Transcript of the Testimony of
Date: January 29, 2018
Case: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED REASSIGNMENT BOUNDARY CHANGE OF NATIONAL TEACHERS ACADEMY
TOOMEY REPORTING 312-853-0648

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Date: January 29th, 2018

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2	BOUNDARY CHANGE OF NATIONAL TEACHERS ACADEMY
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9	MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2018
10	COMMENCING AT 6:02 P.M.
11	42 WEST MADISON STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
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23	HONORABLE FRANCIS J. DOLAN
24	HEARING OFFICER

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2	Hearing of the above-entitled cause, taken before
3	MELISSA A. BELICE, a Certified Shorthand Reporter in
4	and for the County of Cook and State of Illinois, at
5	42 West Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois,
6	January 29, 2018, at 6:02 o'clock p.m.
7	
8	APPEARING ON BEHALF OF CPS:
9	MS. GABRIELA BRIZUELA, Attorney - Chicago Board
10	of Education
11	MR. HERALD "CHIP" JOHNSON, Chief of Family and
12	Community Engagement in Education
13	MR. JAMES DISPENSA, Director of School
14	Demographics and Planning
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1 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Good evening, ladies 2 and gentlemen. 3 THE AUDIENCE: Good evening. 4 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: My name is Francis 5 Dolan, and I'm a licensed attorney to practice in 6 the State of Illinois, and I'm a retired State of 7 Illinois Judge. 8 Recently the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools retained me to serve as 9 10 an independent hearing officer in this matter. The 11 purpose of this hearing is to enable me to receive 12 public comment from concerned persons, specifically 13 including representatives of the CEO, the school 14 community, and interested members of the public 15 concerning the CEO's proposal to reassign the 16 National Teachers Academy's boundary, which is 17 located at 55 West Cermak. 18 Notice of the hearing was served on the 19 school community, and notice of this hearing was 20 also served on the public by newspaper publications. 21 Pursuant to the said notice, this hearing was 2.2 scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m. Let the record 23 reflect that we are beginning at 6:02 p.m. 24 Pursuant to the directives provided in

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Page 8 1 the document entitled Procedures for Public Hearings 2 on Proposed School Closure, Consolidation, Phaseout, 3 Reconstitution or Reassignment Boundary Change, the 4 hearing officer is solely responsible for conducting 5 the hearing and is to conduct the hearing in an 6 efficient and impartial manner. So there are some 7 quidelines that I would ask everyone to follow here 8 this evening and respect. 9 This is a public hearing, therefore I

¹⁰ will expect all in attendance to show courteous, ¹¹ respectful, and civil behavior. Please, if you have ¹² cell phones, turn them off or put them on vibrate ¹³ now. Also, please turn off any other electronic ¹⁴ devices at this time that could disturb these ¹⁵ proceedings.

16 This is an opportunity for public comment 17 regarding the CEO's proposal. It is not an 18 opportunity for questions and answers. Please do 19 not clap or cheer if you agree with a witness or 20 speaker's testimony. Similarly, do not boo or make 21 any other negative verbalization if you are opposed 2.2 to what a witness or a speaker has to say. 23 Please understand I am not an employee of 24 the Chicago Public School System or the Board of

Education. I will conduct an orderly hearing, and I will show respect to each speaker, and I ask that you respect me and the serious purpose of this meeting by honoring the guidelines that I have just set forth.

I will first receive comments from
representatives from CPS concerning why the CEO is
proposing to reassign National Teachers Academy's
boundary. Then I will hear from any elected
officials in attendance.

11 Then those individuals who have signed up 12 to speak this evening one hour prior to the start of 13 the hearing and within 30 minutes after the start of 14 the hearing will be called to speak primarily in the 15 order in which they have signed in. So testimony 16 will be heard in this matter until all who have 17 signed in to be heard by 5:30 p.m. have been heard 18 or until we have reached 8:30 p.m., whichever occurs 19 first.

Individuals who have signed in to speak during the designated hours to do so will each be given two minutes to present their comments. This limitation is to ensure that we have sufficient time to hear all the speakers.

Page 10 1 There are three lights that are located 2 on the podium, on the top left side of the podium 3 right in front of me which each speaker will speak 4 The green light indicates that your two from. 5 minutes have begun to run. The yellow light appears 6 when you have 30 seconds remaining in your time. 7 And the red light indicates that your two minutes 8 has expired. Please respect the red light and 9 return to your seat when it appears. 10 Now, we have a very ambitious schedule 11 this evening with many speakers. I want everybody 12 to have their opportunity to have their two minutes 13 tonight, so I don't want to waste any time at all. 14 So I'm going to be calling three names at once. 15 When I call the names, the first name that is 16 called, you'll come to the podium. No. 2 and No. 3 17 will line up behind the person at the podium being 18 respectful of not being in the space of the speaker 19 of course. 20 Now, a certified court reporter is seated 21 right in front of me. She is here to transcribe

right in front of me. She is here to transcribe
 everything that is being said at this hearing.
 Please understand she cannot record two people
 speaking simultaneously, therefore only one person

can speak at a time, and I will determine who that
 person is.

3 If I have a question for you while you're 4 speaking, please stop speaking and do not begin to 5 answer my question even if you think you know what 6 I'm going to be asking you until I have finished the 7 question. As you know, we have a sign and a Spanish 8 interpreter here. If you see somebody come in that 9 you know needs one or the other, I would ask you to 10 please let them know that and let us know that.

11 When you are called upon to speak, please 12 step to the microphone at the podium in front of me. 13 State your name for the record and spell your first 14 and last names so the court reporter can take it 15 down correctly. Please then state your affiliation, 16 for instance, what school you're from, what 17 community organization, if you're a parent and so 18 forth.

I have been advised that there are one or more students who have signed in to speak this evening. Illinois law prohibits the use of a student's name in these proceedings. It is not supposed to be in the transcript or in the record. So if a student comes forward, you will be assigned

a letter such as Student A, Student B and so forth.
Please, any students that are going to be addressing
us tonight, do not state your name.

4 When you are speaking, please do so in a 5 conversational tone. The transcript of this 6 proceeding, which I will be using to fulfill my 7 duty, will not indicate any loud or aggressive 8 language or movements. So, please, all of us help 9 us all, each us to have a clear record of these 10 proceedings. That is so very important because 11 that's what I take away from this hearing when I am 12 doing the work that I am mandated to do.

13 Following this public hearing pursuant to 14 state law and the rules promulgated by the Board 15 governing this hearing, I will prepare and submit to 16 the CEO a written report that summarizes the public comments and documents received at today's hearing 17 18 and determines whether the CEO complied with the 19 requirements of state law and the final guidelines 20 for school actions. The CEO will include my report 21 and any recommendation submitted to the Board.

Finally, the record in this case will remain open until 5:00 p.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, January 30th, for persons to submit any written

¹ materials they want me to consider and make a part of the record. Those materials may be submitted in the following manner: By hand delivery to the attention of the CPS Law Department at 42 West Madison or by e-mail using the following e-mail address: Transitions, T-R-A-N-S-I-T-I-O-N-S, @CPS.EDU.

8 I'm going to repeat that again now. The 9 record in this case will remain open until 10 5:00 o'clock tomorrow, Tuesday, January 30th, for 11 persons to submit any written materials they want me 12 to consider and make a part of the record. Those 13 materials may be submitted by either hand delivery 14 to the attention of the CPS Law Department at 15 42 West Madison or by e-mail using the following 16 e-mail address: Transitions, T-R-A-N-S-I-T-I-O-N-S, 17 @CPS.EDU.

So if you're a speaker and your two minutes expire and you still have more information you wish to make part of the record, write it down and submit it via hand delivery or e-mail. Materials submitted after 5:00 p.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, January 30th, will not be considered in my recommendation report and will not be included in

1 the record of this hearing. I'll repeat this information at the end of the hearing before we 2 3 close. 4 This evening we are joined by members of 5 the Chicago Board of Ed. Will each of you please be 6 good enough to raise your hand and state your name 7 and title so that the members of the audience know 8 who you are. 9 MS. BRIZUELA: Gabriela Brizuela, Assistant 10 General Counsel for the Board of Education of the 11 City of Chicago. 12 Herald Chip Johnson, Chief of MR. JOHNSON: 13 Family and Community Engagement in Education. 14 MR. DISPENSA: James Dispensa, Director of 15 School Demographics and Planning. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: So we now have the members of the Board of Education who have been 17 18 identified, and that concludes my opening comments. 19 Counsel, you may proceed. 20 MS. BRIZUELA: Thank you. 21 Good evening, Your Honor. My name is 2.2 Gabriela Brizuela, that's G-A-B-R-I-E-L-A, 23 B-R-I-Z-U-E-L-A, and I am an attorney in the Chicago 24 Board of Education's Law Department.

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1 I am appearing before you today in 2 connection with the proposal of the Chief Executive 3 Officer, or CEO, of the Chicago Public Schools 4 regarding the proposed reassignment boundary change 5 of National Teachers Academy, or NTA. 6 At this time I would like to present to 7 the CEO's compiled Exhibit 1, a binder of documents 8 already tendered to you and being submitted for your 9 consideration in support of the proposal. A copy of 10 this binder is also available here in Board Chambers 11 on the podium for public viewing. 12 The binder consists of documentary 13 evidence and written statements demonstrating that 14 the CEO's proposal complies with the requirements of 15 the Illinois School Code and the CEO's Guidelines for School Actions. Specifically the written 16 17 statements and documents demonstrate the following: 18 At Tab A the binder includes notice 19 letters to the parents and guardians of students, 20 school staff members, and Local School Council 21 members at NTA and South Loop, accompanied by draft 2.2 transition plans. 23 The notice letters and draft transition 24 plans describe the basis of the proposal, explain

how the proposal meets the criteria of the guidelines, and identifies supports for a transition.
Tab A also includes the notice of the

⁵ scheduled community meetings and hearings published ⁶ in the newspaper and affidavits attesting to the ⁷ delivery of notice to NTA and South Loop parents or ⁸ guardians, school staff, Local School Council ⁹ members, and elected officials.

10 Finally, Tab A includes an affidavit 11 attesting to the proper publication of the draft 12 quidelines for school actions on October 1st, the 13 list of qualified independent hearing officers 14 before November 1st, the finalized guidelines for 15 school actions following a 21-day public comment 16 period, the proposals before December 1st and at 17 least 30 calendar days before the first community 18 meeting, and finally summaries from community 19 meetings within five days after the meeting.

At Tab B the binder includes the Illinois At Tab B the binder includes the Illinois School Code Provisions designating the powers of the Board and outlining the process for school actions. This tab also includes the Board's policy on the review and establishment of school attendance

Page 17 1 boundaries, the school quality rating policy, and 2 the Chicago Public Schools Space Utilization 3 Standards. 4 Finally, Tab B includes the CEO's 5 Guidelines for School Actions for the 2017-2018 6 school year and the CEO's procedures for public 7 hearings on proposed boundary reassignments. 8 At Tab C the binder includes written 9 evidence in support of the CEO's proposal. 10 Tab C contains the transcripts and 11 summaries from the two community meetings to elicit 12 public comment held at a location convenient to both 13 the NTA and South Loop school communities. 14 Tab C also includes the written statement 15 of Mr. Herald Chip Johnson and the various requests 16 submitted in support of the proposal. 17 Finally, Tab C includes the written 18 statement of Mr. James Dispensa regarding the space 19 utilization with respect to the proposal. 20 At this time, Your Honor, I'd request the CEO's compiled Exhibit 1 be admitted into the 21 2.2 record. 23 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: It will be so admitted 24 marked as Exhibit 1.

Page 18 1 (CEO Exhibit No. 1 marked for 2 identification and received 3 into evidence.) 4 MS. BRIZUELA: Thank you. 5 Your Honor, I would now like to ask б permission to call the CEO's first representative, 7 Mr. Herald Chip Johnson, who will make a statement 8 in support of the proposal. Mr. Johnson's statement is located in the binder at Tab 19. 9 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Please. 11 MR. JOHNSON: Good evening, Your Honor. My 12 name is Herald, H-E-R-A-L-D, Chip Johnson. I am the 13 Chief Officer for the Office of Family and Community 14 Engagement in Education for the Chicago Public 15 Schools. I am responsible for the support and oversight of the FACE management team, the Office of 16 17 the Local School Council relations, Parent 18 University Programs, and the Office of Faith Based 19 Initiatives. I have been the Chief Officer since 20 July of 2017. 21 By way of background, I have worked in 22 public education for over 20 years in both 23 educational and administrative capacities. I began 24 my career as a high school teacher. I went on to

1 serve as an elementary school assistant principal, 2 high school associate principal, and the Network 3 Chief of Schools for Chicago Public Schools before 4 becoming Chief Officer for the Office of Family and 5 Community Engagement in Education. I have a 6 master's degree in education from DePaul University, 7 and I'm currently completing my doctoral degree in 8 educational leadership at the National Louis 9 University.

In November of 2013, after serving as Deputy Chief for the Garfield-Humboldt Network, I became the Chief of Schools for Network 6. In that role I provided support and oversight for schools within my network, including South Loop Elementary School.

16 During my tenure as Network Chief, there 17 have been two long outstanding educational issues 18 voiced by parents and community members in the near 19 south side, the need for continuum of high quality 20 neighborhood school options for all students from 21 pre-K through high school graduation and the 2.2 overcrowding of South Loop Elementary School. 23 A new building is being constructed in 24 the South Loop area such that it will have greater

capacity to accommodate K through 8 students. The addition of the new building will create approximately 1200 seats, which would more than accommodate the combined student populations of South Loop and NTA. The addition of the new building will help address overcrowding at South Loop.

