CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FY-16 BUDGET PROPOSAL
PUBLIC HEARING
August 18, 2015

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had in
the above-mentioned matter commencing at
6:09 o'clock p.m., held at 1900 West Van Buren,
Malcolm X College, Chicago, Illinois,
MS. LESLIE FOWLER, moderating.

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP PRESENT:
MS. LESLIE FOWLER, Moderator
MR. JESSE RUIZ, Vice President
MS. MARY DeRUNTZ, Capital Plan
MS. ANNETTE GURLEY, Chief Officer, Office
   of Teaching and Learning
MR. RANDEL JOSSERAND, Network Chief
MS. GINGER OSTRO, Chief Financial Officer
MR. LUIS SORIA, Network Chief
MS. MEGAN WILSON, Transportation
MS. MARKAY WINSTON, Diverse Learners

Reported by: Anna M. Morales, CSR, RMR
License No.: 084-002854
MODERATOR FOWLER: Good evening. My name is Leslie Fowler. I'm your moderator for this evening.

Welcome to the Chicago Public Schools Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Hearing, and thank you for coming to provide your input for the district.

We are joined today by members of the Board of Education. Our Board Member will be Jesse Ruiz. He is running a little behind, but he will be here for your comments and to make a comment back to you.

We have CPS senior leadership, subject matter experts in transportation facilities, diverse learners, and the budget. This meeting is an opportunity for Chicago Public Schools to hear your ideas, priorities, and concerns about the budget. The Board is scheduled to vote on August 26th on the budget proposal we are presenting tonight.

We have Spanish language translators available. If you are in need, please acknowledge
that when you come to the mic. We also have sign
language interpreters.

Many of you have signed up to ask
questions already and we want to get to know -- get
you as quickly as -- get to you as quickly as
possible. If those slots are full, please fill out
a card, and one of the four monitors will get it
from you and we will follow up to all questions on
our Web site. Some of you will also have detailed
questions that we might not be able to answer	onight, but we will post all the answers to your
questions on our Web site.

I want to go over a few guidelines for
this meeting before we give a very brief
presentation on the budget. The budget hearing
will begin at 6 p.m. and end promptly at 8 p.m.
All who sign up to speak will be given an
opportunity to make a statement of up to two
minutes until the meeting is adjourned. Speakers
are asked to limit their comments to two minutes so
that everyone who would like to speak will have the
opportunity to do so.

The sign-up period to speak was from 5 to
6 p.m., and each speaker was given a number. No
one will be able to sign up to speak after 6 p.m.
Speakers will be limited to addressing topics related to the budget as well as the capital plan.

   When multiple speakers from the same organization or school are listed, only one member per organization or school will be allowed to speak regarding the same issue. If the speaker has a follow-up question, we ask that you please speak to CPS staff members who will be on site to help you fill out a follow-up card.

   The full budget proposal is on the CPS Web site where you can also provide feedback or leave questions. CPS will respond to all questions on the Web site including any that we were unable to address at this meeting. You may visit http://cps@edu/budget.

   Let me introduce the members of our panel. Ginger Ostro, our CFO. Markay Winston from Diverse Learners. Mary DeRuntz, Capital Plan.
Megan Wilson, Transportation. Luis Soria and Randel Josserand, our Network Chiefs. We have Annette Gurley, Chief Officer of the Office of Teaching and Learning; and we have our timekeeper, Mr. Carl Hardin.
Now let me turn it over to Ginger Ostro, who will be providing a budget overview.

MS. OSTRO: Thank you very much. Thanks for coming out tonight to give your feedback and comments on CPS's proposed FY-16 budget.

We would like to provide very high level quick overview for you on some of the key components of the operating budget as well as the capital budget before we take your comments and questions.

Let me start with just a brief overview. This budget that we're presenting to you is in the context of CPS making great academic strides. We've seen increasing graduation rates, attendance rates, better performance on standardized tests, and more students enrolling in college. Yet all this progress is threatened because we've seen a decline in state funding and growing pension costs which are strangulating the district; and, therefore, we've had to create a budget that presents this harsh fiscal reality.

We continue to look to our partners in Springfield to help us, and we will talk about the ways that we want to partner with Springfield to
try and achieve fiscal stability.

In recent weeks, the Governor, the Senate President, and the House Speaker and others have all agreed that the funding system is inequitable as is the pension system and must be changed, and we want to share some of those highlights with you.

First, let's talk about state funding. This chart, the solid orange bars, shows you the amount of state funding we received each year since fiscal '08, and you can see that year over year since fiscal 2009, we've received less money each and every year from the state. This decline in state funding is one of the biggest challenges that we are facing.

But even more significant, in addition to the orange bars declining, are those light-shaded orange bars; and what that shows you is how much the state is falling short of funding its own statutory funding level. The state sets an amount that needs to be -- that should be funded but isn't even providing our funding. If you total up the amount that the CPS should have received, it's almost -- it's over $500 million since fiscal 2010. Think how important that funding could be to us if
we had had it now. You can also see that our funding would be almost level if we had received those dollars if the state had fully funded their formula.

