

Board of Education of the
City of Chicago

In Re: The Matter of
The Proposed Reconstitution of
Amos A. Stagg 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 Tuesday, January 31, 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 Amos A. Stagg 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. 153 individuals signed the attendance sheet at the public hearing. Approximately 50 people requested to speak, however only 24 individuals were provided the opportunity to do so at the hearing, including Latasha Thomas, 17th Ward Alderman, and Chair of the City Council’s Education Committee. The record was left open for the submission of written

materials, but no documentation was submitted to the hearing officer following the hearing.

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

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- (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:

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- 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.

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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

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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*).

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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

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

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 Amos A. Stagg Elementary School, hereafter referred to as Stagg. 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.

Stagg is eligible for reconstitution under the Illinois School Code provision regarding remediation and probation of attendance centers (105 ILCS 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, Stagg has been on probation for five consecutive years. You will hear testimony this evening from Peter Godard, Director of School Performance, detailing the academic performance of Stagg. You will also hear a statement from Adrian Willis, Chief of Schools for the Englewood-Gresham Elementary School 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 Stagg 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 Stagg. You will hear testimony tonight from Angel Turner, the principal of Morton Elementary, 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.”

Peter Godard	Director of Performance Data and Accountability
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Mr. Godard testified as follows: “I am the Director of Performance Data and Accountability for the Chicago Public Schools. In this capacity I oversee the implementation of the District’s Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy, or

“Performance Policy”, and compliance with state and federal school accountability policies. I have been in this position since December 2007.

I am appearing before you today to present specific data highlighting the low academic performance of Amos Alonzo Stagg 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. As you can see, in all four years, Stagg has been a Level 3 school. In the 2007-2008 school year, Stagg received 31% of available points. In the 2008-2009 school year, it received 35.7% of available points. In the 2009-2010 school year it received 19% of available points. In the 2010-2011 school year, it received 28.6% of available points. Prior to four years ago, CPS still had a policy determining a school’s accountability status. Stagg has been on probation for the past five consecutive school years. The notices of Stagg’s Performance Policy status for the last four school years, which were sent to the Stagg 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 Stagg, the geographic network in which Stagg is located, and the District. Stagg is located in the Englewood-Gresham network. The term “geographic network” refers to the schools that are currently in the Englewood-Gresham 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 Stagg is performing compared to all other schools within its community.

As you can see, Stagg’s 2010-2011 ISAT Meets or Exceeds Composite score, which is the combined result of the ISAT reading, mathematics, and science assessments, was 54.7%, compared to a geographic network average of 62.3% and a District average of 75.6%. In reading, the percent of Stagg students meeting or exceeding state standards was 52.4%, compared to a geographic network average of 58.4% and a District average of 72.7%. In mathematics Stagg’s performance was 59.4%, compared to a geographic network average of 68.4% and a District average of 79.4%. In science Stagg’s

performance was 47.5%, compared to a geographic network average of 55.5% and a District average of 72.4%.

The next few slides show Stagg's performance over time on the metrics used in the Performance Policy. These slides demonstrate that the performance gap between Stagg and other schools in the network and across the District has been persistent over time. Stagg's ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 0.1 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 7.6 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 15.9 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 20.9 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

In addition to measuring the percentage of student meeting state standards, CPS also measures the percentage of students exceeding state standards. In 2010-2011 Stagg's ISAT Composite Exceeds score was 7.4%, compared to a geographic network average of 8.3%, and a District average of 18.1%. Stagg's Composite Exceeds score was 0.8 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 0.9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's Composite Exceeds score was 6.7 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 10.7 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

The performance gap between Stagg and the District is consistent across subjects. Stagg's ISAT Reading Meets or Exceeds score was 0.4 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 6 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's Reading score was 13.3 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 20.3 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

Stagg's ISAT Mathematics Meets or Exceeds score was 2.4 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's Mathematics score was 19.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 20 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

Stagg's ISAT Science Meets or Exceeds score was 6.2 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 8 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's Science score was 13.7 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 24.9 percentage points below the District average 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 or ethnicity, mobility, participation in the Students in Temporary Living Situations program, Individualized Education Program (or IEP status),

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.

Stagg's reading value-added score was -2.0 in 2010 and -0.1 in 2011. Its mathematics value-added score was -1.0 in 2010 and -0.4 in 2011. This means that, on average, students at Stagg grew at a below-average pace in reading and mathematics in both of the last two years.

To conclude, Stagg 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.”

Adrian Willis

Chief Englewood-Gresham Elementary School Network

Mr. Willis testified as follows: “I am employed by the Board of Education of the City of Chicago as the Chief of Schools, or Chief, for the Chicago Public Schools, Englewood-Gresham Elementary School Network. Chicago Public Schools are divided up into Networks, previously known as Areas. Network offices are run by a Chief, previously known as the Chief Area Officer, and provide support and oversight for the schools assigned to them on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer or CEO. Amos A. Stagg Elementary School, otherwise known as Stagg, is within the Englewood-Gresham Elementary School Network and I am responsible for the support and oversight of Stagg on behalf of the CEO. I have been the Chief of Stagg since July 1, 2008.