8 The proposed reassignment boundary change 9 of NTA helps to address the need for a neighborhood 10 high school. High school students in the near south 11 area, which includes Chinatown, Bridgeport, Armour 12 Square, and Bronzeville, have very few nearby high 13 school options. Currently 97 percent of high school 14 students in the draft enrollment boundaries for the 15 proposed high school choose not to attend their 16 designated neighborhood high school, attending other 17 schools across the city instead. Additionally, 18 69 percent of current high school students in the 19 draft enrollment boundaries travel more than three 20 miles to attend a high school of their choice. 21 In response to a request for a

neighborhood high school, CPS introduced a
 preliminary framework in May 2017 to expand
 high-quality neighborhood options from pre-K through

1 high school in the near south area by expanding the 2 boundaries of South Loop and converting NTA to a 3 neighborhood high school. This preliminary 4 framework was designed to address key priorities in 5 the near south community, including providing a 6 continuum of high-quality neighborhood school 7 options for all students from pre-K through high 8 school graduation as well as building diverse school communities. 9

10 Throughout this process, CPS has extensively engaged various stakeholders within the 11 12 near south community, including Alderman Pat Dowell, 13 who represents the near south community. Alderman 14 Pat Dowell formalized her request for the 15 reassignment boundary change and the need for a neighborhood high school in a letter dated July 17, 16 17 2017. Alderman Dowell's letter is located in your 18 binder at Tab 21.

In the letter Alderman Dowell recognizes this proposal as the most academically positive option for the near south community. She highlights the fact that while both NTA and South Loop Elementary School schools provide a high-quality education for their students, South Loop has been

Page 22 1 consistently rated as one of the top elementary 2 schools in the City of Chicago. Thus, the 3 reassignment boundary change would make it possible 4 for all K through 8 students in the area to have the 5 opportunity to enjoy that same academic rigor and 6 access to a new state-of-the-art facility. 7 The Alderman further acknowledges the 8 lack of a neighborhood high school in the near south 9 area and the problems it has caused for community 10 This proposal would now make it possible residents. 11 for students to have an easily accessible, quality 12 high school option in their community. 13 In addition to the statement from 14 Alderman Dowell, elected officials representing the 15 affected communities have also recommended and urged 16 the Board to pursue a high school option. 17 Specifically, Alderman Danny Solis believes this 18 proposal addresses the need for families in the 19 area. And Alderman Patrick D. Thompson has 20 expressed the need to create a strong neighborhood 21 high school option for students in the ward he 2.2 represents. 23 The Near South Planning Board has also

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opined on the need for a neighborhood high school

via a letter dated August 25, 2017. For a number of years, the Near South Planning Board voiced concerns regarding the need for a high school in the rapidly growing near south side. On August 23, 2017, CPS representatives presented a framework for a new high school and elementary school to their project review committee.

8 The committee wholeheartedly welcomed the 9 idea of a proposed high school in the near south 10 side as it would enhance their community and give 11 students the much-needed opportunity to receive an 12 education close to home. They also urged CPS to 13 consider extending the boundary of South Loop 14 further south to include the redevelopment of the 15 Harold Ickes Homes, ensuring that children returning 16 or moving into these buildings also have access to 17 South Loop.

The CEO's proposal does exactly this and is in response to this request. The Near South Planning Board subsequently submitted a follow-up letter on January 22, 2018, commending CPS for proposing to extend the boundaries in response to their request. The Near South Planning Board's letters are located in your binder at Tab 22.

Moreover, a request for the proposal, in the form of a petition, was also presented to the Board of Education at its July 26, 2017, board meeting. A copy of the petition signed by parents and community members of the Dearborn Homes is located in your binder at Tab 23.

7 The petition urges CPS to convert NTA to 8 a new neighborhood high school. The petition 9 further affirms that the addition of a high school 10 with quality educational opportunities would suit 11 the needs of current and future students. The 12 proposed reassignment boundary change would address 13 this request.

14 In June of 2017, additional requests in 15 support of the proposal were also received via the process outlined in the CEO's guidelines, including 16 17 270 letters in support of the proposal signed by 18 members of the Pui Tak Center in Chinatown. The 19 letters from members of the Pui Tak Center are 20 located in your binder at Tab 24. Specifically, 21 these letters express support for the proposal to 2.2 convert the current NTA facility into a neighborhood 23 high school.

24

CPS received feedback in support and

Page 25 1 against the preliminary framework. As a result of 2 this feedback and in response to the requests it 3 received, CPS amended its initial proposal to better 4 serve the community. In particular, CPS focused on 5 creating a more gradual conversion timeline for NTA 6 students so that the majority of existing NTA 7 students could continue their academic careers at 8 NTA as the high school expands. Moreover, based on 9 requests from community members, CPS further 10 adjusted its proposal to expand South Loop's 11 boundaries to incorporate the entirety of NTA's 12 current boundary.

13 As part of this process, CPS formed the 14 Near South Community Leadership Steering Committee, 15 comprised of community leaders, educators, and parents to gather feedback and discuss the 16 17 transition supports that would be needed to 18 successfully implement this proposal. If this 19 proposal is approved, CPS will continue to engage 20 the steering committee in the implementation phase 21 and in the development of plans for the new high 2.2 school.

If NTA transitions to South Loop, they
 will be attending a higher performing school based

on the CEO's guidelines for school actions. The
 CEO's guidelines for school actions define a higher
 performing school as a school that received a higher
 level on the school quality rating policy, which we
 refer to as the SQRP, for the 2016-2017 school year.

б Under the SQRP located in your binder at 7 Tab 10, each school receives an annual rating based 8 on its performance on a variety of student outcome 9 measures, including standardized test scores and 10 student attendance. District wide, schools 11 designated Level 1+ are the highest performing, and 12 schools designated Level 3 are the lowest 13 performing.

14 NTA and South Loop both received a 15 Level 1+ rating based on their performance during 16 the 2016-2017 school year. However, in accordance 17 with the CEO's guidelines, when schools are 18 designated the same rating, the higher performing 19 school is determined based on a variety of metrics, 20 including multiyear value-added outcomes and standardized test score attainments. While CPS does 21 2.2 not calculate district-wide multiyear value-added 23 results anymore, it does, however, compile 24 standardized test score attainments in accordance

¹ with the guidelines.

2 South Loop meets the definition of a 3 higher performing school because, according to the 4 most recently available data, it performed higher on 5 the majority of the metics. Charts summarizing this 6 data are located in your binder also at Tab 25. 7 CPS is committed to supporting the 8 transition of current NTA students through 9 graduation and has budgeted approximately 10 3.5 million to support this transition. The draft 11 transition plan included within the notice letters 12 to parents, staff, and local school members outlines 13 the various supports that would be offered if this 14 proposal is approved and was developed based on 15 recommendations from the Near South Community 16 Leadership Steering Committee. A summary of this 17 proposal and transition supports is located in your binder at Tab 26. To highlight a few, these 18 19 supports include: 20 A budget for a variety of events and 21 activities designed to support community building 2.2 and culture integration. 23 The creation of a joint culture and 24 climate team comprised of staff, parents, and

Page 28 1 student representatives from NTA and South Loop. 2 Principal and school-based transition 3 coordinators to assist with the implementation of 4 new programs and practices, administrative support, 5 and other supports identified by both schools' 6 leadership. 7 The implementation of restorative 8 practices. 9 Professional development and training 10 opportunities for school staff and shuttle bus 11 service for NTA students who transition to South 12 Loop Elementary School. 13 In conclusion, the proposed reassignment 14 of NTA's boundary meets the criteria of the Chief 15 Executive Officer's guidelines for school actions 16 because it is a proposal requested by parents or 17 community members via the process to request 18 proposals outlined in the guidelines. 19 Specifically, we have heard the request 20 for this proposal from public officials and parents 21 and community members in the form of petitions, 2.2 e-mails, and statements at community meetings. This 23 proposal is also consistent with the guidelines 24 because the resulting space utilization after the

Page 29 1 reassignment boundary change will not exceed the 2 enrollment efficiency range as defined by the CPS 3 space utilization standards. 4 You will hear next from my colleague, 5 James Dispensa, who will provide information 6 regarding the resulting space utilization with 7 respect to this proposal. 8 Thank you, Your Honor, and this concludes 9 my statement. 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. 11 MS. BRIZUELA: Your Honor, I would now like to 12 ask permission to call the CEO's next 13 representative, Mr. James Dispensa, who will make a 14 statement in support of the proposal. Mr Dispensa's 15 statement is located in the binder at Tab 20. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. 17 Sir, you may proceed. 18 Thank you. And good evening, MR. DISPENSA: 19 Your Honor. 20 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Good evening. 21 MR. DISPENSA: My name is James Dispensa. I'm 2.2 the Director of Demographic Analysis and Planning 23 for the Chicago Public Schools. My responsibilities 24 include undertaking school demographic studies,

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Page 30 1 enrollment projections, and the monitoring of space 2 utilization of the public school facilities 3 throughout Chicago. I have been in this position 4 since October 2004. 5 The CEO has asked me to appear at this 6 hearing today to convey to you, the parents, staff, 7 and school community of NTA and South Loop 8 Elementary School, as well as interested members of 9 the public in attendance, information relevant to 10 the proposal to reassign the attendance boundaries 11 of NTA. 12 This proposal involves the expansion of 13 South Loop's boundaries to encompass the entirety of 14 NTA's current boundary and gradually converting NTA 15 from an elementary school to a high school. 16 Specifically, the proposal involves the reassignment 17 of NTA students in kindergarten through 3rd grade to 18 South Loop in the 2019-20 school year while giving 19 students in 4th grade and above the option to remain 20 at NTA through graduation or transfer to South Loop. 21 The CEO may propose a reassignment 2.2 boundary change that results in the reassignment of 23 current students from one school to one or more 24 other schools if the school's principal, parents, or

¹ community members have requested that a reassignment ² boundary change proposal be considered and the ³ resulting space utilization after the reassignment ⁴ boundary change will not exceed any affected ⁵ schools' enrollment efficiency range as defined by ⁶ CPS's space utilization standards.

As you've already heard, this proposal is consistent with the CEO's guidelines for school actions for reassignment boundary changes because it is a proposal formally requested by the members of the community, including parents and community representatives.

¹³ Moreover, this proposal is consistent ¹⁴ with the guidelines because, as I will detail for ¹⁵ you, the resulting space utilization after the ¹⁶ reassignment boundary change will not exceed the ¹⁷ enrollment efficiency range as defined by CPS's ¹⁸ space utilization standards.

¹⁹ NTA is currently located at 55 West
 ²⁰ Cermak Road and serves 723 students in grades
 ²¹ kindergarten through 8th in addition to its pre-K
 ²² program. South Loop serves 780 students in grades
 ²³ kindergarten through 8th in two different facilities
 ²⁴ known as the South Loop main building and the South

1 Loop branch building. 2 If the proposed reassignment boundary 3 change is approved, NTA would decrease its grade 4 offering from K through 8 currently to grades 4 5 through 9 in the 2019-20 school year. Each school 6 year thereafter, NTA would adjust its grade offering 7 such that by the 2024-25 school year, it would offer 8 only high school grades 9 through 12. 9 For clarity, Your Honor, I will describe 10 the expected NTA grade offerings in each of the 11 following seven school years should the board 12 approve this proposal. 13 Next school year, 2018-19, NTA would 14 offer grades K through 8 in addition to its pre-K 15 So that's no change from the current program. 16 school year. 17 In the 2019-20 school year, NTA would 18 offer grades 4 through 9. 19 In the 2020-21 school year, NTA would 20 offer grades 5 through 10. 21 In the 2021-22 school year, NTA would 2.2 offer grades 6 through 11. 23 In the 2022-23 school year, NTA would 24 offer grades 7 through 12.

Page 33 In the 2023-24 school year, 8 through 12. 1 2 And then finally in the 2024-25 school 3 year, NTA would offer grades 9 through 12. 4 Over the summer of 2019, the district 5 expects to complete construction of the new South 6 Loop school building at 1601 South Dearborn, which 7 is located approximately one half mile north of NTA. 8 This 120,000 square foot four-story elementary 9 school, together with the current South Loop 10 building at 1212 South Plymouth and the South Loop Early Childhood Center Branch at 1915 South Federal 11 12 will accommodate the combined enrollment of South 13 Loop and those students from NTA who choose to 14 transfer. 15 Again, in the 2019-20 school year, the 16 rising 4th through 8th grade students can remain 17 enrolled in NTA through graduation or transfer to 18 South Loop. 19 To understand the enrollment efficiency 20 range of a facility, CPS uses its space utilization 21 standards, which is located in your binder at 2.2 Tab 12. CPS provides an enrollment efficiency range 23 for elementary schools based primarily on the total 24 number of instructional classrooms available in the

¹ facility.

2	There will be a total of 69 classrooms
3	available at the South Loop Elementary main and
4	branch facilities. The ideal capacity of these
5	facilities will be approximately 1590, that's 1,590
б	students, and any enrollment within the efficiency
7	range of 1,113 through 1,749 would be considered
8	efficient.
9	The projected enrollment range of South
10	Loop for the 2019-20 school year, should the Board
11	approve this proposal, is between 1,200 and 1,500
12	students, and this projected enrollment range is
13	within the efficiency range of the new South Loop.
14	Furthermore, the proposed boundary
15	reassignment change will have a positive impact on
16	the racial composition and stability of these
17	schools. The option of maintaining the status quo
18	offers a disadvantage over this proposal, and the
19	projected increase and racial ethnic diversity of
20	both schools is included in the report at Tab 27.
21	While other alternatives were examined, no
22	alternatives affected the resulting racial ethnic
23	distribution of students as positively as the
24	proposed reassignment boundary change.

Page 35 1 Thank you, Your Honor, this concludes my 2 statement. 3 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. 4 MS. BRIZUELA: Your Honor, this concludes the 5 presentation in support of the CEO's proposal. Ιf 6 you have any additional questions, we will be 7 available to answer them. 8 Thank you very much for your time and 9 attention. 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. No other 11 questions at this time. 12 At this time we will begin with the 13 public comments. Remember what I said earlier about 14 the fact that I'm going to call three names. The 15 first name will go to the podium for your two minutes. The other in the order that I call you, 16 17 Nos. 2 and 3, will line up behind the person at the 18 podium so that we cannot lose time, so that we won't 19 lose time between speakers. 20 Having said that, Yvonne Franklin, 21 Francine Washington, and Sheila Garrett. And, 2.2 remember, if you are a student, you cannot put your 23 name on the record. These cards do not indicate, 24 other than one that I've seen, who the students are.

