CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FY2019 CAPITAL BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Held on
July 19, 2018

At
6:00 o'clock p.m.

At
1145 West Wilson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had
in the above-entitled cause held at Truman
College, 1145 West Wilson Avenue, Chicago,
Illinois, Richard Smith, presiding.

Reported by: Tracy Jones, CSR, RPR, CLR
License No.: 084-004553
MR. SMITH: Good evening, everyone. Thanks for coming. We appreciate it.

My name is Richard Smith. I am the acting Chief of Schools for Network 6 for the Chicago Public Schools, and I'm here just to sort of moderate things tonight.

We'll go through the rules in a minute, but I would first like to introduce the people on the stage. To my left is Mark Sitkowski. He's the Assistant Budget Director for Chicago Public Schools. And to my right is Arnie Rivera, and he's the Chief Operating Officer for the Chicago Public Schools. And we're going to start with about five minutes of comments from Mr. Rivera, and then we'll go right to the public participation.

MR. RIVERA: Thank you, Dick.

Good evening, everyone. As Richard mentioned, my name is Arnie Rivera. I'm the Chief Operating Officer for Chicago Public Schools, also a former teacher, husband of a CPS teacher, and more importantly, I'm a parent of a CPS student. So obviously, I look at this work not just from a
professional perspective, but through a personal lens and understanding the importance of these forums, but also the work that we're doing overall from a District perspective.

I'm happy to present the proposed capital plan for FY19. I'm happy to hear your comments after my quick presentation.

So most of you know our Capital Budget funds long-term investments for facilities in our schools, renovations, new construction, as well as any other investments that complement our educational programs. Our FY19 Capital Budget has been funded through the issuance of bonds as well as a number of external sources, including TIF funding, as well a number bonds.

MR. SMITH: We have Spanish and Mandarin. Does anybody need Spanish translation?
(No response.)

MR. SMITH: Does anybody need Mandarin translation?
(No response.)

MR. SMITH: Okay. And we have those.

MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY: Do you want to ask in those languages?
MR. SMITH: In those languages. And we have sign language.

MR. RIVERA: They're saying that they should ask in those languages so that people who are Spanish speaking can hear it in Spanish.

Do you want to stand up and ask it in Spanish.

THE SPANISH INTERPRETER: (Speaking Spanish.)

(No response.)

THE MANDARIN INTERPRETER: (Speaking Mandarin.)

(No response.)

MR. RIVERA: Thank you.

So the improvement of CPS's fiscal situation has allowed us to propose a Capital Budget that is the largest over 20 years. And to provide some context, last year's Capital Budget was just over $100 million. And what we are proposing for the FY19 Capital Budget is $989 million, which we're obviously very excited to be able to have access that we haven't had in recent years.

We'll get a little more granular, but some of the key highlights of our Capital Budget this year include the first round of a three-year,
$75 million investment to ensure that all of our high schools across the district have access to a state-of-the-art science lab. We're making sure as part of a four-year, $125 million investment, we're making investments and making sure that all of our schools in the District have access to devices, infrastructure, and software from an IT perspective.

We're starting off our full-day preschool expansion. We're expanding almost 4,000 additional full-day pre-K seats. And we have capital investment to support that initiative. And there are a number of investments in the Capital Investment Board that extend that and support classroom expansion on a more granular level.

So when we take a look at how we're evaluating our Capital Budget, we really break it down to three key areas. One, deferred maintenance, making sure that we're keeping our schools warm, safe, and dry; educational programs, and overcrowding relief.

Within the deferred maintenance, a lot of what we do focused on roof masonry, HVAC, other mechanical systems, fire alarms, security
equipment, and also making sure that we're doing AC replacement, playground repairs and upgrades, as well as new playgrounds across the city. One of things that was very important to Dr. Jackson and myself is making sure that we really spread out these investments across the city. So what you'll see is a lot of these investments are very geographically distributed.

So real quick, I won't get into each of these bullets, but ultimately, these are key considerations and strategies across these three areas. Deferred maintenance, we have about $1.8 billion dollars in critical need, almost $34 million for maintenance.

As we take a look at our educational programs, as I mentioned, this budget does allow us to make some key investments, allows us to monitor and increase access to high quality programs.

And then we also have the opportunity to address short-term or immediate overcrowding concerns, but making sure that we're making investments in areas that have continued to increase in population and are projected to
increase over the next few years.

The next slide shows how the $989 million of the Capital Budget was funded. 189 million of that was from initial bonds that were issued earlier this year; 290 in additional general obligation bonds the District will issue this fall, $35 million out of a capital improvement tax; $50 million in federally funded projects; $50 million in capital transfer accounts, and then $305 million, again, that will be issued in subsequent years as the majority of these projects will be multi-year in nature.

So when we continue to look at things on a granular level, this is how the 989 breaks out, which we'll be getting into in more detail, but it's 336 million in critical needs, 339 million for programmatic investments, 138 million in overcrowding relief; 88 million in IT, security, and building enhancements, and 50 million of that being the IT investment that I mentioned earlier; $46 million in site improvements, primarily in playgrounds, play lots, as well as turf fields; $25 million in project support services to manage the capital projects; and around $16 million in
land acquisitions for a couple of key projects
that were in this budget to make up the full 989.

Taking a look at the critical need as
well as the programmatic investments, the lion's
share of the 336 are going to be new roofs as well
as masonry. The next big ticket item there is
mechanical. $40 million in regards to contingency
moving into the school year. I think this gives
us flexibility in the event of unanticipated
repairs or just if our schools get to a point
where we need to address problems that aren't
identified in the Capital Plan but that manifest
themselves during the course of the years. They
involve about $3 million for chimney stabilization
across the city.

On the programmatic side, we have --
we've already announced a replacement school for
Hancock High School, which is on the Southwest
Side of the city, as well as a new high school on
the near West Side, which we will work with the
community to identify the right location and their
needs.

If you take a look on down, you'll see
Hyde Park High School, that was wall to wall
program a few years ago. And we're finishing up some renovations there to make sure that the students there have the necessary investments to align with the IB curriculum. Prosser High School is actually adding a program, a vocational program, so we're allocating some funding to build out the necessary space at that school.

Senn High School, Rickover. So many of you know that Senn High School and Rickover have been co-located in the same facilities since 2005. We're making investments to both the prior property and to renovate the space so that Rickover can have sole occupancy in the building, and then we're also making some investments in Senn which will allow them to renovate the space so that as sole tenants of the facility, there's a smoother transition across the school.

We're making some key investments for Poe, McDade, and Decatur. These were three classroom schools serving only a K through 6 population. There's been significant demand to allow for expansion of the 7th and 8th grade. So we're finally able to make that commitment as far as the Capital Budget. McCutcheon Elementary, not
too far from here, is also getting an investment
to allow for a gym and some ancillary space for
the school.

We have a number of schools that are
going to extend to magnet, and we are also, as I
mentioned earlier, doing a three-year, $75 million
dollar school science lab initiative, of which
$28 million and 28 high schools will benefit from
that each year.

As I mentioned, we are expanding full-day
pre-K for 4-year-olds and have almost 4,000 slots.
So we have some corresponding capital investments
to support that work.

Phillips High School over in Bronzeville
is getting a new gymnasium and turf field. We're
doing similar to what we did in Back of the Yards,
we're working to identify a Chicago Public Library
co-location with a school with a high school on
the West Side.

As we go down the list, let me talk about
overcrowding relief. Dirksen, Palmer, Rogers, and
Waters are all getting enhancements to help
alleviate the crunch of pretty significant
population in the Belmont Cragin neighborhood. We
are working with the community to identify a school to meet the needs of that increased population across a number of schools and also some concerns with regards to how the schools are currently laid out.

