CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BUDGET HEARING FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2013
November 5, 2012

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS in the
above-entitled matter held at Martin Luther King
College Preparatory High School, 4445 South Drexel
Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, commencing at 6 o'clock
p.m., MR. PETER ROGERS, moderating.

PRESENT:

MR. PETER ROGERS, Chief Financial Officer
MR. GREGORY VOLAN, Budget Manager
MR. MATTHEW WALTER, Office of Budget

Reported by: Anna M. Morales, CSR, RMR
License No.: 084-002854
(Whereupon, the following proceedings commenced at
6 o'clock p.m.)

MR. WALTER: Hello. Thank you for coming to the amended budget hearings.

To start, first I want to ask if anyone needs a Spanish or sign language interpreter? If so, you can come down to my bottom right and we'll provide one for you.

Today's presentation will first start off with a short presentation by Peter Rogers, the CFO. We'll then go into a question-and-answer session. I'm going to start by going through the logistics of the meeting today. The hearing will begin at 6 p.m. and then promptly end at 8 p.m. or when the last speaker has concluded. All who sign up to speak will be given an opportunity to ask a question or make a statement until the meeting is adjourned.

All those wishing to speak are asked to please sign in from 5 to 6:30 on the speaker sign-in sheet at the entrance registration table and each speaker will be given a number. Please note that no one will be able to sign up to speak
Speakers will be limited to addressing topics related to the budget. 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. 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 the follow-up card. The public hearing is scheduled to conclude at 8 p.m. or after the last speaker, whichever is first. CPS has a Web site where the public can share their thoughts on the budget, cps.edu for more information.

Our panel tonight consists of Greg Volan, Budget Manager, and Peter Rogers, the CFO.

I will now turn it over to Peter to walk us through the slides.

CFO ROGERS: Thank you, Matt, and good evening to everyone. As Matt said, my name is Peter Rogers. I'm the Chief Financial Officer for
the Chicago Public Schools, and it's a pleasure to be here with all of you tonight at this terrific school I must say, an auditorium that could hold many of us even though only a few enthusiastic people are here, and we hope we can address all your questions and interests that you might have particularly relative to the reason that we're here, which is to present to you a discussion of our amended budget for the calendar year -- rather, I should say, the school calendar year of 2013 which we are now into that year by about three months, and we're going to have a discussion about that and some changes that we're proposing to make in the budget. That's the purpose of the meeting. Beyond that, if there are other questions, we'll do our best to answer them, but I'm going to say we're here principally to talk about the amended budget which I will discuss with you briefly and then open it up to questions. So can we start? Again, the purpose of this meeting is to talk about our amended budget, and the first question which we'll get into is why we are amending what we call the FY or full year of 2013 budget in the first place and what does the
amended -- what does the amendment to the budget
do. So I will address those various questions in
due course.

All right. First of all, why do we have
to amend the 2013 budget? And a little bit of
background on this. The budget for the school year
that we are currently in was established and
approved by the Board of Education on the 24th of
August, and it included funds for all concluded
union actions and agreements that we knew about at
that time; that is to say, we set the budget in mid
to late August. Any union actions requiring to be
included in the budget were included in the budget,
and the final budget was set and approved by the
Board accordingly.

As you all know, there was a series of
actions with the Chicago Teachers Union. That
contract entered into a new collective bargaining
agreement which we have now agreed to, and it added
$103 million to the budget to increase teacher
compensation.

This increase requires us to propose an
amendment to the budget which we are in the process
of doing and we'll discuss with you this evening.
Feedback from hearings such as this -- there's another hearing taking place today at Walter Payton School on the north side. The feedback we get from you will be provided to our Board and transcripts will be posted on line. The Board, in turn, will act on this budget at the November 14th meeting coming up in just over a week's time. They'll act on our amendment as we will present to the Board at that meeting coming up on the 14th of November.

All right.

The added expense is primarily due to teacher compensation that stems from the agreement that we reached with the Teachers Union in September, and those include a total of $59 million for a 3 percent cost-of-living increase that will be effective in the school year that we are currently in.

$33 million for what are known as Step increases. These are increases that teachers are eligible for as they gain additional experience and tenure in working in the school system. And so an additional $33 million will be paid this year in this school year for those increases, increases relative to rewarding for experience.
An additional $5 million for what are known as Lane increases. Lane increases are rewards for academic accomplishments, for teachers gaining additional degrees and proficiency in their area of expertise. When that occurs, we reward them. The school system rewards those teachers rightly for getting those additional credentials and experience that helps them teach the children more effectively.

An additional $6 million is for nonteachers, various aides, and clerks that are also part of the Chicago Teachers Union. The total of that then is $103 million, an additional expense for our 2013 budget.

Now we'll cover those budgets, and that's the reason for amending those additional expenses, and that's the reason for amending the budget in various ways.

First of all, from various operating activities, we will cover $21 million of the budget's needed increases, and they come through food service revenue and expenses, improvements in our food service revenue and expenses, and, additionally, more aggressive procurement targets.
So between those two activities, we've identified opportunities for us which will generate, between the two of them, 11 million for one and 10 million for the other for a total of $20 million in opportunity saves. We have those programs well underway right now particularly on the procurement side.

We're looking through each and every contract. We've hired an outside firm to help us with that, A. T. Carney, which is going to help us go through and look at all the contracts and determine ways that we can make improvements as well as any new contract that we're entering into. We continue to bargain extremely hard and get the lowest cost possible.

On the administrative side, we have identified $12 million in potential saves. This comes from delay or cancelling filling vacant nonteacher administrative positions that we had intended to fill during the course of the year. We'll need to delay those or cancel them all together.

And, further, we're going to trim other budget items that we have control over. These
range from a whole host of things down to something like computer printing machines which are expensive in terms of ink cartridges and so forth; and over a system as large as ours, it mounts up.

We've gone through and identified different administrative expenses which will result in a save along with a delay to hire of another $12 million.

On the financial side, we have an opportunity to do some things that will generate $70 million in saves for us this year or additional revenue for us. First of all, we are capitalizing the interest on August 2012 bonds. We had a bond issue, new debt issue in August of this year, couple of months ago, that will be used to fund various capital projects; and by capitalizing the interest, that is to say, rather than paying interest, we make the interest part of the overall debt expense. That saves considerable amount of money for us.

We are intending to sell surplus properties that we have in the system to the tune of raising $15 million in vacant lots and properties that are not currently being used.
And, finally, we intend to refinance bonds that are currently maturing to the tune of about $42 million. These are bonds that would have ordinarily been matured and retired in 2013 and 2014, but instead of doing that, we'll extend these through a new issuance. The rates are favorable for us to do this right now. We'll raise an additional $42 million.

So between these financial activities, we'll raise additional revenue of some $70 million. The combined total of all those will allow us to cover the $103 million in additional expense in 2013 that I have referenced.

So that is what we're doing. In order to accomplish this, since we set our budget in August of this year, we are required with any change we make to the budget to present that to the Board of Education, to have a public hearing which we're having right now on the proposed changes. We'll present these changes to our Board as I mentioned on the 14th of this month, and we'll also discuss any input that we get from you at that time.