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Page 36 1 So I may call the name of a student, the student 2 will line up like the other speakers. However, once 3 at the podium, students do not give your name. I'11 4 give you a student designation. 5 Thank you. Please, carry on, ma'am. 6 MS. FRANKLIN: Good evening, Your Honor. 7 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Good evening. 8 MS. FRANKLIN: My name is Yvonne Franklin. I'm 9 a quardian of a 6th grade CPS student. I'm the 10 chairperson of our LSC and Johnson Drake School. 11 I'm also a representative of 67 community members 12 that gave me permission to represent them with 13 permission. 14 I'm in favor of the proposal. I think it 15 would be a benefit to the students in general, 16 although my 6th grader may choose another option. 17 Our board, LSC board chose to support 18 this proposal also unanimously. We think it would 19 be a benefit for the students. 20 And respectfully, Your Honor, we would insist that Drake school and Chinatown be included 21 2.2 in the proposal going forward. We feel that our 23 students are worthy of such an opportunity, and it's 24 right and good that this proposal be instituted.

Page 37 1 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Take your time. 2 MS. FRANKLIN: I'm sorry. 3 And I have had the opportunity to hear 4 public comments from the opposition, which includes 5 their wish that they be included in the plan going 6 forward, although they do not recommend that this 7 plan be instituted. So it might not be majority, 8 but I have frequently heard this comment in private 9 and public that they wish to be guaranteed a seat in 10 the school. So I believe some of them think that 11 it's right and good also. 12 Thank you, Your Honor. 13 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 14 Francine Washington, please. 15 Excuse me, I beg your pardon. I'm sorry, 16 Ms. Washington, step back for a minute. Just step 17 right back, I'm sorry. 18 Elected officials, we allow them priority 19 in terms of the comments. Is it Alderman here with 20 Please, if you would be good enough. us? 21 ALDERMAN DOWELL: Thank you, Francine. 2.2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: And I apologize to 23 everybody in the audience as well. I made that 24 clear at the beginning that we would have elected

1 officials beforehand. 2 Alderman, I apologize to you as well. 3 Please carry on. 4 ALDERMAN DOWELL: Thank you, Your Honor, for 5 giving me time to speak this evening about this near 6 south educational plan. 7 As the alderman of the 3rd Ward, my 8 communities include Bronzeville, Fuller Park, the 9 South Loop, and Washington Park. The needs of my 10 students are as diverse as the ward itself. 11 I've been an alderman of a portion of the 12 South Loop since 2007, and in 2015, after the remap, 13 I became the alderman of a larger portion of the 14 South Loop stretching from Roosevelt Road to the 15 Stevenson Expressway and beyond. 16 Shortly after officially taking on this 17 expanded area, I began speaking with residents of 18 the area and attending meetings to hear their 19 concerns, the concerns of my new constituents. 20 Consistently I heard two things from most people I 21 spoke to. No. 1, I want to send my children to 2.2 South Loop Elementary School, but the school is 23 overcrowded, and/or No. 2, the community does not 24 have a neighborhood high school, and I can't get my

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1 kid in Jones.

2	So in 2015 I began to think about
3	solutions and work earnestly on these matters.
4	Working with my community and with CPS, the board is
5	now considering an important improvement to the
б	educational infrastructure in the South Loop
7	neighborhood of my ward. This would include the
8	creation of a new elementary school, which is
9	already under construction, and the establishment of
10	a new neighborhood high school for an area that has
11	not had a true local high school over generations.
12	The two-part proposal called the Near
13	South Educational Plan is the only viable option
14	that offers the necessary increase in elementary
15	school seats to deal with the overcrowding in the
16	South Loop as well as deliver a badly-needed
17	neighborhood high school to the area.
18	To meet these needs, the neighborhood
19	Teachers Academy building has been proposed to
20	become the site of the neighborhood high school. As
21	you know, this has become increasingly contentious
22	for the families at NTA.
23	In response to their concerns, the
24	proposal was modified to significantly allow NTA

students to stay and graduate from NTA even if they don't live in the boundary and then go on and attend the new high school with their classmates. A transition team you heard has been put in place made up of parents and community members from NTA and the South Loop to hash out the important issues regarding the merger of these two schools.

8 These are just a few of the many changes 9 that have been made to the proposal in response to 10 community concerns. But the bottom line is for 11 students who live in the South Loop, regardless of 12 where they live in the South Loop and regardless of 13 their race or their income, they'll be able to send 14 their student to a high-performing elementary school 15 and have the ability to send them to a high school 16 in their neighborhood where there was not one 17 before. This, Your Honor, is a vast improvement.

Also, it rights a wrong from a previous administration that separated the South Loop community at 18th Street forcing the majority black low-income students who live in the South Loop into NTA. This was very wrong. Now with this proposal there will be one school for the entire neighborhood not separated by racial boundaries that will provide

the highest quality elementary education for all students regardless of, as I said before, race, socioeconomic, and other demographic characteristics.

5 To those that say this is a racist plan, 6 I say it is not. This plan will increase both the 7 racial and economic diversity of the consolidated 8 South Loop Elementary School. And for those people 9 who claim that the neighborhood high school is just 10 a grab by rich white people, please look at the 11 boundaries for the high school. The high school 12 will be a majority minority enrolled school and will 13 be one of CPS's most diverse high schools. This 14 proposal creates a learning environment that 15 benefits all races, all students, all incomes.

In 2015 when I started down this path, I told CPS that I wanted a plan that was inclusive of the diverse residents and needs of the South Loop, and this plan could not be a solution for one group over another. This current plan, Your Honor, is fair.

I think I will conclude here. I just want to thank everyone from my community who worked hard on this and contributed to these ideas. I want

Page 42 1 to thank Dr. Janice Jackson, Jim Dispensa, and Chip 2 Hastings? 3 MR. JOHNSON: Johnson. 4 ALDERMAN DOWELL: I'm having a bad day. For 5 their vision and leadership on these issues. б And, Your Honor, I thank you for the time 7 that you're going to take to really delve into the 8 issues and hope that you will support this new plan. 9 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you, Alderman. 10 Now then, Francine Washington, where are 11 vou? Did we lose Francine? 12 MS. WASHINGTON: Thank you, Your Honor, but I 13 should have went before Pat because I was elected 14 also. 15 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Pardon me? MS. WASHINGTON: I'm an elected official also. 16 17 I had to put out petitions and get it signed and 18 campaign. I had 21,000 people that voted for me. 19 And then after being elected, I was also appointed 20 by the mayor to be a commissioner. So I'm an 21 elected official also. 2.2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Well, your time is 23 running, so if you'd be good enough to spell your 24 first and last name.

Page 43 1 MS. WASHINGTON: Francine Washington, 2 F-R-A-N-C-I-N-E, Washington, W-A-S-H-I-N-G-T-O-N. 3 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Start her two minutes 4 again from now, please. Thank you. 5 MS. WASHINGTON: Thank you, sir. My name is б Francine Washington. I do agree that we need 7 another high school. What I disagree on is the 8 boundaries. 9 Before the NTA got there, there were 10 family public housing on them spots. We had to 11 fight and beg the people to tear the house down in 12 order to build the NTA. They needed a public 13 school. I realize time is all about the change, but 14 the boundaries need to change. 15 Everybody is hollering I agree with the 16 boundaries. Nobody has yet stated what the 17 boundaries was like it's a government secret. Can I 18 please have someone tell me what the boundaries are? 19 Because from my understanding it starts from 24th 20 Street to the north, to the Loop. I thought the 21 boundary should start from 39th Street or just no 2.2 boundaries. Kids should be able to go to whatever 23 school they want to go to. Why we put boundaries on 24 it.

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1	Plus we haven't even built up on the land
2	that's there. By the time we get the high school to
3	get built up, the people that's coming back to the
4	land and the land down the street to the east and
5	west of it will have nowhere to go. So I would like
6	the boundaries to start at like 39th, south at 39th.
7	We won't go from 39th further. You have to cut us
8	in or cut us out. We're the one fighting for the
9	NTA, now the upcoming high school.
10	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: This is not a
11	question-and-answer period.
12	MS. WASHINGTON: I know it's not.
13	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: This is a time to give
14	your comments for the record.
15	MS. WASHINGTON: My comment is we need to
16	change the boundaries. They talking about the
17	boundaries over and over again. They had it in
18	black and white. No one actually told anyone what
19	are the boundaries. Did you hear it? You might
20	have read it, but did you hear anyone tell what the
21	boundaries were?
22	All I want to know the boundaries need to
23	start south. It can't start at the loop, from the
24	loop to the loop, from the lake to I have

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1	between the boundary talking about now, I actually
2	have over 4,352 constituents that I'm responsible
3	for. That's just the head of households, not
4	counting children. Maybe about 12,000 people. I
5	have Bridgeport, Canaryville, Iches, all the way
6	from the lake all the way over to Cicero. Anything
7	in that area from 24th to
8	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Your time is up. If
9	there's more information, you can submit it by
10	5:00 o'clock tomorrow.
11	Thank you so much for your time here.
12	MS. WASHINGTON: Thank you, but I need the
13	boundaries.
14	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Sheila Garrett. And
15	before you begin, Ms. Garrett, I'm going to ask
16	Maner Wiley, James Miller, and Rosemary Garrett to
17	line up, please.
18	Go ahead, please, ma'am.
19	MS. GARRETT: Hi. My name is Sheila Garrett.
20	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Spell your first and
21	last name.
22	MS. GARRETT: Sheila is S-H-E-I-L-A, Garrett,
23	G-A-R-E-T-T.
24	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you.

1 I just want to commend MS. GARRETT: 2 Dr. Jackson and the Board on getting a high school 3 in the South Loop. It's been 45 years since I've been in that area, and there hasn't been a high 4 5 school. I think the kids deserve to have a quality 6 standard, all the opportunities that they have on 7 the north side in South Loop. They deserve that. 8 And when people get up here to talk about not having a high school in the community, I will 9 10 tell them sit down somewhere and what about the 11 kids. Kids can adapt fast. Older people can't. 12 Teenagers, young parents, they can adapt. Stop 13 worrying about your children you ain't have not had 14 yet. Worry about the kids that are there and give 15 them exactly what they need, and that's a top 16 education in a high school in the community where 17 they could be at home where they know. 18 Thank you. 19 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 20 Maner Wiley? 21 MS. WILEY: Good afternoon, everyone. My name 2.2 is Maner, M-A-N-E-R, last name is Wiley, W-I-L-E-Y. 23 I represent public housing, and I was one of the 24 people that supported NTA being built.

Page 47 1 My thing is I strongly support the high 2 First of all, a building don't make the school. 3 school. It's the people in there. If these 4 teachers saying they want to teach our kids, show 5 me, put your money where your mouth is. There are 6 all these grammar schools, a brand new grammar 7 school is being built. What's the problem. Τf 8 you're really interested, really interested and 9 really strongly want to support teaching our kids 10 and keeping them at grade Level 1, turn your rear 11 end and go to the new school. 12 I transferred from Haines school to South 13 Loop to NTA. Guess what, there was no high school. 14 Ask me what's the percentage of kids, other 15 nationalities other than African-American go to 16 Dunbar, go to Phillips, or go to Tillman. You might 17 have 1 percent, maybe 1 percent other nationality go 18 They would change their address and take there. 19 their kids elsewhere. 20 I raised six kids at Hilliard. I raised 21 15 grandkids. My granddaughter's first one walked 2.2 through NTA. I fought hard for NTA. I'm going to 23 fight hard to make it a high school. My kids 24 deserve a good high school. Will they all allow

Page 48 1 their kids to go to Dunbar, Phillips, or Tillman? Ι 2 don't think so, because I know this for a fact. 3 Now, how come my kid can't be at a Level 1 high school. Other people came late after 4 5 we tore our bricks down to build this school. You 6 don't know the sweat. My husband died while I 7 supported this school fighting hard to build NTA. Bricks don't make a school. 8 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 9 10 MS. WILEY: Thank you all. 11 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: James, Miller. 12 MR. MILLER: Thank you, Your Honor. My name is 13 James Miller, M-I-L-L-E-R. I'm a South Loop 14 resident and NTA parent. 15 The role of CPS should be to improve education, not property values. The achievement of 16 17 all students should be the goal. This plan is not 18 trying to achieve that goal. No NTA community 19 involvement was in this plan before May of 2016. 20 Alderman Dowell did not include us in any of the 21 pre-conversations. 2.2 This was a pushed-to-the-back-room deal 23 by PDNA, a back room deal bragged about by John 24 Jacoby, PDNA board member, at the first town hall

1 meeting in May, the same man who in 2012 bragged 2 that the SLD scores improved because they regrew the 3 boundaries and dropped the low-income population 4 from 91 percent to 37 percent in a Crain's article 5 from March 2012. б This plan was pushed by a small group of 7 property owners to get a temporary price increase, 8 not to improve educational outcomes for children. 9 By removing the low-income children from the test 10 population in the neighborhood high school over 11 time, they are trying to improve their property 12 values. 13 A CPS employee who has a personal 14 economic interest that would benefit from the 15 testimony in support of a plan is in violation of 16 the Illinois Ethics Code and for them to be involved 17 in this case. As such, the NTA community calls on 18 James Dispensa to recuse himself from this case 19 given his economic interest as a property holder in 20 the region that is projected to realize economic 21 specifically real estate appreciation as a result of 2.2 this proposal. 23 Thank you, Your Honor.

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you, sir.