By way of background, over the past 22 years, I worked in a number of capacities within public education before I became Chief Area Officer in July 2008. Prior to my current position, I was the turnaround principal of Earle Elementary School from 2006 to 2008, during which time the school made a 13.6% percentage point gain in ISAT composites. Prior to that, I was the principal of Keller Magnet School for four years. Before becoming a principal, I also served the Chicago Public Schools as an assistant principal for five years and a teacher for more than seven years. I have a Masters of Arts Degree in

Educational Administration. I am also currently working on my PhD in Educational Leadership at Lewis University.

The CEO has asked me to appear at his hearing to convey to you, and to the parents, staff members and local school council members of Stagg, as well as interested members of the public in attendance, information relevant to the proposal to reconstitute Stagg.

Stagg is located at 7241 S. Morgan Street, and currently serves over 500 students in grades pre-Kindergarten through eight.

Stagg has been on probation for five school years for failing to meet the Chicago Public Schools' required standards for minimum student performance on standardized tests. As my colleague, Peter Godard, testified, the school has demonstrated low academic performance across subject areas, students are not growing at a rate consistent with the geographic network or the District, and the gap between Stagg and other schools has been widening in recent years. Based on the Chicago Public School's Performance Policy and my observations, I have concluded that Stagg has made insufficient progress in improving student academic achievement.

Through my review of the Stagg School Improvement Plans, information I have gained through my Network staff, my own knowledge of the District's initiatives, and my work with Stagg, since July 2008, I am aware of how the District has supported Stagg in an attempt to correct its deficiencies. Over the past few years, the district has offered Stagg multiple resources and supports to remediate the school's performance. These programmatic, professional development and mentoring supports include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Since Stagg has been on probation, the district has provided oversight of its discretionary budget 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 otherwise known as SIPAAA. Copies of the SIPAAA for the last two school years are located in your binder at tabs 12a and 12b. The SIPAAA is created with input from data and several stakeholders to identify the key areas where the school needs improvement, plan interventions to support the school, and allocate funds accordingly. The 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. Copies of the Board Reports adopting the last two years of SIPAAAs for Stagg are also located in your evidence binder at tabs 12a and 12b.
- Since 2008, the Network and its data analyst provided training on the evaluation of student data and the use of data to improve instruction. The Network held multiple sessions of professional development with the administration of Stagg, developing assessment metrics and assisting with the analysis of these metrics to determine the instructional factors that contributed to the data results. Once

contributing factors were determined, Network staff helped identify instructional solutions and concrete action plans.

- The Network offered professional development in literacy, math, and science to school based personnel to help improve instruction. The Network purchased McGraw Hill's LEAD 21 balanced literacy program and professional development for all students and teachers in Kindergarten through fifth grade and assisted teachers with its implementation.
- Beginning in 2008, teachers were provided with E-Path Online Diagnostic Testing, an online electronic assessment for reading and math, to help gauge instruction and improve student achievement. In 2010, the Network also provided instruction to teachers in using Acuity assessment data to determine an individualized action plan for students.
- Network personnel conducted multiple school visits to support personnel with skills such as analyzing student work to assess student needs and improve instruction. Network Instructional coaches also provided teaching strategies aimed at improving student achievement.
- The Network funded Saturday Academic Enrichment programming, for students in grades three through eight, targeting those students with low academic performance.
- Network staff provided teachers with coaching and mentoring to help guide students through the steps of logic and conceptual thinking. There was a focus on small group instruction to promote student to student interaction and critical thinking skills.
- The Network provided intensified support to teachers with the lowest student performance in reading in an effort to improve student progress.

Despite these supports, student academic growth at Stagg has not kept pace with District averages. In fact, in recent years the gap between Stagg and other schools in the district has been widening. Although, Stagg has made some incremental growth, this gap has remained persistent over time. Stagg is failing to improve the achievement of its students at a sufficient rate and immediate action is needed to provide students with better educational opportunities. Accordingly, the CEO is recommending that Stagg be turned around.

In a turnaround, students will not be displaced from the school. Instead, a new team of administrators, faculty and support personnel will be staffed at the school. If the Board approves the proposed turnaround of Stagg, the CEO will recommend that the Academy for Urban School Leadership, or AUSL, manage the school, and hire and train the new administration and staff. My colleague, Angel Turner, will testify next and provide you with more information about AUSL's strategies and successes. In my opinion, this

comprehensive approach, if rigorously implemented, will result in accelerated student achievement at Stagg.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need to improve student achievement at Stagg. The community and the students deserve better. Prior supports and interventions at Stagg have not produced satisfactory results. The CEO believes that a reconstitution by turnaround will provide students with better educational opportunities, and we owe it to the Stagg students to implement this strategy.”