This is one of the biggest challenges we face is that our revenues, our resources have been declining, and yet our expenses continue to increase, and the biggest expense that we face is pension costs. This purple chart shows you how much CPS has to contribute each year into the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund. CPS is the only school district in the state that is required to pay its own pension costs, and you can see how this has been increasing year after year. With declining state revenue and increasing pension costs, you can see how CPS is continuing to get squeezed and really the challenges of the budget.

But even beyond that, this chart really shows the pension funding inequity. While CPS is the only district in the state that has to pay its own pension costs, the State of Illinois pays the cost for all other school districts. In fact, it comes out to about $2,266 per student that the state provides to cover the cost of the retired
teachers' pensions. For CPS, we get $31 per student from the state.

When we talk about pension funding inequity, this is the graphic display of it, how different the amount the state gives us compared to how much they provide to the rest of the state. If you go back to that purple chart for a second, that turns out to be $1700 per student that CPS is spending, and we're getting only $31 from the state to cover our pension costs.

What's key is that we want to support the classroom as well as the pensions, and we can't do that if we don't have funding equity from the state and we don't get additional education funding by the state funding formula.

So in this budget, what we've included is $480 million, the large yellow wedge in funding equity from the state to cover our pension costs, because we don't want the chart to continue to look so unequal where the state is providing so much more money for every other district outside of Chicago. We believe that funding should be equitable, and that's why this budget relies on the $480 million coming from the state to provide
that equity. We don't have -- if we don't receive that, then the challenges are great. We'll have to engage in further unsustainable borrowing or potentially even additional cuts.

It's a very high level and quick overview of the operating budget; but another important part of the investments that we are making is in capital which is in our buildings, to help repair roofs and windows and masonry, to add annexes where we need to, but really essentially to invest in the physical structure of the classroom to make sure it's safe and warm and dry for all of our students.

Unfortunately, because of the budget challenges we're facing, the amount that we can spend on these capital investments has been declining. This budget includes only $178 million for capital investments this year, in this upcoming budget year. You can see that's dramatically lower than what we've been able to invest in prior years. And, in fact, if you look forward to the five-year plan that we outlined, we continue to have even less money to be able to invest in our building infrastructure.

So these are the key challenges that we're
facing: Growing pension costs, unequal funding, and pension funding from the state, declining state resources, and the pressures and the challenges that it continues to put on our budget. This is not the budget that we want to be presenting, but it does reflect the reality of the situation that we are seeing, caught in this vice grip between declining revenues and increasing bills.

(Vice President Ruiz arrives.)

MS. OSTRO: We are encouraged by what we see and comments from the leaders in Springfield about the need to provide funding equity and to address the challenges statewide that we see. All have agreed that the funding system is inequitable and that it needs to be addressed. And this is what we continue to focus on in the core component of the FY-16 budget.

I will stop there after this quick overview to thank you and let you know how much we do welcome your comments, and we have a panel here available to answer any questions that you have. As we highlighted up here as well, you can also leave comments on our Web site and we do review them and will provide responses to any questions or
comments that people have.

We also have -- let me introduce Jesse Ruiz, Vice President of our Board, who would like to make a few comments as well.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: Talk about cutting it close. Thank you, all. I've just arrived. Glad to be with you all and thanks for coming out here tonight sharing your thoughts on the budget.

It's helpful. We're going to have a Board meeting next Wednesday and vote on this budget, and so your input is important for the Board Members who do this and we do welcome your comments. We obviously are facing some fiscal challenges as you've just heard. We're doing our best to address those and try to preserve -- keep cuts away from the classroom; but without partners, our partners in Springfield, it's going to be very difficult to do.

So in addition to reaching out to us here, I continue to ask folks to reach out to your Representatives and Senators in Springfield and, please, tell them that it's important that they help us here in Chicago to close this gap this year and to continue to partner with us on the floor so
that we can achieve pension equity with all other school districts and to continue to serve, beef up the momentum, the great strides we've made in the Chicago Public Schools.

So, again, thank you for all being here. I look forward to listening to your comments this evening. If there's anything I can address while I'm here, I'll do my best to do so. Thanks.

MODERATOR FOWLER: We will now begin the public comment portion of the meeting. As a reminder, each speaker will have two minutes. There is a timekeeper who will notify you when you have 30 seconds left. When you have 5 seconds left, I will ask you to conclude.

When I call your name or Speaker Number, please line up at the microphone. I will call in groups of five. Let's begin with the first speakers. Speaker Number 1, Nathan Ryan; Speaker Number 2, Rolando Vazquez; Speaker Number 3, Dwayne Truss; Speaker Number 4, Jackson Potter; and Speaker Number 5, Javier Ruiz.

MR. RYAN: Hello. My name is Nathan Ryan. I am with the Grassroots Collaborative, a coalition of community organizations and labor unions
throughout Chicago.

A VOICE: Is the mic on?

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: I'm not sure if you're picking up. Is that microphone on?

MR. RYAN: As I said, my name is Nathan Ryan. I'm with the Grassroots Collaborative, a coalition of community organizations and labor unions throughout Chicago.

Yesterday I was at Dyett High School as 11 parents and community residents took a bold step of launching a hunger strike so that their neighborhood could have a quality public high school and to make sure that the plan the parents spent years putting together for the school is implemented.

I was struck by the determination of these parents to fight for their community and stand up against the powerful interests trying to cash out the future of Chicago's children for their own profit, something that this Board has been unwilling to do. Instead of siding with Chicago school children, CPS has consistently sided with the banks.