24

Page 50 1 We have Rosemary Garrett. And lining up 2 behind her is going to be William Woodley, Erica, 3 Clark, and Scott Clark. Please. 4 Thank you. Carry on, ma'am. 5 MS. GARRETT: My name is Rosemary 6 R-O-S-E-M-A-R-Y, G-A-R-R-E-T-T. I always say like 7 the popcorn store. 8 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: There you go. Making 9 me hungry. 10 MS. GARRETT: I would like to urge all of the 11 decision makers in this process to please use your 12 right reasoning and good governance because what has 13 gone on prior to this meeting has been a lot of 14 hate, someone who actually put out a flier that 15 encouraged the Hunger Games for the people who 16 supported this project, which I don't think is a 17 value any school wants. 18 And I agree with the previous speakers 19 that it's not the building, it's not the block, it's 20 the people inside that make a school great. I 21 actually was a certified Chicago Public School 2.2 teacher a million years ago. I substituted for the 23 first couple of months when I graduated from Chicago 24 Teachers College. And I saw that it's the people

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1	inside the building that make a school great.
2	And I applaud the parents on both sides
3	of this issue who want the best education for their
4	kids. I've lived in the Bronzeville area since
5	1999. I am not a racist, but I think that the
б	school, the high school is needed in this community.
7	And it's the right thing to do.
8	Thank you.
9	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: William Woodley.
10	MR. WOODLEY: Good evening, and thank you for
11	this opportunity, Your Honor.
12	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Would you spell your
13	last name, sir.
14	MR. WOODLEY: My name is Will Woodley. Last
15	name is W-O-O-D-L-E-Y.
16	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you.
17	MR. WOODLEY: I'm the development director for
18	the Community Builders Chicago Office. We are a
19	nonprofit committed to helping create and support
20	mixed-income communities. Personally I'm also the
21	father of two small children and myself trying to
22	figure out how to get them the best education
23	possible as they grow up in Chicago. So I
24	understand that tonight's topic is both challenging

¹ and emotionally charged.

2 Because I believe it will benefit 3 thousands of children in the long run, particularly 4 those from disadvantaged lower-income families, I am 5 The here to speak in support of the CPS proposal. 6 Community Builders' mission is to help build and 7 sustain communities where people of all incomes can 8 achieve their full potential. Providing access to 9 the highest quality education possible is a key goal 10 for our work.

11 We are the developer of Oakwood Shores in 12 Bronzeville where for 15 years we have helped to 13 create a high-quality mixed-income neighborhood. We 14 now will be doing the same as the developer for the 15 remaining vacant blocks of the former Harold Iches Homes, which are just east of NTA. There we will 16 17 help build a mixed-income neighborhood that includes 18 hundreds of homes for CHA families and other 19 families with lower incomes. A top priority will be 20 securing access to educational and economic 21 opportunity for those families.

The work that Community Builders has done for decades across the country and in Chicago informs us on the importance of providing quality

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1	neighborhood schools and embracing diversity in
2	order to build strong mixed-income communities.
3	CPS's current proposal will give the families we
4	directly serve as well as hundreds of others access
5	to high quality public education, pre-K through high
б	school, and what will be one of the most diverse
7	student populations in the city.
8	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Sir, I'm going to have
9	to ask you your time is up. Submit it by
10	tomorrow at 5:00 o'clock. Thank you so much.
11	MR. WOODLEY: Thank you.
12	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Erica Clark.
13	MS. CLARK: Hi, my name is Erica Clark. I'm
14	with the group called Parents for Teachers, a
15	citywide
16	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Please spell your last
17	name.
18	MS. CLARK: Erica Clark, C-L-A-R-K.
19	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you.
20	MS. CLARK: With Parents for Teachers, a
21	citywide parent group. We're here to talk about why
22	we believe the proposed action for NTA does not meet
23	the law or CPS's own selection guidelines, which we
24	believe is what your job is here tonight, is to look

1 at the evidence, consider it all, and write a 2 recommendation as to whether or not the proposal 3 meets those guidelines. We believe that the facts 4 tonight will show that it doesn't and that you 5 should recommend against this proposal. б First of all, it's not a boundary change, 7 Think about it this way. If this proposal okav? 8 goes through, NTA will close. It will still be a 9 school, but it will not be an elementary school. Ιf 10 you stop at Aldi's on your way home tonight and you 11 buy groceries and then you go back to Aldi's next 12 week to pick something up and it's a Target or a 13 Payless, it's still a store, but it's not a grocery 14 store. Aldi's has been closed. NTA is being closed 15 with this proposal. As such, you should consider

¹⁷ change.

16

So what does the school closing guidelines say? They say that first of all the students need to go to a higher performing school. Now, despite Mr. Johnson's mental gymnastics here, NTA has the highest level a school can achieve. It's a Level 1+ school. There's no higher rating. South Loop is a great school. It has the same

the guidelines for school closings, not a boundary

Page 55 1 rating. But it's not significantly better than NTA. 2 So this proposed action fails to meet that 3 quideline. 4 The second question is is this a 5 community supported proposal? When CPS announced б these plans, they said they were only going to 7 consider school actions that were supported by the 8 community. There is a tab on the CPS Web site that 9 says community-generated proposals. NTA is not 10 listed as one of them. 11 I think you're going to hear tonight that 12 the NTA community, the parents, the staff, and the 13 students at that school are opposed to this plan. 14 They did not generate this plan. They do not want 15 this plan. And as such, that is the community that 16 should take center stage and whose voices should be 17 listened to. 18 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. I'm going 19 to have to ask you to submit whatever you'd like by 20 5:00 o'clock tomorrow. Thank you very much. 21 MS. CLARK: I submitted it already. 2.2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: The next three 23 speakers, if you'd line up, please. Tanya, is it 24 Skelton?

Page 56 1 MS. SKELTON: Yes. 2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: And Anmisa Foreman and 3 Amara Envia. I apologize up front for anybody's 4 name I mispronounced. I really do. 5 Sir, carry on, please. 6 MR. CLARK: Good evening, Your Honor. Scott 7 Clark, S-C-O-T-T, C-L-A-R-K. 8 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. MR. CLARK: I've been a resident of the South 9 10 Loop for almost 18 years now. I have twin girls 11 that are currently in 7th grade at a CPS school and 12 living in the neighborhood, having children, and 13 going through the process. We've seen dozen of our 14 friends' families move out primarily because of the 15 lack of educational opportunities. 16 I understand it's a difficult transition 17 for the folks that are at NTA now, but myself, my 18 wife, and a lot of our neighbors strongly support 19 this, converting the NTA. The amended transition 20 plan I think will be helpful. 21 CPS has known for years, with the growth 22 in the South Loop, we're going to need a 23 neighborhood high school. The current plan is not 24 perfect. I've been to several other community

Page 57 1 meetings. I know the NTA supporters are very loud 2 and very local. But at the end of the day, the 3 greater good of the community I think outweighs the 4 emotional attachment that they have to their school. 5 And we strongly -- hopefully my daughters will be 6 able to attend there as freshmen in 2019. 7 It's not perfect, but as Abraham Lincoln 8 reportedly said, a good settlement or a good 9 resolution is when everybody walks away a little 10 unhappy. It's not the best solution, but I think 11 it's the only solution that makes sense at this time 12 going forward. We strongly support it. 13 I think the diversity that the proposed 14 boundaries and transition will allow will provide 15 greater educational opportunities for all of the 16 children currently in the neighborhood and in the 17 future, particularly given the growth of the South 18 Loop community. 19 So we would strongly support the 20 proposal. We applaud the alderman's support of it 21 and the other community leaders who do support the 22 plan. Thank you. 23 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you, sir. 24 Come forward. Anisha is it?

Page 58 1 MS. SKELTON: No, I'm Tanya. 2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Tanya, yes. I beg your 3 pardon. Carry on. 4 MS. SKELTON: Good evening. My name is Tanya 5 Skelton, T-A-N-Y-A, S-K-E-L-T-O-N. I am a parent at 6 I am here to stand with NTA. I oppose the NTA. 7 plan to close NTA. My son is a 1st grader in the 8 neighborhood program as we live in the boundary. He loves his school. He loves his friends. He loves 9 10 learning and is excited every day to be at the 11 school. The culture of the school is amazing. 12 My husband and I consciously decided to 13 send my son to a majority black school that is in 14 line with our values and feel diversity is important. We have not been disappointed. I told 15 my son I would be talking tonight to save his school 16 and asked him if there was anything he wanted me to 17 18 say. His response, go NTA. 19 Several friends that are at South Loop 20 Elementary or I should say several parents of South 21 Loop Elementary kids are against this proposal. 2.2 Many NTA families or most of us are against this 23 proposal. Who is for this plan? You should 24 strongly consider other options. There has to be a

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Page 59 1 better plan. There is a better plan. 2 Thank you. 3 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 4 Anmisa? Anmisa Crothers Foreman? We'll 5 put that aside. 6 You are Amara Enyia? 7 MS. ENYIA: Yes. 8 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: All right, I'm going to 9 give three more names. 10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is that me? 11 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Can I give an address? 12 Would you be offended if I give an address to see if 13 it's you? I'm going to take that as a no then. It 14 looks like A-N-M-I-S-A. 15 MS. BRIZUELA: Would you like me to confirm? 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: See who it is. 17 Let's carry on with you, ma'am. You are 18 Amara? 19 MS. ENYIA: Yes. 20 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Okay. 21 MS. ENYIA: Good evening. My name is Amara 2.2 Envia, A-M-A-R-A, E-N-Y-I-A. I am a resident and 23 organizer. My background, I have a master's degree 24 in education, a law degree and a Ph.D. in education

policy.

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2 For context for this conversation, I've 3 had the privilege of working with community groups 4 that have experienced a lot of the systematic 5 destabilization and disruption that often occurs and 6 affects the most marginalized communities in the 7 city. I was also one of the primary consultants on 8 the Ogden/Jenner merger, which is being executed as 9 we speak. So it's another example of communities 10 who are grappling with what to do in transformative 11 spaces and how we can talk about issues of diversity 12 and equity and so on and so forth.

13 I'm here representing a group of 14 colleagues, both professionally but also in the 15 community, who were tasked with serving on an equity committee to assess this proposal, not just through 16 17 the lens of diversity but through the lens of 18 equity, which is absolutely important, especially 19 when we're considering groups that have historically 20 been marginalized when school actions have been 21 taken.

This group has met repeatedly and also engaged in conversations with community members, and a few of the points that we just wanted to highlight

in this proposal is that, No. 1, as a matter of
policy and practice, we must counter any policy
decision making that undercuts quality schools. And
more specifically black and brown faces should never
be expendable, and yet all too often they are.
Again, this issue of equity.

7 This group is tasked with thinking 8 creatively about how to leverage existing resources 9 and what kinds of investments we can make that will 10 mitigate the disruptive factors that are at play 11 whenever a school action such as a closing in this 12 case occurs.

And so after deliberation and conversations with the community, we have developed a proposal that assesses the current landscape and the current proposal but also puts on the table an alternative that requires investments in existing high schools in the area, in particular Dunbar High School --

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I have to ask you -your time is up. We have 90 more people to go. So if you'd be good enough, submit it before 5:00 o'clock tomorrow.

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MS. ENYIA: The proposal has been submitted

Page 62 1 already. 2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you so much. 3 And then I'm going to call it looks like 4 Wendy Millen? 5 MS. MILLER: Miller. б HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Miller, I beg your 7 pardon. Ruby Miller and Pearl Miller. 8 Would you please state your name and 9 spell your first, middle, last name, please. 10 MS. MATTHEWS-FELDMAN: A-N-I-K-A, Anika, last 11 name Matthews hyphen Feldman, M-A-T-T-H-E-W-S hyphen 12 F-E-L-D-M-A-N. 13 I am an NTA supporter. I'm against the 14 The plan assumes many things. It assumes plan. 15 that CPS is obligated to give a third high school in South Loop. Regardless of the testimony you've 16 17 heard, there is a neighborhood high school already 18 assigned to the area. That is Phillips. Phillips 19 has 1,134 seats that are available right now. 20 CPS has claimed that this is not a 21 high-quality school skull; however, it is sending 2.2 Englewood kids, if their closures go through, to 23 Phillips. If it's good enough for the Englewood 24 kids, it should be good enough for South Loop

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elementary families. And, again, 1,134 seats that
 are available right now.

Also, we have Perspective. Perspective Also, we have Perspective. Perspective is a charter school, but it also receives funding from CPS. They can add a neighborhood component to this school like they do Jones Prep. Again, that's many seats that could be available right now.

8 Also, integration. We have heard a lot 9 about how this plan is about bringing diversity and 10 integration. However, Dr. Jackson has said in a Board meeting that some of NTA's classrooms are 11 12 black, and that is a problem. However, in the 13 district there are 278 schools that are all black. 14 They're not a problem for CPS. They're not doing 15 anything about them. They're just calling out NTA 16 for being majority black. That is a problem.

17 Also, what community has is matrix. What 18 community has elementary kids sharing space with 19 high school kids. That is not done. There's a 20 difference in their development as well as their 21 behavior. That's why it's not done. CPS hasn't 2.2 even shown us where this is done in the district 23 currently having elementary kids share space with 24 high school kids. That is against the best interest

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Page 64 1 of the NTA community and any community housing 2 elementary kids. That's why it's not done. 3 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. Your time 4 is up. Thank you very much. 5 MS. MATTHEWS-FELDMAN: I also already have my 6 packet to submit to you. 7 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Are you able to accept that or no? 8 9 Wendy Miller. Good evening. 10 MS. MILLER: Hi there. Wendy Miller, 11 M-I-L-E-R. CPS's proposal is not one of a 12 boundary reassignment. It is a forced closure of a 13 top-rated school that is doing everything right for 14 our children. This proposal will ruin the 15 educational continuity of over 700 elementary school 16 children. Expecting NTA families to sacrifice their 17 school for the benefit of other communities is 18 inconsiderate. The needs of one community are not 19 more important than the needs of another. 20 There is no way to recreate or preserve 21 the family and community we have at NTA, a culture 2.2 that knows its students, families, and all of their 23 backgrounds. If our children are moved to an 24 1800-student, three-building elementary school

1 campus, they will suffer.

