't need anybody other than her. ... Why on earth would the Board of Ed decide to pull the plug on Casals now that they finally have everything they need to change. Every single thing is in place this year, ready to just take off. All the foundation has been laid, the dedication and the caring is there, and now we have a network that gives us so much guidance, so much support, tells us when we're doing something wrong, and tells us how they want it changed. They can turn themselves around with her leadership and her team's leadership."

**Tina Padilla**

**Community Resident**

Turnaround does not improve the schools. This school is not being turned around to improve the schools in her view. Rather it is to bring in AUSL. First year teachers are not better than proven experienced teachers, she proffered. "One of the key successes for AUSL has been to weed out students. ... [S]chools are supposed to educate, schools are supposed to educate everybody, but that doesn't quite fit with AUSL's model where suspension and expulsion are commonplace. Those expelled students are sent elsewhere ... . These are facts about AUSL."

**Norma Luna**

**Parent**

Ms. Luna submitted the ballots from a parent referendum on the proposed school action, and testified as follows concerning the same: "On the date January 24 of the current year, we, the parents, carried out a referendum, so that the parents could vote on whether we wanted or didn't want this turnaround. We carried out this referendum so that we could have a real opportunity for the voice of the parents to be heard. We hope and we demand that the voice of the majority of the parents of Casals School be respected, because they attended and they voted and the results were as following. 183 total votes. 171 of which

voted against the turnaround. 10 voted in favor of the turnaround, and two votes were nullified.”

**Maria Dominguez**

**Parent**

Ms. Dominguez feels that the negative comments about Casals School are inappropriate because the school’s scores are higher than half of the schools in their Network.

**Anita Scotese**

**Teacher**

Ms. Scotese testified on behalf of the Teachers as follows: “The glass is not half empty at our school, it’s more than 62 percent of the way full. And the level of success continues to rise each year, even though our resources have been reduced to a trickle. I truly believe with the barest of resources, we have managed the impossible. With the 7th and 8th grade split grade for two years, we have managed to achieve an outstanding increase in our 8th grade math ISAT score. With primary grades filled with 28 or more scholars first learning to read, we have seen steady increases year after year. With more than 80 percent of our students refused entry into After School programs, due to funding cuts. ... [W]e have been able to reach them by tutoring them on our own time because we believe they can achieve. In spite of the inherent confusion created by the change of area officers, each with different mandated programs, the teachers, staff, parents remain consistent with our scholars, and our test scores have improved. In spite of the funding cuts that removed our detention program, our student behavior continues to improve, resulting in more on time tasks and improved learning. In spite of lack of support from the Board in ways to better reach our parents and community organizations, the bonds we are creating with our parents and other adults within the Casals community continues to grow and strengthen. We truly have managed the impossible and continue to do so. If you reconstitute this school, you would destroy those years of hard work and nurturing to which all of our staff, parents and community members have dedicated themselves to for the growth of our young people.”

**Student A**

**Casals Graduate H.S. Senior**

He attended Casals from Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He believes that the staff is passionate, and are hard workers and should not be replaced. The proposed action will disrupt student’s lives.

**Student B**

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

He believes that the teachers are caring, encouraging and helpful, and he opposes the proposed turnaround.

**Student C**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

The teachers are nice. She does not want them to go.

**Student D**

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The teachers have helped her scores improve in all areas. She does not want to see them leave Casals School.

**Student E**

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

He does not want the school to be a turnaround because the teachers are helpful to him with everything he needs.

**Martin Ritter**

**CTU**

Mr. Ritter spoke on behalf of the Chicago Teacher’s Union and testified in relevant part as follows: “First, we speak about turnaround, Casals, its staff, its leadership, its parents, its community partners have created and sustained a turnaround for number of years. We have heard testimony prior that 33 percent of students met State standards. Now 61.5 percent meets State standards. That doubles what they have done in a number of years, and that also is better than 7 out 15 of 12 AUSL schools. ...

I would also like to bring and submit this document that the Illinois General Assembly, Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force, which is comprised of numerous community organizations and multiple State legislators, including State representatives and State senators, have said that Chicago Public Schools are not complying with state laws, including PA970474. ... I would like to submit that for the record. And I would also like to say that through my work with Casals, yeah, that's it right there, they care about their kids, they care about their kids so much that they have stood in the cold, and did their best to make sure that their kids got to school safely. Also, I would like to mention that in prior testimony the parents that spoke mentioned the referendum. This is a democracy. Parents know the best interest of their school and their children.

