Board of Education of the
City of Chicago

In Re: The Matter of
The Proposed Reconstitution of
Charles S. Deneen Elementary School

Before
Fredrick H. Bates
Independent Hearing Officer

Background

Introduction

On or about January 20, 2010, the undersigned was retained by the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) of the Chicago Public Schools to serve as an Independent Hearing Officer in this matter. On Monday, February 8, 2010, 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 Deneen Elementary School via Reconstitution. Notice of the hearing was served on the parents, staff members, principals, and members of the local school councils via U.S. Mail, and/or personal service through CPS Mail. Notice of the hearing was served upon the public by newspaper publication in the Chicago Sun-Times and/or Chicago Tribune.

Pursuant to the directives provided in the document entitled “PROCEDURES FOR HEARINGS ON PROPOSED SCHOOL CLOSINGS, CONSOLIDATIONS,
ATTENDANCE AREA BOUNDARY CHANGES OR RECONSTITUTIONS,” 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:

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

* * * *

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

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

The Board’s School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy provides in part:

That the Chicago Board of Education adopt a School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2009-2010 School Year.

I. Purpose and Goals

This policy shall establish the standards and criteria for placing a school on Remediation or Probation for the 2009-2010 school year based on assessments administered in Spring 2009 and other performance data from prior school years. A school’s accountability status from the 2008-2009 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-four (24) 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 sixteen (16) to twenty-three and nine tenths (23.9) 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 fifteen and nine tenths (15.9) 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.

AP Exam: Shall mean the end of course exam established by the College Board that is administered upon completion of an AP 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 Chief Executive Officer may remove the affected metric from consideration and the school will not get a score for that metric. The 2008 and 2009 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 2009 ISAT Composite score - 50% meeting or exceeding state standards
ii. High school minimum 2009 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.4 herein.

3. Additional Review: Elementary schools with a total performance score between 18 and 20 points, or between 42.9% and 49.9% of points and High Schools with a total performance score between 13 and 15.9 points, or between 36% and 43.9% of points will undergo an Additional Review as described in section IV.C below through which their Level 3 rating may be adjusted to a Level 2 rating. All such schools shall have Probation status pending the result of the Additional Review. Upon completion of the Additional Review, the school’s final Accountability Status shall be issued in accordance with Section IV.B.2. above.

4. 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.

C. Additional Review
Elementary Schools with a performance score between eighteen (18) and twenty (20) points, or between 42.9% and 49.9% of points, and High Schools with a performance score between thirteen (13) and fifteen and nine tenths (15.9) points, or between 36% and 43.9% of points, shall undergo an additional review by the Chief Education Officer (CEDO). The additional review will evaluate whether the school’s current performance, improvement over time and other factors may warrant adjusting the school’s accountability rating from Achievement Level 3 to Achievement Level 2.

As a part of this further review, a comprehensive evaluation shall occur utilizing metrics and standards issued by the Office of Research Evaluation
and Accountability (“REA”). Using these metrics and standards, schools will be evaluated in the following areas based upon data provided by REA, collection of data by the Area Instruction Officer (AIO) or other designated oversight office, and other data and documentation provided by the school:

(1) **Instruction**: whether there is high quality instruction in classrooms at the school as evidenced by high levels of academic engagement and challenging standards-based instruction;

(2) **Instructional Leadership**: whether the school has strong instructional leadership as reflected by the level of program coherence, parental involvement and data-driven utilization of community resources at the school;

(3) **Professional Capacity**: the existence of professional capacity in which there is meaningful professional development, collaboration among faculty members, a focus on student learning and collective responsibility for the school’s success;

(4) **Learning Climate**: whether the learning climate stresses uniformly high expectations and is safe and orderly;

(5) **Student Body Changes**: evaluation of whether the school has experienced a significant change in enrollment due directly to a Board-approved action or Board-directed reassignment of students to the school; and

(6) **Data Enhancement**: evaluation of additional factors, conditions or circumstances with impact on a school’s data results.

The CEDO shall evaluate and document the school’s status and progress on each of the factors noted above and any other relevant indicators and shall provide a written explanation of their evaluation to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEDO evaluation shall also include a recommendation to the CEO as to whether the school would benefit from the additional support services that are provided to schools on Probation. The evaluation and recommendation of the CEDO shall include input from the school’s Area Instruction Officer or other designated oversight office. The CEDO evaluation and recommendation shall take into consideration a school’s “Corrective Action”, “Restructuring Planning” or “Restructuring Implementation” status under NCLB.

The CEO shall review all such evaluations and recommendations and shall take into consideration a school’s student mobility rates, poverty rates, bilingual education eligibility, special education and English proficiency programs when deciding whether or not to modify a school’s accountability rating. The CEO shall make the final determination whether the school’s accountability rating will be adjusted from Achievement Level 3 to Achievement Level 2.
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 2009-2010 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 2008 and Spring 2009. 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 2009 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 2009 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 2009 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 2008 and Spring 2009. 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 2009 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 2009 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 2009 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 2009. 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 2009 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 2009 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 2009 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 2008 and Spring 2009. 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 2009 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 2009 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 2009 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 2008 and Spring 2009. 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 2009 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 2009 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 2009 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 2007-2008 school year and from the 2008-2009 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 2008-2009 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 2008-2009 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 2008-2009 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 2009 = 3 points  
Greater than or equal to the district average, but less than one standard deviation above the district average in 2009 = 2 points  
Below the district average, but by no more than one standard deviation in 2009 = 1 point  
More than one standard deviation below the district average in 2009 = 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 2009 = 3 points  
Greater than or equal to the district average, but less than one standard deviation above the district average in 2009 = 2 points  
Below the district average, but by no more than one standard deviation in 2009 = 1 point  
More than one standard deviation below the district average in 2009 = 0 points

* * * *

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 HEARINGS ON PROPOSED SCHOOL CLOSINGS, CONSOLIDATIONS, RECONSTITUTIONS OR ATTENDANCE AREA BOUNDARY CHANGES.”** Those Procedures state:

1. Upon determining to recommend to the Chicago Board of Education (“Board”) that a school be closed, consolidated with another school, reconstituted or subject to attendance area boundary changes, the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) may appoint an independent hearing officer to conduct a hearing for the purpose of receiving comments and documents relevant to the proposed action.

2. The CEO or a designee will provide notice of a hearing to consider a proposed school closing, consolidation, reconstitution or change in attendance area boundaries to the school(s) that would be affected. Public notice of the hearing may also be given by publication in newspapers of general circulation and by posting notice at the Central
Offices of the Board of Education and at the schools to be affected by the proposed action.