$88 million in IT, as I mentioned earlier. $50 million of that is going to go towards -- in the first payment towards making sure that all of our schools have the right infrastructure devices and software and that every school in the District has access to the most modern technology.

And then the last page, or the last line, I should say, we're doing $46 million of site improvements, primarily spaces for playgrounds, play lots, turf fields, as well as some other projects that we're fortunate to be able to do with the help of TIF funding as well as funding from other elected officials; the $25 million that I mentioned earlier to manage the capital projects and the $16 million for land acquisition.

And the last slide that we wanted to show was just how these projects are distributed across the city. We feel strongly that we have the
ability to do -- almost a billion dollars of
capital helps us to balance both the deferred
maintenance, modernization of our schools and some
key programmatic initiatives. We know that there
is still a lot of need out there, and not
everything that folks desired is in here. But we
also feel strongly with the increased financial
stability of the District, that moving forward, we
should have continued increase in our market
access.

So that concludes my presentation, and I
look forward to hearing from you.

MR. SMITH: I was told we have a timekeeper
here?

THE TIMEKEEPER: Present.

MR. SMITH: So just so I know how this works,
you're going to hold it up?

I'm going to read the rules for tonight's
public speaking. So please, if you're going to
speak, listen carefully.

This will end at 8:00 o'clock, or once
the last speaker speaks. If that's before
8:00 o'clock, that's when we'll end. But
8:00 o'clock is when we'll end, so hopefully we
can get all the speakers up here on time.

You will be able to talk for two minutes. And the timekeeper here will -- you're going to hold up one minute, and you're going to hold up 30 seconds, and you're going to hold up "Time is up." So I've been on this side before when I was a school principal speaking, and I know it can be a little hard when you only talk for two minutes, and it can be a little discombobulating when somebody is holding up a sign in front of you. And I know it is difficult, but we would love it if you would cooperate and try to stay to those two minutes so everybody can get in before 8:00 o'clock. So thank you.

I've had my phone all charged up ready to go with my stopwatch on. I'm glad you're here.

Speakers will be called up in the order that they've signed up. Please limit your topic to the Capital Plan. We already talked about the two minutes. When multiple speakers from the same organization or school are listed, only one member from that organization or school will be allowed to speak regarding the same issue.

If you have a follow-up question
regarding what you want to talk about, please, outside, our CPS staff members are in the lobby, and they have a card that is a follow-up card that you can complete. And you will get a response to your follow-up question.

As you probably know, the full Capital Plan is on the CPS website. You can provide feedback or any questions on that website, and that's cps.edu/capitalplan.

And so we will now proceed with the presentations. And as we do at Board meetings, we're going to follow the protocol of CPS Board meetings where we will allow our elected representatives to speak first. And we have two representatives today.

Now, we have a microphone over here. Is there a microphone over there? I can't see it on the other side of the podium. So this is our only microphone, to our left. So I would like to start with Alderman John Arena from Ward 45.

ALDERMAN ARENA: Thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Rivera. I'm going to keep the pleasantries short, because I have two minutes and I want to stick to --
Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen, for this opportunity; and, Mr. Rivera, thanks for being here. We've worked together, and we continue working together. I'm here to talk about some of the capital issues that we've discussed in the past. I did receive a letter from -- signed by the Mayor and Janice Jackson that speaks to two particular capital improvements in the 45th Ward, Farnsworth Park and Schurz turf field. Again, it goes into a few operating investments in the ward.

And the reason why I think I'm here today is because one critical component of -- that should have come from years ago, 2016, when I voted for the CIT budget, and the City budget that included the CIT levy, and Schurz Field and Pitch Field, Farnsworth, the Annex Step Crossing, and St. Cornelius Early Education Center, were all negotiated with CPS to be done to deal with the overcrowding issues in my K through 8 schools. So when I look at this and I see Farnsworth Field, which is -- funding is comprised of $100,000 of automatic money, $400,000 of TIF funds, and half a million dollars of Water Reclamation funds for their uses, and then Schurz Field is entirely TIF
funded, it's a bit of an insult that the about $5 million we need to make the early education center at St. Cornelius a reality is not in a billion dollar proposal.

In the operating investment, I have four schools that are -- that are touted as getting expanded pre-K programs. My challenge to you is where are we going to put those classrooms when the reason why we've identified the opportunity to open up 14 classrooms in the St. Cornelius facility was specifically to address the plan to expand the full-day pre-K?

So Beaubien, that has one pre-K classroom, and is at capacity, how exactly do you propose to do this? Two years after the 45th Ward was promised, that I voted to raise the taxes for my constituents, and I can't get a clear answer on when we're going to fund this proposal. So I'm really incredibly frustrated.

And besides all the other issues with we're building new schools in places where we have capacity in other schools, and we have schools that are horribly overcrowded and in desperate need of deferred maintenance, that we are
misappropriating these funds in terms of what does
the system need.

Please go back, re-look at this, and make
sure that you are addressing the problems that
exist in the system today, and reject building new
schools on top of places where we don't need them.

We need to have an honest conversation
with our constituents about school boundaries and
about reallocating where kids go to school, and
have an honest conversation that a great school is
only a great school because the parents put the
time, energy, and their investment in making it a
great school. It is not only just the dollars
that go into the bricks and mortar.

So please, I beg you, as a member of the
City Council, and I know a lot of my colleagues
are feeling the same kind of wrong-sighted
allocation of funds in an understandably political
year, let's put that aside. Let's do what we need
to do to make sure that all of our students have
what they need, and readdress this budget at this
time. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Alderman Arena.

Alderman Cappleman.
ALDERMAN CAPPLEMAN: Thank you so much. I just found out about this meeting about ten minutes ago.

I want to talk about one school that you helped that means so much to me and so much to our students, and that's McCutcheon. McCutcheon was built in 1971, and it had no gym. That means the kids had to go next door. They rented one; but if it was raining or snowing or any type of inclement weather, they missed out. Because that gym is not ADA compliant, that means children who rely on wheelchairs were going to be left out. And anyone who's in a wheelchair, they already feel too left out.

I can't speak to the process that CPS uses to make decisions about capital improvements. It's very complex, and it still needs work. I'm not here to -- I'm here to say that there is more work that needs to be done. But I'm also here to say thank you to this school.

This school is also, 20 percent of its students are experiencing homelessness. Within six blocks, I think, five blocks of that particular school, we have seven homeless
shelters, including a shelter focused on domestic violence, the only domestic violence shelter in the Midwest focused on families that are immigrants. So it was so, so important that you stepped up, and the students and the teachers and our Principal Kram, thank you so much.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Alderman.

I would like ask Justin Heath, who is here on behalf of Alderman Villegas from the 36th Ward. Justin.

MR. HEATH: Good evening, gentlemen. Thank you.

My name is Justin Heath. I'm the Director of Policy for Alderman Villegas. I would like to just read a letter from the Alderman.

A recent -- The recent release of the Chicago Public Schools FY2019 Capital Improvement Plan has drawn a great deal of attention from the 36th Ward, and I wanted to share with you a few thoughts. First and foremost, I appreciate the new investment in our schools. The plan includes desperately needed additional resources at schools like Locke Elementary and Prosser Career Academy, and I look forward to seeing those improvements as
soon as possible.

Similarly, it appears the need to ease the overcrowding in elementary schools on the Northwest Side are well underway. I know that you will continue to involve the community as this process moves forward, and you deserve credit for this new path.