Angel Turner

Principal Morton Elementary School

Ms. Turner’s testimony was primarily for the edification of the Stagg 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. She testified as follows: “I am employed by the Board of Education of the City of Chicago as the principal of Morton Elementary School (“Morton”).

The Chief Executive Officer has asked me to appear at this hearing today to convey to you, and the Stagg community, as well as interested members of the public in attendance, information on AUSL.

By way of background, I am currently the principal of Morton, a turnaround school in its fourth year. I have been a principal of Morton since the turnaround in 2008. As principal, I have seen the Morton students accomplish 33.6 point growth on ISAT resulting in a composite of 74.0 % of students meeting or exceeding state standards. Prior to my principalship at Morton, I served as an assistant principal of Collins H.S. I also was the assistant principal at the Chicago International Charter School – Basil Campus. I taught at two different CPS elementary schools. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and a Masters in Education Administration.

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 underperforming 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 unsafe environments 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 success in implementing turnaround strategies. The first slide compares the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards before AUSL managed the school to the

same schools' performance in the 2010-2011 year. As you can see, AUSL turnarounds have produced the following results:

- 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 Herzl 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 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 Stagg community."

Mr. Tommy Anderson

LSC Chairperson

Mr. Anderson testified as follows: "I'm a parent of four excellent students at Stagg Elementary. My kids actually transferred to Stagg from Hinton Elementary, which they were not doing as well as they -- as they're doing right now. My son Dion (phonetic), he's in the Montessori program, which is an excellent program. I don't know if any of you know about the Montessori program, but, you know, my son is six -- seven years old, and he went to the -- the map, the globe map, and Trinidad, I don't even know where Trinidad is on the map, but my son showed it to me on the map. He's seven years old. So that's another great aspect of Stagg Elementary.

The thing that really bothered me as I sat here and -- and listened to the -- listened to the people present themselves was the point where, you know, since I've been hearing about the turnaround, they said that the atmosphere was -- was -- what did they say, what was the word that they used, toxic, they said it was a toxic environment. ...

I'm the LSC chairman, and, as far as I know, there's never been one police report, one incident, the Chicago Police Department was never called to our school for anything, any disciplinary action, nothing. That's one thing. The second thing was, the last meeting I went, one of the board members had stated out of their mouths that, you know what I'm saying, they had all this money allocated to help the schools out, but they wouldn't even

release the money to the schools unless the schools accepted the turnaround. I -- I didn't understand that. You know what I'm saying? First of all, our kids are not stats. Our kids are not statistics. They're our children. ...

Another thing is, you know, since I've been a member of the LSC, you know what I'm saying, everything we did has been conducive to the growth of our kids. We present evidence that our -- that our kids have made a 5.4 percent increase in the things that we've done, we have a Montessori program, we have after school programs, we even from the start, the community -- community school for the kids in the -- in the community. So to me I -- I didn't understand. I also heard that they said five million dollars allocated for Guggenheim Grammar School, but, for some absurd reason, Guggenheim is closed. ...

So how are you going to give five million dollars to a school that's being closed? I don't - - I don't understand that. You all want -- You know, when I was growing up, CPS stood for Chicago Public Schools, but in the last five, six years, everything has been charter, AUSL, all of that, and then you go outsource, you know, you want to outsource everything. Our teachers need -- they need the -- the same thing that AUSL -- you give to AUSL, you can give to our teachers.”

Alderman Latasha Thomas

17th Ward Alderman

Alderman Thomas' complete remarks were as follows: “I am Alderman Latasha Thomas, 17th Ward. I'm here tonight to speak against turning around Stagg Elementary School. I am the Chair of Education for City Council. I've been an alderman 12 years and an attorney 22 years. I grew up in the Englewood-Auburn-Gresham communities. I attended elementary school in this community. Those experiences set the educational foundation for the rest of my life.

Now, the impending turnaround of Stagg has created anger and frustration voiced clearly in this community. For those parents who have been -- who have children in the school or other schools slated for closure and turnarounds across the city, I understand their frustration. I am just as frustrated.

The satisfactory performance of our children in a structured learning environment does not fall solely on the shoulders of school administration and faculty. I am opposed to heaping the total blame on the schools' teachers and the administration. Unless those people are completely at fault, then turning around a school would be both ill-conceived and unsuccessful. Parents have a vital role in the education of their children. I believe the collaboration, a holistic approach, provides some of the best chances for positive change in the educational experience these children are struggling through. Parents, teachers, the administration with impartial input are needed to help reverse the trends of these schools, not just in Englewood but across the city and across our country.