CPS has bought in more bad bank deals and
Wall Street image than anywhere else in the country at a cost of billions of dollars that should be going to fund neighborhood schools. And while other cities like Houston receive multi-million dollar settlements from taking the banks to court to get the money back, CPS did not. CPS missed a six-year window for arbitration despite Grassroots Collaborative repeatedly calling on you to get our money back, leaving hundreds of millions of dollars of our money with the bank, money that should be going to fund special education.

Instead, Chicago's unelected school board is choosing to cut special education, lay off educators, and decrease the quality of our children's education. Meanwhile, parents at this very moment are starving themselves outside Dyett High School so that their children can have a better future.

The difference in priorities couldn't be more clear. Our city deserves an elected school board that listens to the people --

MODERATOR FOWLER: Mr. Ryan, please conclude.

MR. RYAN: -- that will prioritize doing what is right for Chicago's children instead of what is
profitable for Wall Street and big banks.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you. Next speaker, Rolando Vazquez.

MR. VAZQUEZ: Vazquez. Good evening, everyone. My name is Rolando Vazquez. This is my daughter, Rita Vazquez.

Hello. Quick comment. I didn't plan on saying this for Ginger. Can I just kindly advise you against couching it as "the reality"? Those are your words -- that this is the reality we find ourselves in. And I kindly advise you to be careful with your framing or framing like that because the reality can be different. It can be different. I have a couple suggestions.

But let me start with a question. I think it's pretty straightforward is what is the Board doing specifically to get revenue coming into the state?

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: The Board is using all its taxing options possible. So we'll be voting to raise property taxes to the cap as we have every single year for the last four years. We don't control revenue at the state level. That's why we're asking our partners in Springfield to help us
with providing adequate and equitable funding
through the form of pension parity and, frankly,
increased funding. Our state funding -- you're
exactly right -- has gone down in Illinois. It's a
statewide problem, but we are suffering as a result
of that statewide problem which is unfortunate.

MR. VAZQUEZ: Would you support a progressive
income tax?

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: I've always --
personally, I support a progressive income tax. We
got to change the Illinois Constitution. I've
actually been involved on an individual level in
doing that. So, yes, if we can get a progressive
income tax in Illinois, I, for one, as an
individual -- we haven't taken the Board position
on that, but I personally am in favor of
progressive income tax, yes.

MR. VAZQUEZ: I encourage you to use your
influence on the Board to get the other
Board Members behind that.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: It's a constitutional
amendment. So I encourage all of us in Chicago to
move all our -- again, there was a effort on this
years ago and it went nowhere. We need a
progressive income tax in Illinois. We need to
expand our sales tax base. We're on an antiquated
sales tax base in Illinois. So there's all kinds
of additional revenues. We're talking about our --
and not to take up too much of your time -- but
talking about a pension problem just for CPS, the
state has large expensive problems as well. And so
they need the revenue as much as CPS needs the
revenue.

MR. VAZQUEZ: Thanks for that.

Last thing, under 10 seconds, I'd also
refrain from calling it a pension crisis. It's a
revenue crisis, and you just spoke to that. So
thanks.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you. Mr. Truss.

MR. TRUSS: Good evening. I like to start
these meetings out with if you keep telling a lie
over and over again, eventually for some people it
becomes the truth, and it seems like the CPS
administration is believing their own lies.

First of all, you know, this mess that
we're in right now wasn't caused by the state not
adequately funding pensions. It was caused by the
unelected school board doing things like opening up
more charter schools in communities like Austin
that got four schools closed down because of
underutilization, and here it is, we got a new
charter school opening up in Austin and a school
like Spencer suffering $539,000 worth of cuts, and
you're saying it's a state issue. No. I think the
issue is right there at 42 Madison Street.

The CPS -- the budget that CPS has
presented harms our most vulnerable children,
namely, students with disability and our lowest
income children in neighborhood schools.
75 schools have lost over 10 percent of their
budgets. The BGA reported that district schools
are projected to lose $146 million, an amount that
does not correspond to the loss of 4,000 students.
Somebody is doing some bad math downtown at
42 Madison Street.

We recognize that we need more revenues,
and one of the great places that you all have and I
haven't really heard you talk about is that
$1.44 billion that's sitting in TIF surplus funds
that could definitely help our schools right now
because we understand we need revenues. And also
the fact that what Ms. Ostro didn't present in
terms of state revenue loss is the fact of the
income tax rollback. That was one of the things
that harms us in terms of the issue being revenue,
but you keep blaming it on some type of thing that
the state came up with this system where it is
unfair and that's because of pension.

The last thing about that is the fact of
the pension wrap-up law that's got CPS having to
pay so much money this year to fund the pension
because for how long was it? Wasn't it ten years
when money wasn't paid into the pension? If you
don't pay money into the pension and you then open
up more charter schools, you're going to get what
you get --

MODERATOR FOWLER: Mr. Truss, please conclude.

MR. TRUSS: -- and I can't see how that's
adequate professional management of our schools,
and thank you very much for the opportunity.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: I want to say, I agree
with you. That's why we're making good on the
payments. None of that ten years was happening in
the last four years. I agree with you.