3. At the hearing, the hearing officer will consider the relevant statements, comments or documents of any person who wishes to speak. The total number of persons speaking at the hearing will be subject to the sole discretion of the hearing officer. The hearing will be transcribed.

4. The hearing officer will be solely responsible for conducting the hearing and will conduct the hearing in an efficient and impartial manner according to the following guidelines:
   a. 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;
   b. The hearing will commence and conclude at the time designated in the notice of hearing;
   c. The hearing officer will commence the hearing by reviewing the purpose for which the hearing is convened;
   d. The hearing officer will determine the order of speakers’ participation;
   e. Participants may submit any relevant documents or written statements to 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.

5. Following the hearing, a hearing officer will prepare and submit to the CEO a recommendation and/or a summary report of the public comment and documents received at the hearing.

6. The CEO may include the hearing officer’s summary report, the documents received at the hearing, and any recommendation received from the hearing officer in his or her recommendation to the Board on the proposed action.

7. These hearing procedures shall apply at any community meeting held in compliance with the Board policy on the Closing of Schools and/or the Board policy on the Consolidation of Schools.
SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

Testimony Received at the Public Hearing & Community Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Robert Runcie</td>
<td>Chief Administrative Officer, CPS</td>
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Mr. Runcie stated the basic case for reconstituting Deneen School, and testified as follows: “I am the Chief Administrative Officer for the Chicago Public Schools. I have been in this position since March 2009. I appear before you on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools, to introduce the proposal to turn-around Deneen Elementary School through reconstitution based on low academic performance.

Before I begin, I want the hearing officer and the community to understand that Deneen Elementary School students are our first concern in making this recommendation. I want to make it clear that Deneen students have not failed and, this recommendation is predicated on the conviction that, if the school is provided a clean slate, it will help CPS to deliver to Deneen students the high quality education all students deserve and Deneen students will succeed.

The CEO’s recommendation that Deneen be reconstituted is based on the Board of Education’s authority to reconstitute schools on academic probation under Section 34-8.3 of the Illinois School Code and the CPS Performance Policy. There are copies of these statutes and policies in the binder of documents that you have received.

Section 34-8.3 grants the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Education the authority to take certain corrective measures with respect to schools with academic deficiencies. One of those measures is placing schools on probation. If a school has failed to make adequate progress in correcting its academic deficiencies after being placed on probation, Section 34-8.3 allows the Chief Executive Officer, with the approval of the Board of Education, and after a hearing, to reconstitute the school and remove and replace the staff.

At the Board of Education meeting in December 2009, the Chief Executive Officer published criteria for identifying low performing schools as candidates to be reconstituted. Specifically, schools that earned less than 33.3% of points on the CPS Performance Policy for two consecutive years were eligible for reconstitution. Deneen received 26.2% of available points on the Performance Policy in 2007-2008 and 19.0% of available points in 2008-2009.
In evaluating whether or not to reconstitute a school, CPS also applied various exclusionary criteria. Schools that met any of the following criteria were not considered for reconstitution:

1. The school has a contract principal who has been in place for less than two years.
2. The school is participating in the Fresh Start program, which is the CPS partnership with the Chicago Teacher’s Union.
3. The school has been subject to reconstitution or principal removal under Section 34-8.3 of the Illinois School Code within the last two years.
4. The school is currently in the process of phasing out.
5. The school has been used as a designated receiving school for reassigned students due to a school closure or consolidation within the last two years.

These exclusions ensure that schools that have had major changes in governance or leadership in the last two years are given sufficient time to show progress before being considered for reconstitution. None of the above criteria applied to Deneen, and therefore it was considered for reconstitution.

If approved by the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, the following would occur as a result of the reconstitution:

1. All students currently enrolled in Deneen or eligible to enroll in Deneen this coming fall would continue as students at the school.
2. All staff including the faculty would be removed and replaced.
3. Deneen and its new administration and staff would be supported by the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL), which Adrian Willis, Chief Area Officer for Area 14, will describe more fully in his statement.
4. Deneen currently participates in the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), a federal grant, which provides incentive payments to teachers. Should the Board approve this proposal, CPS will work with AUSL to facilitate the potential continued collaboration with TAP.

We understand that turnarounds present challenges to students and staff but we know that they can dramatically improve educational opportunities for students. We believe that Deneen students deserve nothing less.”

Ryan Crosby | Director of Performance Policy, CPS

Mr. Crosby delineated the school’s data pursuant to the CPS School Performance Policy. He testified as follows: “I am the Director of Performance Policy 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 June 2008.
I am appearing before you today to present specific data highlighting the low academic performance of Charles S. Deneen Elementary School. This data is being displayed on the PowerPoint presentation currently being shown.

As discussed by Mr. Runcie, schools considered for reconstitution were those that received fewer than 33.3% of points on the CPS Performance Policy for two consecutive years. The CPS 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 received less than 50% of the total available points were placed on probation. Schools that received less than one-third (or 33.3%) of total available points for two consecutive years, were considered for reconstitution.

The CEO selected 33.3% as the cut-point because one-third of total points represents a school that earns, on average, one point out of three on each metric. Put another way, a school earning exactly 33.3% is a school that met, on average, the minimum criteria to earn at least one point on each of the 14 metrics. A school that earns less than one-third of points is not, on average, meeting this minimum threshold. Schools earning less than one-third are those that not only have low levels of performance, but have shown little improvement over time. Furthermore, by selecting schools that received less than one-third of the total available points for two consecutive years, we are not considering schools that simply had one bad year. Rather, the schools selected had multiple years of low performance.

In the 2007-2008 school year, Deneen earned 26.2% of the total available points. In the 2008-2009 school year, Deneen earned 19% of available points. Deneen has been on probation for three consecutive years, and for four out of the past five years, including the current school year.

The next slide shows the percentage of students at Deneen and across the District who met or exceeded state standards on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test, or ISAT, in the 2008-2009 school year. ISAT performance is used as a part of the elementary school scoring in the CPS Performance Policy.

As you can see, Deneen’s 2008-2009 performance on the ISAT composite, which is the combined result of the ISAT reading, mathematics, and science assessments, was 46.5%, compared to a District average of 69.8%. In reading, the percentage of Deneen students meeting or exceeding state standards was 50.9%, compared to a district average of 67.8%. In mathematics Deneen’s performance was 48.4%, compared to a District average of 73.6%. In science Deneen’s performance was 28.6%, compared to a District average of 64.3%.
The gap between Deneen and the District has been persistent over time, and in recent years has been widening. After the 2005-2006 school year, when the District as a whole, including Deneen, showed large improvements in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards, the District has continued to improve, from 61.8% in 2005-2006 on the ISAT composite to 69.8% in 2008-2009, an increase of 8 percentage points. Over this same period, the ISAT composite scores of Deneen have stayed largely flat, going from 45.4% to 46.5%, an increase of 1.1 percentage points.