This is not an issue relegated to the underemployed, underserved communities of our nation; There is an apathy across the school district and throughout the nation with --

without regard to social-economic status. This is not purely a political physical or social service problem. Failing children fall into the stress categories and ultimately horrifyingly --horrifying circumstances. This is not the future any of us want for our children.

At Stagg we have previous AUSL teachers there already. We have an assistant principal that was an assistant principal at AUSL. So we have staff there that know the principles that AUSL would try to use. Stagg, as you've heard, has a Montessori program currently in the school.

Why are we turning this school around?

Let me take a moment to give you some facts that I know about the school. We heard in - - in two of the Power Points about the geographic network. There are 34 schools in that network. There are at least seven whose composite ISAT scores are lower than Stagg, 14 schools with less growth than Stagg in the 2010-'11 year. Stagg's growth was 4.3 percentage, and there were 13 schools with less growth in the network. There are 26 schools with less growth than Stagg in the exceeds category for 2010-2011. The average percentage of students who meets or exceeds in reading for third grade from 2007 to 2010 is 44 percent and in math 54 percent. The average percentage of students who meets and exceeds in reading for eighth grade from 2007 to 2011 is 67 percent in reading and math 59 percent. There are five current and existing turnaround schools that posted similar or less gains than Stagg in 2010-2011.

Why aren't we putting more resources into this school in its current configuration? Why aren't we supporting Stagg? And I must add, the Morton School example that was used still appears to be on probation. Exhibit 12A and B of the booklet that they gave you shows that. Further, there's a turnaround school on its fourth year in my ward. It had a seven percent gain the past year, and Stagg had a six percent gain in the past year.

My main concern is for the young people who haven't had a chance to choose the life they want to lead yet. Without a comprehensive evidence-based plan for change, we are just spinning our wheels on this issue and going nowhere. Where is this plan? Their comparison, we can compare from the exhibits you already have, the geographic network and the district network, and the geographic network needs a lot of work. We cannot attack individual schools.

For example, in 2000 -- the 2011 ISAT scores, the geographic network is ten to 15 points below the district. That's 34 schools. What is the comprehensive plan for the geographic network, not just individual schools? Even the turnaround school within the geographic network in my ward is not at the level of the district. You can look at Exhibits 11 and 13. Exhibit 13, look at Harvard School, which is in my ward. If we -- If we cannot come together on this issue, we are all failing, and these kids are counting on us as adults to save them from hopelessness and a life time of inequity.

Again, I do not support the turnaround school at Stagg. ... Use those additional resources that they're planning to send to Stagg after it's turned around, use them now, use them next year. Allow the school to continue to grow and improve."

Ms. Ruth Miller

Principal

"This is my fifth year as principal and the first year of my second contract. I, too, am opposed to the turnaround of Stagg School. As the principal of Stagg, I have never had my evaluation lowered or received a correction action plan.

My personal and professional background illustrates my passion for the institution of education. My daughter is a recent graduate of Howard University, and my son will graduate from SIU in the spring. I am a doctoral candidate in urban school leadership at the University of Illinois. I hold a Masters' Degree in Curriculum and Instruction and Endorsements in Special Education, Early Childhood, Reading and Science. I have served for more than 28 years in the Chicago Public School system as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, intern principal and principal. I spent most of my career educating the children of Cabrini Green. My tenure at Sojourner Truth School in an underserved community has given me the experience, knowledge and skills to understand the needs of Stagg School.

Since my time at Stagg, by the implementation of various strategies, we have made continuous improvement in three key areas; climate and culture, academic achievement and parent and community involvement. ...

By the implementation of several programs in the integration of the Common Core Values Initiative, we have been able to reduce the number of misconducts by 60 percent and create a positive climate that is conducive to learning.

I have worked hard to build a competent teaching staff. I did not have the luxury of getting rid of all of my teachers and starting with a fresh new staff, but what I have done is to lower teachers' ratings, use the E3 process, counsel teachers out, close positions and redefine them to bring in highly qualified teachers with endorsements. Within the time I have been principal at Stagg School, I have hired two nationally board certified teachers, eight teachers with math, science and reading endorsements, teachers with Montessori certificates, other highly qualified teachers who also came from AUSL schools including my assistant principal.

I ask that you give the current staff a chance to provide the students of Stagg the high level of education they deserve in the loving and supporting environment we have created. Why should we turn around a school that promotes and inspires a safe learning environment? Why should we turn around a school that proactively implements learning programs that we reflect year over year growth and teachers, staff in the Englewood community, which enriches their learning experiences? Our students demonstrate exceptional potential and have proven that they are leaders of tomorrow who are on their pathway to expire -- inspired learning and exemplary character development."