MR. TRUSS: It added up, though.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: It does, and that's why
we're paying the pension payment.

MR. TRUSS: I think you should mention that in the talking points versus saying the state is being unfair. Everybody knows that it's been like that for years.

MS. OSTRO: Thank you.

MR. TRUSS: -- suburban schools should have been on the pension to help out and maybe we can get some of their revenue back.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Mr. Potter.

MR. POTTER: Good evening. So I'm here not just because we need counselors in our schools, but I'm here to conduct an intervention. I think district officials -- Jesse, I like you. I think you need intervention and a counselor because you guys are in an abusive relationship with the banks. They rip off and steal and misrepresent the risks of things like option rate securities and toxic swaps, and that's the tip of the iceberg. We're not even talking about capital appreciation bonds where they charge 500 percent interest. We're not talking about lies and manipulation or all the other ways they trick and deceive the district.

And instead of speaking out against these
unconscionable cuts, you double down on this debt.
You don't speak out about the wealthy and powerful
pocketing these precious resources that should be
going to the most vulnerable students in our
system.

So while the banks are devouring our
school budget -- a glaring omission in the causes
of this crisis, I should add, Ginger -- to the tune
of $1.2 billion for the swaps alone, you know, you
guys just pulled out a line of credit for
250 million to $300 million to pay off the swap
termination fees, that is almost exactly the amount
you're cutting from school budgets right now, SPED
programs and in the neighborhood schools.

In the meantime, parents at Dyett have to
starve themselves in order to get -- while the
banks are gorging themselves, parents are starving
themselves for the basics.

So it's time for CPS to get on the path of
recovery. It's time to admit you have a problem,
get out of this abusive relationship, stand up to
the financial predators so that they don't feast on
our schools while our schools famine. It's high
time. I hope you'll do this.
Jesse, Ginger, maybe you can give us an update on where those negotiations stand. Are you extracting any concessions from the banks?

MODERATOR FOWLER: Please conclude.

MR. POTTER: Markay, maybe you can tell us a little bit about the SPED cuts and what does that mean for the average child that depends on those programs?

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Potter.

Mr. Ruiz?

MS. OSTRO: We can just quickly respond. We do continue to negotiate with the banks and anticipate in the August meeting that we will ask for specific authority in terms of bonding to pay for some of the termination payments. We will have more specifics later in the month.

Markay, did you want to make a couple comments?

MS. WINSTON: Just one comment, Mr. Potter. Relative to special education concerns that you represented, what we've looked at relatively across the Board is really dealing with a number of classroom paraprofessionals, and that's where you see some of the reductions. We're not touching any
of the individuals and we're not changing any programs. In fact, we're enhancing by adding additional programs for our preschool diverse learners. So that's where we stand relative to changes to our special education.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Mr. Ruiz.

MR. RUIZ: I want to say I graduated from CPS high school, so I know firsthand how the budget cuts affected me. We have money to build jails, but when it comes to investing and keeping youth out of jails, law makers want to act like they don't know nothing, you know.

I see this budget here in the TIF surplus, that should be like a big part of the pie chart right here. You know, you're not looking at the TIF funds, you know.

There's plans for a Noble charter school where I live on the south side. How can you guys consider building a charter school when our public schools that are existing already aren't getting adequate funding? I don't understand that, you know.

We're demanding an elected school board, so, Jesse, get ready for your campaign for
VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: I'll tell you, you know, we don't build charter schools. They have to bring their own facilities, and they get on the same per pupil basis. And the BGA story that somebody referenced today was, in fact, incorrect, and I think you didn't see it run in the Sun-Times because of that reason, that it was factually incorrect. It was comparing '15 budget and '16 budget numbers which didn't compare properly. Somebody talked to Sarah Carter and pointed out her error, and so it was a misleading story.

And so just so you know, we don't build those charter schools. And now --

MR. RUIZ: Approve the funding.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: We get to approve the funding, but the problem is that now there's a state charter commission -- please, listen. There's a state charter commission which happened to years ago. If we don't approve and act on those by law, under Illinois law, that they can go to the charter commission and, just like we did two years ago, and I forget the precise schools where we denied the charter and the charter commission gave
them the charter and then we have no authority over
that charter whatsoever and they end up getting
more money from CPS.
  So if we don't act on them by law, they
can circumvent us and go to the charter commission
and get their charter anyway. So if we denied
every single charter, you would still see more
charters. And, frankly, I was opposed to that law
when I was on the State Board of Education going
into effect about four, five years, about five, six
years ago because the State Board of Education was
the arbiter or the court of appeals when charters
were denied.
  Two came my way when I was there from the
suburbs, Grayslake and in Matteson, I believe.
Blondean Davis opened up a charter school out
there, a former chief education officer at CPS, and
that was it. Chicago had authority to do its own.
We've lost that authority under the state law.
MR. RUIZ: Well, I'm saying, though, work
harder. Like you said, you have no official
authority over it, but you could use your voice as
the Board of Education --
VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: I opposed the enacting of
the law in the first place. The General Assembly passed it. That's the law until it's changed.  
MR. RUIZ: Or until we get an elected school board.  
VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: An elected school board doesn't have anything to do with it. They would have no control over that either.  
MR. RUIZ: I know it doesn't, but it helps.  
VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: You could make that as well.  
MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you. Our next speakers, Speaker Number 6, Ms. Correa; Speaker Number 7, Mr. Cornejo; Speaker Number 8, Mr. Bell, Speaker Number 9, Ms. Alday; Speaker Number 10, I'm not sure I can read it, Naomi Ohiri.  
Ms. Correa.  
MS. CORREA: Buenas tardes. Good afternoon. (Through interpreter). First of all, I'm a mother who has been affected by these budget cuts. These are my children who come to the school, the school, who are my children. They come from the transportation from their school that is Jorge Prieto. It used to be just two minutes away from my home. Now they send them to one that takes
me 20 minutes. And my worry is now when the winter comes. I'm asking CPS what is happening with all these budget cuts? Where are our taxes? My worry is that I have a husband who works 12 hours a day and he pays taxes. And I'm a mother who is dedicated to the education of her children. Why? Because I don't want my children to have a life on the streets where the government has to invest more money in jails than education for my children.