2 I have had children at both South Loop 3 Elementary and NTA. We left South Loop Elementary 4 because the attitude of the administration and staff 5 did not reflect the values I expect my children to 6 learn well from. My child was overlooked in the 7 classroom. NTA staff knows my children and the rest 8 of our children beyond the classroom, and this 9 knowledge helps our school to provide our students 10 with a great education. We take care of our families, and all children are valued equally. 11

Students are empowered to speak with their own strong, confident voice. NTA ignites momentum. We're building future leaders that are culturally aware and strive for a just society, which we need. NTA is special in a way that should be a beacon in CPS for families that need a better school opportunity.

This proposal sacrifices a very special, very unique community to create the city's largest elementary school and disperses kids to a giant three-building campus. This proposal is not the best CPS can do for all of our communities. They avoided input from NTA even before they made their

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Page 66 1 plan public, and they should reassess this plan 2 because there are better options that the larger 3 community could put forth. 4 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. 5 Do we have students now? 6 MS. MILLER: Yes. 7 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Do we have students in 8 front of us? 9 Whose first name begins with an R. Okay, 10 you're Student A. Would you please begin, please, 11 Student A. 12 STUDENT A: Since 2013, my mom and other 13 parents have added to the school gardens. Gardening 14 at NTA is done by parents and teachers. We get to 15 go out of the classroom and learn about growing and 16 harvesting vegetables that we plant. Some of our 17 classrooms learn how to make compost and plant 18 seeding and raised beds that we build with our 19 classrooms. 20 Two of our teachers took a training class 21 in order for us to pick and serve our vegetables in 2.2 the cafeteria. This past fall the little kids have 23 picked parsley, collards, kale, and Swiss chard to 24 have at our school lunch. One of our moms is a

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master gardener. We know she knows a lot about growing plants and helps kids who haven't planted anything before. We have volunteers who help with classrooms when they plant plants and pick vegetables. My mom helped with that. Over the summer we helped take care of the gardens, and families can come to pick vegetables. Two years ago we planted a pollenating garden to help the bees. HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much, Student A. Are we on Student B now? STUDENT B: NTA used to have a full-time librarian, but that teacher left a few years ago. When I came to school, some parents decided to try to reopen the children's library. One of our moms organized volunteers from the school to re-alphabetize books, update books, and organize the furniture. She also spent a lot of time researching the computer equipment needed to set up the library so that the children could check out books.

We also had book fairs. Our parents have helped our teachers by buying the books at fairs from a wish list. The library is awesome because

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1	kids get to meet people in our community.
2	Our neighbors are Queen Chapel, the
3	oldest African-American church in Chicago, is near
4	NTA. I got to visit Queen Chapel on a field trip.
5	The men of Queen came to NTA to read books to the
6	little kids. That way they get to know our
7	neighbors. They are working on opening the bigger
8	kids' libraries that I will be able to check books
9	out too.
10	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Does that complete the
11	statement? Thank you so very much, Student B.
12	Appreciate it.
13	MS. FELDSTEIN: Tina Feldstein, Kathryn
14	McKechnie, Paul Kent.
15	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Good evening.
16	MS. FELDSTEIN: Good evening, Your Honor. My
17	name is Tina Feldstein. That's T-I-N-A, last name
18	F-E-L-D-S-T-E-I-N.
19	I'm here today representing one of the
20	most active community organizations in the near
21	south side, the South Loop, it's called the Prairie
22	District Neighborhood Alliance. I'm the president
23	and founding member.
24	Our Board unanimously supports this plan.

This conversation didn't start in 2017 or '16 or '15. This conversation about how are we going to address the needs of our community, the education needs, started back when our organization was founded in 2006.

We host a lot of very large events for our community. And back in 2007 our events would typically have maybe 25 children attend. Those same events annually each year now are attracting thousands of families, thousands. We can't even fit the number of people that want to participate in our community.

Now, we have seen over the years the overcrowding of South Loop Elementary School, and we have consistently seen the families of our community leave our community because there is no viable opportunity for them. They don't want to go to a overcrowded school. And they know they're going to be facing high school.

When we started back in 2006, most of the children were 3, 4, 5, 6 years old. We have now seen all those children become high school students. Many of the parents cannot afford to go to private schools and/or are able to get into many of the

Page 70 selective enrollment schools. May I add that Jones 1 2 is a school that our tax dollars paid for, and many 3 of the students in our area can't even get into that 4 school. 5 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I'm going to have to 6 ask you to please submit whatever else you'd like. 7 MS. FELDSTEIN: We are in a hundred percent 8 support of this plan. 9 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. 10 Kathryn? 11 MS. McKECHNIE: McKechnie. 12 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: McKenzie. 13 MS. McKECHNIE: McKechnie. 14 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Okay, you'll correct 15 Just a second. me. 16 I'm going to ask Autumn Laidler to line 17 up. 18 Go ahead. 19 MS. McKECHNIE: K-A-T-H-R-Y-N, 20 M-C-K-E-C-H-N-I-E. 21 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I apologize for 2.2 mispronouncing it. Carry on. 23 MS. McKECHNIE: Good evening. My name is 24 Kathryn McKechnie. I'm a South Loop mom currently

1	serving on the Phillips Academy LSC.
2	Tonight I want to talk about CPS's
3	investment in Phillips, Tilden, and Dunbar. At its
4	June 20th meeting, CPS provided handouts detailing a
5	combined \$55 million investment in these three
6	schools since the year 2000. Since the financial
7	analyst in me loves a challenge, I decided I would
8	dig into whatever numbers I would find on the CPS
9	Web site. This is what I discovered.
10	Since 2006 CPS has invested \$34.7 million
11	in these three schools combined, not the 55 million
12	detailed in the handouts. Of the \$34.7 million
13	spent, Phillips received a little over \$900,000.
14	That is the neighborhood South Loop school. 722,000
15	was spent on a district-wide initiative to bring
16	air-conditioning to all classrooms. CPS has
17	invested a paltry \$188,000 in Phillips mainly spent
18	on operations and maintenance. Dunbar received a
19	\$32 million investment, including nearly 4 million
20	for IT, educational programs, and other projects.
21	Dunbar, however, is not a neighborhood school.
22	This follows the district's typical
23	pattern of investing heavily in selective enrollment
24	classrooms like nearby Jones and other

1 non-neighborhood schools. On the north side, we 2 could find true neighborhood investments, 19 million in Taft and 32 million in Lincoln Park. Converting 3 4 NTA to a high school will further the trend of 5 disinvesting in neighborhood high schools, 6 especially those in predominantly black and 7 low-income areas of Chicago. 8 The South Loop is one of the few racially 9 integrated neighborhoods in Chicago. If CPS chooses 10 to truly invest in Phillips like it has in Lincoln 11 Park or Taft, we could create a high school with a 12 racially and economically diverse student 13 population. If the Board chooses to move forward 14 with its plan to convert NTA, it will signal loud 15 and clear what has been whispered for years. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 17 Please submit anything else by tomorrow. 18 Mr. Kent, you're up. 19 Lisa, please. I have a card just with 20 Lisa. Lisa, get in line, if you will. 21 Go ahead, sir. 2.2 DR. KENT: Hello. My name is Dr. Paul Kent, 23 P-A-U-L, K-E-N-T. I'm a pediatrician at Rush 24 University Medical Center. My background is in

¹ physics and math at Harvard and then Mayo Clinic, ² University of Chicago, Lurie Children's Hospital. ³ My wife is also a pediatrician, and she is head ⁴ of -- one of the two medical directors for ⁵ Department of Children and Family Services.

I have no dog in this fight. I'm not
from Chicago. I'm not from NTA. My children live
and we live in River Forest because we can. We're
rich enough to move, to make a choice, and get the
best schools we possibly can. We're able to have
our own neighborhood school that is outstanding.

I wanted to correct a couple misconceptions here. My wife and I, as I said, are both experts in the field of child welfare. She in fact is head of Child Protective Services and probably will be for the State of Illinois shortly.

The first is that adverse childhood 17 18 experiences, the harms that are done to children by 19 psychological and emotional displacement, a person 20 says kids can adapt better than adults. That is 21 100 percent wrong. The harms that children face, 2.2 especially psychological harms, increase the risk by 23 threefold, carrying a weapon, using alcohol, sexual 24 activity. It lowers your IQ by about ten points.

The children behind me are all smoking a 1 2 pack of cigarettes a day. That's actually not true. 3 But if they lose the type of educational advantage 4 they have, it will be the equivalent of one pack of 5 cigarettes a day. That is the harm that is being 6 chosen to inflict on these children to the benefit 7 of someone else. 8 My child, African-American, DCFS, 9 drug-exposed, HIV positive at birth went from 1 10 percentile to the 27th percentile in reading because I'm at an outstanding school. If you look at the 11 12 equity analysis, you'll see black male children, 13 like my son Isaiah, went from 17 percentile to 56th 14 percentile equivalent to the white children, not for 15 the rest. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Sir, I'm going to ask 17 you to submit the rest --18 DR. KENT: I will submit the rest. 19 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you so much. 20 Thank you for your thoughtful DR. KENT: I'd like to submit some of the medical 21 attention. 2.2 research in these areas so you can be familiar with 23 it, please. 24 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.

Page 75 1 Ms. Laidler. I'm going to ask David Wu 2 to line up. 3 Go ahead. 4 MS. LAIDLER: A-U-T-U-M-N, L-A-I-D-L-E-R. I'm 5 here to speak on behalf of the teachers and staff at б National Teachers Academy. I'm here because the 7 consequences to our children are greater that any 8 consequence that any one of us could face by 9 standing up and speaking out. 10 So what is happening inside NTA is most important. NTA is not an asset, it is not a 11 12 location. It is students, families, and staff. The 13 true asset of NTA is the members of this thriving 14 community. As teachers and staff, we know black lives matter. We teach our children to stand up to 15 16 injustice, and we listen to families. 17 Through their educational and life 18 experience, our students have faced down adversity 19 and achieved in the classroom and out. Our entire 20 class last year in 2017 was accepted at Level 1+ and Level 1 schools of their choice. 21 2.2 NTA is a promise that was made to our 23 community by the city. CPS is breaking a promise to 24 families and hundreds of students already displaced

1 who have remain committed to NTA and will be 2 displaced again if NTA is broken apart. We have worked to create a purposefully 3 4 integrated school within our building and community. 5 CPS has said in the proposed plan it's time to integrate our schools. Intention is not action. 6 7 This is an issue not just of race but of race and 8 It is systemic. To quote Ta-Nehisi Coates, class. 9 the point of this language of intention on personal 10 responsibility is broad exoneration. Mistakes were made. 11 Bodies were broken. People were enslaved. 12 We meant well. We tried our best. 13 Good intention is the hall pass through 14 history. We refuse to let our children be the 15 victims of good intentions which result in these harmful outcomes. Our children are not disposable. 16 Their education matters. Their bodies matter. 17 18 Their black lives matter. 19 NTA is a Level 1+ school with 75 percent 20 African-Americans students that are 75 percent --21 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you so much. 2.2 Ma'am, excuse me, I'm going to have to ask you, 23 please, submit it by tomorrow. 24 MS. LAIDLER: If this was a Level 1+ white

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Page 77 1 school, would this proposal be up? 2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Lisa. 3 And I am going to ask Charles Riffenburg 4 to get in line, please. 5 Go ahead, please. 6 MS. RIFFENBURG: Lisa, L-I-S-A, Riffenburg 7 R-I-F-F-E-N-B-U-R-G. I am an educator at NTA. Т 8 received my bachelor's from Yale University and my 9 master's in elementary education from Northwestern. 10 I've been a teacher, artist, administrator, and an 11 educator in three public school systems. 12 So many of my students, the parents that 13 I work with have come up here since the beginning in 14 June, and they have stood up because they have 15 integrity. One of our core values at NTA is that we 16 do the right thing always, except I have never come 17 up and spoken before. And if I teach them all of 18 the time just by my words, it's not enough. So 19 that's why I'm standing up today to talk with you. 20 I'm teaching them by example. 21 I wish you could see NTA. NTA is the 22 most magical place. I have worked at many CPS 23 schools all over the city, and NTA is, hands down, 24 the best that I have ever worked at. Any of the

¹ fellow teachers in the city, they ask you where you ² work, I say NTA, they go, ohhhh, NTA. Because, as I ³ said, it's the best.

4 It's a home. It's a haven. It's a place 5 of brilliant teachers, the hardest working in the 6 city, specifically because of the students that we 7 There's been a lot of discussion about serve. 8 academic rigor that is supposedly not at NTA. I 9 take personal offense to that. My 12-hour, 13-, 10 14-hour days for the past four years at NTA? My 11 students are experiencing an academically rigorous 12 education where they are learning many grade levels 13 above where they are because of them, because of 14 their parents, and because of me.

Students are not just standardized test
 scores. The students at NTA receive the arts, they
 receive social and emotional education, and they
 receive needed services.

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you so much for
 your comments.

MS. RIFFENBURG: Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Mr. Wu. Is it Cybal
 Hay, please.

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Go ahead, sir.

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1	MR. WU: My name is David Wu. Last name is
2	W-U. I work for an organization that offers ESL
3	classes to Chinese immigrants in Chinatown. Because
4	these immigrants can't speak English, don't have
5	college education, and have limited job skills,
6	almost all work in Chinese restaurants.
7	These immigrants, Mr. Moy, Mrs. Lee,
8	Mr. Chan leave Chinatown around 10:00 o'clock in the
9	morning and get home around 10:00 at night. Some
10	work as far as Gurney, Aurora, Northwest Indiana.
11	They do this six days a week. They came to the
12	United States so that their children and not
13	themselves can have a better life. They hope that
14	through education the lives of the children can be
15	better.
16	For decades some Chinatown families, 40,
17	50 years ago immigrants in Chinatown have worried
18	about where their children will go for high school.
19	My wife's family immigrated when she was in
20	elementary school after being held back so she can
21	learn English. My wife and her oldest sister went
22	to Lindblom. Her parents never went to Lindblom
23	until graduation day partially because it was far,
24	partially because they worked so many long hours.