The AUSL monies and capital improvement monies that were going to go into Casals after the turnaround, the parents knew about that, they knew what type of financial improvements could come to their school, they said no to AUSL and the turnaround. These teachers can turnaround themselves. They have been doing it for the last seven or eight years, they're a great group of teachers, they have great parents, great community partners. Respect their wishes and I would like all my documents also included right here to be included in the testimony.”

**Amarillis Patino**

**Teacher & LCS Rep.**

She attended Pablo Casals when it first opened in 1989, returned to complete her student teaching there, and now has the privilege to serve proudly as a faculty member of Casals.

She opposes the turnaround. She testified in pertinent part as follows: “My students look up to me, they know that I too lived in the neighborhood. They know that I know the hardships families must overcome in a neighborhood infested with gangs and poverty. I remind my students that they can accomplish anything they want to in this life. I am living proof of that. Casals has already completed its own turnaround, as my colleagues have said. In August of 2011, we moved over into the Garfield-Humboldt Network. A network that has a leader, Miss Little, who believes that excellence is not the goal, its the standard. Knowing the reputation that Miss Little holds as having the highest gains district-wide on ISAT composite scores, we were eager to work under her wing. We have adopted all the initiatives, programs, assessments, and are about in the middle of scores in this new network. Not only have we been turned around by CPS into a new Network, as you have heard, we also have a new Principal. ...

The Local School Council worked very hard over the summer looking for a new principal, I feel that we have found that in Miss Sautter, our current Principal. ... Ms. Sautter has only obtained this position as of October of 2011, and already has completely changed the culture of our school. We have weekly team meetings with an agenda to focus on the strengths as well as the weaknesses based on the network assessments. She conducts daily observations of classroom visits, leaving positive comments as well as suggestions. The discipline at our school has dramatically improved as well. All I ask is that you give our new network and principal community a chance to prove themselves to our school and community.”

**Emilia Pena**

**Bi-Lingual Teacher**

The students are extended family to the faculty at Casals. She understands the student’s challenges. The school has made gains despite limited resources, e.g., her classroom has 2 computers for 30 students. In her opinion, the school needs additional resources, and the students need stability, not a turnaround.

**Adourthus McDowell**

**Family Case Manager, Humboldt Park**

Mr. McDowell submitted a document challenging the methodology of CPS’ system concerning how probation schools are determined. He stated in pertinent part: “[A]t issue are the rubrics designed by the CEO to arrive at each school’s quality score. This is a complex performance rating when added together with other variables, approximately 14 different parts, determines the methodology used to arrive at school performance index, which is the basis of, in this case, the school turnaround. Should the school remain on probation for at least two consecutive years. It’s complex to many who cannot figure out the scoring rubrics. It seems only the CEO can figure the political formula of keeping schools on a growing elite eradication list for extinction. This is a violation of the Illinois School Code. It has been reported at the CPS Board meetings, community hearings, as well as the Illinois Legislative Chicago Facilities Task Force Committee hearings, the last one was January 12th, in which it was decided that Chicago Public Schools must meet with them and submit their compliance to the request, which was stated earlier, by one of the presenters. And I’ll conclude by saying that the local school council members know

nothing of these rubrics, nor have they received corrective action plans necessary to correct whatever the deficiencies identified by the rubrics matrix.”

**Alfredo Dominguez**

**Parent**

The parents support the teachers and prefer experienced teachers over inexperienced teachers. The students and parents are concerned about the proposed action.

**Elisa Nigaglioni**

**Community Member**

She volunteers substantial time at Casals. She helps train the parents so Hispanics will have a voice in their school. Se testified in relevant part: “If you want to help somebody, one of the things you have to do is ask them what you want, not impose it upon them. And that day the majority of the parents voted that they didn't want a turnaround. And one of the questions I ask myself, as a member of the community, and not just a member of the community, but an active member of the community, is why can they give money to a private company, if they can't give it to our school currently.”