So at this point, I would like to open it up to any questions of a speaker who has signed in.
You have two minutes to ask a questions and we'll do our best to comment on those questions. After all have signed in and spoken, the hearing will adjourn.

So at this point, I will open it up to questions. We do not have a roving mic, but we're not that large a group, and I'm sure we'll be able to hear you if you will speak up a little bit and we'll answer as best we can.

MR. WALTER: We'll start in the order that you signed in. So we'll start with Speaker Number 1. So you know, I will have -- I will be keeping time for two minutes. I will hold up a 10 seconds note when you get to the end of your time. So if you could wrap it up.

MR. BLUE: Gentlemen, how are you? My name is Sylvester Blue. I am the chairperson of the Local School Council at Dunbar High School. And in your financials that you stated, selling of surplus properties, you said vacant properties and properties that weren't currently being used.

Are you taking into consideration any school that may possibly be closed in this upcoming year?
CFO ROGERS: No, we are not, unless it has been at this point already. These are --
A VOICE: Repeat the question.
CFO ROGERS: The question was, which if you don't mind, I will try to ask it for you. The issue of selling surplus properties has been raised and the question regarding that was will we be selling any -- will any of those properties relate to schools that we might be closing during the course of the coming year. I think that was correct, isn't it?
MR. BLUE: Yes.
CFO ROGERS: My answer to that is that is not the intent. These are principally properties that have been vacant for some time that in our planning we haven't found a use for these properties, and we think there's an opportunity to sell those right now as the market for real estate has improved a little bit.
We've also been waiting for most of the property values to have been improved which we think they have enough for us to warrant selling them at the present time and, if successful, we will raise $15 million for doing so.
MR. WALTER: Speaker Number 2.

MR. BRUNSON: Hello. My name is Michael Brunson. I am the recording secretary of the Chicago Teachers Union. I will be quick because basically I have two questions.

First of all, you said you had to add in $103 million to cover the contract, and when you figured it at 3 percent, I know that before the Board had anticipated a 2 percent increase with no Steps and Lanes.

Did you deduct that from the 103 million to come up with the 103 million? Was that taken into consideration or did we start from zero to get to 3 percent?

CFO ROGERS: That's a good question, Michael. Did everyone hear the question?

A VOICE: No.

CFO ROGERS: I know you have a big voice. Do you mind repeating it?

MR. BRUNSON: At first, the Board had anticipated giving the teachers a 2 percent raise with no Steps and Lanes, and they had built that into the original budget. So when they came up with this extra 103 million, did they deduct that
from the numbers they came up with to get this
103 million? That was the question.

CFO ROGERS: Greg, would you mind answering
that question?

MR. VOLAN: So it's true that we did budget in
the original budget for 2 percent salary increase.
One thing that changed after the original budget
was there was an agreement with the Chicago
Teachers Union before we reached the agreement on
the collective bargaining agreement. There was the
agreement on the full school day position -- on
full school day. And part of that required us to
open up over 500 teacher positions for full school
day. So that's all factored into this.

So we weren't able to deduct the full
2 percent that we had budgeted for salary increases
because there was that additional unanticipated
cost for the full school day positions.

MR. BRUNSON: And then my second question, and
I will let it go, and I have to bring this up
because this is something that's on everyone's
mind. There is the rumor of the school closings
that are coming up; and, in the past, the school
closings have been based on academic performance,
but this year the rumblings are that the school closings will be based upon space utilization, meaning that the schools are understaffed with students.

So with that in mind, if you're planning to close, to right-size this system or close buildings based upon space utilization, why has the whole Department of Demographics and Planning been eliminated from Chicago Public -- from the central office? You've had Department of Demographics and Planning run by -- what was his name? -- Mr. Dispensa. He's been moved over since April to Senior Manager of Business Optimization.

So it seems as though if you're going to be closing schools based upon that, why would you shut down that department?

MR. VOLAN: You want me to answer this one?

CFO ROGERS: Please, Greg, if you would.

MR. VOLAN: So the answer is that we have not shut down that department. That department is now part of the Portfolio Office. Jim Dispensa is still with the CPS. He took a different position at CPS. And I know the Portfolio Office is looking to backfill his position. But the department has
not been eliminated. That function is still being provided through the Portfolio Office.

    MR. BRUNSON: You folded it into Portfolio now?

    MR. VOLAN: Correct.

    MR. WALTER: Speaker Number 3.

    MR. JACKSON: Two questions I want to ask. Now you got up there $103 million for the teachers whatever they agreed with; but according to the graph that I got, the Board made a -- they said a revenue surplus in 2009, '10 and '11, and also basically in '12. You're basing your revenue on expenses, on expenses.

      So my question is how is it that you're going to spend more money that you take in to, you know, to get up this level?

      Now we know that this TIF money as well as the property taxes that is being -- going up by the Board is supposed to really offset these expenses that you're coming up with. And number two, the $80 million that was allocated for those teachers that would have offset that $103 million, why did the Board not offer those teachers that 80 million that they should have been getting instead of deliberately diverting that money from the teachers
to pay for police officer and triple their pay salary?

CFO ROGERS: Well, let me see if I can try to repeat that. I think, in essence, what you've -- the question you have raised is that revenues and funds that could have been used to cover the increase in teacher compensation by way of the recent agreement could have been covered by other means and, in fact, some of the money was funneled off to pay for policeman?

MR. JACKSON: Correct. The Teachers Union had to file an FOIA, to get a freedom of information to show you all had this money, but you lied to the public and said you did not have the money to pay the teachers, otherwise they wouldn't have gotten to the place where it was.

So you had $80 million to pay the teachers, but you deliberately moved the funds just as you're doing now. You're moving funds and saying we got this big deficit. But you're not telling how much money you're taking in on the TIF. You are not adding up how much you're paying for these 18 lawyers, and I mean the law firms you're paying for.
So let the public know how much money it's going to cost for us, as taxpayers, to pay for outside law firms that your Board has. But you're going to outside law firms to pay for it. You're giving me zero seconds, but you're not going to give us the real answer. You're not putting up there about how much does it cost for the outside consultant which you don't need and these outside law firms that you hire and the Board got their own law firm that could save money.

CFO ROGERS: Let me make an effort to answer your question which is quite broad. I will tell you this that, as I said, we are obligated to have a balanced budget. We had a balanced budget on August 24th when this Board of Education approved it.

We then entered into a collective bargaining agreement with the Chicago Teachers Union that required us to pay an additional $103 million. So we were obligated to produce a balanced budget which requires us to find expense reductions or additional revenue to cover the expense of the Teachers Union contract. That amounted to $103 million.
We have found those revenues and expenses through activities that will continue over the next several months which will allow us to, once again, balance our budget.

MR. JACKSON: Do you not agree the $80 million was misappropriately and deliberately sent off to another?

CFO ROGERS: I'm afraid I don't know about the $80 million you're talking about.

Next question.

MR. WALTER: Speaker Number 4.

MS. ROBINSON: The 80 million he was talking about and the money he's talking about for the teachers was the 4 percent that we didn't get. That's what you're -- not the new contract. So that does need to be answered. A lot of people that one.

My name is Bonita Robinson, and I'm a retired reading specialist who taught from 1972 to 2011 at Duke Ellington School in the Austin community on the west side. I have a comment and a question.