The widening of the performance gap between Deneen and the District is consistent across subjects. In reading, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding at Deneen increased from 45.6% in 2005-2006 to 50.9% in 2008-2009, an improvement of 5.3 percentage points. Over that same time period, the CPS average increased from 59.1% to 67.8%, an increase of 8.7 percentage points.

In mathematics, Deneen went from 46.4% in 2005-2006 to 48.4% in 2008-2009, an increase of 2 percentage points. Over that same time period, the CPS average increased from 64% to 73.6%, an increase of 9.6 percentage points.

In science, Deneen declined from 42.4% in 2005-2006 to 28.6% in 2008-2009, a decrease of 13.8 percentage points. Over that same time period, the CPS average increased from 63.3% to 64.3%, an increase of 1 percentage point.

Starting in 2008, CPS began using a new metric to measure student growth from year to year on the ISAT. This metric, called the Value-Added metric, which is a component of the CPS Performance Policy, compares student academic growth at a school with the growth of similar students across the District. This is done through a regression methodology that controls for eight student-level factors, including grade level, prior performance on the ISAT, free or reduced lunch eligibility, mobility, participation in the Homeless Education Program, Individualized Education Plan (or IEP), English Language Learner status, and gender. Controlling for these factors allows us to see how much impact the school had on its average student over the past year. Because we control for prior performance, this metric allows us to identify schools with low test scores where growth is rapid, and schools with high test scores where growth is slow.

The value-added metric is measured in ISAT scale score points. 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 means that students at the school grew, on average, one scale score point greater than similar students. 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 lesser pace than similar students in the District.

Deneen’s 2009 reading Value-Added score was -0.4 and its mathematics Value-Added score was -1.2. This means that on average between 2008 and 2009, students at Deneen grew 0.4 ISAT scale score points less in reading and 1.2 ISAT scale score points less in
mathematics than similar students in the District. While Deneen’s reading score means that students at the school grew at about the same pace as similar students throughout the District, Deneen’s math score was in the bottom 35% of scores District-wide. Taken together with the widening of the performance gap between Deneen and the District on ISAT, these value-added scores show that Deneen is not making progress in catching up to the District. In a school that lags behind the District in terms of performance, we would expect to see positive value-added scores for the school to catch up.

In addition to standardized test scores, the CPS Performance Policy evaluates schools on attendance rate. The attendance rate for Deneen has been consistently lower than the District average. In 2008-2009, Deneen’s attendance rate was 91.4%, which was in the bottom 15% of attendance rates for elementary schools in the District. The District average for elementary schools has been above 94% since the 2004-2005 school year and was 94.5% in 2008-2009.

To conclude Mr. Hearing Officer, Deneen met all of the criteria for reconstitution. The school has low academic performance, this performance is consistently low across subject areas, and this performance has remained low over time.”

Adrian G. Willis
Chief Area Officer for Area 14

CAO Willis testified concerning the efforts made to assist Deneen as follows: “I am employed by the Board of Education of the City of Chicago as a Chief Area Officer for Area 14, which includes Deneen Elementary School.

The Chief Executive Officer has asked me to appear at this hearing today to convey to you, and to the parents, staff members and local school council members of Deneen School, as well as interested members of the public in attendance, information relevant to the proposal to reconstitute Deneen School, located at 7240 S. Wabash.

I have held the position of Chief Area Officer for Area 14 since July 1, 2008. I have over 20 years of experience as a teacher and administrator in the Chicago Public Schools. Prior to my service as a CAO, I was the turnaround principal of Earle Elementary for the 2006-2007 & 2007-2008 school years, during which time the school experienced 13.6 percentage point gains in ISAT composites. Prior to that, I was the principal of Keller Magnet for four years. Before my principalships, I was employed as an Assistant Principal for five years and a teacher for more than seven years. I have a Masters Degree in Educational Administration.

As the CAO of Area 14, my responsibilities include: providing instructional support to schools and, coaching, supervising and evaluating principals. Since July 2008 I have supervised, supported, coached and evaluated the performance of the principal of Deneen Elementary School. Based on the Chicago Public School’s Performance Policy and my observations, I have concluded that Deneen School has made insufficient progress in improving student academic achievement. Also, Deneen has been on probation for three school years for failing to meet the Chicago Public Schools’ required standards for minimum student performance on district wide assessments and standardized tests.
Deneen has received less than a third of total performance points under the Board’s Performance and Remediation of Schools Policy for two consecutive school years. That means that students at the school are not growing at a rate consistent with the other comparable schools in the district.

Over the past two years, I have offered Deneen School multiple resources and supports to remediate the school’s performance deficiencies. These supports have included, but are not limited to, the following:

- During the 2008-2009 school year Area 14 instructional coaches conducted more than three dozen Math, Science and Literacy professional development sessions at the school and Area office;

- At least twenty site visits were made by the Area 14 team to address concerns around students at risk and attendance;

- Twenty-four Area intervention calls from parents and teachers were accepted and followed up on in support of Deneen;

- Last year a triage team of four literacy instructional coaches was assigned to Deneen full-time for an entire week to ensure that upper grade students received testing necessary to implement the Balanced Literacy framework;

- I have participated in instructional learning walkthroughs with the principal and leadership team as well as goal setting conversations over a two year period;

- For the 2009-2010 school year members of the Area 14 staff have made at least 10 site visits to Deneen for grade level and cluster meetings, data analysis meetings and other performance management follow-up items.

Despite those supports student academic growth at the school has not kept pace with District averages. As shown in the PowerPoint presentation, since 2001, the percentage of Deneen students who have met or exceeded ISAT standards each year is below the district’s average. And, over the past few years that performance gap has widened. For individual students and for the community, there is an urgent need for the performance of Deneen School to improve and to improve quickly. Accordingly, the Chief Executive Officer is recommending that Deneen be turned around through reconstitution.

In a reconstitution, students will not be displaced from the school. Instead, a new team of administrators, faculty and support personnel will be staffed at the school. They will undergo extensive professional development and planning before the start of the 2010-2011 school year to develop a comprehensive plan and approach to:

- change the school culture and environment;
- ensure that students are safe within the school and its grounds;
- work with community partners to ensure that students are safe traveling to and from school;
• address the students’ social and emotional needs;
• develop a curriculum plan and instructional strategies that meet student needs;
• create a professional climate in which administrators, teachers and staff are accountable both for their professional practice and for student achievement; and
• develop a school-wide culture in which students and parents are accountable for student academic work, student behavior and student achievement.