### **Summary of Documents Received**

#### **Documents Submitted By CPS**

The CEO, through the Law Department, submitted several documents to the hearing officer that were received and made a part of the record in this case. Those documents included: 1) Copies of the Notice Letters sent to the school community including the Principal, LSC, parents, and teachers and staff advising of the Public Hearing, an affidavit regarding the same, and an e-mail reminder concerning the Hearing sent to CPS School-Based Staff; 2) The Chicago Board of Education’s School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012 School Year (Policy Manual Section 302.6A, Board Report 10-0728-PO4); 3) The Chief Executive Officer’s Procedures for Public Hearings on Proposed School Closure, Consolidation, Phase-Out, Reconstitution, or Reassignment Boundary Change; 4) A copy of the relevant statutory provisions; 5) The 2010-11 & 2011-12 SIPPAAA for Casals School; 6) The 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 Notice Letters to the school concerning its performance policy status; 7)

Chicago Public Schools Restructuring Summary for Pablo Casals Elementary School and accompanying Board Report, 06-0524-ED12, entitled Approve the Restructuring Plans of Schools Classified as in Need of Restructuring Under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act; and, 8) the CPS witnesses written testimony and related Power Point presentations.

### **Documents Submitted In Opposition To The Turnaround<sup>1</sup>**

Several documents were submitted to the hearing officer that were received and made a part of the record in this case. Those documents included: 1) A comprehensive, and very impressive notebook containing information regarding the school, their school data, etc., designed to show that Casals is not the lowest performing school in the network, they are outperforming some AUSL schools and the student populations of AUSL Turnaround schools declines. The document also included a Strategic Plan for Casals; 2) The ballots from a parent referendum on the proposed school action, ostensibly confirming 183 total ballots demonstrating 171 votes against the turnaround, 10 in favor of the turnaround, and 2 votes nullified; 3) The Illinois General Assembly's Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force, "Record of Action from the January 12, 2012 Meeting" which concludes that the Chicago Public Schools are not complying with state laws concerning the proposed School Actions; and 4) A document submitted by Mr. McDowell entitled "A New Agenda to Avert the Eradication of Communities of Color" challenging the methodology of CPS' system concerning how schools are selected for

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<sup>1</sup> The documentary evidence received at, and following the Public Hearing, in large part mirrored the testimonial evidence presented. Accordingly, said submissions are described generally herein, and the Hearing Officer has submitted said materials to the CPS Law Department for inclusion in the record in this case. Some of the post-hearing parental submissions were in Spanish but were translated into English. Both versions are included in the record. Additionally, and importantly, the Principal, Emily Sautter, submitted a brief written statement, to wit: "I was in my 27<sup>th</sup> day of my contract as a new principal at Pablo Casals Elementary School when I was informed that the school was designated for the turn-around process. I anticipate that this school will flourish under the focus on academic excellence. The accompanying structures and supports that have been put into place this year are showing gains, I want the best for the students of Casals and I feel as if my journey with the staff and students is only just begun." Ms. Parham submitted Benchmark data with her written statement that showed Casals outperformed 9 of 12 schools. Blocks Together submitted a letter from Cecile Carroll alleging that although Turnaround Schools are not covered by the new legislation, there is new leadership at this school that deserves to be given an opportunity because the school is trending in an upward direction. Finally, the 2011 ISBE School Report Card for Ward Elementary School was also submitted.

probation status. After the hearing approximately 61 written statements were submitted, primarily from parents who opposed the proposed turnaround at Casals Elementary School.

### **STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

1. Proper notice of the Public Hearing was given as required by Illinois law, the Chicago Board of Education's School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012 School Year, and the Chief Executive Officer's Procedures for Public Hearings on Proposed School Closure, Consolidation, Phase-Out, Reconstitution, or Reassignment Boundary Change. The purpose of the Public Hearing was to give representatives of the Chief Executive Officer ("CEO"), members of the local school council, parents, students, members of the school's staff, the principal, representatives of the Chicago Teachers' Union, and interested members of the public, an opportunity to comment on the CEO's proposal to Turnaround Casals Elementary School via Reconstitution.

2. On Monday, January 30, 2012, a public hearing was held at the Board of Education, 125 South Clark, Chicago, Illinois. The public hearing that is required to be conducted prior to reconstituting a school has taken place in this case, and all of the other aspects of the applicable Board's Policies have been fully complied with.

3. Under the statutory scheme contained in Section 5/34-8.3 (d) of the Illinois School Code, the CEO and the Chicago Board of Education are granted the authority to take certain corrective measures with respect to schools with academic deficiencies. One of those measures is placing schools on probation, which allows the CEO and the Board to take additional corrective actions intended to correct the school's

academic deficiencies. Any school placed on probation is subject to several courses of action by the CEO, with the approval of the Board, after an opportunity for hearing. Section 5/34-8.3 (d) (4) specifically includes “Reconstitution of the attendance center and replacement and reassignment by the general superintendent of all employees of the attendance center” as an action available to the CEO in said cases.