The comment is that for the past 20 years, 20 plus years, urban school reform has played out
in the Chicago Public Schools including the budget
has been a failure. Instead of admitting the
failure of the school system -- of the school
system to nurture, educate, and prepare our
students for successful productive lives, this
system has sabotaged the neighborhood schools by
withholding resources and then supplanting them
with accountability measures otherwise known as
testing which takes up too much time, and then
crafting a narrative of failure of the schools,
teachers, and students as opposed to the failure of
the system to provide the appropriate learning
environment.

It is well-documented that from 1971 to
'88, according to the NAPE scores, the achievement
gap, black/white achievement gap was narrowing, '88
at the best. It is also well-documented through
research that since the advent of reform 20 plus
years that the gap stopped narrowing and, in fact,
has widened.

I have -- there's a wonderful graph that
shows the closing of the NAPE scores from '71 to
'88. I taught during that time.

And then these last 20 years, the
Sun-Times last year showed us a University of Chicago headline here, No real progress in grade school reading in 20 years. So the past 20 years of reform has been a failure.

I taught during both periods, and I can attest to the fact that what's going on now, including the budget -- and I can't want to hear the details. I'm glad the people are covering the details that I want to talk about but we don't have time enough to talk about that. When I taught during the period where the gap was closing, from the administration, there was a by word of how can I be of service to you? What do you need? Go in there and teach. That's why it got closed because we spent time teaching with the children.

And then in these last 20 years, the by word is intimidation, do this, do that, and mostly test, test, test, test. That is why I left the classroom. I still want to be teaching, but I was testing and my time -- one thing about it. We can spend our money for the resources that you don't fund, but when you start taking our time -- I'm closing -- when you start taking our time, then you're sabotaging our children and the research
proves this.

Just a few things that were taken from my school. We used to have trips. We used -- I mean, all the time. We brought in cultural events through Urban Gateways. Our children went to camp. All this is gone. Spanish is gone. Computer is gone. You're going to be taking -- they're going to be taking this new test, NWEA, on the computer. We have little kindergartners who are going to take that test who don't know how to use the computer because we don't have -- we have a computer lab. We just don't fund the teaching.

We had guidance counseling for the children. We didn't have as much killing then, but we at least had the guidance counseling. We had aides. We had RIF, Reading is Fundamental. Choir. I taught at Duke Ellington School. There's no big music program there. Half music time.

And paraphrasing -- I'm closing -- to paraphrase Linda Darling Hammond, we know what works. I work for that period where the gap closed. Why aren't we doing it? You're sabotaging our children.

I worked in the past year on several
committees with some of your top administrators, and it is clear to me that they are wonderful people that I had met, but they do not know what our children need.

Like I said, I taught them and I know that many of the teachers that you all -- you're budgeting and opening the charter schools and saying you have too many seats in the regular public schools, that's a manufactured seat expansion. But what I'm saying is many of the teachers that you have displaced and so forth, they were teaching when I was teaching. They know what they're doing -- they know what they were doing. And this is killing our children.

The question that I wanted to ask -- and I'm going to move on -- the question that I wanted to ask was, Duke Ellington school branch, closing, was torn down in 2005. Yet in your budget, you have an item. It's a small amount, but why would there be something on the budget for -- you're making me wonder because the teachers didn't get there -- it was on the 2012 list. Like I said, it's a small amount, but that was a year that the teachers didn't get their raise. I had just
retired last -- but why would there be an amount
for a school that hasn't existed for many years?

MR. WALTER: Do you know how much the amount
was?

MS. ROBINSON: Here it is. It's right here. I
have a copy because I would like an answer for that
because it makes me wonder, are there other
schools, are there other amounts in this budget
somewhere -- because it wasn't even listed next to
Duke Ellington School. The current Duke Ellington
School was listed as Edward Duke Ellington School,
and then it's listed about 23 schools down,
Ellington branch. So it's like you didn't want
people to see them together.

It might have a good answer. I don't
know, but it makes me wonder, are there other
things throughout this budget that are budgeted for
schools that don't exist?

MR. WALTER: We'll have to look into that for
you. In general, though, when a building is
closed, sometimes there are still expenses that are
associated with it. If a branch is closed --

MS. ROBINSON: I looked back at the other
years, and there was nothing there. So why would
it pop up after not being there for years?

MR. WALTER: We'll have to look into that.

CFO ROGERS: It's a question we wouldn't have.

MS. ROBINSON: It's a small amount, but small amounts add up.

CFO ROGERS: I can assure you, if there's an expense listed with the school, it was for a legitimate expense, and we'll have to check into what that was. We can get more detail on it. But there are certainly residual expenses. They might not happen the very next year. It could have been something that came up as a consequence with the school closing.

MS. ROBINSON: I would like to know. How will I find that answer out?

CFO ROGERS: If you could give us your name and address, we can get back to you with a response.

MS. ROBINSON: And, finally, I do want to leave on a positive note, and I had planned on going to the October Board meeting and I will have to eventually come, but I was going to suggest that reading the -- this whole system, in fact, I am going to suggest to you that you suggest to your real boss, Mayor Emanuel, that we all read as a
city, the Flat World in Education by Linda Darling
Hammond, who done the research on the closing of
gap, how America's commitment to equity will
determine our future as well as the miseducation of
the Negro.

To come up with a real plan instead of a
sabotage plan and fake failure plan, we need to
move our children.

CFO ROGERS: Thank you very much. I appreciate
your comments, and it's particularly good to hear
from someone who's got as much experience in
teaching in our Chicago district as you have.
Thank you very much.

MR. WALTER: Speaker Number 5, please.

MS. REGGS: First, I want to say I think it's
disrespectful to have two minutes regarding a
meeting when you come into a community talking
about budgeting and school closing and other
things.

I know you're talking about budgeting
today. The budget doesn't accommodate the schools
the way you're supposed to be. If we're going
through a crisis with the budget, how can the
richer -- I will classify this -- certain schools
that are richer is getting funded and certain people are being funded while schools that are closing are lacking resources more and more if you're piling schools on top of each other and not providing for that school?

So I just want to say when you guys requested an extension for the schools -- for the school closing for March, I think that we should not do that. I think closing the previous schools still haven't marinated yet, and you guys just keep piling things up and you guys are not being accountable for anything.

Total conspiracy with this budget. You guys are dealing with federal funding that's not properly going to the schools. No one has gotten arrested. No one has become accountable.

Jean-Claude Brizard is gone. He still gets a paycheck of 300 and some thousand dollars as if he's still here. Our school deserves that money.

TIF money is not being properly funded into the schools that you guys are closing. And I oppose that you guys are constantly coming to African communities destroying our schools by not giving us the proper resources and you have the
money for the resources. Because we don't have
libraries at Dyett. We don't have computers at
Dyett. We don't have like a rehab. We don't have
a counselor to come in and work with our kids.

And you guys never sent me a letter saying
that the school was being phased out by e-mail.
You sent it to my daughter.

I want to know why is it that you guys'
paycheck keep going up but the school is closing in
African-American neighborhoods?

CFO ROGERS: Thank you for your question and
comments. I will say that as far as the date that
you referenced relative to March 1st, I want to
comment on that because, in fact, it addresses some
of your points.