What is going to happen with the children of the future? That's what I'm asking CPS. That's my worry, that I have to get up at 5:30, leave my home at 6:20 to take my children, and by that time, it is already the change of time so it's going to be dark.

We need a change and we need support for our brothers and sisters, Latinos and African-Americans. We don't want more closed schools. We want you to work. And I would like to support so that my children can take the bus close to their homes.

That's my big question. What are you going to do to solve these problems? We don't want our children on the streets. No more children at
McDonald's. No more children on the streets. They are the future and we need a solution now.

I would like to ask a question to the representatives from CPS. Would you like your child to walk 20 to 25 minutes in the cold?

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: Of course not. We try to do that, make sure that they have routes as close to possible to their homes. (Spanish language.)

MS. CORREA: (Spanish language).

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: (In Spanish.)

VOICES: Translate, please. In English.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: She's asking what happened to all our taxes, and I'm saying, unfortunately, the tax rate went down this past year so there are less funds. So, yes, we should all be paying more taxes. We all are going to be paying more taxes to help fund our schools. And we need that tax to be done in Springfield.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you. Next speaker.

Jaime Cornejo.

MR. CORNEJO: It's actually Jaime. Thank you very much. That's okay. I get that all the time.

Well, I had prepared something, but I
wanted to start off, first of all, I'm a youth mentor for the group Advanced Youth Leadership Power which is a part of Access Living, a disability advocacy organization in the City of Chicago.

And, quite frankly, I don't want to hear the words "expensive" or "in the way" anymore when it comes to special education because we, as advocates for AYLP, are quite disturbed and distraught by the proposed CPS budget cuts that will deeply affect special education and students with disabilities. Because without advocate support, how are our students with disabilities that are talented and intelligent supposed to achieve their goals, further their education or even have access to decent housing in the City of Chicago? And even further, how are they supposed to get employment as adults like myself with a disability?

I'm an adult, unemployed adult with a disability living in the City of Chicago. And with the 625 staff positions that will likely be cut from the special education budget in CPS, there's a lack of good investment in it. So I ask you all, I
ask the Board to invest in us and not divest in us.
We are worthy and we are 50,000 strong, 50,000
students with disabilities or more in the system,
and we deserve equitable education.

We need these systems -- we need these
support systems and services right now because we
cannot miss out on future opportunities. We're not
a nuisance in the system. We don't want to be
last. We want to be considered on the top list
right now. We deserve equal education because it's
our civil right as people with disabilities.

What will happen? Are we going to be sent
to jail again because --

MODERATOR FOWLER: Please conclude your
comments.

MR. CORNEJO: -- because of our disabilities?
We don't -- I'm against the school-to-prison
pipeline. We need to be over -- we need to be
overprepared. There needs to be more staff at the
beginning of the school year. Thank you very much.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thanks for your comments.

MS. WINSTON: Thank you for sharing your
comments from Access Living relative to students
with disabilities. When you comment about not
wanting us to perceive students with disability as
less than or nuance, nobody that I'm talking to has
that perception. What we are, in fact, trying to
do is we're trying to make sure that we're aligning
all of the supports and services that we're
delivering to the ISBE guidelines. I think all of
us are in agreement perhaps that ISBE guidelines
are the guidelines that we are required to follow.
And so as we're looking at our staffing ratios and
we're looking at the number of students in our
district, our efforts have truly been to make sure
that we're close in alignment with that.

We haven't been in alignment. We noticed
that we had a decline in students within our
Chicago Public Schools, and yet we continue to have
increases in our staffing. And so part of the
effort is, one, to make sure that we're closer
aligned with our class size ratios; but, at the
same time, we're not watering down or compromising
the quality of supports and services that we're
delivering.

So, like you, we want to make sure that
our students with disabilities are graduating. We
want to make sure they have opportunities to go to
college and that they have opportunities to be employed. Those are the same goals that we've had in the past and those are the same goals and priorities that we will maintain in the future.

MR. CORNEJO: Right, but why is it the reading levels of students with disabilities have decreased so that, therefore, makes it harder for them to achieve equal opportunity in terms of employment? And there's 30 percent of people with learning disabilities within CPS -- or 60 percent of people that have mental health issues that are going to, you know, our juvenile centers, and that can't keep happening.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Mr. Cornejo, your time is up. Thank you. Dion Bell.