Ms. Kimberly Henderson

Assistant Principal

“I am the current Assistant Principal at Stagg Elementary. First of all, I want to start off by saying, giving you a little background about myself, I taught for 12 years in the Englewood community. I then left the classroom and became an administrator of a program called Advvid (phonetic) here in central office. I then went to New Leaders for New Schools, a principal preparation program -- ... and then I was hired and selected to be a turnaround principal with AUSL. Unfortunately, at that time I was not on the principal eligibility list so I became an assistant principal with an AUSL instead.

Let me start off by saying that I believe in turnaround schools. I worked at a turnaround school, and I can personally attest to the great work that is done there. I do believe that turnaround is necessary for our lowest performing schools, but I contend, and the data that has already been spoken of shows, that Stagg is not one of the lowest performing schools, not in our network and not in CPS. We have data to support that, and, actually, I'll be giving you a binder, Hearing Officer, with all of our data.

Alderman Thomas went on and spoke about how many schools were performing lower than us in reading, in math, in exceeds and in the growth categories. We have a lot -- lots more data to show -- to share with you as well. I also note from my personal experience with AUSL that AUSL cannot turn around all of the lowest performing schools in the City of Chicago. It does not have the manpower to do so.

And so what I am proposing is that we have a motto here at Stagg that CPS needs to be aware of and may want to replicate, and the motto that I'm speaking of is that I am a trained administrator by AUSL, I have been trained on how to help turnaround schools like Stagg who, by the way, was already on an upward trend when I arrived. In fact, we have partnered with my colleague Angel Turner. I have taken teachers to her school for observation, professional development and sharing of ideas. I also took another cohort of -- of our teachers to Curtis School of Excellence, another AUSL turnaround. So I recognize that they're doing great things, and, because I was trained by AUSL, we are also doing great things at Stagg as well.

I am here today also to share that we have three teachers who came from an AUSL turnaround school who you will hear from later on this evening. So I believe that the motto that we have, taking trained administrators like myself and bringing them to schools such as Stagg and helping to turn around that school without the displacement of every staff member, is one that CPS would like to look at and, hopefully, would like to use as an example. I also want to let you know that we know that this motto is working because we are very excited to announce that we have our current Scantron data, which is our interim assessments, and so the data that you all are referring to is dead. Our students took that test, the ISAT, last March, almost a year ago. We have current Scantron data that shows today, and the current Scantron that we just started taking two

weeks ago, that we have 60 percent of our students are projected to meet the standards in reading on the ISAT, 60 percent, and we also have 75 percent that are expected to meet in math, 75 percent are projected to meet the standards of math on the ISAT. That is based on current data that we have been taking for the last two weeks, not on the data that was presented from last year. So I know that our motto is working, and what we are asking for is an opportunity to continue the great work that we have started. We are asking CPS to take a look at our example of taking an AUSL-trained administrator and putting them in a lower performing school to help bring that school up into an upward trend where we all want to be.”

Ms. Gina Hartfield

Parent

Ms. Harfield travels a great distance to take her children to Stagg. She is against the proposed turnaround, and suggest that CPS should infuse additional resources into Stagg.

Mr. Kenn Whitfield

Graduate

A 2007 graduate of Stagg, Mr. Whitfield spoke of the benefits he received by being taught at Stagg. He opposed the proposed turnaround.

STUDENT A

6th Grade

She tested into a selective enrollment school but misses Stagg. She opposes the turnaround.

STUDENT B

5th Grade

They have improved on the Scranton and ISAT. Her improvement is due to the Teachers who respect the students’ feelings. She opposes the turnaround.

STUDENT C

5th Grade

Since the second grade the teachers at Stagg have helped them learn giving him a chance. He opposes the turnaround.

Ms. Vivian Wallace

Parent, NCLB Chair, LSC Member

She testified in part as follows: “We are not in favor of turning around Stagg School. Students have shown increase in test scores and the teacher, student and parent relationships has increased. Stagg has the only Montessori program in the Englewood community, and it is a program that we want to see stay. Stagg supports students in school and in households. We have a mentoring program to help children with behavior issues inside of the school instead of suspending them three to five days out of the week. We know we must continue to improve and make change, and we assure you that change is going to come.”

Ms. Michele Thompson

Teacher's Aide

She stated: "I don't think it's a good idea to turn our schools around. We need to give our teachers a chance to prove their abilities. If they have better resources, more funding, I think they would do a fantastic job."

Ms. Sherry Williams

LSC Teacher Rep.

She testified as follows: "I am currently a kindergarten teacher, the LSC teacher rep and the Chicago Teachers Union delegate. Okay. Now, these are the steps that Stagg has taken to create a positive school culture and climate. We have a school by PBIS based on school pride motto. Students receive pride points which are entered into a monthly raffle, attendance plan which highlights weekly attendance for each classroom and rewards class with highest monthly attendance. Our action against adversity, we have a check and connect program to target chronic truants and ensure regular attendance. Our check-in check-out program, we have a check-in check-out program that provides mentors for students with behavior issues and sets daily behavior goals. We've hired a full-time dean of students to decrease out-of-school suspensions.