As has been documented in recent news
reports, our new CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett has made
it very clear that she does not intend to let the
school system take any actions on school closures
or adjustments despite recognizing that there is
quite a surplus of schools in the system relative
to the number of students we have. It's her intent
not to let any actions take place until we have
fully discussed all possibilities with the
community.

And a very thorough process has been set up including a panel of experts and very interested people representing all walks of the city to gain opinion and to make sure that we are equipped with a full view of community prior to taking any action.

And the reason for requesting an extension of the normal date that's required for notification of school closures is that she rightly felt that we were not in a position today and would not be by the normal date of having to submit school closure information. We would not have had an opportunity to fully obtain input from the school -- from the people that are most interested in the schools, that being parents and the community.

And so it's her intention to fully obtain as much information as possible. And I applaud her for those efforts. Could we have your name, please?

MS. REGGS: Kitesha Reggs, K-i-t-e-s-h-a, R-e-g-g-s.

MR. WALTER: Speaker Number 6, please.

MS. CLENDENNING: Good evening, everyone. My
name is Joy Clendenning. I live right over here in Hyde Park. I am the parent of four children who attend Chicago Public Schools. This is my 12th year as a CPS parent, and I'm here tonight to specifically say to people who work on the budget, can you please stop doing so much testing and stop spending so much money on it? In terms of what you presented tonight, I guess you could look at this as a place where you can get some expense reductions.

I would specifically suggest you look at other budget items. You mentioned computer printers. Well, I would suggest looking at all of the vendor contracts and all of the infrastructure and staffing required to run nonmandated tests such as the NWEA MAP testing which has been extended this year down into kindergarten including schools which don't have the right sized text map, including children who don't how to use a map.

So I would suggest that you in the budget, maybe you can suggest to people that we need to look at how we're spending the money and whether it really helps kids.

I don't know the numbers, but I do know
that there's a lot of testing going on. I know it's increased during the 12 years that my children have been in the system. I believe that the people deciding to approve all of the money for testing must think that this helps kids, but I don't think it does and I think research will back me up.

Please stop the testing. Move the money to the things that we know will help kids. Invest in our existing neighborhood schools including the one right here around King. There are neighborhood schools right here that have kids and need investment and, frankly, would have more kids if you invested more in them. We know that we need things like smaller class sizes, playgrounds, libraries, social workers, nurses, authentic professional development, Restorative Justice programs and college counseling, just to name a few.

Please shift the money away from the nonmandated testing and spend it on things that we know work.

And I guess my question would be, can you do this? Do you have a line to the Board? Do you have a line to people? I mean, you look through
the budget to try to find things. Is there a way
that you can look at this testing issue? Thank
you.

CFO ROGERS: Thank you very much. To answer
your question outright, yes, there is a way and I'm
Chief Financial Officer. I have full authority to
look at any expense in our school budget and
question it and recommend changes if I don't think
it's an appropriate level.

In fact, just to reference your point,
which you will probably find interesting, we spent
three hours today going through budgets that
included testing with a view toward understanding
in full detail how much testing was needed, asked
for justification by way of an expert on our
education side relative to the consequences of
those testing.

And I can assure you, we regularly
question every expense throughout the Chicago
School District. And we need to do that and more
because, yes, we have a very substantial task in
front of us. We had to move rather quickly to fill
the gap that allows us to balance our 2013 budget.

But nothing goes without review, and we
put every resource possible in looking at all expenses, vendor contracts, many of which are oriented towards testing, you're right, because we often use outside vendors for testing, and analysis for results. And we'll look at every expense as we have, and we'll continue to do so going forward.

Thank you for your comments.

MR. WALTER: Speaker Number 7, please.

MR. VANCE: Hello. Hello, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Dave Vance. I am an LSC member at James Thorpe Elementary School at 89th and Buffalo.

Well, Mr. Rogers, I have to be blunt. First, welcome, and there's all was a "but". You're the fifth financial officer in the last two years, some odd years. I can't name all the financial officers. I can name the four CEOs since Arne Duncan. Let me see. Yes, we had Ron. Huberman, he's gone. We had Terry Mazany, six months. We had J. C. Brizard. And now another savior, Barbara Byrd-Bennett.

So what's going on? What's going on at the top? You're new, but we've been going to these meetings, and that's why I know you're new. We've
been going to these meetings. There's instability. And then in September, they lowered Moody -- Moody's lowered their rating on CPS bonds. So, gee, instability at the top, lower your bond ratings, what are we supposed to think? So can you explain to me why they have reduced the bond ratings? One question. But we have all been watching this Board, the different boards. We're worried that you don't know what you're doing, and that it's just another scam, and now the scam is instead of looking -- closing the bad schools, now they're counting seats. You know, we're all human beings and we want better schools and we're fighting for our schools. They chopped our school in half. I know all about what you're doing. In the first year they opened up L.E.A.R.N. Charter in my school, they gave them $2 million, a million from Oprah Winfrey, another second million from Arne Duncan. We know what the scam is. I do have a question because I was at the Board meeting and it was on the slide show. I thought when Tim Cawley presented the same slide
show, I thought he questioned this 70 million increase, how you could capitalize. Bienen asked Cawley, you can't do that. So what happened? Is it okay now?

CFO ROGERS: Who asked Tim Cawley?

MR. VANCE: The Board member --

MR. BRUNSON: Bienen. Board Member Bienen.

MR. VANCE: Bienen. He asked about this slide. He said, this 70 million can't be added that way. Did he discuss that with you?

CFO ROGERS: I was in that same Board meeting -- thank you for your questions, sir. There are several. I would like to try to comment on each one as I can briefly.

First of all, yes, your observation is well-taken. There has been a frequent change in the CEO level, no doubt at the CFO level as well. I can't explain fully since I was not here yet, not to hide behind that. All I can tell you is I'm here now. I'm dedicated to this position. I'm very pleased to be here. And my sense of the colleagues that I'm working with is that everyone -- if you'll just bear with me on this -- everyone has the best intention of education in Chicago or
we would not be in the positions that we're in today.

Now time will tell how successful we are, and with your input and comments such as what you made, I think we can only get better if we listen to those and make improvements. So that would be my comment on that.

As I said, the principle point I want to make is that there are a lot of dedicated, very smart, and very motivated people that work in the Chicago Public School System, both at the teacher level and administrative positions, and we're trying to do the best we can for children.

Second point I think that I want to comment on -- I may have missed one, I'm sorry, please let me know if I did -- you raised a question about the financial aspects of the $70 million that were presented at the Board meeting and a question may have come up on that. I think the question that came up on this related to the fact that we were going through and discussing the 103 million, the coverage of the 103 million as though it was all coming from expense save when, in reality, a large part of it isn't really expense
save. It is actually additional revenue.

And Tim may have not explained that
initially, but I'm sure he corrected himself
eventually in that. And Mr. Bienen was correct in
saying that of the 70 million, much of that comes
from -- the 70 million, it's principally from
additional revenue which comes from refinancing
bonds or capitalizing bonds; and, on the one hand,
capitalizing bonds does allow you to save expense
from interest you would otherwise pay. But a large
portion of the 70 comes from revenue, not expense
save. And you're correct in that regard.

I'm sure you may have asked -- is there
another part to your question? I'm sorry if I
missed it.