Page 80 1 It was their wish that their children could go to a 2 high school closer. It's the same wish that 3 immigrant families in Chinatown have today. I support the conversion of the NTA into 4 5 a high school as it finally provides a nearby high 6 school for Chinatown, especially children of recent 7 immigrants that won't get into selective enrollment 8 schools. But this high school also serves the 9 growing needs of those living in South Loop and 10 North Bronzeville. 11 I'd like to submit into the record 12 letters from over 250 adult ESL who support a high 13 school but can't attend tonight because they're 14 working tonight even after the hearing is over to 15 provide for their families. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 17 Mr. Riffenburg. 18 Would Bernie Wong please get in line. 19 Go ahead, sir. 20 MR. RIFFENBURG: Charles Riffenburg, 21 R-I-F-F-E-N-B-U-R-G. 2.2 For the past four years I have seen the 23 amazing work that is done at NTA. And I've been 24 coming to many of these meetings. I followed this

entire process. I've seen this false choice that's put before the neighborhood of you can either have a high school or you can't.

4 It has been shown by the amount of money 5 that CPS has put in all of these proposals that they б could build a high school if they wanted to without 7 destroying the amazing community at NTA, but they 8 have chosen not to do that. I grew up in a small 9 community. I went to small schools. And I can tell 10 you that a small school like NTA serves its 11 students' needs better than a 1,500- to 12 2,000-student school ever could. Students will get 13 lost in a three-building campus.

14 But when you have a campus where such 15 amazing personal attention is given to every child like it is at NTA, you can't replicate that. The 16 17 community is not just the building, but by 18 destroying NTA, you are destroying that community 19 and all of the good that goes with it. 20 Thank you. 21 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 2.2 Would Leonard James -- is it Brock? 23 MR. BROCK: Brock. 24 Excuse me, would you be good enough to

¹ get in line.

Ŧ	get in line.
2	Go ahead. Please, ma'am.
3	MS. WONG: Yes. My name is Cybal Wong.
4	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Spell your name please.
5	MS. WONG: Cybal, C-Y-B-A-L, W-O-N-G. And I am
6	the parent of three CPS alumni. I come from
7	immigrated parent too. I have worked with
8	organization and also the churches that serve the
9	immigrant youth and children. I understand how
10	difficult they have to go through to find a high
11	school.
12	Also I have three letters come from the
13	high school kid that they wrote. Because they are
14	all at home studying for their final exam because
15	they start their final tomorrow for the semester.
16	One letter the student that attend Kelly
17	High School. She arrived in this country last year
18	October 2017. She want a high school and elementary
19	school near her house because there are many people
20	live in Chinatown and around it. So having a close
21	high school to Chinatown is a good idea for many
22	students. It's the short way to go to stool.
23	The Student B said also went to a Haines
24	Elementary School, currently attend Lane Tech High

Page 83 1 It's very far away. She really love to School. 2 have a high school around Chinatown so it's more 3 convenient and save time and less time for traveling 4 so she can have more time to study. 5 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Ma'am, I'm going to 6 have to thank you for your time here tonight. Your 7 time is up. 8 Elisabeth Greer, would you get in line, 9 please. 10 Go ahead, ma'am. 11 MS. WONG: Good evening, Your Honor. My name 12 is Bernie Wong, B-E-R-N-I-E, last name W-O-N-G. T'm 13 a social worker by background. Early last year I 14 retired as a founder and CEO of Chinese American 15 Service League. I have held this position for the 16 last 39 years. I'm also a proud parent and 17 grandparent of CPS. 18 In the past months we have heard many, 19 many testimony as to the urgent need for a good high 20 school, neighborhood high school. This is 21 substantiated by the Chinatown Vision Plan developed 2.2 by the Coalition for Better Chinese American 23 Community in collaboration with the Chicago 24 Metropolitan Agency and Alderman Solis.

1 I just want to share with you what I 2 personally have observed in the last 40 years. Over 3 and over again I watched the pain and worries of our 4 parents. The children have to change multiple buses 5 often in the dark, early hours, and heavy snow so 6 that they could get a better education than the one 7 assigned in the neighborhood. Every parent wants 8 the best education for his or her child, including 9 all the participants in this room, whether they are 10 opposed or for a high school. I can understand how they feel. This is 11 12 challenging situation. But as someone who is seen 13 as a long-time activist in my community, I can't 14 forget the many pleas of the thousands of parents in 15 our community over the past four decades for a 16 larger built high school in our area. 17 After so many months of hearing and 18 fact-finding, I hope CPS could come up with a viable 19 plan for our children that this will create a 20 vibrant, ethnically and economically diverse high 21 school. And I also hope that they will look for 2.2 long-term solution for the high school besides their 23 creating of NTA. 24 Thank you.

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Page 85 1 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 2 Elizabeth Vanopstal. 3 Sir, you're up. 4 MR. BROCK: Good evening, everyone. 5 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Full name. 6 MR. BROCK: My name is Leonard James Brock. 7 I've been listening --8 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Will you be good enough 9 to spell your last name, please. 10 MR. BROCK: My last name is spelled B-R-O-C-K. 11 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. Carry on. 12 I was listening to everything that MR. BROCK: 13 was being said, so I was wondering what I could say 14 that would be applicable and germane to everything 15 that's going on and something that's comprehensible. 16 I respect and applaud the management and 17 the performance of the high school that's going on 18 with the high school students and all of that. 19 That's very vital. Education is very vital. 20 I think another thing that should be 21 taken into great consideration, I'm in support of 2.2 the NTA organization, and I believe that we should 23 be considering is what's going to be bestowed upon 24 the young children and also the parents, the

Page 86 1 displacement that's going to be put on them to have 2 this taken place, you know what I'm saying? We 3 should consider all of that. 4 From a religious respective, the Bible 5 says to whom much has been given, much is required. 6 I think the older kids can probably take home more 7 responsibility, but to put children under that 8 strain and then their parents when they're working 9 could create extreme hardship. So that should be 10 considered. 11 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 12 And will Beatriz Frausto-Sandoval, would 13 you be good enough to get in line. 14 Go ahead, please. 15 MS. GREER: Elisabeth Greer, E-L-I-S-A-B-E-T-H, I'm the chair of the Local School 16 G-R-E-E-R. 17 Council at NTA and very strongly against this 18 proposal. 19 I'm here to speak on the record about the 20 Near South Steering Committee. Initially I was sent an e-mail by Pedro Soto, Dr. Janice Jackson's chief 21 2.2 of staff, requesting the names of three people who I 23 would recommend serve on the committee. Our 24 principal, Mr. Isaac Castelaz, and the executive

Page 87 director of Chicago United for Equity, Niketa Brar, were also asked for three names each. Ultimately no one from my list or from Niketa's list were chosen, and only one person Mr. Castelaz recommended was on the committee. Additionally, out of the four people chosen by CPS to represent NTA, two of the names on the list were not immediately recognized by Mr. Castelaz or myself. We eventually discovered that they were NTA parents but neither were actively

involved in the fight to save our school.

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How did their names end up on the list? How did their names end up on the list? Both parents told me that they didn't know. Someone from CPS called them and asked then to be on the committee. Neither of these parents attended any of the Near South Steering Committee meetings effectively whittling down NTA's representation to two people.

Conversely, South Loop Elementary was
 represented by four actively engaged members,
 including two LSC members and one member of their
 Space Planning Committee. NTA was at a distinct
 disadvantage, and this disadvantage continued as I
 discovered that in several instances my e-mail

Page 88 1 address was left off of CPS's vital communications 2 about the committee. And a meeting was even 3 convened without my knowledge. 4 I also want to be clear that the agendas 5 of all the meetings focused on what to do when the 6 proposal was enacted. We were not tasked to 7 determine whether or not the proposal should be 8 enacted. 9 On a different note, I want to urge that 10 this plan not be carried through on the basis that 11 CPS is proposing to create a 2,000-seat, 12 three-building, one administration Frankenschool. 13 There is no academic evidence that larger schools 14 are good for children. In fact, all evidence points 15 to the contrary. 16 The new South Loop Elementary School will 17 be the largest in CPS and, as such, it will probably 18 struggle in maintaining academic outcomes for 19 students, and it will drop from its coveted Level 1+ 20 rating. 21 Thank you. 2.2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 23 Will Kate Gladson get in line, please. 24 Go ahead, ma'am.

1 MS. VANOPSTAL: Elizabeth Vanopstal, 2 E-L-I-Z-A-B-E-T-H, V-A-N-O-P-S-T-A-L. Your Honor, I 3 am a NTA mother and a pediatrician where I teach 4 both ethics and evidence-based medicine. 5 Let me state this simply. I think this 6 plan is not evidence based, and I do not think it's 7 moral. It furthers patterns of racism and classism 8 that favors some and not others. 9 First, we have presented tons of evidence 10 against the plan. The detriments to education for 11 both NTA and South Loop kids when you create massive 12 elementary, there's evidence behind that. The 13 importance is breaking down data into fair 14 comparisons, and I don't think that CPS is 15 accurately giving you information. When we've had 16 independent people look at test score data, there 17 are major discrepancies. And we've talked about the 18 health effects and even mortality effects of adverse 19 childhood events. 20 But more importantly, to the core of my 21 being, I think this plan is immorally wrong. And it 2.2 breaks do not harm as a principle. Many of our kids 23 have been displaced multiple times. First there

²⁴ were the promises of the Iches being told that this

1 would be their school forever, and then that was 2 taken away. Then there were Long Grove and Hilliard 3 kids getting kicked out of South Loop Elementary and 4 their borders being redrawn. And later when South 5 Loop is overcrowded, they wanted to have a school 6 within a school at NTA rather than making the 7 boundaries different then. So I ask how is this 8 equitable? 9 Another thing is the community meetings. 10 They say they have community engagement, but what 11 does that mean? It's not the NTA community. When 12 you go to the community engagement meetings, they 13 don't tell you the history of the racism and the 14 displacement that has affected these kids. 15 And so it's not fair to say that they're 16 offering something new when these kids in these 17 other communities have nothing to lose. That's not

a fair choice. It's like offering medicine and
making people struggle for the choices that are
available when NTA already belongs to a family.
It's a cruel plan which does not value equity.
HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you so much.
Would Candace Moore please get in line.

24

MS. VANOPSTAL: I wanted to submit I also have

Page 91 1 video testimonials from families. Thank you. 2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Please carry on. Your 3 name? 4 MS. FRAUSTO-SANDOVAL: Beatriz 5 Frausto-Sandoval, B-E-A-T-R-I-Z, F-R-A-U-S-T-O 6 hyphen S-A-N-D-O-V-A-L. I'm a parent of a child at 7 NTA, and I am opposed to the plan to convert to a 8 high school, which is, in essence, a closure plan as 9 other parents and opponents have stated tonight. 10 I think we've heard many very valuable 11 arguments tonight as far as why this plan is not in 12 the best interest of any of the students involved, 13 whether they're students from NTA or the students 14 from the neighboring communities where, yes, a 15 quality high school is needed. 16 I agree that Chinatown, Bridgeport, 17 Armour Square, and Bronzeville need a high school. 18 Everybody needs a good high school. But there is, 19 as other people have said, over 1,000 seats in 20 Phillips and very little investment in Phillips to 21 date. 2.2 Because I am also an attorney, I just 23 need to refute some of the things that have been 24 said tonight by the people from the Board of Ed and

1 the alderman regarding diverse school communities. 2 NTA is an extremely diverse school community. 3 Pat Dowell stated that the most 4 academically positive option is this merger of NTA 5 in South Loop academy, which we have already stated 6 will result in a three-building campus of over 2,000 7 The research fares out that larger schools seats. 8 are not a positive thing for learning. 9 The gradual conversion that the CPS Board 10 proposes as a way to ameliorate the affects of this 11 plan really doesn't eliminate the problem that this 12 is going to create a mega school. This is going to 13 create displacement of our students, many of which 14 have already been displaced several times as we've 15 stated. 16 And it is going to destroy the community 17 People have come up here and said that a of NTA. school is not the bricks. And that is right, a 18 19 school is the people. But if you take these people 20 out of the schools, we will not have our principal. 21 We will not have --2.2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you so much. 23 MS. FRAUSTO-SANDOVAL: We will not have 24 everybody --

Page 93 1 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Excuse me, I am going 2 to have to ask you to submit anything else you'd 3 like to say if you'd like to. 4 Niketa Brar, if you'd get in line. 5 Carry on, ma'am. 6 MS. GLADSON: Good evening. Your Honor. 7 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Good evening. 8 MS. GLADSON: My name is Kate Gladson, 9 G-L-A-D-S-O-N. I'm from the Legal Assistance 10 Foundation, and I'm here with Candace Moore from 11 Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights. 12 We're here on behalf of concerned parents 13 of NTA and Chicago United for Equity to speak 14 against this proposal. We've prepared a written 15 statement which we will be submitting for our review, and Candace and I will summarize it now. 16 17 In order for the Board of Education to approve any school action, CPS must prove that its 18 19 proposal complies with Illinois law and complies 20 with its own quidelines. In this case CPS's 21 proposal fails to comply with both. 2.2 Turning first to the law, CPS's proposal 23 violates Illinois law in at least four separate 24 ways. First of all, its proposal includes both a

Page 94 1 boundary change and a phaseout, so the gradual 2 cessation of grades in NTA's elementary school. 3 CPS's proposal includes both of these 4 actions, yet CPS's guidelines fail to include any 5 criteria for a phaseout this year. Without criteria 6 for a phaseout, the CEO cannot permissibly propose a 7 phaseout, and the Board of Education cannot approve 8 a phaseout. 9 Second, CPS must provide students with an 10 opportunity to attend a higher performing school 11 after a school action. In this case NTA students 12 will not have that opportunity. NTA and South Loop 13 Elementary are both Level 1+ schools. 14 Third, the transition plan that CPS has 15 generated fails to commit specific resources to provide NTA students with a comparable level of 16 17 support services after this action. Specifically 18 this transition plan fails to address how students 19 will receive additional support for the loss of 20 their school-based health center and for the community center on site, and for their free 21 2.2 extracurricular activities. 23 Lastly, CPS failed to include the NTA 24 community in arriving at this decision, which also

Page 95 1 violates the law. Turning to the guidelines, this 2 request did not come from NTA parents, principal, or 3 community, therefore it fails to meet the 4 quidelines. 5 Additionally, there have not been --6 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 7 Jessica Schneider, if you'd get in line. 8 Ms. Moore, carry on, please. 9 MS. MOORE: Good evening. 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Good evening. 11 MS. MOORE: My name is Candace Moore, 12 C-A-N-D-A-C-E, Moore, M-O-O-R-E. And I'm from the 13 Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights. 14 Following Kate's comments, I want to make 15 a few additional points. The first point is that 16 it's important that the full scope of community 17 feedback and comments be considered. Many students, parents, and community members make time to come out 18 19 and speak out hoping that this time, unlike so many others, would be a real moment when the powers that 20 21 be at CPS would actually listen to them. 2.2 This is why we are formally requesting 23 that Your Honor rely strictly on the transcripts of 24 the community meetings and not the summaries of the

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¹ meetings. In reviewing the summaries, we found a ² number of inconsistencies that we have documented in ³ our request, and I'll submit that, that make them ⁴ wholly unreliable.