For engaging our students, we have a vast after school program and after school activities including sports such as football, basketball and track teams. ...

We have a partnership with children, home and aide that buses students to nearby partner schools for afterschool programs. As previously stated, Stagg has been awarded a community school grant which will increase the number of students we can service in our afterschool program, and Stagg will be able to offer parent classes including a GED program.

As far as setting goals for the school, we have a school writing -- reading level assessment which is the step in the past given three years yearly, we have data talks with students around Scantron data and healthy competition encouraged amongst classes, and, last, we have biweekly assessments based on Scantron results to target needs."

Ms. Ashiaha Butler

Englewood Community Action Council

"I have not went to a school that has welcomed community residents like myself the way that this group has welcomed me. I think the culture and climate within the school has been extremely positive and that relationships that the teachers have gained with these students as well as the parents was priceless. I'm more of a neutral party, but I can definitely tell you that what they're doing so far is going good, and I definitely see them being -- improving over the next couple of years."

Mr. Matthew Luskin

CTU

He proffered 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. He added: “There's no data in this presentation that shows what the impact would be of removing every adult staff person, every parent leader in this area from the two elementary schools in that neighborhood. There's no evidence, there's no data in there that shows what the removal of this Montessori program would be, a rarity on the south side.”

MS. Erika Jenkins

Parent

Ms. Jenkins testified in part: “I have three children attending Stagg; eighth grade, preschool in a Montessori preschool and Montessori second grade. And I just want to start out with stating that I hear a lot about the stats with the testing, which I know is important, but, more importantly, if our school could receive more resources such as one particular resource that was brought into the school that had the Beacon Counseling Program where parents were being counseled, children were being counseled, families, which I was one of the families, that was living doubled-up family, were able to find housing, and they assisted us, those type of resources helped my daughter to bring her grades up, and now she's number one in the school in reading.

Those type of resources for us parents help us to know that we have somebody else ... hearing our voice.”

Mr. Willie Kennedy

Parent

He asked that CPS do the right thing.

Ms. Hannah Richardson

Teacher

She testified in part: “I'm a primary Montessori teacher at Stagg. I come to you tonight as an educator, a child advocate and a concerned citizen to ask you to reconsider and give the school, the staff and student body the chance that we deserve to continue on the path of improvement that we've initiated as we strive to be an outstanding CPS school.

I teach in the Montessori program, like I said, and for those of you who don't know what that means, I teach children ranging in ages of three to six years of age in the Montessori philosophy. Those children are staying with me for three years in the classroom. And think of how well I get to know each child when they're with me for that long. When they leave my classroom, they'll go on to the Montessori elementary classroom where they'll do the same. They get one-on-one lessons from me, and everything is tailored towards their individual needs and interests.

That might not be remarkable to some, but in an environment where so many children lack the consistent relationships with adults that foster positive self-image and independence, it's like a God-sent. I want you to know that these children are performing very well academically and will continue to perform well at that level and create the outstanding upper grade students in the school of tomorrow.”

Ms. Jacqueline Lee

Parent

She stated: “Are you aware of the chaos and devastation you inflict if you turn us around? Are you aware of how this will affect our community and their families? The chaos I speak of has already occurred. We have some students questioning their own potential and their instruction of their educators. Those who are supposed to graduate are concerned about their own greatness of wondering if they are ready for high school knowing that teachers are labeled incompetent and their school toxic. Our teachers are constantly putting on this facade daily to educate and boost moral of our potential graduates knowing that their job is in jeopardy. Parents are concerned and wondering if the new school will put forth effort, energy and patience towards our children, wondering if the foundation of family instilled in Stagg remains. Stagg School is not perfect, but putting necessary money and resources in our school, we can be.”

Ms. Bridgette Rector

Graduate & Parent

She testified in part as follows: “As a parent and graduate of Stagg School, I can truly say the children of the school are receiving a quality education by teachers who love and care about each and every one of them. ... As a parent and graduate of Stagg School, I can truly say the children of the school are receiving a quality education by teachers who love and care about each and every one of them. ... To say that the teachers in this school are not providing a quality education for my son and all the other students that chose to attend this school is rather insulting.”

Ms. Nancy Jo Roberts

Teacher

Ms Roberts stated: “I have been an employee of Stagg Elementary for the past 26 years. I was born and raised in the Englewood community, and I have done, of my 34 years in the Chicago Public Schools, 26 years in Englewood as a teacher. I have taught generations of families in the Englewood community from Stagg Elementary School. I have children that I have taught that come back to visit that are successful in our business world. Some of them have become teachers, some of them are in the medical field, and they always come back to let us know what a fine job we did at Stagg School. Over the years, this school has become more than a place of employment for me. It -- It's become a home. The students are more than just students. They are family to me.