On the other hand, I feel the need to share with you my disappointment that the much discussed Hanson Park Elementary Annex was not included in the 2019 plan. Hanson Park is one of the top-performing schools in your system, even though students are being taught both in hallways and a neighboring church without proper heating and cooling. I have toured the facility with your team three times over the last three years, and no one has argued that more improvements are desperately needed.

Finally, I wish to remind you that the fastest growing population within the city is Latino families, and they currently also make up the largest population in your schools. Last year's budget neglected Latinos, and you faced a significant backlash. This year's budget is
nominally better, but we must continue to make progress. Latinos have been ignored for far too long; and until our students and schools are treated equally, Chicago's Latino community will push back. I am optimistic, however, that the new program for early childhood care and the new investments in Belmont Cragin are positive signs of a future Chicago Public School system that will be warm and welcoming to all Chicagoans, regardless of their ethnicity.

Alderman Villegas.

Appreciate it.

MR. SMITH: Thank you very much.

For the rest of the speakers, what we're going to do is call everybody up five people at a time. And so when the last person in the group of five is going to speak, we're going to call the other five. And we're going to go in order that I say the names, and that's the order in which you've signed up to speak.

So the first five speakers will be starting with Regina Hawley Williams, Fatima Peters, Steve Fix, Zoe Fix Zalkind, and Dawne Moon. Will you please speak in that order,
please.

So we're starting with Regina.

MS. HAWLEY WILLIAMS: Good evening, Board members, CPS family, and partners. I am Regina Hawley Williams, a proud parent of a Sullivan High School senior. Also, I am the LSC chair. On behalf of our principal and Sullivan, we would like to thank you for the capital investments made to Sullivan High School. The academic investment will serve 60 percent of our bilingual students. Our science labs are being upgraded, which have not been updated since the '60s. We are also able to employ one full-time social worker, who services 15 percent of our homeless students. Also we're also to employ one full-time special education case manager who services 25 percent of our special education students and students with high needs.

We're also here to ask for some help in repairing our pool, and Ms. Fatima Peters will expound on that.

MS. PETERS: Hello. My name is Fatima Peters, and I am a parent of a junior student at Sullivan High School as well as an ESL Student Support
Specialist. As Regina mentioned, on behalf of the staff and families at Sullivan High School, we thank you for your investment that you have made towards our school.

I would also like to ask for help with repairing our school's pool. Our pool has been shut down due to costly repairs, leaving our students, families, and community members without a free and safe indoor pool to use. Our pool services Chicago Park District's needs, the Rogers Park community, our low incidence students, our refugees, and the general population of our school.

Sullivan High School is located less than a mile away from the lake. This past year, we have lost two of our feeder school students to a tragic drowning in Lake Michigan. One of the students drowned at Loyola Beach, which is 0.7 miles away from Sullivan, and the other drowned at Rogers Beach, which is 1.3 miles away from us.

Having a swimming pool at Sullivan High School, we provided free swimming lessons to students, their families, and our community.
Sullivan High School is known for our growing population of our refugee students, also known as Refugee High. And the majority of our students and family members have never been swimming or know how to swim. We feel it is our responsibility to teach them. Our Low Incidence Department benefited from aquatic therapy offered through PE classes. Some of the great benefits we've seen from our autistic students with sensory difficulties. They became more engaged and less distractible. The pool provided a safe environment that supported students while providing them important -- improvement in their social skills. Many of our students were able to tolerate touch after aquatic therapy.

I thank you for your time. I would appreciate if you would consider helping us out. Thank you.

MR. FIX: Hi. I have some people joining me. So they're there.

Hi. My name is Steve Fix. I serve as the Vice Chair of the Local School Council at Decatur Classical, and I have served as a parent for four years on the LSC. On behalf of myself,
the LSC, and the parents at Decatur Classical, I would like to express our gratitude for the CPS plan to use capital funds to address the lack of 7th and 8th grade in Decatur Classical School. Of the 473 elementary schools in CPS, only three go K through 6 instead of the standard K through 8. These are Decatur on the North Side, and Poe and McDade on the South Side.

As they get older, children become aware that after 6th grade, they're going to have to switch schools twice in three years to attend 7th and 8th grade at another school, and then 9 through 12 at high school. Our children love the rigorous academic environment at Decatur, but dread the uncertainty and stress it creates. In many cases, the uncertainty causes parents to transfer their children to K through 8 elementary schools before they even got to 6th grade.

We have truly explored every possible option to get a 7th and 8th grade at Decatur. Every month, we have attended Board of Ed meetings to speak about the topic. We have reached out to the Mayor's office, the State Representatives and Senators, to aldermen, two of whom mentioned
relocating Decatur into their wards. We have thoroughly explored four specific solutions, including moving into vacant schools, moving and sharing space in underutilized schools, and renting space in charter and private schools. Several of these measures progressed quite far, but did not ultimately succeed. In the absence of any possible alternative solution, we are delighted and appreciative that CPS has agreed to use capital funds to put a 7th and 8th grade at its three classical schools. While Decatur is on the far North Side, it pulls students from all over the city, including the West and South sides.

It is gratifying to see CPS remedy the lack of 7th and 8th grades at all three classical schools at once. In fact, Decatur, Poe, and McDade are engaged in ongoing collaboration. In our work to get 7th and 8th grades, our LSC and PTA members have communicated extensively with LSC and PTA members of those schools. Furthermore, our principals are in regular contact, and teachers have an opportunity to visit each other's schools. We're excited to see what we can learn from and alongside Poe and McDade as we extend our
classical curriculum to 7th and 8th grade.

On behalf of the entire Decatur parent community, an extremely heartfelt thank you to CPS, the Board of Education, and the Mayor's Office for acknowledging our situation, and for working with us for so many years to allow our children to continue receiving the excellent education that CPS classical schools provide.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

I'm wondering if the microphone on the stair is a little difficult. Instead, can we just put it on the floor, just put the stand on the floor instead of trying to navigate around a stair? Is that okay? And, if possible, could you move the microphone over this way so we can see the speaker.

There you go. That's perfect.

MS. FIX ZALKIND: Hi. My name is Zoe Fix Zalkind, and I'm going into 6th grade at Decatur Classical School. I just want to thank the Board of Education for adding grades to Decatur. It will really help because there was a lot of pressure to change schools, and now students can just stay at Decatur for 7th and 8th grade. Also
we don't have to worry whether we'll see our friends after 6th grade, because we get two more years with them.

    When I heard there was going to be an expansion, I felt all this stress about leaving Decatur go away. So I'm just really grateful to the Board of Education.

    MS. MOON: I'm Dawne Moon. I'm a parent member of the local school council at Kilmer Elementary in Roger's Park. And I was interested to hear that having safe, dry, and warm schools is the top priority.

    Kilmer has exceptional dynamic teaching going on, but it is not currently a safe environment. There's desperate need for tuck-pointing. We have had bricks fall from the building to the ground on the outside, and we've had bricks fall from the gym wall to the gym floor when students are playing there. We can hope that the next brick doesn't fall on a kid, or we can tuck-point.

    Phase 1, I understand, has happened in terms of putting a cover, a temporary cover over the holes in the roof so that water next year
won't be pouring into the classrooms as it has been. But we need a permanent roof, and we need tuck-pointing to ensure the safety and dryness of this building. And it's not clear why funding for Phase 2 isn't part of this budget.

There are some other safety and dryness issues. It seems like there were some sewer problems, because the restrooms all smell like urine even after they've just been cleaned. And when it rains, sewer water seems to be backing up into the play lot. This is not safe.

And the lockers are rusted out so that when students drop things through the rusty holes in their lockers, there have been cases where the student got stuck in the rusty hole. And so that's also not safe.