4. Casals is located at 3501 W. Potomac Avenue Chicago, IL 60651 and serves approximately 500 students in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth grade.

5. If approved by the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, the following would occur as a result of the reconstitution: All students currently enrolled in Casals would continue as students at the school; All staff including the faculty would be removed and replaced; Casals and its new administration and staff would be supported by the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL).

6. The Chicago Board of Education’s School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012 School Year (Policy Manual Section 302.6A, Board Report 10-0728-PO4), is the CPS School Accountability Policy. Under this Policy, each school receives an annual rating based on its performance on a variety of student outcome measures, including standardized test scores and student attendance. This rating is based on a point system. Points are received for the school’s current level of performance and improvement over time on standardized tests and attendance, as well as the growth of individual students from year-to-year on the state test. There are 14 separate metrics on which schools are evaluated, each worth up to three points, for a total of 42 available points. Elementary schools that receive less than 50% of the total available points earn a rating of Level 3 and are placed on probation. CPS began using this structure for the

Performance Policy four years ago. In all four years, Casals has been a Level 3 school. In the 2007-2008 school year, Casals received 35.7% of available points. In the 2008-2009 school year, it received 31% of available points. In the 2009-2010 school year it received 38.1% of available points. In the 2010-2011 school year, it received 31% of available points. Prior to four years ago, CPS still had a policy determining a school's accountability status. Casals has been on probation for the past five consecutive school years.

7. ISAT performance is used as a part of the elementary school scoring in the CPS Performance Policy. Casals' 2010-2011 ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score, which is the combined result of the ISAT reading, mathematics, and science assessments, was 61.5%, compared to a geographic network average of 69.7% and a District average of 75.6%.

8. In reading, the percent of Casals students meeting or exceeding state standards was 58.2%, compared to a geographic network average of 64.9% and a District average of 72.7%. In mathematics Casals' performance was 66.5%, compared to a geographic network average of 75.5% and a District average of 79.4%. In science Casals' performance was 56%, compared to a geographic network average of 66.9% and a District average of 72.4%.<sup>2</sup>

9. The performance gap between Casals and other schools in the geographic network and across the District has been persistent over time, and in recent years has been widening. Casals' ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 0.7 percentage

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<sup>2</sup> The term "geographic network" refers to the schools that are currently in the Garfield-Humboldt Elementary School network, as well as elementary schools located within the community, but managed independently, such as charter schools. The reason CPS used the geographic network in this comparison was to show how Casals is performing compared to all other schools within its community.

points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 8.2 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' Composite score was 10.4 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 14.1 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

10. In addition to measuring the percentage of students meeting state standards, CPS also measures the percentage of students exceeding state standards. In 2010-2011 Casals' ISAT Composite Exceeds score was 5.8%, compared to a geographic network average of 11.3%, and a District average score of 18.1%. Casals' Composite Exceeds score was 0.9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 5.5 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' Composite Exceeds score was 6.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 12.3 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

11. The performance gap between Casals and the District is consistent across subjects. Casals' ISAT Reading Meets or Exceeds score was 1.3 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 6.7 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' score was 12.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 14.5 percentage points below the District average score in 2010-2011. Casals' ISAT Mathematics Meets or Exceeds score was 2.3 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' score was 11 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 12.9 percentage points below the District average score in 2010-2011. Casals' ISAT Science Meets or Exceeds score was 2.3 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and

10.9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Casals' score was 9.9 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 16.4 percentage points below the District average score in 2010-2011.

12. The Value-Added metric, which is a component of the Performance Policy, compares student academic growth on the ISAT at a school with the growth of similar students across the District. This is done through a regression methodology that controls for nine student-level factors, including grade level, prior performance on the ISAT, free or reduced lunch eligibility, race/ethnicity, mobility, participation in the Students in Temporary Living Situations program, Individualized Education Program (or IEP), English Language Learner status, and gender. The Value-Added metric is a standardized measure with a mean of zero. Standardization means that the score is reported in standard deviation units, which is a measure of how far away the school's score is from the District average. A positive number means that students at the school are growing at a faster pace than similar students in the District. A score near zero means that students at the school are growing at about the same pace as similar students in the District. And a negative score means that students at the school are growing at a slower pace than similar students in the District. Casals' reading value-added score was -0.1 in 2010 and -0.3 in 2011. Its mathematics value-added score was -0.8 in 2010 and -1.1 in 2011. This means that, on average, students at Casals grew at a below-average pace in reading and mathematics in both of the last two years. As a point of reference, Casals' 2011 value-added score for mathematics was in the bottom 13% of scores in the District.