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

If the Board approves the proposed turnaround of Deneen, the Chief Executive Officer will recommend that the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) manage the school, and hire and train the new administration and staff. AUSL is a pre-approved and proven turnaround provider that has a great deal of experience in turning around troubled Chicago Public Schools, both on the elementary level and, more recently, at the high school level. AUSL also currently operates six dual mission CPS schools with teacher training academies in which it trains teachers to work in turnaround settings as administrators and teachers. AUSL will rigorously implement its proven turnaround process at Deneen.

While the turnaround process is a multi-year journey, experience has shown CPS that AUSL turnaround strategies do 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.

In particular, AUSL turnarounds have produced the following:

• At Sherman School of Excellence, CPS and AUSL’s first turnaround effort in 2006, only 28 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards when AUSL first took over. In 2009 over 50 percent of students met or exceeded state standards, thanks to great school leadership and a new school culture.

• At Harvard School of Excellence, another Area 14 elementary school, only 30 percent of students were meeting state standards on the ISAT before the turnaround. Today, 56 percent of students are meeting state standards.

• At Howe School of Excellence, the AUSL turnaround increased student performance by 8 percent on the ISAT test in one year.

• While AUSL’s most recent CPS turnarounds at Dulles, Bethune and Johnson Schools of Excellence have existed for less than a year and therefore have no comparative student test data, other indicators such as student attendance, community and parent involvement, suggest that the schools have improved. At all three schools student attendance for this school year is higher than for the same
period last year. The communities and parents are engaged in the schools and they are enthusiastically supportive of the turnaround effort. Both of these factors are essential for improved student academic achievement.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need to accelerate student achievement at Charles S. Deneen Elementary School. The community and the students deserve better. Prior supports and interventions at Deneen have not produced satisfactory results. The Chief Executive Officer believes that a turn-around by reconstitution will accelerate student achievement and we owe it to the Deneen students to implement this strategy.”

Freddrenna Lyle Alderman 6th Ward

Alderman Lyle testified as follows: “I'm the alderman of the 6th Ward where Deneen Elementary School is located. I'm also a proud product of the Chicago Public Schools. I've lived within walking distance of Deneen for most of my life and have watched the school grow. In fact, for many, many years, we lobbied to get that wonderful new addition that's currently at Deneen.

We are in agreement that we want what is best for the children at Deneen. That is probably the only thing that's been said here today that we certainly agree with. We all want it. The parents want it. The community wants it, and I believe with every fiber of my being that every teacher in that school wants it.

I also know that the Board has implemented certain processes and procedures that they find to be very logical, and it seems like that they instituted them to get to an end result, and some of the people can follow in looking at it from a distance. For instance, the process -- as you list out on the PowerPoint, the process of how schools fall into the category of becoming reconstitution eligible is rather logical except when you get to the value-added metric which accounts for, I think, 20 some percent of the score because there's no data that has been produced that showed that value-added metric has been proven to be an effective indicator of student attainment. In fact, the Board's own web site indicates that there are -- that this is to be used clearly as a statistical estimation and cannot account for all external factors and that there should be some competence intervals that are there so that information can be interpreted with caution.

So we see where you're going when you say that these schools are poorly performing and certainly you have data that justifies that, but the value-added metric talks about these students are being compared to students and learning across the District. I don't know what that means in terms of across the District. I don't know if you're throwing in selective enrollment schools in your selections. Even when you say that you -- that your analysis is done comparing these controlling factors of grade level, prior performance on ISAT, free and reduced lunch eligibility, mobility, participation in the Homeless Education Program, Individualized Education Plan or IEP, English Language Learner status, and gender. In that analysis, in that statement of all those things that are going to be considered in determining whether or not these students did well or did poorly, whether the school should be thrown under the bus, nowhere in there does it say we're
comparing schools with 36 to 39 children in the classroom.

So when I hear people get up and they talk about, well, we went out there 92 times and we talked to the teachers and we gave them some more homework assignments and we talked to the principals and we taught them how to be better principals, it's like saying to someone who is drowning, we're going to teach you how to tread water more effectively as opposed to pulling them out of the water. How can you -- how can you get gains that everybody else is getting when those classes have 25 and 26 and 27 children. It could not have been a secret that there are classrooms at Deneen that have 38 children in that classroom vying for that teacher's time. Somebody knew that down here. So if you wanted to help, you would have went out there and you would have come up with another teacher or you would have found another school or you would have made some accommodation to reduce the class size when we have -- most of the classes from four to eight have 36 to 39 children. Then you say, oh, by the way, they're not doing well. Duh? Your web site.

All of the learning, all of the materials, and all of the papers on educational attainment talk about class size. So we knew that. People in this building knew that. So I find it disingenuous now when they come out and say, yeah, we've been ignoring the fact that you have too many kids in the class. We're going to totally ignore that for the purposes of this discussion and say because you failed.

So we see how you come up with these regulations about who falls on the list and -- the next area that people in the community don't understand is once you get on the list, there are a lot of schools on the list. How do you get to be the school that's chosen to be thrown under the bus? People don't understand that because that we can't find anywhere on the Board's policy list.

We know that Deneen had been making some progress. Maybe it wasn't as well as the progress made over on the northwest side of Chicago and some communities that are not similarly situated, but they have been making progress. We do know that they competed to get in the TAP program that was designed to cure some of these deficiencies. They, in fact, did win the grant to be a TAP school. In fact, they had only had one semester when the Board comes in and says, oh, sorry, we're not going to give you a chance to see if it works because we're going to stop you now. Then we're going to be nice enough to see if we can give TAP to the next people we're going to bring in.

After I got here Thursday, I heard talk about the AUSL. They have a wonderful program, and our program would be wonderful, too, if we could have the resources to bring into the building. Our school would be wonderful, too. Our program would be wonderful, too. We need to stop playing these games and people acting like we are comparing apples and apples because we're not. They're going to come in and get additional resources that this principal did not have at this school for these children, and that I fault this party for.

They quote the statute ILCS 5/34-8.3. All of those things that are in the statute in terms of what we should do have no bearing upon whether or not we did not do anything to
address the class size because the academic failure is directly attributable to -- one of the things is attributed to the class size, and the Board did do that. So they did not do everything that they could to assist this school when it was on probation for them to come in now and want to reconstitute them. Again, I think it is very, very unfair and unjust.