So we don't begrudge anybody a turf field. We'd love one too. But it's not clear exactly how it is that these funds are being allocated and why the safety issue isn't a priority.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Dawne.

The next five speakers are Betsy Vandercook, Eilane Edger, Jeff Meegan, Peter
Williams, and Gina Esher.

Betsy, you ready?

MS. VANDERCOOK: I am. It's a little low, but ...

My name is Betsy Vandercook. I'm speaking really with two hats, but first for Network 49, a progressive organization in the 49th Ward. I'm the Co-chair of the Education Committee. You may know us best from Holy Day Charter Freeze Referendum in 2016 for no more charter expansion in the 49th Ward, which won with over 11,000 people voting for it. All right.

Also I was recently elected to Kilmer LSC. My daughter went there years ago. Now I'm back as a community member, and I'm so proud to serve as an elected official.

You know, there's been a lot of press already about inequity in this plan, particularly in the North Side, which is getting a lot, and the South and West Sides. Now, I'm from the North Side, but from Roger's Park. And I went last night to the Capital Program page to see what we had gotten for our six schools in Roger's Park. And I will read them off. This is the 2019
MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY: That ain't right.

MS. VANDERCOOK: This is in the Capital Budget, what's in the papers, what shows in the Capital Budget. I'm not saying there's not some renovations going on or a new room or something going on. I'm talking about what's in the Capital Budget. You find a school, and that's what it has, it shows what's been given over the last -- since 2018 and what's in the Capital Budget for 2019. And that's what it shows.

MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY: We just mean that's not okay.

MR. SMITH: If we could just -- I know you folks probably think you have the answers, and you might. But let's let the speakers speak.

MS. VANDERCOOK: For Edgewater, what it shows online is that for 2019, there is $7 million, and for West Rogers Park, $57 million. Since 2011, Rogers Park Sullivan has gotten about $400,000, and Field $900,000 to start projects, coming to
about a million. Edgewater is $24 million, and West Rogers Park has gotten, including what I mentioned, $69 million. So it's a question of equity. And the question is why. Why aren't Rogers Park schools -- We also don't have any STEM program, teen program, arts program, or language arts programs, and have not for over some years. Our surrounding communities do have those programs.

And I just -- Again, like previously said, I don't begrudge anybody having -- One of the kids from Decatur, that's fabulous that they're going to finally get a 7th and 8th grade. But Rogers Park is not, for whatever reason, and I would like you to answer that at some point, we are not getting some of the other resources that many of the other North Side communities are getting.

I would like to say what Alderman Arena already said and take this back to look at it again to see what really isn't needed and what is needed. You have two examples already, the pool for Sullivan, a roof for Kilmer, and somebody from Gale is going to be speaking. There are other
needs, really pressing needs in Rogers Park that aren't being looked at. I ask you to look at them. Thank you.

MS. EDGER: Hello. My name is Dr. Eilane Edger. I am a parent of 6th grade twins from Pierce Elementary School. I've been a parent representative on the LSC, and I'm currently the Chair of LSC this year. In a former life, I was the research director for early childhood at CPS. And as an advocate for full-day pre-K, we have been trying to push for a full-day pre-K forever. So I was very pleased to read that the free full-day pre-K was going to finally be pushed into the schools. And especially at Pierce too, so I was very happy to see that. It will not only strengthen the community, the community at Pierce, but also ensure that the children at Pierce have a very strong foundation and ensure that they are ready for kindergarten. So thank you very much.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

MR. MEEGAN: Good evening. I'm a husband of a CPS teacher. I'm a father of a CPS student and father of CPS graduate. On behalf of the Phillip Rogers Elementary community, parents,
administrators, teachers, and students, we would
like to thank the Board of Education for the
investment you placed in our school. A special
thanks to Alderman Silverstein, who has actively
worked to improve the infrastructure in the
50th Ward.

We know that communities are only as
strong as their infrastructures, great schools
being among the most important. Strong schools
equal strong communities. Phillip Rogers was
built in 1937 and hasn't received any real
investment since 1955. Since then, we've grown
into one of the most diverse schools in the city
with over 30 languages spoken by our families.
The capital investment will better allow Rogers to
continue to grow and serve the needs of our
diverse community. We are looking forward to
continuing our mission as an educational
environment that encourages learning, social
growth, community service, and leadership, while
striving to provide an individual education
experience for each child. The investment and new
addition will go a long way to helping us achieve
those goals. So we thank you for your time and
your commitment.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

MR. WILLIAMS: Hello. I'm Peter Williams. I'm a parent of a student at Senn High School, and I'm an officer with the Parent Advisory Committee at the high school there. And I just want to say that this is extraordinarily exciting, and I thank you very much. I think this is a great opportunity for Chicago Public Schools and for Senn High School in particular.

I haven't had a chance to look at much of the details of your plan, but I hope it really includes improvements and opportunities in the arts for students. My child is in an arts program at Senn High School, in the music program. And currently, this is a major arts program in a high school in Chicago, and they don't have a dedicated room to do their music program. And they're moving around in different areas, and I know that Senn is going to be expanding with the Rickover moving, so I hope they get a dedicated room for the music.

And I just want to remind and say again that I think the arts are a very important part of
education. I know it's helped my child
tremendously in being a better mathematician and
scientist in school. So please look at that.

MS. ESHER: My name is Gina Esher. I am a
parent of a 4th grader at Pierce Elementary. I
have a daughter who just graduated from 8th grade
there, so I've been involved for almost nine years
at the school. I'm also on the LSC and part of
the peer service organization.

I know a lot of people here have been
throwing around the turf. But I'm here to say
thank you for funding our turf because I don't
know if anybody sees this. This is a health and
safety issue for our kids and our parents. This
is what we go through. We lovingly call it Pierce
Lake, because that's what it comes to. It is a
lake, and it floods. We've had broken bones. We
have parents who have fallen, who have slipped.
We have to navigate. Our kids are not getting
recess. They're cancelled for four, five days at
a time because they cannot be out in this field,
whatever the conditions are. So I did want to
come here and say thank you. We look forward to
seeing the changes come. And I hope there's many
more schools that can be helped with the capital expenditures. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

Our next speakers are Stephen Lee, Christina Tassone, Maureen Delgado, and Samay Gheewala.

And by the way, thank you so much, all of you, for staying with the time. It's unlike Board meetings where people tend to go over.

MR. LEE: Good evening. My name is Stephen Lee. I am another Decatur parent. The earlier speakers did cover just about everything I wanted to say. I just want to quickly add my thanks for making long time dreams finally happen, and for making an amazing education available for the kids and more families in the future. Thanks.

MR. SMITH: So nice of you to say that. Thank you.

Christina.

MS. TASSONE: Hello. Good evening. My name is Christina Tassone, and I'm a proud CPS parent. I'm also a former CPS student. I am here as a representative, along with my partner here, and we have some parents here as well for Sauganash
Elementary School. The purpose here is to ask for additional classroom space for our students in order to fulfill educational needs and to decrease our potential safety liability.

So since our 2011 addition, we have had an additional 124 students. We also will have a new addition coming in, a development called Sauganash Glen with four- and five-bedroom family homes. And I think it's about 50 or more homes.

So again, what our issue is is that we have kids unable to sit at their desks. They sit in the hallways for instructional learning due to overcrowding. We have a picture here of our class. And as you can see, and you can't see it here completely, but we'll give it to you, everything in red is where we have over capacity. 16 out of the 20 classrooms, grades, are at capacity -- I'm sorry, over capacity. Our kindergarten, and I just had a kindergartener in there, 40 kids in a small space, two 40-kindergarten classrooms.