MR. BELL: Hi. My name is Dion Bell from Communities United. I graduated from Roosevelt High School last school year. Just because I graduated doesn't mean I don't care about my school anymore. It's like a second home to me.

In the past two years, Roosevelt lost over $1.8 million. As a result, we lost a dozen teachers -- well, about a dozen teachers from classes and many other school programs. There were
not enough teachers to teach the classes that we had left. There were not enough books, so we had to share. Our books were ripped, torn, missing pages or completely outdated.

This year, Roosevelt lost $871,000. It lost 11 staff positions. This is on top of the $1.8 million we lost in the past two years. Everything will be worse this year. There will be less teachers, less classes, and less resources for our students.

I do not go to Roosevelt anymore, but that doesn't -- but I don't want to see a school that I spent the last four years of my life be ripped out because CPS couldn't get their act together. Thank you.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you. Speaker Number 9, Alday.

MS. ALDAY: (Through interpreter.) My name is Merced Alday, and I'm on Communities United. We're here because we are worried about the firing of special needs teachers. This is a problem. For example, at Roosevelt School, they fired four teachers of special needs -- four special needs teachers. These teachers are important to help
children to move forward. This way, the students
don't get stuck. Because if they don't receive
this help, these children are going to be
frustrated for the future.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you. Speaker
Number 10.

MS. OHIRI: Hi. My name is Naomi Ohiri. I'm
from the Jackie Vaughn School. I'm concerned for
this proposed budget. I just want you to know this
is the fall-out if you were to persist in going on
with these cuts.

We are about 208 total at our little
school. We were punished heavily. We lost 23
paraprofessional positions. We lost five teacher
positions. And now I understand we got some of
those back; but I want you to know every time you
make a cut, we lose a child.

We are a school of diverse learners. Each
one has their own inability, disability; and when
you can't address that individual's particular
need, you lose a child. We are a fall-out if you
keep continuing with this budget that you're going
to give to us. We can't survive off of that.
We're already reeling from the last cut you made.
We're already understaffed. Even our gymnastic
teacher doesn't -- he doesn't even have enough
people to help him take the kids either upstairs or
downstairs because we don't have the teachers, and
now you are taking away five of our teachers.

We want our teachers. We want our
paraprofessionals because if we don't have those
people, where do we go? We have -- you know, we
are hurting. Don't hurt us anymore. Please. We
need those positions. We need those
paraprofessionals. We need our teachers. And we
are a group, we are a strong LSC, and we want you
to know we are here. Don't do this to us, please.
I'm pleading to your humanity. Whom you cut, you
cut to the bone, and we are the bone, and we invest
in our kids.

And this is my child. I want her to be
able to fill out a job application. I want her to
be able to be a viable child. (Applause) -- a
citizenship in this world. Don't cut us off before
we have a chance to even see who she is. I invite
you to come to Vaughn and see who we are and see if
you are not turned around. No matter who you are,
we want you to come.
MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you.

MS. OHIRI: -- do not reduce our -- make us one person.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you.

MS. WINSTON: Thank you for your comments regarding Vaughn School. What I would just comment to you is I know very well what the situation is at Vaughn, and my staff and my deputy chief has, in fact, visited with your principal and met with your assistant principal and talked with your staff and, in fact, today attended the LSC meeting. So we have, in fact, been able to make some corrections to the budget situation at Vaughn relative to the data that was provided.

So note that that is very much a priority for us, and we enjoyed working collaboratively with the Vaughn leadership team to address those changes.

A VOICE: One teacher, 26 aides.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Our next speaker, Speaker Number 11, Betts, Speaker Number 12, Sosa.

MR. SOSA: Sosa.

MODERATOR FOWLER: I'm sorry. Speaker Number 13, Sheridan. Speaker 14, Taylor. And
Speaker Number 15, Lee.

MS. BETTS: Good afternoon. I, too, am a parent at Vaughn. I have a scenario for you guys. First, I have a question. Do any of you have a child with disabilities? Then I wondered if you know how we feel. I pray that you do feel what we are feeling when they said that they cut those 23, 24 people, those paraprofessionals.

How would you feel if you had a child that's blind and had no aide, to walk down those stairs without an aide? There's an accident just waiting to happen. How would you feel if your child had to go to the bathroom in a wheelchair and has to wait because there is only one teacher in the classroom? There's not an aide there. So now the teacher has to take the entire class to the bathroom like they're in first grade to go and aid this one child which is going to take maybe about 10 minutes to change this person. I think sometimes people have the right to -- we don't want everyone knowing that you're going to the bathroom, you know.

As I said, you guys, just take into consideration what we're seeing. Yes, you guys
have helped us to get some of our staff back, our
paraprofessionals. We need all of them back.
Every child needs an aide. Don't take the aide.
Don't take the help because when you take that
help, then it puts pressure on the next teacher to
aid. So someone misses out. And, unfortunately,
maybe my child or it will be somebody else. I just
want to say everybody deserves the same help.
Also, come visit Vaughn.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you for your comments.
Please conclude.

MS. BETTS: Just come visit Vaughn. Feel the
love that the staff gives our children. You would
be pleased and proud if you saw. Just come. Come
down.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you.

