



Summary of the Community Meeting for the Proposed Closure of Early College High School, Career Academy High School, and Thurgood Marshall Middle School

Date: January 12, 2017
Location: Wells Community High School, 936 N. Ashland Avenue
CPS Attendees: Judith Camacho, Michael Passman, and Patrick Payne

Meeting Notes:

Mr. Payne started the meeting promptly at 6:00pm. He explained the meeting agenda, described the three closure proposals, and then began the public comment portion of the meeting. Approximately 20 people were in attendance.

Public Participation:

Dr. Nancy Jackson (Prologue CEO): Can you explain what occurred between October and December with SB630?

Patrick Payne, CPS (PP): SB630 created the process for school closures, consolidations, and co-locations. The law requires that by October 1, CPS has to publish guidelines stating how CPS will handle school actions for that year. The public then has 21 days to provide comment. After that, CPS may issue revised guidelines. CPS announced the actual proposed actions by December 1.

Pa Joof (Prologue Early College Principal): Can you explain the process? We got a letter on May 24 that we were being closed; but now we are hearing our school is set to close.

PP: Contract schools are in a space between district operated schools and charter schools. Both the contract renewal process and the SB 630 processes applied to Early College. The contract renewal process is managed by our Office of Innovation and Incubation. That Office recommends to our Board whether a contract with a school operator should be renewed or not renewed. The Board decided to not renew the contract Prologue had for the operation of Early College. The school's operation then reverted to the District and there is a proposal to close the school.

Pa Joof: We don't feel like this process was explained to us and we don't think that we went through a fair process. It was very convoluted. You took our name and moved our student population -- 90 percent of whom are in the street. I am also concerned about the performance criteria used to evaluate the school. The criteria was new and had never been used before and we've had a good history with kids.

PP: I can put you in touch with the Office of Innovation and Incubation.

Jack Robertson (Prologue): Given that CPS is responsible for education in Chicago, I'm troubled by the process. The Board has not coordinated their renewal process with SB630. "You killed me in May. And under SB630 you killed me again. Or decided I needed to die."

PP: Contract schools operate based on a contract. When the Board does not renew a contract with a school operator, that organization no longer operates the school. At that point CPS operates the school and we can hire teachers and explore alternative placement for students. That's what happened. I hear what you are saying, but that's how the process works.



Jack Robertson (Prologue): We owned the school and it was taken from us.

PP: I'm not a lawyer, but I don't think that's correct.

Cindy Wilder: How many students were enrolled at Early College this year?

PP: Zero

Cindy Wilder: To me that says there was no effort.

PP: The Office of Innovation and Incubation reached out to students previously enrolled at Early College to help identify alternate options.

Cindy Wilder: I know that didn't happen with all of our kids. People still call us asking if we will have a school.

Lilian Garcia (Prologue Employee): When we were closed CPS told us that we could apply for jobs at Early College after it opened in the fall. But no one called, and the building was never staffed. Our school was safe, and kids traveled far to get an education at Prologue. Right now, half of our kids are in jail and the others have been shot in the streets. We let these kids die. No one called these kids, and they're still on the streets. We were a family, and we provided a lot of support to kids in need.

PP: Thank you for doing the work you do. I appreciate what you have done.

Dr. Jackson (Prologue CEO): We are not attacking you. We want to get as much of our experience on the record. The bottom line is that when there was no renewal, we did not have an appeal process, which is unheard of.

Jacqueline Dawson (Prologue Security Officer): I worked at Prologue for nine years. Prologue had a lot of kids with IEPs and the school helped them. A lot of our kids went to college and graduated. These were kids who CPS didn't want and kicked out. We provided them shelter and education. Some of those kids didn't have anywhere to eat or sleep. A lot of them still made it through. It seems like you set us up for failure and then took our name from us. (Ms. Dawson was crying toward the end of her statement.)

Dr. Ramona Battle (Prologue Director of Child Welfare): I left a traditional school because I believed in Prologue's mission. They provided a unique service to reach kids who needed additional support. Our students needed to be at Prologue. Students still call me to help setup medical appointments and reach mental health resources; and we still help them even though our school was shut down.

Randle Noble (Chief of Police of One Church One Inmate): Wants the school closure delayed 60-90 days. "We can get private money and support this school for 30 years if you can delay this 90 days."

Deotis Taylor (One Church One Inmate President): Kids will stay out of trouble if they are in school. Prologue has 500 kids in the street today.

Mr. Brooks (One Church One Inmate): We don't need anything taken away. We need additions. I'm a former Cook County corrections officer, and I've seen the problems we are having with the youth. We need to provide more, not less.



[Unknown Name] (Community Volunteer): Told a story about how transgender students who were becoming involved in prostitution found support at Prologue.

Wally Cunningham (One Church One Inmate): Opposed to closing schools

Pa Joof (Prologue): "I would like to oppose, for the record, the closure of this school." I sent I&I information on transcripts. I never heard from I&I. I think CPS wanted to close Prologue and replace it with a for-profit charter.

Rev. Terrance Jackson (One Church One Inmate): We need help to reverse the increase of crime in the city. Vowed to attend additional meetings and hearings.

Reverend Al Sampson (One Church One Inmate): Talked about his activism as a young person in Birmingham, Alabama. Encouraged the Prologue people to partner with One Church One Inmate. "Rahm took two of his sons to Israel to the Wailing Wall. He told his sons at the Wailing Wall repeat after me 'I want you from this day forward to know that you are Jewish. And as a Jew, you will never go hungry. You will never be broke. And you will always have an educational and economic sustenance.' That Young black male (points to kid in audience) needs that opportunity."

Gwen Pruitt (Bronzeville Business Owner/Prologue Mentor): Talked about mentoring kids at Prologue.