MR. VANCE: Well, the other part was, of
course, the money that's being spent going to the
charter schools, and while they get money we get
starved. And they cut our budget this year from
last year a quarter of a million dollars. So
they're cutting school budgets and then giving the
charter school in our same building 800 million and
cutting us by 250 -- excuse me, 800,000 and cutting
us by 250,000.
So we see it as a scam. We don't trust the Board. We don't trust the Mayor. So good luck with your new job.

CFO ROGERS: Thank you. I have a feeling I will need it.

Just to further comment on that. I think this goes back to a comment I made a moment ago which is to say that your opinion, which I know is very well thought through considering the role you are playing at the school you're involved with, the opportunity is there right now with our new CEO to give as much opinion as possible to shape the direction of our school district.

As I said, it's the intent of everyone working there to improve the quality of our education for Chicago's children, and whether it's through charter schools spending or more spending in neighborhood schools, now is the time to make sure your voice is heard. Yours have been heard this evening and thank you for that.

MR. WALTER: Speaker Number 8.

MS. DAWSON: My name is Dorothy Dawson, and I have been connected with Dunbar Vocational Career Academy for the past 51 years. I have been more
than some of you guys' ages are.

But I have you know this: I looked at this 103 million. I want to know how many million are you going to put into Dunbar Vocational High School, to put all of our shops back in shape, back where they were before? In the last eight to ten years, you just started nibbling one at a time, one at a time, taking them out. We had brick, auto mechanics, body fender, welding, sheet metal, printing, all of the office things that you could have, accounting, court recording, anything that you could name, we had it at Dunbar, and we are almost down to zip now.

We want this school back and up to par. Now that I met you, I know you and I will be seeing you because we want that back. You put simple stuff in the school that you don't even ask the school. Like they filled in the orchestra pit with cement. They had no business doing that. They never asked us as a Local School Council, can I do that. They just did it. And we don't like it and we're not going to accept it.

You're going to give us what we want and put our kids back on lane.
I got something that I want to give you personally about what happens to the best products that come from vocational and technical high schools, some of the best people in the country, and we got them -- like that little guy sitting over there, three master degrees that finished in carpentry in my school. You know, you have a number of them that we can name that own their own business. Ernest Brown own his own business because we had the equipment and stuff that you needed at Dunbar.

We want it back. We going to word the heck out of you. We need it back.

CFO ROGERS: All right. Thank you for your comment, and I look forward to getting more as time goes on. I appreciate how much you --

MS. DAWSON: One other thing, please. Take Marriott Food out of our school and let us go back to cooking and making good meals for our kids so they can be healthy and live longer.

CFO ROGERS: We'll take your comments to the right people including ourselves. Thank you very much.

MR. WALTER: That's it. That was the last
speaker that registered.

CFO ROGERS: Are there any new speakers that have not registered?

MR. WALTER: We have Speaker Number 9.

MR. SAFFOLD: I'm Number 9.

CFO ROGERS: Yes, sir.

MR. SAFFOLD: First comment -- my name is Lonnell Saffold. I am a resident of the Englewood neighborhood, and I overheard you talking about school closing. And while I don't have much to say about it other than the people -- I mean, the gentlemen raised a question about spacial utilization and how they want to go about making the choice of which school is going to stay open and which school is going to close. Are they taking into consideration the safe passage? Because if you close a school to fill another, you're taking another kid out of the neighborhood who had safe passage to that school, now he's going to be put in the school where it's going to be probably met with rival gang members. You saw what happened at Fenger High School. It was a travesty, and it was seen all over the country.
Are they taking into consideration, if they're closing 100 schools, the danger that's going to put young teens' lives at stake just trying to get to a new school? Are they taking that into consideration? That's my first question.

CFO ROGERS: Now the answer to that is a definite yes. That is a very important factor that is being taken into consideration. In any discussion about school closures -- let me emphasize, once again, that there have been no final decisions. There is not a plan for school closures at this point. We're at a fact-finding stage right now that's been announced, and we'll continue until our new CEO feels confident she has appropriate input from the community.

One of the factors, though, I can tell you for sure because I heard this mention on numerous occasions has to do with the safety of the children recognizing that is a factor that's critically important to any discussion of this sort.

MR. SAFFOLD: So is there going to be finances put in place to hire more security officers? Our champion, what I see right now, where I see parents standing on corners, security, I don't know what
their titles are, but I like the fact that you have parents in their vests being identified. I guess when trouble happens, they can reach out, contact the CPD or what have you. Will that increase? That's part of a monetary budget that will have to be approved, right?

CFO ROGERS: It would be if it were increased from the current budget. I can tell you that, yes, indeed, we have an entire group that works on safety and security as you referenced, and that is -- as I mentioned, while there is no definitive plan at this point in terms of any additional school closures, any discussion will have to consider and will actively involve safety and security. If that means additional expenditures for safety and security, that will have to be taken into consideration before any changes are made.

MR. SAFFOLD: My second question, and I will be brief, you mentioned there was going to be a $21 million savings I guess with food service and purchasing.

Tell me how these savings already have been accounted for. Are you going to be renegotiating contracts with current contractors?
1 And you say you've identified the money. So is it
2 safe to say the cuts are going to come? Because if
3 you're going make savings, that means there's going
4 to be cuts with procurement. These are the people
5 that you contract with. So are you saying today
6 that these cuts have already been made but we just
7 don't know what they are?
8     CFO ROGERS: No. Actually it's a good
9 question. You're right. The number was
10 $11 million I think for -- in the food service area
11 and another 10 million for contracts in general.
12     Speaking for the people that are
13 responsible for procurement and food service, I can
14 tell you right now that they do not have those all
15 in hand at this point. They intend to work hard to
16 find them. They feel confident that there is areas
17 particularly in the procurement and contract area;
18 not making cuts of services. It does not have to
19 do with cutting services. It has to do with buying
20 goods and services more smartly, going back and
21 looking at contracts that have been negotiated in
22 the past and perhaps not fulfilled perfectly.
23     This is a very large school district. We
24 have a $5 billion budget. It's enormous, as you
can imagine. There's many contracts and many vendors. We have a team of professionals that I feel confident that has never existed before in the Chicago Public Schools that are working these things on a very rigorous basis to identify the opportunities. They won't come from reducing services. They'll come from reducing expenses to vendors and finding more efficient ways to operate.

MR. SAFFOLD: Would those services include wages and benefits of those who are providing the services?

CFO ROGERS: They might if they are outside vendors and providers, but not certainly anybody who is currently an employee delivering for us who might be under a contract or an agreement already. It's principally on outside suppliers.

MR. SAFFOLD: There's 1800 custodians right now that's with a contract that's contracted out with CPS.

CFO ROGERS: Yes.

MR. SAFFOLD: Right now they provide a very good service to many of the schools. I just want to make sure we're not talking about balancing the budget off of hard-working families who have to
provide -- kids who probably attend CPS who also
have to provide for their families, taking a
$14 janitorial job down to $10. Is that your take
on how you want to balance the budget? I'm asking
the question.

CFO ROGERS: It certainly is not. I have not
heard that mentioned, frankly, and I know that our
schools are served well by the janitorial staff
that we have.