5 Additionally, as you consider the best 6 interest of the communities at issue, I want to make 7 a couple points. One, NTA is a resource. Beyond 8 its academic excellence, it offers a number of 9 different community benefits. It has the UIC health 10 clinic that provides health care services to 11 students and community members, including uninsured 12 and underingured families.

13 It has a wonderful partnership with the 14 Chicago Park District, which offers recreational 15 programs, including swimming, affordable child care. Additionally, the Chicago Housing 16 17 Authority, in their plan for transformation, 18 specifically acknowledges NTA as a resource and 19 investment to support the Hilliard Homes and the 20 Iches redevelopment.

The final point I want to make is closing this school does more than just take a good thing away. It actually creates additional harms. It, once again, displaces communities who already were

Page 97 1 asked to bear this burden when they were cut out of 2 the South Loop's boundaries years ago and those who 3 were displaced in the historic 50-school closing. 4 It imposes a burden on this community 5 while many of the supporters that were listed б tonight benefit while losing very little or nothing 7 at all. It destroys the school community of 8 educators, parents, community members who came 9 together and worked hard to turn things around for 10 their students and achieve the success we now see at 11 NTA. 12 It is for these reasons and the others 13 outlined in our statement that we'll be submitting 14 that that is our position. 15 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. We'll get 16 your materials. 17 MS. MOORE: Thank you. 18 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Will Aiko Habino get in 19 line, please. 20 Ms. Brar. 21 MS. BRAR: My first name is spelled 2.2 N-I-K-E-T-A. 23 Please stop the time. 24 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Excuse me, continue

1	with the time, please.
2	MS. BRAR: I'm sorry, I was
3	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Continue with the time.
4	MS. BRAR: following the protocol by which
5	you were holding the time for everyone else's name.
6	N-I-K-E-T-A, Brar is B-R-A-R. I'm the
7	Executive Director of Chicago United for Equity,
8	which is a Chicago-based organization focused on
9	promoting more jobs to equitable inclusive city
10	building bridges across race, class, and geography.
11	Our organization became involved in this
12	proposal in response to community sentiments that
13	this was not in line with community requests or
14	interest, which was demonstrated after 1500
15	signatures were submitted in opposition of this plan
16	and over 470 letters were submitted to state
17	legislatures requesting an assessment of this
18	proposal through a racial equity assessment tool.
19	Our organization has spent the last three
20	months conducting a racial equity assessment
21	engaging over 300 members of the Chinatown, South
22	Loop, and near south community. This is more than
23	any of the other community organizations, and it is
24	also a more diverse offering than any of the

1 organizations that you've heard speak today. 2 Overwhelmingly people supported the goals 3 of diversity and high-quality school options. And 4 overwhelmingly the community decided that this was a 5 proposal that would meet the Chinatown community's 6 needs to a certain respect, and that community has 7 been underserved for nearly 40 years. However, the 8 community also found that this disproportionately 9 burdened three specific groups, all of which are low 10 income and African-American students. 11 And that in response there were six 12 different proposals that were developed that would 13 meet the same needs for diversity, that would meet 14 the same needs for high-quality high school options 15 but would not disproportionately impact African-American students, would not create 16 17 disruptions that are unnecessary, and would not 18 systematically create a segregation border for 19 Phillips High School, which currently has the 20 ability to enroll a diverse offering of students and would not be able to if it was limited to the 21 22 population. 23 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you for your

²⁴ comments.

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Page	100	1

Would Kiku Hibino get in line, please. Carry on.

MS. SCHNEIDER: Good evening. My name is
 Jessica Schneider. I'm with the Chicago Lawyers
 Committee for Civil Rights. And alongside my
 colleagues who spoke before me, I'm here to express
 opposition to this proposal.

1

2

I want to focus on and build on one aspect of this inequitable proposal that has already been mentioned. We have heard throughout this process that there needs to be a separate neighborhood high school and that Phillips High School is not a viable option. It is supposedly too far, it is not a quality option, and it won't work.

However, at this same moment CPS is considering a proposed school action that will send students in Englewood to Phillips High School when their schools close. It is in fact farther for students in Englewood to travel to Phillips than it would be for South Loop students, so why is it not too far for them?

South Loop is 3.4 miles from Phillips
 High School. Hope High School in Englewood is 3.3
 miles away. And Robeson High School in Englewood is

4.7 miles away. Students from South Loop at
farthest would have to travel 27 minutes by public
transportation, yet the students from Hope and
Robeson would have to travel 35 minutes by bus and
train from Hope and 37 minutes by train from
Robeson.

So I ask, when this is clearly an
inequitable result, why is CPS operating in this way
with this proposal? I submit it is because CPS has
always operated in a way where what's a good enough
option for one community of students is not good
enough for another. Simply put, CPS is willing to
reroute low-income black students but not others.

14 Children know when you don't think their 15 community is worth the investment. This proposal 16 will affect not just current students but 17 generations of students. In a district that 18 overwhelmingly underserves low-income black 19 students, why close this over-performing Level 1+ 20 school? These children are exceeding all their standards and expectations, and they should be able 21 2.2 to continue to do so.

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
 Aiko Habino, please.

Page 102 1 MS. HABINO: Good evening. Aiko Jojima Habino 2 A-I-K-O, J-O-J-I-M-A, H-A-B-I-N-O. I have a 3 undergrad degree in policy management and master 4 degree majoring in governing studies. I am a Ph.D. 5 candidate at University of Chicago in Sociology. 6 I'm currently teaching sociology at the School of 7 the Art Institute at Chicago, specifically a class 8 on the focus on inequity in the Foodscape in the 9 world, the US, especially the City of Chicago. 10 So I'm against this CPS proposal because 11 this is following a concerning pattern of CPS, the 12 current operations, which is racial inequity in 13 Chicago is increasing as a result of current school 14 construction and closures. CPS school 15 infrastructure spending is more inequitable than the education spending formula. 16 17 Before funding reform, CPS received 76 18 cents for every dollar that majority white districts 19 received and asked for reform, yet Chicago gave its 20 own majority black school just 38 cents, I repeat, 21 just 38 cents for every dollar spent on building and 22 maintaining majority white school in Chicago from 23 2011 to 2015. 24 Moreover, majority white school received

Page 103 1 funds to drive community development. Majority 2 black schools on the other hand get funding to patch 3 programs. The most common type of spending on 4 majority black schools was for interior renovation 5 such as paint upgrades, security cameras, and metal 6 detectors. The most common type of spending at the 7 majority white schools was new construction for 8 60 percent of these schools. Not a single 9 segregated black school ever received new 10 construction funds from fiscal year 2011 to 2015. 11 So this is a concerning pattern. This 12 proposal is one of the typical case of this. I'm 13 against this proposal. 14 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 15 Pauline Lipman, if you'd get in line, 16 please. 17 Kiku Hibino? 18 MR. HIBINO: Good evening, Your Honor. 19 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Good evening. 20 MR. HIBINO: My name is Kiku Hibino, K-I-K-U, 21 H-I-B-I-N-O. My child is a student at NTA, a 2.2 Level 1+ Title 1 school where he is excelling due to 23 the wonderfully dedicated work of the 24 administrators, teachers, and parents. NTA was not

Page 104 1 consulted as required by Policy Manual Section 2 703.2, Section 3. Because we would have expressed 3 our opposition to this change. 4 Our concern is regarding the massive 5 impact to our school's performance, community, and 6 enrollment numbers. I request that you meet with 7 NTA parents to clarify this boundary change and to 8 discuss the future plan to maintain this strong 9 academic community and the high performing school. 10 We do not feel that our interests are 11 being well served with this move and that this has 12 not been conducted in the spirit of the MCLV 13 Title 1, Parental Involvement Policy, Section 801.3. 14 Thank you very much. 15 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 16 Latasha Watkins, if you'd get in line, 17 please. 18 This is a student, Student C. 19 STUDENT C: I am a third grader in NTA. I am 20 against the proposal because I think it is wrong. 21 It's not fair to NTA. It's another school CPS is 2.2 destroying. NTA is a Level 1+, and we have a gym, a 23 pool, a park, mostly everything. All of that will 24 be great for high school, but there are still

Page 105 1 schools who have not even finished kindergarten. Ιt 2 would distract the young kids' education. It would 3 put the next generation of kids in trouble. 4 NTA is the best school for everyone, 5 black or white or Asian like me. Please do not б close NTA. 7 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 8 Would Chris Hall get in line, please. Carry on. 9 10 MS. LIPMAN: Pauline Lipman, L-I-P-M-A-N. I'm a Professor of Education Policy at UIC. 11 12 I'm a researcher, and I work with data, 13 but I'm not going to discuss CPS data. I've been 14 testifying at school closing hearings since 2004. 15 Every year parents, teachers, students, and 16 researchers like me come with testimonies and data 17 for why a school should not be closed. But the 18 mayor and his appointed ward are not weighing data, 19 no disrespect to you, sir. 20 There is no way to understand the Board's 21 proposal to close NTA and shuffle students to South 2.2 Loop outside the larger context of race, real 23 estate, and privatization. So-called disparities 24 between South Loop and NTA are negligible. That's

1 smoke and mirrors.

2	Here are some data we should pay
3	attention to. Since 2001, CPS has closed, phased
4	out, consolidated, or turned around 160 schools,
5	almost all in black and brown communities.
6	87 percent of all students affected have been
7	African-American. Meanwhile CPS authorized 130
8	charter schools and spent money for that.
9	Students shuffle from school to school
10	away from families and trusted adults out of their
11	neighborhood. Students from Price were shuffled to
12	NTA. Now NTA students are going to be shuffled
13	again. The NTA closing is tied to closing the only
14	neighborhood high schools in Englewood. While CPS
15	invests in schools in affluent and white north side,
16	they disinvest in neighborhood black schools.
17	This is part of an assault on low-income
18	black Chicagoans that has driven 240,000
19	African-Americans out of Chicago since 2000 and cut
20	the black teaching force almost in half. Our data
21	show that school closings have not improved
22	education and have been destabilizing for children
23	and families and communities.
24	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.

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1	MS. LIPMAN: Investing in south side high
2	schools doesn't have to be contingent
3	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I'm going to have to
4	ask you to step aside.
5	Madam Reporter, just stop the testimony
б	there. Thank you very much.
7	Leoman McGrow, please. If I mispronounce
8	your name are you from the GAP committee?
9	MR. MC GEE: Leonard Mc Gee.
10	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I'm sorry, it says the
11	GAP looks like committee. Is it Leoman McGrow? So
12	you get in line after the gentleman in the back.
13	I'm sorry, carry on, please, ma'am.
14	MS. WATKINS: Hi. I'm Latasha Watkins,
15	L-A-T-A-S-H-A, W-A-T-K-I-N-S.
16	Is this really about a boundary change?
17	If so, then a separate hearing really should be held
18	regarding the high school portion of this. It's not
19	the building that makes the school, it's the people
20	is what I heard. As long as the people are white
21	enough. Why don't current families within NTA
22	boundaries send their children to NTA now is the
23	question.
24	I feel like the problem of overcrowding

at South Loop is a created problem when 40 percent of the children are from outside of South Loop's neighborhood boundary. The school is not overcrowded if it only admits the students within its boundary.

I asked Alderman Dowell specifically
about whether we would do an attendance assessment,
and I think respectfully she said, no, we're not
going to do that. Why? Why is that not being done
to understand whether we really need to build,
number one, a new school. And then, two, whether we
need to sacrifice NTA for a high school.

We already talked about what community members generated this proposal, which were not those from NTA who have not been involved in creating a proposal.

17 And why have no other alternatives been seriously considered? For instance, why are 18 19 Chinatown or South Loop or Bridgeport not offering 20 one of their buildings for this conversion? What 21 about investing in Dunbar and Phillips to better 2.2 impact more CPS students, specifically those that 23 are black and brown. What about building a new high 24 school building structure instead of a new

1 elementary school for South Loop? 2 As an NTA community, we're not against 3 communities having a high school that they well 4 deserve. We're not against diversity. In fact, 5 diversity is occurring naturally at NTA already. 6 What we are against is sacrificing our students, who 7 why should they bear the burden of this change? Whv 8 should they be displaced and do so at their academic risk? 9 10 Personally I am a CPS student. And it looks like I'm out of time. 11 12 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: You are. Thank you. 13 Who do you have with you? 14 MS. WATKINS: This is Joseph, who should be 15 going to NTA because we chose to stay for that I think he's made his opposition known too. 16 reason. 17 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 18 You all know the applause will not be on the record. 19 I did hear you, but it's not on the record. 20 Johnnetta Diming, would you get in line, 21 please. 2.2 Carry on, sir. 23 MR. HALL: Chris Hall, C-H-R-I-S, H-A-L-L. Т 24 oppose the plan.