Turning around a school is not just changing faculty and staff. It's breaking up a family. My colleagues and I have spent many years involved in continuing education, always to benefit our students, seeking the best of teaching strategies and a quality curriculum for all. We are dedicated, and we have always been devoted to giving our students the highest quality education.

Having worked with at least five administrations in my tenure at Stagg, it is my opinion and my belief that there are no better teachers or administrators that can provide our students with the education that they deserve.”

STUDENT D

4th Grade

The student opposed the turnaround, and asked that CPS not remove the teachers who are important to the students at Stagg.

STUDENT E

2nd Grade

The student opposed the turnaround.

STUDENT F

Montessori - 6 years old

The student opposed the turnaround, and asked that CPS not remove the teachers or Montessori Program at Stagg.

Ms Adrienne Adams

Parent

She is against the turnaround because of the Montessori program at Stagg, which she described as “a blessing.”

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 Internal Communications Electronic Mail to CPS School-Based Staff dated Thursday, January 5, 2012, entitled “Reminder about Planned Public Hearings and How to Sign Up” sent to the 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 Performance Policy Reports for Amos A. Stagg Elementary School for 2008 - 2011; 6) The School Improvement Planning for Advancing Academic Achievement (“SIPAAA”) for Amos A. Stagg Elementary School, 2010-2012, Year 1, and accompanying Board Report Approving the 2010-2012 School Improvement Plans for Schools on Probation and for Schools with School Improvement Status, dated December 15, 2010 (Board Report 10-1215-ED4); 7) The SIPAAA for Amos A. Stagg Elementary School, 2010-2012, Year 2, and accompanying Board Report Approving Updates to the 2010-2012 School Improvement Plans and Related Budgets for Schools on Probation and for Schools with School Improvement Status, dated August 24, 2011 (Board Report 11-0824-ED2); and, 8) The written testimony of the CPS witnesses, and their related Power Point presentations.

Documents Submitted In Opposition To The Turnaround

At the hearing four written submissions were made by speakers opposed to the Turnaround at Stagg: 1) A letter from Alderman LaTasha Thomas (17th Ward) containing her testimony in opposition to the Stagg Turnaround; 2) 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; 3) The Stagg School power point presentation; and 4) A document comparing Stagg to the other Englewood-Gresham Network Schools.¹

¹ I would be remiss in not noting for the record how impressive and comprehensive the presentation was by the Administration from Stagg 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 Amos A. Stagg Elementary School via Reconstitution.

2. On Tuesday, January 31, 2012, a public hearing was held at the Board of Education, 125 South Clark, Chicago, Illinois. The public hearing 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 that, after at least one year, fails to make adequate progress in correcting deficiencies, 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. Stagg is located at 7241 S. Morgan Street, and currently serves over 500 students in grades pre-Kindergarten through eight.

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 at Stagg would continue as students at the school; All staff including the faculty would be removed and replaced; The Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) would operate Stagg.

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, Stagg has been a Level 3 school. In the 2007-2008 school year, Stagg received 31% of available points. In the 2008-2009

school year, it received 35.7% of available points. In the 2009-2010 school year it received 19% of available points. In the 2010-2011 school year, it received 28.6% of available points. Prior to four years ago, CPS still had a policy determining a school's accountability status. Stagg 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. The ISAT scores for the 2010-2011 school year for Stagg, the geographic network in which Stagg is located, and the District were compared. Stagg is located in the Englewood-Gresham network.² Stagg's 2010-2011 ISAT Meets or Exceeds Composite score, which is the combined result of the ISAT reading, mathematics, and science assessments, was 54.7%, compared to a geographic network average of 62.3% and a District average of 75.6%.

8. In reading, the percent of Stagg students meeting or exceeding state standards was 52.4%, compared to a geographic network average of 58.4% and a District average of 72.7%.

9. In mathematics Stagg's performance was 59.4%, compared to a geographic network average of 68.4% and a District average of 79.4%.

10. In science Stagg's performance was 47.5%, compared to a geographic network average of 55.5% and a District average of 72.4%.

11. The performance gap between Stagg and other schools in the network and across the District has been persistent over time. Stagg's ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 0.1 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-

² The term "geographic network" refers to the schools that are currently in the Englewood-Gresham 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 Stagg is performing compared to all other schools within its community.

2006 and 7.6 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 15.9 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 20.9 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

12. In addition to measuring the percentage of students meeting state standards, CPS also measures the percentage of students exceeding state standards. In 2010-2011 Stagg's ISAT Composite Exceeds score was 7.4%, compared to a geographic network average of 8.3%, and a District average of 18.1%. Stagg's Composite Exceeds score was 0.8 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 0.9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's Composite Exceeds score was 6.7 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 10.7 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

13. The performance gap between Stagg and the District is consistent across subjects. Stagg's ISAT Reading Meets or Exceeds score was 0.4 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 6 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's Reading score was 13.3 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 20.3 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

14. Stagg's ISAT Mathematics Meets or Exceeds score was 2.4 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's Mathematics score was 19.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 20 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

15. Stagg's ISAT Science Meets or Exceeds score was 6.2 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 8 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2010-2011. Stagg's Science score was 13.7 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 24.9 percentage points below the District average in 2010-2011.