As I said, it is a range of things that
we're looking at. They are not -- if we had these
at the start of the budget, we would have booked
them into the original budget.

But we've asked people all across the
school system to go back and look harder at
contracts and agreements, how can we do things
better than what we're currently doing now. It's
really recovering an expense that we probably
should have been smarter about in some cases or for
new contracts going forward, negotiating those at a
better rate. That's what we're trying to do.

MR. SAFFOLD: Thank you very much.

CFO ROGERS: There are many opportunities as
you can imagine in a school system our size. You
need to work very hard on it, and that's what we intend to do.

MR. SAFFOLD: Thank you very much.

CFO ROGERS: Thank you.

MR. WALTER: Speaker number 10.

MS. COLEMAN: Good evening. My name is Samantha Coleman. I am the Executive Director of Assist Her, Incorporated. I believe my concern actually piggy-backs off the gentleman that just spoke in regards to the procurement target, things of that nature.

There's a few people from Dunbar which is a school that Assist Her has worked with in the past. So when we're revisiting our schools to try to give them services, the topic, of course, that comes up is we don't have funds.

Our particular programming as it relates to girls across the city has been that our programming and counseling has assisted in academic gains, attendance issues, social emotional learning, things of that nature. It's very disheartening to go to schools this year and hear that they don't have anything. So that's been like something that's new for us this year.
And also, too, with the contracts that have been out there, there's been the Cultural of Calm, social emotional learning. Then you go to another school and it's called New Frontier. There's like all these different names and no one really knows exactly what's happening. And so my concern is that as an organization that is trying to provide quality services for our students, are we going to continuously get cut in terms of, you know, school budgets when they essentially can't afford us? And when are schools going to be notified whether or not -- because I have some schools, we're waiting to hear about our budgets. So some are almost indicating that there may be monies coming for our services. So there's quite a bit of confusion, and I'm hoping you could give some clarity.

CFO ROGERS: I will certainly try although that's quite -- I think your questions which are no doubt well thought through would be perhaps best served for more complete answer if you would put those in writing and send them to us so we can get back to you with more detail and specifics, address
specific issues that you might have.

I can tell you that in terms of budgets coming or money might be forthcoming, without knowing exactly what program is being referenced, it would be difficult for me to respond to that. I know our budgets, of course, are set at the start of the year, communicated to the schools --

MS. COLEMAN: For instance --

CFO ROGERS: -- but there are new programs that are developed throughout the year for which budgets were created, and those monies that support those budgets are often trailed at the first announcement of the school budget. That might happen throughout the year.

MS. COLEMAN: So like, for instance, we were -- we definitely went through a process with obtaining a new contract with CPS that's called Social Emotional Learning. We -- at the beginning of that process, I felt that it was a good job in stating that, okay, we're really trying to get the most, you know, bang for our buck or what have you. So we're really forced to kind of like go all the way down to the very least that we could possibly do.

And it was, you know, told to us that the reason
was because of budgetary concerns within the system which is fine.

To my knowledge, the contract that I'm speaking of is through the Department of Positive Behavior and Supports. And so then when we're going to schools, we hear that schools have to now apply for these funds, whereas that was something that was never even told to vendors.

So we essentially have no clue as to what schools we should be reaching out to, but the problem is that schools that we work with in the past now are like, they have nothing, Dunbar being one of them.

CFO ROGERS: All right. I don't know if one of my colleagues would like to comment on that. I think it's -- I have to repeat myself and say that I think you have raised some very specific points which are good. Rather than just trying to answer generally, I would appreciate it if you would funnel those -- you can send them to me if you would like and I will make sure you get an appropriate answer. I don't want to try to answer something that relates to your specific programs and not be accurate and correct. I'd rather give
you a thoughtful and appropriate answer.

MS. COLEMAN: Okay.

MR. WALTER: Speaker Number 11.

MS. NICOL SWEAT: Good evening. I am Sherry Nicol Sweat. I am a 33 year teacher, Chicago Public Schools, a product of Chicago Public Schools, a graduate, 1975, graduate of Dunbar Vocational High School. I have been teaching at Dunbar now -- this is going into my 24th year.

One of the things that I first would like to say is there needs to be proper notification about these meetings because I heard about it through the grapevine. Just like they use the robocalls like when they were trying to get the parents to tell the teachers not to go on strike, they should have used them to tell them about this meeting tonight. Because I just heard about this this afternoon. So it makes you think that you don't want to us know about the meeting.

Over 100 of my family members have graduated from Dunbar Vocational High School. I was very sadden when Ms. Dawson said -- we call her Mother Dawson. She was the dean when I was a student there. They filled in the orchestra pit as
if our children don't need an orchestra pit, we don't need an orchestra. They put a ridiculous looking handicapped lift right here on the front of the stage and just made a spectacle of our stage and auditorium. Dunbar produced Jennifer Hudson and many other students that are in the industry.

So that is just a very sad thing, and we want that rectified and we want our programs, our fine arts programs to be reinstated at Dunbar because, right now, I don't even have a choir class or -- I had the vocal music industry.

One other thing is that no longer do we have the business department, and so many of the shops that she says are missing.

So the budget is really the plan. The budget is the plan. So we need money to be allocated for our programs, you know, at Dunbar and other schools like Dunbar. We want programs that will help our kids. They're pushing -- now this is a vocational school, but they are pushing the college readiness, the college this, that, and the other, and then the vocations going last.

They want the vocations teachers to teach reading. When the kids come to high school, they
supposed to know how to read. You know, teachers spend all day trying to teach people how to read and do math and stuff like that. So the auto mechanic teacher can't really teach what he needs to do in auto mechanics. You follow?

CFO ROGERS: I do.

MS. NICOL SWEAT: So I'm saying to you -- one last question, how do you get on this committee to -- you said there's a committee being formed because I would like to serve.

CFO ROGERS: I will mention that there's a city-wide committee that was announced in the last few days. I think there are 11 members of the committee who were picked from various aspects of community service from minister to educators to a wide range of people.

However, this committee is of no use unless it is a committee that's designed to reach into the community and obtain opinions and direction from the committee. It's not a group that's going to meet somewhere in central Chicago and decide what to do.

The purpose of this committee which spans all over the city in terms of its networking
capability is to meet with people who are in the schools such as yourself and others and obtain opinions that we value for shaping the direction of what we do in the future. So that committee, while it's established with SEP, the intention of that committee is to facilitate comments from as many people as possible.

I know there's an effort to reach into all school committees, any parents committees and obtain as much information as possible, and I believe there is a -- this ability to find out how to give an opinion is detailed on our Web site which would allow you to go in and make sure that you can either attend meetings or provide your thoughts and point of view directly to the individuals who are referenced as being on this committee.

MS. NICOL SWEAT: Let me just say this. You said they were picked. Who are these people? I mean, you come up here with a committee that we don't -- we didn't have any say about. You follow me what I'm saying? And this is the same okedoke all the time in the City of Chicago, whether they be a minister or whatever. Some of them just sold
out and they are going to say what they're told to say.

CFO ROGERS: I suggest what you should do is go on our Web site, find the people that are on the committee and formulate your own opinion. If they are not -- if you think they are not people that are representative of the community, you should make your view known.