MS. WINSTON: I have visited Vaughn and I will
continue to visit Vaughn.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Sosa.

MR. SOSA: Greetings. I bring a message from
the folks that are along with me that are carrying
out a hunger strike outside Dyett. I know that you
know about it, Jesse. We brought it up to you
many, many times.
I am not from the south side. I'm not, you know -- I haven't been to Dyett. I haven't been a student there, but what you guys have done to the African-American community in this city has no name. What you continue to do, it's called Dyett High School.

You -- like I told David Vitale last time, what can you do with $10 million? What would you have done with the $10 million that Barbara Byrd-Bennett gave to the folks? How much did those people make out of this deal? We're talking about people that have given you all kinds of reasons to approve them. People have opened their hearts. People have told you, you know, that they can't go in this community without these schools, and you continue to refuse them.

You know, as a matter of fact the Dyett obligation that Coglan (phonetic) put forward is the only value education that you have. The other two obligations, one of them was out of deadline, and the other one has no community support. Therefore, those two should be tossed out.

Do the right thing for once. Listen to the people that want to continue to be part of
Chicago. Stop discriminating people on the basis of their color, on the basis of their income. You know, give them a chance to stay in the City of Chicago. What kind of city are we going to build? Just a city for rich people where black people and brown people have no place?

You have a lot to say about this. (Applause) -- you say you have ideas. I don't believe you. Why don't you put it forward at the Board meeting and become our advocate?

MODERATOR FOWLER: Please conclude.

MR. SOSA: If you can't get this done, you know, just quit, like you took the jobs of all these teachers. Then you don't --

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Sosa.

Sheridan.

MS. SHERIDAN: Hi. My name is Gabriel. I'm a teacher. I've been teaching for 17 years for Chicago Public Schools, and I really do love my job. I love the students and families that I serve.

And I came before you at one of the other hearings and I had a statement prepared at that hearing and set it aside because I genuinely wanted
to ask you about how my pension is being blamed for this financial crisis. And, today, I was going to have a whole another statement prepared for you, and, again, I have to set it aside because I am perplexed again, this time about your explanation about how the charters are funded.

I know that my tax money partially supports these charter schools, and I know that many of the people in Chicago would rather have my tax money go toward the neighborhood schools that already exist. So I hear that they're saying that these charter schools come with their own facilities, and I know that they can be a money-maker for the people who are bringing the charters forward, but I also know that my tax money goes for them.

So I really genuinely would like more full explanation about how my pension, which was a promise to me that was originally intended to attract highly qualified teachers to stay in the profession instead of Social Security, which I have not paid into all these 17 years. So when I go out of the business, I have to rely on this pension; but somehow the public is being led to believe that
my pension, which was a promise made to me to continue to educate myself for this profession, is now a crisis.

In the meantime, all these people want to know why the money -- a lot of revenue has been talked about that's not being tapped into; but there's also misspending, and you sort of -- you sort of put off that young man who asked about the elected school board and certainly --

MODERATOR FOWLER: Please conclude.

MS. SHERIDAN: -- there are lots of decisions to be made, but there does seem to be a mismanagement of funds according to what people would like our tax money to be paid for.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: If I could speak briefly. Nobody is blaming your pension fund. You're entitled to it. We want to honor it.

What I'm blaming is the state doesn't treat Chicago as they treat every other district where they pay every other district's contribution to the pension funds, the TRS. We almost have a 200 times differential on how much we get per pupil, about $31 to 2600 more -- $2600 that -- $2,066, I believe the number is, that other

MS. SHERIDAN: Well, I do appreciate your comments earlier and right now. I do feel like the state is blaming the city and the city turns around and blames the state and both are blaming the pension.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: I'm not blaming the pension. You never heard me say that. It's a disparity in how pensions are funded across the State of Illinois.

Ms. Sheridan: The funding is there. There's also some revenue that people have mentioned tonight. I'm really, really hopeful --

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: I hear you. We're trying to get to additional revenues that's favorable to everybody.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you. Mr. Taylor.

MR. TAYLOR: In 1979, I graduated from Chicago Metropolitan High School, first magnet school and first alternative school in this nation. The next year, in 1980, this Board entered into a desegregation decree wherein you admitted for
decades how it and the CHA had been using schools
to segregate and discriminate against black people.

In 2009, you went in front of the judge to
bring down the desegregation decree. Basically
what you said was the school board was just too big
to do -- you just cannot do it because we do not
have enough white people in the system that we
can't do. Then four years later, you closed 50
schools in predominantly black and brown
neighborhoods and four white neighborhoods.

Then after that, in 2015, you said -- in
2013, you said you would not sell these schools.
You turned around and sell these schools. You sell
one on 45th and Indiana for $300,000, a property
that was worth $5 million, but you sold it for
$300,000. You sold one on 61st and Wabash for less
than $300,000. And you ask where is your revenue.
One of these, one on 61st and Wabash did go to a
charter school.

Now I ask you, since they have lifted this
decree, is this Board going to keep the history of
segregation that you have which you already
admitted to or are you going to finally turn around
and try to stand with the people?
We ask you to make a decision on Dyett on August 26th. Why do we have to go through this RFP process? Nobody else has to do that. With King, they gave them the school within two weeks, no RFP process.