Finally, when we look at why this school was selected as opposed to some other schools that are in Area 14 and in these other areas and we have all of the scores, the Scantrons scores, and we looked at the list to see where we are and where they are, some of the people were saying -- some of the parents were saying, they just want this building because we have this brand new building. It looks good. It has a new addition. They just want to give it to these new folks. I said, oh, no, that's not the way the Board of Education operates. I said, no, that certainly could not be the way the Board operates. Besides, AUSL was not a charter. They give the buildings to charters. But AUSL is not a charter. Again, I said this on Thursday, and I said it today. The responsibility of this body is to educate all of the children. It's our responsibility under the Constitution to provide free education. It is totally counterproductive, it's totally disingenuous for this body to continue down this path of outsourcing education and this -- the turnaround process is just another example of outsourcing education and removing from ourselves responsibility to do that which we are mandated by law to do, and that's educate every child that walks in the door. That's what we're suppose to be doing. Instead, we want to piece this off to you and you do that and then we don't have to worry about that school.

So I'm here to oppose Deneen's closing, and just like I was here to oppose Gillespie's closing. The principal is going to stand here, and she'll give you specifically all of the wonderful things that they have done, and all of the changes that they already implemented before we decide -- we, as the Board, decided to go in and pull the rug from up under them which leads back to the question about why these schools, why Deneen? They have already done the things that we're asking them to do.

The AUSL programs runs on this New Leaders concept. Our principal came out of the New Leaders program. So why Deneen? I think that's what the parents walk away wondering, and I know no one can successfully answer. All the rhetoric and all the metrics and all the comparisons still don't answer that fundamental question. Why when these people were making progress, when this school was on the upward train do we come in and say, oh, no, sorry, not fast enough? And when we knew those things that we could have done as a Board to make it faster and failed to do that.”

Joyce Lockhart Fisher Principal

The Principal set forth the position of the school, and testified as follows: “Let me start off by saying that I, too, oppose the turnaround of Deneen Elementary School. I have been the contract principal, Mr. Hearing Officer, since July 2007. I'd like to give you a more focused view of Charles S. Deneen.

In 2007, academic data for NCLB indicated that students were performing at the 45th percentile in reading, the 48th percentile in math, and the attendance rate was 89 percent.
Deneen was utilizing textbooks for reading, writing, and social studies. Deneen also bolstered two partnerships, Junior Achievement and DARE. After analyzing what we knew, the administration and the leadership began the task of implementing the following turnaround framework.

No. 1, we adopted the curriculum that – the curriculum changed by the area to Balanced Literacy which instructs children at their individual levels whether they are below their grade placement or above their grade placement.

We standardized our recruitment and our hiring process by implementing a three-step interview process.

We supported the inquiry-based math and science curriculum with extended-day opportunities for professional development and in-house differentiated professional development for staff.

We developed a teaching schedule that reduced the number of teachers our middle school students saw in one day and facilitated a common planning time which as we know is critical to improve instruction. Teachers need the opportunity in order to sit together, look at student work, analyze data.

We established a leadership team that focused on a collaborative voice, teacher, and staff representation. Our first leadership team meeting retreat was held in August of 2007, just a month and a half after I became the contract principal. Strategic development of teacher knowledge and skills was implemented through a staff retreat. That, again, was held that first August 2007.

We began focused professional development in the area of literacy with our area, summer learning opportunities, our CNCT partnership, and our extended-day opportunities. We had site visits to our partnership schools, and we had opportunities for teachers to attend Teachers College in New York. We partnered with the University of Chicago IBHS program which supported principals and teachers in the area of math which, by the way, wrote our curriculum. We focused on increasing technology. We have 16 computer stations in our library, two computer carts, and 15 laptops. We had a development of additional partnerships to address physical renovations, student and social needs.

We also implemented a national behavior support system, PBIS, to instill a safe and respectful climate. And from that, we got our motto which is pride, respect, and responsibility.

The results of these interventions were an increase in reading and math AYP percentages as stated on the NCLB document from the CPS web site of 53 percent.

In 2008, my second year, our second year in the midst of our turnaround, Deneen intensified their professional development to include embedded professional development within the day. We hired a consult to look at literacy and writing. Our literacy group,
they focused on the specific needs of Deneen by having teachers be involved in a lab site where they actually go in and observe their colleagues. Our partnerships increased, the coaching support from the University of Chicago from just math to math and science. It also began to develop professional learning communities to study groups and study topics. We increased our number of teachers that attended the Teachers College in New York with the explicit purpose of them becoming teacher leaders. We extended our departmental division through 4th grade, and that was in response to what we saw as a need to increase our math and our science scores. We increased technology with LCD projectors in all of our middle schools. We improved our in-house observation and evaluation tool for teachers, making it specific. We worked specifically with the University of Chicago's U/STEP program which has -- which placed the student teachers within the building. It gives us a ready pool of teachers for hiring. We sought and were granted five additional partnership grants that directly affected student and social academic needs. We sought and were accepted out of 47 schools to become a part of the TAP, the Teacher Advancement Program. The Teacher Advancement Program was voted on unanimously by our teachers for the one specific purpose.

We did not see enough gains, and we knew we needed a program to push our teaching so that our children could achieve. The results from this was an overall percentage rating of 53 reading which we were very surprised by, and that particular percentage we felt had -- was impacted by our 5th grade who for reasons that we have yet to figure out, that anomaly where our 5th graders dropped 30 percentage points. They came into 5th grade at 46 percent. They left 5th grade at 11th percent. That's almost not possible. So we have no idea what happened there. Had our students just maintained, we would have saw even more gains. We were disappointed with our science grade, but I need to take you into Deneen last year. In our 7th grade, we had three homerooms, math, science, and literacy. And for the majority of our year, we had three teachers on leave. We had a revolving door of substitutes, and it greatly impacted our math and our science scores.

It's 2009, and let me tell you where we are currently. Currently, we are supporting student academic achievement through Read 180. We have instituted advisory classes for our 6th through 8th grade. Those classes are taught by myself, the assistant principal, Mr. Klee, and our counselor. We have instituted a writing class which is in direct relationship to the writing scores of our students in 6th grade.

The results to this day have indicated that within Area 14 Deneen ranked within the top ten of performance for schools. Our current Scantron results indicated there's growth from fall to our present scores. Our discipline has dropped 156 percent. We are on track at 94 or 95 percent targeted attendance.