I can tell you that our CEO made an extraordinary effort to make sure that these are people that would be viewed by anyone in the city as being representative of a wide group of individuals, and they're not what you would refer to as names that would be expected to just fall in line with what everyone tells them to do. These are opinionated people. I am sure they would like to hear your point of view on that as well.

MS. NICOL SWEAT: I certainly hope so because a lot of these people that are making decisions don't even have children in Chicago Public Schools.

A VOICE: Can you answer her question about the meeting notice?

CFO ROGERS: I'm sorry. You had a question about the meeting notice. I did not mean not to
respond to that. In fact, there's a process of procedure that we do go through to notify about meetings principally in the press and on our Web site a certain number of days prior to the calling of a public meeting.

If you have comments and questions about the effectiveness of that, which is a fair comment, you made them tonight. I think it's worth looking at in terms of how far our reach is. I do know that the procedure that is in place was followed and adhered to in this case. I'm glad you are here as a consequence even though you had to hear it from somebody else. I'm glad you at least heard about it.

MR. BRUNSON: Can I ask a question? Will the transcripts of this meeting be published?

CFO ROGERS: I do not believe there's a transcript from this. But I'll ask one of my colleagues.

MR. BRUNSON: You're being transcribed.

MR. WALTER: I think they are.

CFO ROGERS: I'm sorry. Yes, in fact, I believe they are published. They're taking them down right now and they will be published.
MS. ROBINSON: Jumping off of that, our children should be given those notices so parents can get that information. A lot of them do not have access to Internet. Where I work, a lot of parents don't. And they use this in the home.

It seems like when you don't send the notice home by the children to let them know about important meetings, it really comes across as if you really don't want involvement by the parents, you know, and that's what we got. Very few parents are here.

A VOICE: This is terrible.

CFO ROGERS: Good comments, and those will be taken down, and I think they are constructive comments for sure.

MR. WALTER: Speaker 12.

MS. WINSTEAD: I hope that everybody can hear me. I'm going to stay right here because my little cheerleader here might try to follow me up on the stage.

My name is Valencia Reis Winstead. I serve on the Local School Council at the School of Leadership at South Shore, a school where we're very concerned that we might be named one of the
schools to be closed because, of course, our
schools were consolidated two years ago. We have
two classes left.

And I heard Barbara Byrd-Bennett last
night on that issue with Craig Dellimore on WBBM
here, and she says that the space utilization is
like their number one thing.

However, we do have what's known as
Community Action Council. We also have other
community organizations that have a stake, myself
included, with other organizations who help to
build a brand new school, the new South Shore
International College Prep which sits a block away
from the old school where we are.

We are very concerned that we are not
going to have a voice in what goes into this
building that has already been refurbished. So I
think it would be cost prohibitive at this point
with so many capital improvements over the last two
years that they would tear that building down.

So that's my first comment is that we must
have a community process that helps to gather input
as to what the community would like to see happen
and not just our school that's going to be empty in
two years. Well, it probably won't be empty. I'm sure they'll probably find a charter school. That was a facetious comments. I'm sorry.

We have to find a way that the community at the beginning, not at the end when the students have all left and graduated or when the next wave of new administrators come in to put a new school in there and say, okay, well, this is what you're going to get.

You know, we have lots of community organizations, and I want to specifically tout the Local School Councils. I have not heard anyone on this panel, anyone, even Barbara Byrd-Bennett, talk about how important it is with Local School Councils to learn their budget, monitor their budget and what you're going to do to help facilitate that learning process.

Because right now, not just with you -- we can't blame you because, of course, you're new, we can't have any animosity towards you -- but your predecessors, I hate to say it, they sucked. No one has reached out to an elected group, the Local School Councils, to help them to learn what they're supposed to learn about their school budgets and to
properly make decisions about what they want in their schools, either individually or collectively as a community.

And I think that if you want to take something back -- and I'll put this actually in writing on your Web site that I see here -- I would like to see you perhaps maybe try to initiate that because it has never been done. We've been asking for years.

I have served for 15, 20 years on a Local School Council. I don't have any children. My babies are 26 years old, a set of twins. So I am still working and volunteering in schools and talking to children and working with parents and community members because we have to live in these communities.

And when you close schools down or you starve us of resources, we are destabilized. And we are -- when we're destabilized, that leads to a whole slew of -- I could go on and on, but he's got the little sign-up.

I just want to say two more things. One, find a person with a pulse at 125 to answer the phones. It's ridiculous and so unfair that the
third largest school district, in Chicago, only has a voice mail with very limited options. No options for the general public at all.

And then two, when you come to these meetings, could you please bring copies of these presentations? It's not you again. We can't get upset with you, but I have asked continuously. It is very difficult to sit and listen and absorb and then try to respond to something that you are not providing us a copy of in writing.

So if you could pass that on and maybe with your new administration, good luck, you know, and give us the copies.

CFO ROGERS: Thank you for your very thoughtful comments. I appreciate it. Are there any other questions? Yes, sir?

MR. MINTER: I am a member of the community -- Jerry Minter -- and former teacher and I am a guardian for a girl who's in a charter school.

And so my first question is, under Ron Huberman and under Arne Duncan, we're $500 million in debt, the Board of Ed. And so I apologize. I got here late. How much in debt are we now compared to that time?
CFO ROGERS: Well, I can answer that directly. That is -- sorry you missed the first part.

This meeting is really about assuring our budget is balanced and it will be for the year 2013. We made adjustments to it. This was really a meeting about an amended budget, and we have a balanced budget for 2013.

We've not finalized our 2014 budget yet.

There are significant challenges in it that we know we'll have to face, and we're working on that and will be particularly over the next several months.

MR. MINTER: As a former teacher, I know that many of the capital improvements were done on the south side first and then done on the north side second and then done on the west side Hispanic community third, were done because there was significant borrowing from the Teachers Pension Fund by the Board and it took a long time to get it. So I guess that may have caused some of the problems with the budget being out of balance.

Is the budget being balanced because of the TIF money that's being utilized? Because I know some people in the groups are requesting or saying they were going to demand that you consider
CFO ROGERS: We do have -- we do certainly utilize TIF funds to a great extent. We also -- just to be clear on what I said, we also utilize debt. Of course, we issue debt in the form of bonds as any public institution does, and you might call that borrowing that we do to fund capital improvements and other aspects of our program.

But in terms of revenue and expense, were in balance for 2013, and that's -- we'll be striving to keep it that way going forward. Thank you for your comments.

MR. MINTER: And then under -- the man who mentioned here earlier, when we open up a new charter school, there's a significant amount of investment; but, in contrast, I found out that in some charter schools, there's a group in the charter schools that are saying that the per capita amount spent per child is around $6,000 per year in a charter school as compared with those in the Chicago Public Schools that are around at 12 to $15,000 per child.

I don't know if you have those numbers available or if you could remember or if somebody
on your team remembers it. Can you clarify that?

CFO ROGERS: I can't clarify it in anything other than in a general way. As you can appreciate with a district the size of ours, there are variations from school to school, but we would have to look at each specific school to look at that. But I feel confident in saying that we're not over funding -- not over funding charter schools at the expense of neighborhood schools and the rest of the public school district.

MR. MITNER: I said it was the reverse.

CFO ROGERS: I know what you said. I can't specifically cite the dollar difference frankly.