I have a 7th grader that was in class with 33 kids. Two 30-kid 7th grade classrooms, and it keeps goes on and on with all of that red.
In addition, we have used all of the usable storage space. They've been converted into classes. So just to give you an idea, we are fortunate to have a science lab. But unfortunately, it's only used as 7th and 8th grade homeroom. Only they use it because of the overcrowding.

A couple of points here in addition. Two special education classes are sharing one room, which makes it difficult to schedule students. There are times in the day we are out of compliance with ISBE due to the student ratio. The music teacher has a to drive a cart to provide music in the homeroom. The music teacher needs a classroom for all of the musical instruments where students can come and practice performing. We have her desk in the empty F room with all of the technology wires because all of the storage spaces and closets are being used as classrooms.

Another additional thing I want to add, the tutoring partitioned off in the hall. So all of this is happening in the hallway. Speech therapy happens under the stairwell and on the stairs. We are out of compliance. We had
inspectors come in. We were penalized in our
ing rating because have no rooms to be used for
storage because again, storage rooms are used as
classrooms.

The fire department has also been
advised.

MR. SMITH: Thank you very much. You have a
great school and a great principal.

Ms. Delgado.

MS. DELGADO: Good evening. My name is
Maureen Delgado, proud Principal of Clinton
Elementary School, which is in West Rogers Park.
We serve over 1200 students who speak 45 different
languages, and many of our students are refugees
or new immigrants to our country. I would like to
thank you because we are now the proud recipients
of a new roof. And for the last ten years, we
have been wet and moldy, and plaster has been
falling from our auditorium and our gymnasium on a
regular basis, which has made it very, very
difficult to create a welcoming environment for
our students who are dealing with a lot of social
and emotional issues. So now we are looking
forward to having a new roof, moving on to our
full-day pre-K, and we also will get our social
worker this year. So we would like to thank you
for those wonderful investments at our school, and
we look forward to this two-year budget and see
how it all turns out. So thank you very much.

MR. GHEEWALA: Good evening. My name is Samay
Gheewala. I'm speaking for Horace Mann Public
Education. We have a few questions about this
$1 billion Capital Budget. We don't see where the
decision making is being done, and there seems to
be a lack of transparency. It's only been three
public meetings, and so we don't know if it's a
fair framework based on the needs. Was there more
engagement with the community when these decisions
were being made?

The facility assessments were not updated
in 2017 as required by law. This information
would be very helpful for us to see what the plan
is. We're not against any school getting
necessary repairs or upgrades if they need. And
we are not here to say that some school doesn't
deserve something. Every school in this district
needs something and deserves it. Most schools are
waiting far too long for facility upgrades. What
we're asking for is information on how CPS has chosen who has to wait, who doesn't. The parents, schools, and the members of the public deserve the right to know this.

And furthermore, we would like a framework where every school roof or failed plumbing system is considered equal and worthy of dollars. In the budget, 336 million is going to the needs of existing schools, and 600 million is going to new construction and programs. We don't see why CPS is spending so much on new construction when so many schools have basic needs that need to be met. We think CPS should halt the new construction until we -- either all of the existing repairs are completed.

And we need a better process of community engagement and transparency. We need a transparent explanation to the public on what factors are used to determine which schools are prioritized. Clearly, some are, and some aren't. And we want to know how that's calibrated.

There should also be, by law, a long-term facilities plan developed with community input to decide these decisions. And we would like to see
that. Because hundreds of millions of dollars are being expended with little or no transparency, with no oversight. We don't want the unelected school board to vote on this until we have a more transparent plan and community input.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Gheewala.

MR. GHEEWALA: As a member of the Friends of Roosevelt group, we know Taft is overcrowded. Roosevelt abuts Taft. And actually, a large portion of the Taft attendance area is closer to Roosevelt and more convenient. The children currently have to cross the Edens Expressway.

Roosevelt has the capacity and is very welcome to bring those Taft students over until the overcrowding can be addressed. And I believe Schurz and Steinmetz also have the capacity and would be very happy to accommodate.

MS. SMITH: Good evening. My name is Erica Smith. I'm a parent of a student at Thomas J. Waters Elementary School, which is part of your FY2019 Capital Plan. We -- So Waters is a K through 8 neighborhood school that's situated just east of the Chicago River right off the Brown Line. And we are here to tell you a little bit
about our school. As you've heard, and I think many people here would agree, the space utilization formula doesn't really tell the whole story about how space is utilized in our schools. There are spaces in our school building that are better characterized as large closets than classrooms, and yet they count — according to the formula, they count as classrooms. Many of our most vulnerable students are diverse learners and English language learners. They receive service in the hallway or in multipurpose space rather than in a private setting, which would better suit — better serve their needs. We have multiple traveling programs that have no dedicated classroom space, and our bathrooms are in such poor condition that many of our students refuse to use them.

Between 2007 and 2017, our K through 8 enrollment nearly doubled, increasing by 86 percent. This tremendous growth has put significant strains on our educators and our families, closing our preschool program, despite the high demand, in 2014. But through creative scheduling and budgeting, we've been able to make
do with the things that we have. But we are running out of solutions, and we are now at risk of having to cut some of the very programs that draw families to our neighborhood public school.

I'm sure any school in our district would make good use of the funds that have been allocated to Waters. I would argue that any time a neighborhood public elementary school is targeted for an investment like this, it's a huge win for Chicagoans. Our district suffers from inadequate funding, and we won't be able to fix everything at once. But all of our students do deserve to have neighborhood schools that are well-maintained and resourced. Parents in our community have advocated strongly for fair and equitable funding from CPS.

We've protested school closings and charter expansions, attended school board meetings and town halls, and we will continue to do so. We want all CPS students to have all the same opportunities and resources as our students, and we'll stand with you to make sure that our district and City and State governments are held accountable.
MR. SMITH: Thank you.

Our next group of speakers, I apologize it's hard to read the writing, Jason Honig, Carol Lauhon, Norine Gutekanst, this other name I can't make out, but I believe the last name is Mitchell. And Christina Dussault.

So we'll start with Jason.

MR. HONIG: Thank you. My name is Jason. Job well done on the name pronunciation. I'm actually a former Christian school principal in Westridge at the Bethesda Lutheran school. But we've partnered with Boone and Stone and other schools in our community. And so as a former principal, I understand that our schools are the hub of the community. And the old educational philosopher John Dewey once said that our schools are the bedrock of democracy. And the landscape that we're in today, politically and otherwise, we deserve strong schools because our schools serve the whole child, the whole family, and whole community.

And I know that you can't put price tags on learning. You can't put price tags on our values of our students. But what we need to do is
be able to prioritize people over profit and politics. And the people in this room here today are here to make sure that we hold CPS accountable. And we appreciate you being here today and presenting this information for us. In Westridge, we're very grateful for all of the expenditures and the support we've gotten from CPS. However, my son will be attending Stone Academy in the fall in kindergarten. So as a former Christian school principal, I am now delving into the public school system.

Stone Academy has deteriorated flooring in their playground, and their playgrounds are in disrepair. The playground at Boone has holes in the steps going up to the play structure. And in March, the parents from the school received a letter saying that they were not in compliance with the Department of Early Childhood for CPS, so that they could no longer send their children out to play. As parents and educators, our children need that play time. They need that social and emotional learning. And they need to be safe. So I ask that you review this budget, come out to Boone, come out to the neighborhood, and let us
fix our playground, and let us make sure that our
children are safe, and all for the common good.
Thank you.

