

Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Best Practice High School

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

Location: Cregier (Noble Street – Bulls), 2040 W. Adams

CPS Staff in Attendance

Sasha Tuzel, Arnie Rivera, Jeneen Hatoum, Rose Sprinkle, Susan Ryan, Barbara Dubielak-Wood, Debbie Jobst, Lafayette Ford, Phil Boothby

Brief Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Best Practice High School, an existing phase out school, in accordance with Public Act 097-0474. CPS officials made a brief presentation in regards to the proposal. There were about 100 community members in attendance and 8 speakers. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including: support of the plan to close Best Practice, emphasizing the importance of a high-quality education and that they would like to see CPS use the proposal as an opportunity to reinvest in the schools and provide students with excellent educational opportunities.

CPS Presentation

Arnie Rivera, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting and the CPS staff in attendance. He covered the ground rules for the meeting. Jeneen Hatoum then gave a presentation. She also relayed the date of the next community meeting and public hearing, January 20, 2012 and January 25, 2012 respectively.

Public Comment

Melvyn Lenton

Ms. Lenton stated that the school system, especially this school, has been failing students and not providing them with a quality education. Kids need to learn computer literacy and financial literacy. If they don't go to college, they need to be taught a trade. If the school cannot provide a quality education, CPS should close the school and allow students to move to a place that can provide them with a quality education.

Lataksha Green

Ms. Green stated that she believed that the closing of a CPS school should not be prohibited because it in no way would benefit the students. She expressed that instead of looking at this as an opportunity to give up, why not use this as an opportunity to start over and give students of the community a second chance. She believes that the school should be remodeled to make the students feel safe. Closing public schools does not benefit the community. "If we don't help, who else will?"

Stanley Oden

Mr. Oden has kids and grandkids going to school at this time. He agrees with the proposal to close Best Practice.

Kesha Gooden

Ms. Gooden stated that this school has been here for as long as she knows, and she sees boredom here. The students here are bored. To get these students to come back here, you need to keep it real by going and knocking on doors in the community. They haven't been offered anything. Bring back students; go knock on doors. Give parents something to think about and they will come back.

Timothy Wilson

Mr. Wilson stated that if the school is not being utilized, why waste the taxpayers' money to keep the school going. If there aren't any students, the school should be closed and send the students somewhere else.

Crystal Harris

Ms. Harris stated that most people don't like change, but if there is nobody here right now and there are other schools are providing quality education, why keep this school open. The producing schools need improvement. She is in favor of consolidating schools and keeping kids where they are getting a quality education. Providing an equal playing ground is the best solution.

Gregory Cooper

Mr. Cooper stated that in his son's classroom, they were reading *See Spot Run* and *Dick and Jane*, so he went straight to the principal and that's how they got computers. Without quality education, we won't have scientists or astronauts. Give these children a chance for a quality education. Stop playing politics and close it down.

Annie Harris

Ms. Harris is a mother and grandmother and wants the best for children. If Best Practice is failing and on probation for several years; we cannot continue to set our children up for failure. We need more opportunities for high-quality education on the West Side. The decision to close Best Practice was made years ago. There are no students currently enrolled here, this is a formality. If this closure is approved, families will not be affected. Start focusing on our children; they are the future. Let's consolidate and get it together.

Public Comment concluded around 6:20 p.m.