So I offer to you, Mr. Hearing Officer, that Deneen is in the midst of their turnaround. They're two years within the midst of their turnaround. And despite -- and we're in the midst of this despite what our performance indicators suggest. We're in the midst of it despite decrease in teaching positions. We're in the midst of this in spite of being a feeder school that begins in our 7th grade. We are in the midst of our turnaround in spite of what happened last year.
I agree with Alderman Lyle that I'm sure the AUSL can do wonderful things. In fact, I know they can do wonderful things. Of the 11 AUSL schools, six of them are led by principals that went through the New Leaders For New Schools Preparation. I know because I went through that same preparation program. Our framework is very similar to what AUSL has. We're on our way to turnaround. So I have just one last question. When Deneen, not if Deneen, makes their school plan goals in June, what will you state to the teachers that today you've called inadequate? What will you say to the students that have suffered for five months wondering what's going to happen next year when they are already in the midst of a turnaround?"

William Klee
Assistant Principal

Mr. Klee testified as follows: “I'm the assistant principal at Deneen Elementary School, and I too oppose the turnaround of the Deneen Elementary School. I will be addressing you this evening on three topics. First, the culture and climate that we've established at Deneen. Second, the various interventions that have been put in place by this administration and leadership team. Third, I will present the data that shows that our interventions are working. These interventions are outlined in the binder that we submitted on Tab 3.

The culture and climate that we have established at Deneen will be best described by our motto of pride, respect, and responsibility. I'm confident in saying that you can stop any of our students at Deneen and ask them what our motto is, and they will be able to tell you pride, respect, and responsibility. This can be attributed to the positive behavior incentive system, PBIS, that has been implemented at Deneen. This intervention has created an environment that is conducive to learning. By no means am I saying that PBIS alone is the answer to our success. But, Mr. Hearing Officer and community members, it is the implementation that has been a success despite the fact that 50 percent of our staff has only four or less years of experience. The ability of our staff to work cohesively toward that collective role is a success. It's the hard work and consistency of our students, security officers, staff, teachers, parents, administrators working to create an environment of learning and of pride, respect, and responsibility. It is this culture of -- it is this culture and climate that we've worked so hard to establish and are still working to perfect, programs like PBIS celebrations, student of the month, PRI celebrations that you'll hear about a little bit later. We address the roots of the behavior and give the students the opportunity to take responsibility for their own behavior.

It is our culture and climate that allows implementation of academic supports like the Chicago Teacher Advancement Program. TAP has a competitive application process which Deneen was chosen out of 47 schools to be a part of. TAP gives the support of human capital in the form of lead teachers and mentor teachers to improve our educational practice. TAP is a proven national reform model. The Wildcat Honor Academy which was in place this year was designed to move students from meeting standards to exceeding standards. Reading 180, the remediation intervention, to support students who are two years or more below level. Advisory class, writing class, this is an
extra class that is given to 6th through 8th grade students as a prep class in addition to the instruction in writing that they are already receiving during the language arts course.

It is this culture and climate that allows us to bring in outside partners to expand our programming opportunities. Chicago Cares, for example, Chicago Cares is a volunteer organization. It has partnered with us to provide the students programming and a capital building program both of which have a competitive grant process. The student program it gives us is – our students have the opportunity to experience four programs on Saturdays, like homework help and students on stage, and three other programs during the week, two of which are geared towards students and one which is geared towards adult learners. Chicago Cares made it possible to extend the opportunity for students to continue learning on the weekend with student center programs. Our next initiative is to encourage our parents to take part in the Dell computer class to assist them with their computer learning needs. These programs are helping us to achieve our mission of being a true community school.

The Chicago Cares capital building grant assisted us with beautifying projects in our building estimating about $25,000 only in materials. Chicago Public Schools built an addition prior to -- in the previous administration of the 2006 and 2007 school year. It’s a million-dollar addition to our building with a library, cafeteria, administrative offices, and three classrooms. It was unfortunate that the existing building that was really in need was not touched, but it was our partnership with Chicago Cares and the hundreds of volunteers they recruited as well as the volunteers of our student body, our staff, and community members worked to paint the halls, lockers, classrooms, paint signs, and paintings that hang in our hallways and outside our building.

The programs like the 21st Century, ETH, Chicago Urban League, dancing, and so forth, they are all in line with TAP, Mr. Hearing Officer, all of these interventions are only their first year and second year of implementation. Now, I know that our District is moving towards data-driven results. So let me go on record by just citing the following facts. Attendance is up and on track to 95 percent. Suspensions are down 156 percent. And out Scantron 2 benchmark -- Deneen is well on its way to turnaround. The structures that are in place at Deneen are very similar to the structures that AUSL will be implementing and will have the same results. I can speak with confidence that in comparison because I have had the experience of creating and implementing the same structure as an assistant principal for Chicago Academy High School, an AUSL School, and I have worked under the mentorship of Brian Simms, the CAO of all AUSL high schools. So I have no doubt that if Deneen is given the opportunity, we will produce the results that will beat and surpass CPS expectations, and most importantly produce students who will be able to compete for both educational and occupational opportunities.”

Marilyn Stewart

CTU President

CTU President Stewart believes that CPS is wrong to continue turning around schools that are in the process of turning around. She testified as follows: “I'm President of the Chicago Teachers’ Union. I was taking some more notes. One of the things that they
have mentioned about Deneen is that Deneen is part of Cohort 3 of the TAP program, Teacher Advancement Program. In the Cohort 3, there were 12 schools that were selected. Deneen and Gillespie are the ones that started this year -- I mean started in September of 2009.

We have the MOU, memorandum of understanding, of the TAP program. The TAP program has guidelines. There's a real -- it's joint council made up of 12 people. They are CTU members and CPS members. Mary McGuire is one of the officers who met with the TAP meeting today. There's criteria in the MOU that has guidelines. This school self-selected themselves for improvement in 2008. They were selected by the counsel. Some schools applied to be a part of the TAP program, and they were not selected. There's schools that were on the TAP program that were removed because they were not doing something, and the TAP council made up of these people said you cannot be a part of the TAP program. The TAP program also has to have buy-in from the teachers. It was not something that would be done by two people. 75 percent of the staff had to agree to be a part of the TAP program. There's a criteria for selection, there's a criteria for removal, and there's a criteria for support.

In 2007, the District got a grant from the federal government of $27.5 million to do this grant. For them to take this school out of this process where they just started, they are turning around as we speak. I don't know how many Board members have been out there. I drive by Deneen regularly, and I watched them build a new addition to that school. Today I drove by there, and I saw a sign saying save our school. It's complete arrogance on the part of CPS to continue this sham of turning around schools that are in the process of turning around.