MS. LAUHON: My name is Carol Lauhon. Can you
hear me? I'm retired, I don't use my teacher
voice anymore. My name is Carol Lauhon. I'm a
proud resident of Rogers Park, and I'm an
enthusiastic community representative on the local
school council at Gale Community Academy. I am
here to point out that with respect to facilities,
Gale has a 3,000-square-foot greenhouse, a newly
expanded community funded learning garden, and a
rooftop weather station. Our environmental
learning program has been developing with the
support of our neighbors and with the help of some
of our wonderful key community partners. Gale was
the only elementary school invited to appear at
Taste of Chicago 2018. We displayed urban
gardening at the Farm to Festival demonstration at
Buckingham Fountain. Add to that our eastern
border is the shore of one of the largest
freshwater lakes in the world. Gale Community
Academy can become distinguished as a locus of
climate, sun, and environmental education for the
21st Century. We have accomplished all of this without support from CPS. With supportive funding from CPS, our program can develop to sustain a full-blown urban gardening and climate science curriculum.

Gale Grows Kids is our motto. We know we can attract more families to the neighborhood with CPS support. Last year, CPS funded $5 million in special programming. We respectfully ask that you invest in our green space learning initiative too. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Thank you very much.

MS. GUTEKANST: Hello. I want to say good evening to everybody here. My name is Norine Gutekanst. I'm a staffer with Chicago Teacher's Union. I'm a former teacher. I've got about 30 years in at CPS. So I'm here today because I wanted to just bring up what -- you know, there's a phrase that says a budget is a moral document. And I think this seems more like a political document than a moral document. It seems like it's really designed to boost the Mayor's election prospects rather than address really persistive inequalities inside CPS.
One of the things that Mr. Rivera outlined was something like $500 million in capital investments that are going to be paid for by borrowing. That's problematic because this -- these dollars, plus interest, are going to have to be paid for. And where is that money going to come from? It's either going to come from taxes or it's going to come from State funding and the operating budget. So there are repercussions to all of these borrowed funds.

This moral document doesn't really seem to contain a vision to end inequity in Chicago, in Chicago's public schools, and to address what are really very important needs in our black and Latin communities. So I'm going to echo what Mr. Arena said, which is where is the process whereby these school communities who have needs get to present them and get them to be ranked? It seems as though it's -- the process is quite the opposite of transparent. I think everyone in this building, in this room tonight, they would like to see a school system where every single child in Chicago gets the kind of education that Zoe would get at Decatur. That's in their vision too. I am
very happy there are winners, but we need a system
where there aren't winners and losers. And we
need a transparent capital planning process, not
just a system that passes around capital
improvements right before the election to help
boost the Mayor's election prospects.

And finally, I'm going to say we need an
elected school board because with an elected
school board, we will have advocates for these
communities who can advocate for that transparent
process.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

MS. MITCHELL: Good evening. My name is
Dr. Mitchell. I'm a proud Chicago Teachers Union
member. Malfeasance. Correction, malfeasance
with racist intent in the entire Chicago Public
School system. Malfeasance, wrongdoing,
especially by public officials. Chicago officials
want to spend capital funding dollars for only
affluent community public schools especially their
communities, and leave CPS schools that service
black and brown children without a library. It is
a disgrace for the Chicago Public Schools, being
the third largest educational system in the United
States, to not have funding for black and brown communities' school libraries. We're demanding it. You guys have to do some of the capital funding to ensure that this money is being spread out equitably across the school districts to ensure that all students have access to books within their school libraries. Thank you.

MS. DUSSAULT: My name is Christine Dussault, and I teach in Logan Square. I've been a teacher at Chase Elementary school for the last seven years. And I have to say the families at my school and my staff are incredible. As much as our shared engineer and wonderful maintenance staff try, they cannot stay on top of all of our building's needs. One can easily get sick going from room to room in our school with the heating and air conditioning nightmares, malfunctions. And the leaks, there are so many leaks. It's just become commonplace for those leaks.

Looking at the CPS Capital Budget, I am angry, because it is clear that it is not fair and transparent, just like many have said tonight. Not all students, including my students, are represented in this plan. The teachers at my
school work tirelessly, as most teachers do, and
many have turned into part-time grant writers just
to provide the world class education that our
children deserve. But we are tired, and we cannot
continue on this trajectory. The kindergarten
teacher alone at my school has raised over $10,000
just this school year from donors. We have lost
arts, library, community programs, after-school
programs nearly every single year. These are
classes and opportunities that can literally make
or break a child's school experience. When are
you going to invest in my school? I've been
waiting, and yet another year has gone, and it's
nothing. We need a budget that invests in all
students. Stop playing politics with our
students.

MR. SMITH: Our next five speakers in this
order are Lucy McGowan, Juan Zavala, Saul Garcia,
Wilma Pittman, and Catherine Mora. So we'll start
with Lucy when she gets up there.

MS. MCGOWAN: Hello. My name is Lucy McGowan.
I live in McKinley Park, and I teach at the nearby
Ordonez Middle School. I'm here because I'm
disturbed and infuriated by the capital budget.
The priorities are completely out of whack in that they primarily favor communities that are already thriving on the North Side and in the center of the city.

In 2013, CPS closed 50 schools, mostly on the South Side in black and brown communities. They said this disinvestment would save $500 million. Five years later, they're pouring almost precisely that sum, $500 million, into new construction and improvements into more affluent communities. It's not right. You're appeasing people in power, and you will do almost anything to avoid integration, building annexes and new schools to relieve overcrowding when nearby schools sit underutilized and under-resourced. I want to see equity in investment. Stop trying to appease constituents with political clout, and start serving all of our students in all of our neighborhoods in all corners of the city.

MR. ZAVALA: My name is Juan Zavala. I'm a middle school teacher at Calmeca Academy. I am a product of CPS, United States Marine Corps veteran, and I model on the weekends.

In all seriousness, I'm here because of
the lack of transparency with the budget. I feel like too many decisions, like you said before, are based on a political agenda, and not enough was actually based on students. I've heard the word "investment" used a lot. But we need to invest in all our students equally, not by neighborhood or economic status of parents or any of that.

I want to share a quick story of my first day of school a couple of years ago. So as the students were going to lunch, one of the students looks at me and says, "You look like a really nice teacher. I'm sorry I won't get to know you." And she starts running. And I see she has scissors. And I run up and get the scissors. She was trying to stab herself. This was a student who suffered extreme trauma and almost about 50 times, I had to pull scissors away from her that school year.

We have one counselor for 805 students. And although I appreciate that that student is still alive, that's not enough. So we need to invest in our kids.

I'm sorry. I'm a Marine. I don't cry. But in all seriousness, our children are worth much more than a new building, new school, or new
MR. GARCIA: Hello, everybody. So let me just -- Correction. My name is Saul Garcia, not Saul Garcia. I am a teacher on the Southwest Side, Little Village neighborhood. I'm a lifelong Little Village resident. I have lived there my whole life. I am a CPS product through and through. I have graduated from Farragut Career Academy. And unfortunately -- And fortunately, I am very lucky to work at a school that has adequate resources, adequate funding, even though it's on the Southwest Side. Unfortunately, though, this is not the case for a lot of schools in the South Side, in the West Side. We are seeing this happen every day. We are seeing the stories, rat infestation, mice, all these different things. Like we've said before, this budget is not transparent. We can see that it's benefitting only North Side schools or majority North Side schools while they are defunding schools and closing schools in black neighborhoods. That's not right. It's not right at all.

There is a new school in the works in the
Belmont Cragin neighborhood. You've read the stories. The community themselves have been saying they do not want this school, they don't need this school. That funding could be allocated to schools in my neighborhood, in our neighborhood. Maybe we should start locating schools in predominantly black neighborhoods and funding them instead.