16. 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. Stagg's reading value-added score was -2.0 in 2010 and -0.1 in 2011. Its mathematics value-added score was -1.0 in 2010 and -0.4 in 2011. This means that, on average, students at Stagg grew at a below-average pace in reading and mathematics in both of the last two years.

17. This low performance has taken place at despite efforts by CPS to provide

the school with assistance, strategies and training. Over the past few years, the CPS District has offered Stagg multiple resources and supports to remediate the school's performance. These programmatic, professional development and mentoring supports include, but are not limited to, the following:

- CPS has provided oversight of its discretionary budget 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.
- Since 2008, the Network and its data analyst provided training on the evaluation of student data and the use of data to improve instruction. The Network held multiple sessions of professional development with the administration of Stagg, developing assessment metrics and assisting with the analysis of these metrics to determine the instructional factors that contributed to the data results. Once contributing factors were determined, Network staff helped identify instructional solutions and concrete action plans.
- The Network offered professional development in literacy, math, and science to school based personnel to help improve instruction. The Network purchased McGraw Hill's LEAD 21 balanced literacy program and professional development for all students and teachers in Kindergarten through fifth grade and assisted teachers with its implementation.
- Beginning in 2008, teachers were provided with E-Path Online Diagnostic Testing, an online electronic assessment for reading and math, to help gauge instruction and improve student achievement. In 2010, the Network also provided instruction to teachers in using Acuity assessment data to determine an individualized action plan for students.
- Network personnel conducted multiple school visits to support personnel with skills such as analyzing student work to assess student needs and improve instruction. Network Instructional coaches also provided teaching strategies aimed at improving student achievement.
- The Network funded Saturday Academic Enrichment programming, for students in grades three through eight, targeting those students with low academic performance.
- Network staff provided teachers with coaching and mentoring to help guide students through the steps of logic and conceptual thinking. There was a focus on

small group instruction to promote student to student interaction and critical thinking skills.

- The Network provided intensified support to teachers with the lowest student performance in reading in an effort to improve student progress.

Despite all of these supports, student academic growth at the school has not kept pace with CPS District averages.

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.³

Recommendation

Stagg has been on probation for five school years for failing to meet the Chicago Public Schools' required standards for minimum student performance on standardized tests. The school has demonstrated low academic performance across subject areas, students are not growing at a rate consistent with the geographic network or the CPS District, and the gap between Stagg and other schools has been widening in recent years.

³ Stagg spent a great deal of its time at the hearing proffering evidence that there are lower performing schools in it Network. The fact that there are other under-performing schools in the Network that are not being reconstituted at this time may seem unfair to the Stagg school community, but nothing in the Illinois School Code requires CPS to take action on under-performing schools beginning with the lowest performing school in a Network first. It is not the role of Hearing Officers to substitute their judgment for that of the CEO, no matter how tempted they may be to do so. The Hearing Officer's role is to summarize the evidence for the Board and, more importantly, to ensure that all applicable laws, Policies and Procedures have been complied with. If the CEO's Proposal complies with the applicable laws and policies with regard to reconstituting a school, which is the only issue before me, then the Hearing Officer has no legal authority to reject the proposed school action. There have been occasions where a CPS proposed school action complied with the Illinois School Code, but was troubling to this Hearing Officer. Without substituting my judgment for that of the CEO and usurping the legal authority granted by the Illinois General Assembly to the CEO and Board, not to the Hearing Officer, I have made the CEO and Board aware of my concerns in my Report & Recommendation. The presentation by the Stagg School Community was exceptionally impressive, and the appeal to utilize them as a model of "self turnaround" because the school employs former AUSL teachers and administrators, makes some sense. However, for the reasons stated above, and given the exigency of the need to expedite improvements at Stagg, I believe this school should be turned-around as proposed. Finally, 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. 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.

Stagg has made insufficient progress in improving student academic achievement. Accordingly, the Hearing Officer hereby recommends that the Board approve the CEO's proposal to Reconstitute Amos A. Stagg Elementary School. Stagg is eligible for reconstitution under the Illinois School Code, 105 ILCS Section 5/34-8.3(d)(4) and the Board's School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012 School Year (Policy Manual Section 302.6A, Board Report 10-0728-PO4), because it has been on probation at least one year and has failed to make adequate progress in correcting its academic deficiencies.

FURTHER THE HEARING OFFICER SAYETH NOT.

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

February 6, 2012