MR. MITNER: Sometimes I misspeak. Excuse me.

CFO ROGERS: You were very clear all the way through. Yes, ma'am?

MS. BURGE: I would just like to echo the comments that someone made earlier about my concern about people being concerned about money and not the safety of our children.

So as you close schools based on seats, I'm very concerned that our children are going to be moved into different schools where there's going to be conflict with them getting back and forth to
school, and I want to make sure that it's on the record that we are concerned about the safety of our children and our children being able to come and go and be safe.

And as a parent of a CPS student, I don't want to get anymore of those calls that it is not safe for me to come home, someone needs to come and get me. My daughter was also in a school where she was volunteering after she graduated, and there was a shooting outside of the school and the young people inside of the school were being treated very badly by the Chicago Police.

So there are a lot of concerns that I have about safety and a lot of concerns that I have about how our children are being treated and that there is more to this issue than just the bottom line. My name is Dorothy Burge, B-u-r-g-e.

CFO ROGERS: Are there any other questions? We have a process, you can appreciate, for running meetings that call for submitting your questions in advance, but you're here. I would like to hear your thoughts. Is there any other comments? I believe you had your hand up.

MS. HARRIS: I had a question. I'm a retired
special ed early childhood teacher, and I'm concerned that when I left that the services were being taken out, the speech therapy, the PT. All those services were being taken out and the children were not getting their services. And that comes from the federal government, and that's supposed to come down to the states.

When I was leaving, they were getting rid of all of the people who were supposed to be servicing these kids. And they need help. And they have a right to have it just like all of the children need the right to have the same services, be it public schools or the charter schools. The tax dollars we pay is paying for these kids to go to school and be educated and not be taken and -- you need your senior teachers in there because some of these teachers don't know how to teach. They don't know the learning style of these children. They run and they get scared. Oh, I'm afraid.

In order to talk to the African-American children, you need to know how to talk, not run.

CFO ROGERS: Thank you for your comment.

MS. HARRIS: I also work on the LSC at Ellis School.
CFO ROGERS: Are there any other questions that we can answer?

MS. NICOL SWEAT: I had one more question about --

CFO ROGERS: How about this lady who has not had a chance to speak?

MS. WALSH: Marion Walsh. I have a question as it regards the $12 million. You said that it went towards (inaudible) and nonteaching positions or delay or cancelling some positions that weren't already taken, and then you said other budget items.

Now you got $12 million. I think "other" needs to be a line item explained because "other" and 12 million, to me, they don't go together. Is there some line item accounting that we could have access to that would explain "other"? Because "other" and 12, that's a big number to just put an umbrella under.

CFO ROGERS: As I mentioned, that was a combination of delays and hires or not hiring at all for people, largely administrative positions and a whole host of different areas that not all of which are identified yet but we're looking at to
save money across the school district.

And I can tell you this, that we go through everyone's budgets and do so on a monthly basis in excruciating detail, and it's one that's designed to make sure that we're not wasting.

If there's any way to do things more efficient or cut that's not absolutely necessary, we'll do that because our full intention is to spend as much money as we have in our budgets through grants and allocations that we get from the federal government, property tax, and state government and so on, to spend as much as we possibly can on education and not spend it in anything other than that.

And we scrutinize every budget in great detail. We have a very large budget. And it's where we go through and try to identify opportunities such as I mentioned. It often encompasses numerous items, hundreds of items that we've decided not to pursue.

I believe we have time for one more question.

MS. NICOL SWEAT: It's in reference to the reading labs and math labs that they used to have
in the schools. Reading and math, I believe it was Title I money or whatever budget, and all of the schools had this to assist students, teachers with students who had problems in meeting the standards of whatever. So we don't have those anymore.

So my question, if you could go back and ask or you can all look at this. We need these labs back because that has now been put on the classroom teacher in all of the subjects at this point. When you used to have that --

MS. ROBINSON: When the gap closed.

CFO ROGERS: I can comment on that. I don't know the specific situation you're talking about, but I can tell you, I know of no discussion that I have ever heard in terms of cutting back on special education requirements. We get grants. We're obligated to spend those grants for what they were intended for. And we spend as appropriate, as we should, significant amount of money across the district on special ed requirements which is very appropriate. We should do that and we'll continue doing it. I don't know the specific situation you're talking about.

MS. NICOL SWEAT: I'm talking in general.
CFO ROGERS: Across the district I'm convinced --

MS. NICOL SWEAT: This is special ed. I'm talking about the regular population. Students had reading labs, math labs to assist the students who were --

CFO ROGERS: I can't comment on the specific situation other than to say that we do spend significant amount of money on all forms of education as much as we can. Yes.

A VOICE: I was going to address her concern. Basically we provided reading and math specialists out to the schools under Title I grants. Those funds have been liquidated and those funds have been pushed out to the schools for them to, if they need to, they can actually purchase those reading teachers or those reading specialists inside of their schools.

So basically we gave the schools an option by pushing additional funds out to them under Title I. If they wanted to continue with the reading specialists and the math specialists, they'll pull out services for those children.

CFO ROGERS: We have time for one more
question. I believe you had a question. Yes, ma'am?

A VOICE: Two questions, real short. The amended budget, when do you anticipate this to be approved? When does this have to be approved?

One.

Two, will the information, detailed information of how the spending of like the 70 million of the properties that you plan on selling or -- will all of that information be detailed and given to the general public before this budget is approved?

CFO ROGERS: The answer to your question, the budget will be approved or at least presented to our Board of Education on the 14th of this month. It is our intention, as it always is, all our information is subject to full disclosure, and we present our information on a frequent basis through the Web site and other forums.

There may be something that I would have to comment on relative to selling of the property. There may be a reason for reasons of wanting to make sure we get the best price and sell it appropriately and so on. That means we wouldn't
disclose everything right at the beginning. I don't know the answer to that for sure.

But, generally speaking, it's our intention to have full disclosure as we're obligated to do.

A VOICE: After the fact? Because this here, what we're seeing here is just so general. I mean, anybody could put some numbers up there. I mean, we need to see the detail.

CFO ROGERS: You'll see the detail after -- in the case of property, you'll be able to see what properties we sold.

A VOICE: After? So we have no say until after?

MS. REGGS: I just want to quickly say, there was a school that was consolidated, and then an education task force found out that the school was in -- that the Board was in noncompliance.

So what are you going to do about those schools that illegally took on actions and removed students from schools? And that's the part of the budget because that school is consolidated. Price Elementary School kids are traveling to NTA and just like you're doing with other schools.
So those schools are being consolidated, but, yet, the educational task force investigated just as well as we did, and the Board closed all those schools down and they was in noncompliance. So basically it's a conspiracy, not following policy, and you guys are basically doing what you want to do, and you guys can't get it together because you keep hiring new people to come in. If you guys can't get it together, how can you make decisions to close schools?

CFO ROGERS: All right. Thank you for your comments. With that, we'll conclude tonight's public meeting. Thank you very much, everyone, for attending.

(Off the record at 7:25 p.m.)

(Which were all the proceedings had in the above cause this date and time.)
STATE OF ILLINOIS )
) SS:
COUNTY OF WILL )

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 8th day of November, 2012.

________________________________________
Illinois Certified Shorthand Reporter