You can listen to these stories. These are -- we're not putting kids on an assembly line and painting them all blue or painting chairs red. These are relationships that will be negatively affected by what they do.

I have a list of all the TAP schools. There were 29. The District's goal was to have 40 schools. They have 29 in the process starting from -- we already selected schools that are going to be in the 2010-2011 TAP model. So why would you mess with a process that already has guidelines? I'm going to submit to you the definition of the TAP -- the definition of the TAP program. The District was -- they applied for this grant, and they're going to apply next year to continue this. So for the District to mess with a program that is data driven, to mess with a program that already has a council of CPS and Union people and public education fund members as part of this process is absolutely beyond my belief.

I absolutely implore you to reconsider any school that has a TAP on it. I think since 2004 I've said time and time again what they are doing to turnaround, consolidate, phase out, whatever, it's wrong. CPS needs to stop it. You see all these people out here. They can be doing other things, but they're coming out in droves on Saturdays and after school and after work and come out to plead with the Board of Education not to do this. This is the
first time I'm pleased to see Board members here. They weren't here before. So I think you need to hear what's going on. It's a sham.”

Antinell Robinson Parent/Teacher

Ms. Robinson believes that Deneen School is a family community, and that turnarounds are harmful to the students because of the relationships they have developed with their teachers.

Kahalia Porter Parent

Ms. Porter does not want Deneen School to change, or to loose the teachers that she is familiar with.

Patricia Jackson Parent

She is opposed to Deneen School being a Turnaround school. She believes that CPS should provide support to the teachers not replace them.

Kamara McGee Teacher

She is the school disciplinarian and has seen a marked improvement since the school adopted the PBIS and PRR programs. The school has reduced lost time due to suspensions. There has been improvement at the school and they are addressing their areas that need improvement.

Student A 3rd Grade

Student A stated that the teachers want the students to succeed and they are working hard to accomplish that goal. She does not want other teachers to get credit for the work the current teachers have started.

Student B 5th Grade

Student B stated that she would be very upset if the school was turned around. They have wonderful teachers and programs at the school. She cares about her teachers.

Student C 5th Grade

Student C stated that she is comfortable with the teachers they currently have at Deneen and that she would prefer to keep them. They have graduates who are successful high school and college students so the teachers are doing something right.
Student D  

5th Grade

Student D is opposed to the turnaround proposal. The teachers have ideas on how to get the scores up, and should be given the opportunity to do so.

Mary McGuire  

CTU

She is very involved with the TAP Program, and believes that it does not make economic sense to take a program that is being successfully implemented at this school this school year, without an opportunity to for testing to see the early results, and then replace the entire staff that has implemented the program. The school realized they needed to turn themselves around which is why the school, with the approval of the teachers, applied for the TAP Program.

Yolanda Mann  

Teacher

She is the Lead Teacher for the TAP Program at Deneen. She feels that a reform model is in place. She spoke about the benefits of the Tap Program, and requested that the school be given more time to reap the benefits of the hard work that has been done there.

Covette Hamilton  

Teacher

She testified that Deneen has in fact seen the benefits, in measurable terms, of the programs it has implemented this school year. The Steps Literacy Assessment shows that the students are currently making significant gains. They are exceeding the expected goals. The school is on the right track, but they need more time.

Odessa Jefferson  

Teacher

There have been numerous changes in the school’s administration over the years at Deneen, which has adversely impacted student achievement. They finally have a good team in place and need additional time. CPS should wait for the test results of the initiatives in place at Deneen before taking the proposed action.

Rita Jean Gramm  

Teacher

She presented data on the current school year which demonstrate that the school is on the right track.

Student E  

3rd Grade

This student indicated that she wants the teachers to remain because they have helped her tremendously. The after school programs at Deneen are enjoyable.
Student F  
7th Grade

The student attends the advanced program at Lindbloom. She feels that the teachers are loving, and she wants her younger siblings to be able to be taught by them.

Student G  
7th Grade

The student attends the advanced program at Kenwood. She believes that the teachers care about the students, and feels that she has grown academically and socially because of them.

Dameron Smith  
Parent

The problem is not the teachers, it is the parents that are the root cause of low student performance in her opinion. She believes that the teachers at Deneen are performing well.

Valerie Davis  
Teacher

Ms. Davis stated that she has attended many professional development programs as a result of the efforts of the current school administration. She believes that the school is headed in the right direction, and has seen tangible improvements at Deneen.

Steve Johnson  
Parent

He is a hard-working parent who does not want to have to deal with the turnaround issue. He does not understand it, and does not want it.

Dallas Lee  
Teacher

Mr. Lee testified as follows: “In the summer of 2009 when searching for a school to plant my teaching seed, I looked for a school that was selective and reflective of this process. Deneen matched those qualifications. I went through a three-round interview process, the first being a telephone conversation just to discuss my interest in teaching at the school; second, an actual face-to-face interview with both Principals Fisher and Klee and there was a conversation that reflected upon pedagogy, management, and curriculum; and, lastly, I actually was observed teaching a class which I was never asked to be done by anyone. I take this personally in that those children who scored low in the 5th grade are my children now. And just come watch them.”
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 advising of the hearing sent to the school communities including the Principals, LSCs, parents, and teachers and staffs, and an affidavit regarding the same; 2) copies of the notifications published in the newspaper; 3) the Board’s Policies on Performance; 4) the Procedures for the Hearing; 5) a copy of the relevant statutory provisions; 6) the ISBE 2008 & 2009 School Report Cards; 7) 2008 and 2009 Notice Letters to the school concerning its performance policy status; and 8) the CPS witnesses’ written testimony and related Power Point presentation.

Documents Submitted In Opposition To The Closing

Several documents were submitted to the hearing officer that were received and made a part of the record in this case. Those documents included: 1) A comprehensive, and very impressive notebook containing background on the school, their school data, information about their programs and student achievements, a petition signed by several people opposed to turnaround at Deneen, and several letters from students and parents opposed to turnaround at Deneen; 2) Witness statement of Dr. Kugler indicating that the entire turnaround/school closing process is disruptive to the education of the students; 3) multiple letters from teachers opposed to turnaround at Deneen; 4) statistical data concerning AUSL run elementary schools; 5) letters from the lunchroom staff; and 6) a folder submitted by the CTU containing, among other items, details concerning the TAP

1 The documentary evidence received at, and following the Public Hearing, in large part mirrored the testimonial evidence presented. Accordingly, said submissions are described generally herein, and the Hearing Officer has submitted said materials to the CPS Law Department for inclusion in the record in this case.
Program currently being implemented at Deneen, a copy of the MOU between CPS and CTU concerning the program, and information regarding prior turnaround schools.

**STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

1. Proper notice of the Public Hearing was given as required by Illinois law and the Procedures for Hearings on Proposed School Closings, Consolidations, Attendance Area Boundary Changes or Reconstitution. 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 Deneen Elementary School via Reconstitution.

2. On Monday, February 8, 2010, 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 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. Charles S. Deneen Elementary is located at 7240 South Wabash Chicago, IL 60619.

5. If approved by the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, the following would occur as a result of the reconstitution of Deneen Elementary School: All students currently enrolled in Deneen or eligible to enroll in Deneen this coming fall would continue as students at the school; All staff including the faculty would be removed and replaced; Deneen and its new administration and staff would be supported by the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL). Deneen currently participates in the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), a federal grant, which provides incentive payments to teachers. Should the Board approve the proposal, CPS will work with AUSL to facilitate the potential continued collaboration with TAP.

6. None of the “Exclusion Factors” that would prohibit Deneen from being eligible to be a turnaround school in a manner that is consistent with State Law, and the Board’s applicable Policies and Guidelines adopted pursuant thereto, are applicable here.

7. In December 2009, the CEO published criteria for identifying low performing schools as candidates to be closed for academic reasons. Schools that earned less than 33.3% of the total available points on the CPS Performance Policy for two consecutive years were eligible to be turnaround via reconstitution. Deneen received 26.2% of available points on the Performance Policy in 2007-2008 and 19.0% of available points in 2008-2009.

2 Whether AUSL will ultimately be the organization to turnaround this school was not the subject of this hearing.
8. ISAT performance is used as a part of the elementary school scoring in the CPS Performance Policy. Deneen’s 2008-2009 performance on the ISAT composite, which is the combined result of the ISAT reading, mathematics, and science assessments, was 46.5%, compared to a District average of 69.8%. In reading, the percentage of Deneen students meeting or exceeding state standards was 50.9%, compared to a district average of 67.8%. In mathematics Deneen’s performance was 48.4%, compared to a District average of 73.6%. In science Deneen’s performance was 28.6%, compared to a District average of 64.3%.

9. The gap between Deneen and the District has been persistent over time, and in recent years has been widening. After the 2005-2006 school year, when the District as a whole, including Deneen, showed large improvements in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards, the District has continued to improve, from 61.8% in 2005-2006 on the ISAT composite to 69.8% in 2008-2009, an increase of 8 percentage points. Over this same period, the ISAT composite scores of Deneen have stayed largely flat, going from 45.4% to 46.5%, an increase of 1.1 percentage points.

10. The widening of the performance gap between Deneen and the District is consistent across subjects. In reading, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding at Deneen increased from 45.6% in 2005-2006 to 50.9% in 2008-2009, an improvement of 5.3 percentage points. Over that same time period, the CPS average increased from 59.1% to 67.8%, an increase of 8.7 percentage points. In mathematics, Deneen went from 46.4% in 2005-2006 to 48.4% in 2008-2009, an increase of 2 percentage points. Over that same time period, the CPS average increased from 64% to 73.6%, an increase of 9.6 percentage points. In science, Deneen declined from 42.4% in 2005-2006 to 28.6% in
2008-2009, a decrease of 13.8 percentage points. Over that same time period, the CPS average increased from 63.3% to 64.3%, an increase of 1 percentage point.

11. Starting in 2008, CPS began using a new metric to measure student growth from year to year on the ISAT. This metric, called the Value-Added metric, which is a component of the CPS Performance Policy, compares student academic growth at a school with the growth of similar students across the District. This is done through a regression methodology that controls for eight student-level factors, including grade level, prior performance on the ISAT, free or reduced lunch eligibility, mobility, participation in the Homeless Education Program, Individualized Education Plan (or IEP), English Language Learner status, and gender. The value-added metric is measured in ISAT scale score points. 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. A negative score means that students at the school are growing at a lesser pace than similar students in the District. Deneen’s 2009 reading Value-Added score was -0.4 and its mathematics Value-Added score was -1.2. This means that on average between 2008 and 2009, students at Deneen grew 0.4 ISAT scale score points less in reading and 1.2 ISAT scale score points less in mathematics than similar students in the District. While Deneen’s reading score means that students at the school grew at about the same pace as similar students throughout the District, Deneen’s math score was in the bottom 35% of scores District-wide. Taken together with the widening of the performance gap between Deneen and the District on ISAT, these value-added scores show that Deneen is not making progress in catching up to the District.
12. In addition to standardized test scores, the CPS Performance Policy evaluates schools on attendance rate. The attendance rate for Deneen has been consistently lower than the District average. In 2008-2009, Deneen’s attendance rate was 91.4%, which was in the bottom 15% of attendance rates for elementary schools in the District. The District average for elementary schools has been above 94% since the 2004-2005 school year and was 94.5% in 2008-2009. This low performance has taken place at despite efforts by the CPS Area 14 Office to provide the school with assistance, as follows:

- During the 2008-2009 school year Area 14 instructional coaches conducted more than three dozen Math, Science and Literacy professional development sessions at the school and Area office;
- At least twenty site visits were made by the Area 14 team to address concerns around students at risk and attendance;
- Twenty-four Area intervention calls from parents and teachers were accepted and followed up on in support of Deneen;
- Last year a triage team of four literacy instructional coaches was assigned to Deneen full-time for an entire week to ensure that upper grade students received testing necessary to implement the Balanced Literacy framework;
- The CAO participated in instructional learning walkthroughs with the principal and leadership team as well as goal setting conversations over a two year period;
- For the 2009-2010 school year members of the Area 14 staff have made at least 10 site visits to Deneen for grade level and cluster meetings, data analysis meetings and other performance management follow-up items.

13. In spite of the additional measures afforded to the staff at Deneen School, students have continued to perform below standards set by both the State of Illinois and the Chicago Public School system as a whole.

applicable to the CEO’s proposed action in this case have been complied with in their entirety, specifically including, but not limited to the School Performance Policy for the 2009-2010 school year.

**Recommendation**

The Hearing Officer hereby recommends that the Board approve the CEO’s proposal to Reconstitute Deneen Elementary School.³

FURTHER THE HEARING OFFICER SAYETH NOT.

Respectfully submitted,

Fredrick H. Bates
Hearing Officer

February 10, 2010

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³ There is nothing in the state law, or the Board’s Policies or Guidelines, that requires a lower performing school to be acted upon first. If a school is on probation for two consecutive years, without any of the exclusions being applicable, it is subject to being a Turnaround school, or closed.