13. This low performance has taken place at despite efforts by CPS to provide the school with assistance. Since 2006, the CPS District has supported the school with:

- The implementation of the Reading First program;
- The implementation of a Balanced Literacy model;
- Additional personnel;
- The expansion of the Chicago Math and Science Initiative to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade with required professional development to include special education teachers;
- The development of a comprehensive math plan with curriculum pacing, systematic professional development and area-based monitoring;
- Interventions for English language learners which included explicit oral language development and required personnel participation in area-based literacy training;
- Upgrades for the classrooms and school library with leveled texts; and
- Network based Marzano vocabulary development strategies training.

The reading scores have been consistently lower than the CPS District average.

14. The Reading First program provided Casals with research based instructional and assessment tools to ensure that all children read well by the end of third grade. Casals received funding through the Reading First program to reduce classroom size, hire a reading specialist and purchase materials. Despite participation in the Reading First program and other supports, reading scores at Casals have been below CPS District average since 2006, and are almost fifteen percentage points below the CPS District average in the 2010-2011 school year.

15. Math scores have also been consistently lower than district average. In 2006, Casals was provided with an expansion of the Chicago Math and Science Initiative to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders along with assistance in developing a comprehensive math plan. However, despite these supports, math scores at Casals have been below the district average since 2006 and are almost thirteen percentage points below the CPS District average in the 2010-2011 school year.

16. In more recent years, the Network has provided Casals with the following supports in an effort to improve student achievement:

- CPS has provided oversight of Casals' discretionary budget, since the school has been on probation, to ensure funds are allocated in line with the goals for

improved student outcomes. This is done through the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement, (“SIPAAA”). The Network Chief not only provides input in the creation of the SIPAAA, but also approves the SIPAAA upon completion. The Board of Education also approves the SIPAAA.

- The Network conducted frequent visits at Casals focused on the implementation of guided reading practices.
- Professional development opportunities were provided for all teachers around guided reading and small group instruction and differentiated instruction.
- The Network provided an assigned instructional coach who helped launch an Instructional Leadership Team and develop a cycle for continuous improvement.

Despite these supports, student academic growth at the school has not kept pace with district averages. Since 2006, the percentage of Casals students who have met or exceeded ISAT standards each year is below the District and geographic network averages. Furthermore, over the last few years that performance gap has widened. In spite of the additional measures afforded to the staff at Casals School, students have continued to perform below standards set by the Chicago Public Schools.

17. Illinois law, and all the Chicago Public School Policies and Procedures applicable to the CEO’s proposed action in this case have been complied with in their entirety, specifically including, but not limited to 105 ILCS Section 5/34-8.3(d)(4) of the Illinois School Code, the School Performance Policy for the 2011-2012 school year, and the CEO’s Procedures governing the Public Hearing.<sup>3</sup>

### **Recommendation**

The Hearing Officer hereby recommends that the Board approve the CEO’s proposal to Reconstitute Casals Elementary School. Casals is eligible for reconstitution

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<sup>3</sup> The CEO’s Guidelines for School Actions are inapplicable to this case. The definitions pertaining to 105 ILCS 5/34-230, found in 105 ILCS 5/34-200, define school action as “any school closing; school consolidation; co-location; boundary change that requires the reassignment of students, unless the reassignment is to a new school with an attendance area boundary and is made to relieve overcrowding; or phase-out.” The definition does not include reconstitutions under 105 ILCS Section 5/34-8.3(d)(4) of the Illinois School Code, commonly referred to as a turnaround. The CEO’s Guidelines for School Actions were drafted pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/34-230, and since the definition of “school action” does not include reconstitutions, the CEO Guidelines are not applicable to reconstitution hearings.

under the Illinois School Code, 105 ILCS Section 5/34-8.3(d)(4) because it has been on probation for at least one year and has failed to make adequate progress to correct its academic deficiencies. In fact, Casals has been on probation for five consecutive years. Casals Elementary School is on probation in accordance with state law and the Performance Policy. The school has low performance, this performance is consistently low across subject areas, and the school is not making progress in catching up to the District.

FURTHER THE HEARING OFFICER SAYETH NOT.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Fredrick H. Bates*/s/  
Fredrick H. Bates  
Hearing Officer

February 4, 2012