Unfortunately, we are right now in the system where our school boards are hand-picked by our Mayor, and they are not representative of our people. This is why, as Norine has said, and as many others agree with, we need an elected school board, one that works for the entire city and not just a few. I call for us to really push our elected officials. We need an elected school board now.

MS. PITTMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Wilma Pittman. I am from McCutcheon Elementary School. I have four children -- four grandchildren in McCutcheon currently. I just have one in first grade. I am here to thank the Board because I am so grateful and thankful that we're receiving a new gym because we have children
that's in wheelchairs, and our little ones can't
go outside when the weather is really bad to take
gym.

So I also would like to thank or
principal, Ms. Kram, and Alderman Cappleman,
because we really worked hard, tirelessly and many
hours, to make sure that this come -- that we get
the gym. And we would like for the gym to become
a hub for Uptown where we might be able to have it
open on the weekends, you know, early in the
morning so the kids can come in and so we can have
activities.

So again, I wanted to say thank you, and
I am so grateful. And I will be forever grateful
we finally have our first gym at McCutcheon
Elementary School. Go Mustangs!

MS. MORA: Hi. I'm Catherine Mora. And I
have a daughter at Schurz. And I wanted to thank
you for the field. I had a chance to meet with
the students, the athletic students. And when I
told them they were getting a field, you should
have seen their faces. They were overjoyed. So
they were thrilled and (inaudible), and the mascot
is a Bulldog, and they can actually be Bulldogs.
The second thing, because Schurz stresses improvement academically, it has an honors program, a guidance program, a CD program, (inaudible). And in keeping with CPS rules, keeping students safe, warm, and dry, I had a chance to walk through the school when it rained one day and watched a wall crumble in the cafeteria. There are serious issues with the roof and tuck-pointing. And we have leaking and flooding throughout the school. There is the BAS system, the heating system, is failing. We only have two engineers, and the size of that school, if you've been in it, it's enormous. And the two engineers that are currently working there have to work 12-hour shifts during the winter because if the system fails, part of the school will freeze.

We have green and black mold underneath the library carpet and the counseling carpet. And I've documented everything. So I have pictures and samples and everything. We also have peeling paint in the auditorium that is falling, and there's concerns that it's lead-based paint. So I have samples of that hoping to get that tested.
I'm just -- So knowing that Schurz is on improvement academically and keeping -- The kids there, their morale is up because they're getting a new field. But you still hear it when they walk the halls. I mean, it's gross. And you have kids, they gave away $19 million in scholarships. These kids want to achieve. So I just hope that standing before you, you guys will understand that when you invest in your public schools, it's not just throwing money. You're actually giving back to your community and to a future that can reinvest in the system as it matures.

MR. SMITH: We have ten speakers left. So the first speaker is Walterine Brock, Ebony Deberry, Justin heath, Adele Sims, and Julio Rodriguez. Are they here? If any of you are here, Alderman Arena, did you want to speak again?

So that would be -- I see they're coming. Okay. So it would be Ms. Brock next. Thank you.

MS. BROCK: Good evening, everyone. I just wanted to say my name is Walterine Brock. I'm a parent with Gale. I'm an LSC member. I'm a volunteer. I'm a safety volunteer for the kids. And so my concern is I was really appalled when I
put my little one in Gale and found out they had so many major issues. So I decided to, instead of being a problem, I decided to be part of the solution. But I do have a list that I would like to read off, because I'm concerned about the students at Gale.

And my list consists of paint peeling in the cafeteria, cracked tiles, walls with holes in them, water fountains rusty and smelly, toilets leaking, sinks leaking, floors staying wet all day, bathrooms smelling.

Security is one of my main issues there. I know we need more security there. You have students walking off the grounds because we don't have enough teachers or security to cover all the doors and the locations because we're right out off the park.

Kindergarten overcrowding. First grade overcrowding. And I'm asking that CPS see can they put forward some effort to try and make sure that Gale is a little bit more safe. My biggest concern is the kids being safe coming and going and staying on school grounds. All the other issues, I think you can work with. But safety is
one of my biggest concerns with Gale. And thank you all.

MR. SMITH: Next speaker is Ebony Deberry.

A SPEAKER: You talking about me?

MR. SMITH: The next speaker I have is Ebony.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello, everyone. My name is Marilyn, and I am a former Rogers Park resident. I was also on the local school council at Gale. And one of the things that concerns me was the lack and cut of teachers for the special needs students. I had a 6th grade son there before we moved to Uptown, and the school is being cut from different type of programs and special needs students. So my son started acting out from us -- from him being traumatized from us living in the shelter for two-plus years. I was getting calls up to the schools. I was told that my son, something was wrong with him. Rather than him getting the services he needed, he was -- I was being told to take him to Lake Shore Hospital to get him checked out. Every time he acted out, I was being told to take him to Lake Shore.

Another thing that I observed while I was living in Rogers Park, I worked at the shelter
right on Howard Street where I serviced 36 women and children. And a lot of the women came in broken through domestic violence, substance abuse. And when they came to the shelter, they got on their feet. But most of the parents that lived at the shelter, their kids attended Gale. So most of them had children that Gale no longer had the pre-K expansion, which was a bigger need for the schools in Rogers Park.

I'm no longer a Rogers Park resident. I now live in Uptown. So when I came to Uptown, it was no different. I seen that one school had already closed. Lofts are being built and condos. I hear there's a $75 million upgrade to the Uptown Theater. I hear that there is an underground tunnel being built to get us to O'Hare in 12 minutes. And I wondered where would we get this money from? And it's very sad that the City talks about they don't have money for this, they don't have money for that. But they certainly have money for the things that's not for the lower class.

Also I'd like to point out that I have two daughters at Roosevelt. My son goes there to
middle school, and I'm hearing that the middle
school might be phased out as well. Also I have a
daughter that graduated from Uplift. Uplift have
some very good, caring teachers. It's a small
school. Although McCutcheon is going to get a
gym, teachers from Uplift are being laid off as
well.

And you have violence on every corner,
which is a lack of security as well. So I just
ask that you all keep these things in mind. Thank
you.

MR. SMITH: Thank you. I have Justin Heath as
the next speaker and Adele Sims after him.

No Justin Heath.

Adele Sims. Thank you up at the top.

MS. SIMS: Thank you for listening. WBEZ
reported the bulk of these funds are going to the
North Side, white and mixed schools getting most
of the money. And that money is 989 million. Why
do most of the doors close in the black community,
the blacks or mixed areas, Latinos? It seems like
excellent locations are being provided, and high
school doors are constantly being closed. Why is
this? The West Side and the Latino schools are
being left out. Don't they count? Why does it appear that the white schools are receiving the bulk of the funding? And the question still is, why?

MR. SMITH: Are you Julio?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Julio Rodriguez.

MR. SMITH: Julio is next. And then after Julio, our final speakers are going to be Ms. Issalma Franco, Ranj Mohip, Betsy Melton, Mini Bandera, and Marisela Estrada thank you.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon. I am Julio Rodriguez. I live in the Belmont Cragin community. My mom owns many businesses around the area. And I went to Belmont Cragin Elementary School. I fully support the Capital Plan that is laid out. My family and my neighborhood, my mom and friends, are all small business owners that want to support the new school for Belmont Cragin. Not only would it ease overcrowding, but this decision is community led and presented the best interests of the community. Thank you.

MS. FRANCO: Good evening. My name is Issalma Franco. I am a resident of the Belmont Cragin community. I really want to say thank you for
having this location for Belmont Cragin. It is time. For example, my brother, who went there, I went there. It is time for him to actually be able to use the bathroom without running outside to go to another location, because they share a building right now. So it's really helpful. I know when I've been to the building now, as I graduated, I go and visit or go volunteer, it's over packed. There's papers everywhere, there's boxes everywhere, and it's something about safety too.