So we want to know, are you going to stand with us or are you going to stand like all the rest of the boards to discriminate and segregate against the people of Chicago?

MODERATOR FOWLER: Please conclude.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you for your comments.

Speaker Lee.

MS. LEE: CPS is claiming to be broke, but we recognize CPS is broke on purpose. CPS continues to starve neighborhood schools while at the same time exponentially growing contracting charter schools.

We, as taxpayers in Bronzeville and across the City of Chicago, stand together saying that we want the Dyett Global Leadership & Green Technology High School. We want the same quality schools in our community. We have 1200 strikers in Bronzeville right now fighting for quality,
world-class education.

So you all talk about the fact that there needs to be equity. Yes, there needs to be equity throughout the City of Chicago. And the black and brown communities, we get their closed schools. We get closed hospitals. We get no jobs. But in other neighborhoods, they get world-class education, and those children deserve it. But so do black children on the south side of Chicago.

We deserve quality schools throughout the City of Chicago. The Dyett Global Leadership & Green Technology plan is the best academic plan, and you know that, Mr. Ruiz. You know we have the best plan. We want a vote on the Dyett RFP on August 26th. We want to make sure that we have quality schools that are not starved as the goal of charter and contract schools and the budget reflects that. We need equity, we need equity throughout the district and not just in certain communities. Thank you.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you, Speaker Lee. The next speakers, Speaker Waller and Speaker Lanking.

MS. WALLER: Good evening, Board Members. I am a special educator, and I am very concerned about
this state of affairs with special education. Christopher, Montefiore, Beard. One of 68 students in the United States will be diagnosed with autism. One in six will be diagnosed with developmental disabilities. 11 percent of children will be diagnosed with ADHD.

Is this the time for us to have less teachers, less support staff when we have over 50,000 IEPs in the system? With all due respect, Ms. Winston, have you been to these schools? Have you been to Christopher? Have you been to Montefiore? Have you been to Beard?

MS. WINSTON: Yes.

MS. WALLER: You have been to Beard?

MS. WINSTON: Yes.

MS. WALLER: Was it this year?

MS. WINSTON: Not this year.

MS. WALLER: Okay. Because I was there.

I want to ask you, these schools are going to be suffering with these cuts. They're morally, they're morally wrong.

And you mentioned something about ISBE rules. But there's a federal law that says these children are entitled to a free and appropriate
public education -- not private, public -- that's
going to meet their unique needs.

I ask you a rhetorical question, and this
is this: When you go home and you're laying in the
solitude of your home and you think about your day,
what faces do you see? Because I'll tell you the
faces that I see. I see the children that say, you
told me I could. I stuck with it. I didn't give
up because you told me not to. I see the parents
at graduation that say -- they're crying, but
they're not crying because they're happy. They're
crying because --

MODERATOR FOWLER: Please conclude.

MS. WALLER: -- the system is going to start
all over again with them trying to find a place for
their children to go. Don't ignore the elephant in
the room.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you.

MS. WALLER: It's revenue.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you, Ms. Waller.

Speaker Lanking.

MS. LANKING: Good evening. I'm kind of
nervous. You know, it's kind of like, to me, like
gun violence. I lost two young cousins last year,
and, you know, it don't affect you until it happens to you. And that's how it feels now.

I'm 33 years old. I have a 16-year-old son who has cerebral palsy. He has cognitive impairments and he attends Vaughn. So when they called me up with this, it hit me. I'm so emotional. Like I said, I'm a single mom working a seasonal job. My son get up for the transportation. We live 319 South Loomis, and Jackie Vaughn is 4355 North Linder. My son wait for the bus at 5:45 in the morning for school. I can't get him to school.

My son has special needs. Yes, it is. That's the way of making it sound good, right? But I know I have a disabled child. I know that. I'm always teaching my child, you don't need sympathy from nobody. If they don't push the chair, you do it. You make do with what you do. But when you take this away, the aides, my son can't help get his belt on. It limits his life. I have jogging pants for him.

No. Please don't limit mine. Please don't. You gave us one teacher, Dr. Foley. That's the name, Foley? I don't know. She's the deputy
chief.

MS. WINSTON: Yes, ma'am.

MS. LANKING: Ma'am, you look very cute with your red lips, very cute.

Dr. Foley didn't matter too much to me today. Because it's not affecting her. If it's not affecting you, you going to let it go. But it hit home. It hit home.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Please conclude.

MS. LANKING: I posted it on Facebook. I didn't really care for it because I'm upset, and I will be at every meeting towards this. I'll lose my job. I don't care because it's my child's life. Thank you.

MODERATOR FOWLER: Thank you. That concludes the speakers on our list this evening. Thank you for coming out. At this time, that concludes our activities. Thank you.

VICE PRESIDENT RUIZ: Thank you, all.

MS. WINSTON: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Public Hearing adjourned at 7:11 o'clock p.m.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS

) SS:

COUNTY OF W I L L

ANNA M. MORALES, as an Officer of the Court, says that she is a shorthand reporter doing business in the State of Illinois; that she reported in shorthand the proceedings of said Public Hearing, and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of her shorthand notes so taken as aforesaid, and contains the proceedings given at said Public Hearing.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF: I have hereunto set my verified digital signature this 19th day of August, 2015.

Illinois Certified Shorthand Reporter