And Belmont Cragin School is something that I know the community has fought for and really wanted. And we're really happy that it's now happening. And we're thankful for it. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

MS. MELTON: Hello. My name is Betsy Melton, and I am a parent of a Blaine Elementary School student and also the President of Friends of Blaine, a fundraising organization. In addition to that, I just stepped off after serving as a parent representative on our local school council.

First of all, I just wanted to say that
we're very pleased to see continued financial investment in maintaining and improving Chicago Public Schools. I know it's relative; but as a previous speaker mentioned, I just wanted to thank you for your assistance in repairing the holes in our field, in our turf field. It's certainly going to make recess an easier -- certainly an easier time for our students. So I appreciate that.

It's my understanding that maybe four years ago, we were on a list to receive an annex at Blaine due to, at the time, we were -- it was stated we were overcrowded. As we continued down that road and that process, our capacity was reevaluated. And it changed into being modifications in our classroom and our lunchroom space as opposed to adding an annex to the building. It's my understanding that we're not slated for any additional building improvements to help alleviate our space issues. In addition to the overcrowding we were experiencing then, we've now taken on a full-day preschool. We have lunchroom issues that are going to be related to that as well as advisory periods and teacher
education times as well as not being able to find
space for our testing for our students.

Educational planning is an additional
issue. And on top of that, with the required
120 minutes now for PE, and the additional
30 minutes for health, we have continued space
issues as well. So I guess our questions are, how
can we get a better understanding of where Blaine
is on the plans for building improvements? And in
addition to that, how have your CPS building
capacity calculations changed to account for the
120 minutes for PE, 30 minutes of health, and the
four now full-day pre-K classes that we'll be
taking on?

MR. SMITH: Thanks.

MS. BANDERA: Good evening. My name is Mini
Bandera. I work and live in Belmont Cragin.
Don't believe what you see or read in an article.
We had a Belmont Cragin quality of life.
Mr. Rivera, you visited Belmont Cragin, and you
spoke with parents. The article doesn't quote any
parents.

We are the second largest community in
Chicago that's Latino. We do need -- I work at
the schools. I work with parents. I walk the
hallways. The building was built to relieve
overcrowding. The building was filled. We are
going to have to build an annex. Only one school
in Belmont Cragin has room, and that's Burbank.
Due to boundaries, they can't take any kids.

Believe me, if you want come to Belmont
Cragin, we'll show you the schools. Those
students do need it. We are Latino. It's time.
And this is not something that just happened.
We've been fighting for this for five years. If
you don't know Belmont Cragin quality of life,
look it up. And believe me, those parents, we're
ready. We've been asking. It's time. I feel
you. If you want your school for any fight, join
us, and we'll just make that happen. Not because
we're the North Side, we have everything. They
bypassed Belmont Cragin. But it's time that that
ends. So that's why I'm here.

Thank you. And we will continue to fight
for all those schools. But we've been on this
fight for five years or longer, and Belmont
Cragin -- Belmont Cragin already sits -- it's a
cold case in the Northwest middle. We're just
looking for a building that will have many
benefits for the whole community, not just that
school, a community center and school that's going
to benefit our community. We have no community
center in Belmont Cragin.

So thank you so much for the funding that
you will be doing at Belmont Cragin, because we
need it, and it's long overdue.

MR. MOHIP: Thank you. My name is Ranj Mohip.
I am on the LSC at Armstrong School. That is in
the 50th Ward, but I live in the 49th Ward because
of the way things are. And the way things are is
we have to beg the alderman in the 49th Ward for
money. They look at it and say, well, you know, a
lot of you guys are in the 50th, go ask the
alderman in the 50th. We ask the alderman in the
50th, and we get nothing because there's not
enough votes for these politicians. So I do want
to thank Chicago Public Schools for finally
getting us, which to some may seem unnecessary,
but we finally are really getting a field turf at
Armstrong. We've had many kids injured, many
times, and it's unfortunate what I'm seeing here
today. And I know the frustration of everybody on
the process, but we have the South Side pitted against the West Side, we have the West Side pitted against the North Side, everyone is fighting over the small amount of dollars. As a representative, community representative at Armstrong, I'm very thankful for what we're getting.

We don't have any lockers at the school; still need that if anybody's listening. But I just wanted to thank CPS for what we're getting. And hopefully, everybody can get what they need, because this is something we really needed.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

Can we give a nice round of applause to Marisela Estrada. She's our last speaker, and she waited all night.

MS. ESTRADA: Good evening. Good night. I don't even know what time it is, I've been here so long. My name is Marisela. I'm a parent and a resident of Belmont Cragin School. As my grandma always used to say, use the magic words, "please" and "thank you." So right now, I'm going to ask you to please hear me out. And what I have to say that I have to share with all of you is what we
have been through. It's been a long journey. It's been five years of standing up for the needs of our students, for the needs of the students in our community. We've been through meetings up and down. We've been through all the road. I hear your -- I hear your petitions, and trust me, we understand. She always taught me to put myself in somebody else's shoes, and that's exactly how I feel right now. I know how you feel, but I'm really, really, really grateful right now for what we are getting.

Our students are in a school that's co-located inside of another school. My daughter is part of that school. She's 9 years old, and she comes to the house, and she says, "Mommy, I love the school, but I couldn't play in the playground because we don't even have a place for recess." She shares a lunchroom. She shares bathrooms. We don't have a library. We have a library, but it's located in a room. So what we are getting is a well-deserved building that it's not also -- it's not only going to be a school, but it's going to serve as a community center for the community.
We are proud of Belmont Cragin. This school is a dual and a public school. It has a social and emotional learning program, and it helps the students with trauma. Belmont Cragin is the fastest growing community in Chicago. We have 12,000 students belonging to this community, and trust me, I invite you to go there. Our houses are not like the houses out there. You see a building of three floors, that means there's three different families possibly living there. It's not a building per family. We are overcrowded so stop, if you can, if you want to come and meet our community from the heart. We are also having this community center to help out our own community. If you hear about Belmont Cragin, all you hear, most of what you hear is bad, unfortunately. Well, let me tell you, not all of us in there are bad. We're looking for a better future. I have two daughters, a 9-year-old and 2-year-old. I look -- I struggled with what I had in the time I had it. I'm a low-income Latina, and I'm looking for a better future for not only my kids but for the kids in my community.

Thank you very much for what you gave us.
I think it's well-deserved, and we all deserve what we are asking for. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: Just before we all leave, I want to thank you all for being here, and those who spoke. And for those of you who actually stayed here to hear all the speakers, not only was it very respectful, but I think it demonstrates your commitment to the children in Chicago and the betterment of their education. So thank you very much, all of you, for being here tonight. Thank you.

(Off the record at 7:42 p.m.)

(Whereupon, the Public Hearing adjourned at 7:42 o'clock p.m.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS

COUNTY OF COOK

I, TRACY JONES, being first duly sworn, on oath says that she is a court reporter doing business in the City of Chicago; and 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.

TRACY JONES, CSR, RPR, CLR
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**Notes:**
- Tuition varies by class and age.
- Additional fees may apply.

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**Administrators' Notes:**
- The school is advised to consider alternative funding sources.
-有任何问题，请随时联系我们。

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**Supplementary Information:**
- Back to school activities will be held on 9/12.
- Attendance is mandatory for all students.

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**Academic Achievements:**
- Students have accomplished significant academic goals.
- Please refer to the attached report for detailed information.

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**Future Events:**
- Annual Art Show: Date TBA
- Talent Show: Date TBA

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**Contact Information:**
- Office: (312) 534-5678
- Email: info@school.org