1	This deal has been described as not
2	perfect but good. However, in reality a good deal
3	is one where sacrifice and hardship are shared.
4	When you list out the sacrifices in this deal, NTA
5	students are the ones who lose their school
6	building. NTA students are the one who lose their
7	teachers. NTA students are the ones who lose the
8	administration that has lifted their school to its
9	current 1+ height.
10	NTA students are the only ones who lose.
11	However, this has always been known since the plan
12	was devised. The reality is that the current
13	proposal offers political benefits that outweigh the
14	cost to the community and especially those born
15	solely by the students and families at NTA.
16	The question then is is there a solution
17	within the current proposal that could make it at
18	least a good one? I believe there is. If the
19	building at Cermak and State is the only viable high
20	school option for the communities involved, then the
21	new building at 16th and Clark should become the new
22	NTA.
23	Now, this solution is still far from
24	perfect. Ask anybody from the NTA community if they

¹ want to be forced from their school. Furthermore, ² it still inherits the issues with the current plan, ³ most notably that both schools will suffer from ⁴ overcrowding in the very near future. However, this ⁵ common sense change to the proposal is also fair and ⁶ has precedence.

Dr. Janice Jackson has said the proposal
was to write the wrong committed by CPS just ten
years ago. Alderman Dowell said this as well. This
statement is disingenuous at best. But if there is
any honesty to this, this change would be a huge
leap closer to that goal.

Furthermore, this solution, unlike the first ever a closing of a Level 1+ school, is not without precedent. It is the exact same solution that CPS implemented at South Loop Elementary for the first time the same vulnerable families were displaced from their school.

At the last meeting a representative from PDNA noted that the schools are the community's assets, and the community needs to decide how they're best utilized. I agree with that sentiment, let the community decide. Is my proposal perfect? No, but neither is the current one.

Page 112 1 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you, sir. Ι 2 appreciate it. 3 I'm going to ask Kayla Perkins, please, 4 to get in line. 5 Carry on, sir. 6 MR. MC GEE: My name is Leonard E. Mc Gee. 7 L-E-O-N-A-R-D, middle initial is E., last name is 8 M-C space G-E-E. I'm the president of the GAP 9 Community Organization. 10 First of all, I'd like for you to 11 consider the boundaries to be that of the Tift 12 boundaries. The Tift which was back in 1998 under 13 Madeline Habecock, who's the one that actually paid 14 the \$38 million to build the school, which is built 15 by black money, not South Loop. The school belongs 16 to the Tift. And we are in support of bringing in 17 the high school, and the key word here, is quality, 18 a quality high school. 19 They have talked about a lot of high 20 schools in the area, but the issue is quality. We 21 would like to make sure that the Tift boundary, the 22 people who paid for it -- and those are black people 23 who paid for it, tax increment financing over the 24 last 20 years have actually put up \$38 million.

Page 113 1 Most of the people here didn't put a dime into the 2 school. 3 So we would like to have our building 4 back. We're already at the table. We want the 5 boundaries to reflect what the Tift is. And anybody 6 else who wants to sit at the table, we welcome them. 7 But the African-American community that built it and 8 paid for it should have access to the high school. 9 Thank you. 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much, 11 sir. 12 Would -- is it Milda --13 MS. SAUNDERS: Saunders. 14 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Yes. Would you get in 15 line. Thank you so much. Thanks for the help. 16 MS. DIMING: Hello. 17 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Hello. 18 MS. DIMING: I'm Johnnetta, J-O-H-N-N-E-T-T-A, 19 Diming, D-I-M-I-N-G. I'm here, a parent and a 20 resident of the low-income community of Bronzeville. 21 I'm here because all this stuff that we're talking about, can none of this make sense to half the 2.2 23 people that's trying to make the decision. The only 24 thing I'm asking is that whatever decisions you all

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1	make, could you all just think about us, think about
2	us because our kids, they need a chance too.
3	We're trying to do what we can to make
4	sure our kids have equal rights like everybody else.
5	We're trying to do the right thing by our kids.
б	We're asking you all the same thing, just do right
7	by our kids. Our kids deserve it. They didn't do
8	nothing wrong.
9	Thank you.
10	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
11	Milda Saunders, if you'd get in line,
12	please.
13	Carry on.
14	STUDENT D: I am 12 years old in the 7th grade.
15	I am a proud NTA scholar and a proud
16	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I'm going to interrupt
17	you. You can start her time again, but this is
18	going to be Student C.
19	THE AUDIENCE: D.
20	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: D. I beg your pardon.
21	Thank you.
22	Go ahead.
23	STUDENT D: I am 12 years old in the 7th grade,
24	and I am a proud NTA scholar and a proud member of

NTA Student Congress where we are taught to be leaders and advocates for our school. I have been attending NTA since I was in kindergarten. In my eight years at NTA, being an only child, I have met so many amazing teachers, staff. And, most of all, I have built friendships with my peers.

7 I've gone from a kid who was shy to a 8 teen who has been taught by my teachers to believe 9 in myself. NTA is not just a elementary school to 10 me. It's my second home. More than anything, NTA 11 is where I began learning life skills to prepare me 12 for my future.

I feel this proposal is racist and unjust towards African-American students and should not be continued. CPS does not listen to how the students, families, and staff feel. They only care about making change for South Loop and other communities and breaking apart our NTA family.

I have said this before, and I will say it again. CPS needs to be building up schools, not tearing them down. Black students lives and their education matter, but they obviously can't see that. Our principal, Mr. Castelaz, is an amazing principal who believes in all of his students. NTA needs to

Page 116 1 remain a Level 1+ elementary school and nothing 2 less. NTA is here to stay. 3 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 4 Isaac Castelaz, if you'd get in line, 5 please. б Carry on, please. 7 MS. SAUNDERS: Hi. I'm Milda Saunders, 8 M-I-L-D-A, S-A-U-N-D-E-R-S. I'm an NTA parent of 9 two children, a physician, and a lifelong Chicagoan. 10 NTA is a Level 1, predominantly African-American, predominantly low-income school. We should be 11 12 studied and emulated, not closed or boundary changed 13 out of existence. We support diverse schools both 14 racially and socioeconomically. We welcome families 15 to join us. But to close a high-functioning school 16 because it sits on prime real estate, that's not 17 integration, that's colonization. 18 As a lifelong south-sider, I agree that 19 the near south side should have a high school 20 option, but this is not the way. Has CPS ever 21 closed a Level 1 school? I sympathize with parents 2.2 in Chinatown, Bridgeport, near south, and even the 23 South Loop. Your struggles are important, but our 24 children matter too.

Page 117 1 NTA has school supports, medical clinics, 2 and, more importantly, staff and faculty who have 3 always wanted them there and have always supported. 4 We are better than this, Chicago. We are better 5 than this, CPS. This is a false choice. This 6 proposal does not make sense. We shouldn't close 7 Level 1+ schools. We shouldn't build a high school 8 that will rapidly be too small for all of the 9 communities that it proposes it will serve. And we 10 don't let one community take a school from another 11 community just because they want it. 12 Let's come up with an equitable and 13 rational plan. Let's consider Dunbar, King, 14 Phillips, or other schools other than this plan. 15 We're better than this. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. 17 Patricia Crosby, if you'd get in line, 18 please. 19 This is going to be I take it Student E. 20 STUDENT E: I am a third grade student at NTA. 21 I have been there since I was in kindergarten. Ι 2.2 have so many friends at NTA I can't even count them. 23 Many of them are not even in my grade. It's like a 24 second family to me. NTA has the most amazing

teachers. They make learning exciting and fun.
 They are always there to help.

3 We have a program called second step 4 which helps us learn with kids in other classes and 5 get to know them. This has helped to make new 6 friends outside of my regular homeroom. We can 7 compare how I like one thing and they might like 8 another thing. They encourage you to be partners 9 across classrooms. We have an awesome pool with 10 great swim classes. And I know I'm a much better 11 swimmer than I used to be.

12 I think the plan to convert NTA to a high 13 school is wrong. It will hurt many families, 14 including mine. I have two younger siblings. My 15 sister is here at NTA in kindergarten, and my brother is two years old. Like many families, we'd 16 17 be split apart. I would stay at NTA, my sister has 18 to go to South Loop, and my brother can't go to 19 either one.

Because the plan requires a lot of construction, I'm afraid I would lose a lot of friends because who wants to learn in a construction zone. It can't be good for any student's education to deal with that in class. I'd lose the pool as

Page 119 1 well. My sister definitely loses the pool because 2 South Loop does not have one. And also the health 3 center. 4 I take public transit with my dad and get 5 to school, my dad and sister to get to school. 6 We're not sure how that will work when my building 7 is ten blocks away from hers. I'm afraid CPS would 8 be tearing apart the NTA community that I love. 9 This plan will hurt many families, including 10 destroying the community. 11 Thank you. 12 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 13 Darrell Actenpona (phonetic). I'm sorry, 14 I'm sure I didn't do justice to your name. 15 Sir, carry on, please. Isaac Castelaz, I-S-A-A-C, 16 MR. CASTELAZ: 17 C-A-S-T-E-L-A-Z. I'm the principal at National 18 Teachers Academy. 19 Back in 1966, nearly to this day, 20 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., moved into a west side 21 apartment to join a movement designed to desegregate 2.2 Chicago. During this time in our city, Dr. King 23 came to see that more than passing new laws, the 24 crisis Chicagoans faced could only be solved once we

Page 120 1 learn to, quote, desegregate our minds, end quote. 2 In so doing, he called for, quote, a 3 coalition of conscience, end quote, brave people of 4 every race and background working together to serve 5 the cause of equity. He said, quote, our power is 6 in our unity, the force of our souls, and the 7 determination of our bodies, end quote. 8 This proposal reminds us of the 9 conditions King spoke of so long ago. We are told 10 this plan could right a historical wrong in which 11 the boundary of South Loop school was moved to 12 exclude poor black children who were sent to NTA, a 13 new unproven school at that time. However, this 14 proposal won't right that wrong because NTA has 15 righted that wrong all by itself. 16 Whereas the boundary-ship years ago 17 denied poor back children a quality education at 18 South Loop Elementary School, those same students 19 today have a quality, high-quality option at NTA, 20 which has risen from a Level 3 to a Level 1+ school 21 in four years. NTA is a product of not only the 2.2 kind of coalition Dr. King sought but also the power 23 of the kind of unity he envisioned so many years 24 aqo.

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1	The process of considering this proposal
2	has shown us just how powerful the NTA community is.
3	But I also think that hidden beneath it all is an
4	opportunity, an opportunity to do something truly
5	remarkable. Let's do as Dr. King urged and form a
б	coalition of conscience between our communities. I
7	call for us all, NTA, South Loop, Chinatown, CPS,
8	and, yes, City Hall, to reconsider this proposal
9	together and explore alternatives which work for
10	everyone.
11	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Sir, your time is up.
12	Thank you.
13	MR. CASTELAZ: Thank you.
14	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Jawan Boston, please,
15	would you get in line.
16	Carry on, please, ma'am.
17	MS. CROSBY: Hi. My name is Patricia Crosby,
18	P-A-T-R-I-C-I-A, last name Crosby, C-R-O-S-B-Y.
19	I'm a proud NTA biological foster and
20	adoptive parent of six young brilliant young men,
20 21	adoptive parent of six young brilliant young men, and I have two left at NTA. We're a Level 1+
21	and I have two left at NTA. We're a Level 1+

this major accomplishment, you're rewarded. But
 instead it feels as if we're being punished.

3 When I think about NTA, I think about it 4 takes a village to raise a child. That's what NTA 5 has been doing. One of my children who's in seventh 6 grade now, he was my foster son, now he's my adopted 7 son, he went to two schools prior to this, and he 8 was labeled as learning disabled. But being at NTA, he thrived. Now, I already knew he was a genius, 9 10 but being at NTA, he thrived. Right now his 11 grades -- he's in seventh grade. His grades are As 12 and Bs, and they're trying to get him into a select 13 enrollment school.

It's unfortunate -- I mean, I agree -- I respect everyone's opinion, but what people have to understand is that we have to think about the children. NTA children, they need that elementary school. Please try not to turn NTA into a high school.

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
 Shantel Boston, if you'll get in line,
 please.

24

20

Sir, are you a student?

1 STUDENT F: Yes. 2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: We're going to show you 3 as Student F. Go ahead, please. 4 STUDENT F: Good afternoon. It makes no sense 5 to put NTA students in a different environment. 6 This will affect students mentally and academically. 7 This will make NTA students feel as though they are 8 inferior since they are not being considered at all. This will make it less convenient for NTA families. 9 10 Should you really take away someone's home because 11 their scores are slightly lower than people from 12 families that have more money and resources? 13 Grammar school is where a student 14 develops the most. Would you want to put fourth 15 graders in the same environment as high-schoolers? 16 Even eighth graders have trouble transitioning to 17 high school. You give fourth graders the burden of 18 having to live with this four years early. Think 19 back to your fourth grade year where you probably 20 barely managed to make friends and all of a sudden 21 having to be put near high-schoolers who have 2.2 completely different ways than you do. 23 What would become of your teachers' and 24 our students' future? It is true that people must

¹ travel out of their way to go to high school, but ² now we have to go out of our way to go to school. ³ Students in the South Loop will have an opportunity ⁴ to be successful, but another community won't. So ⁵ you are prioritizing another community over us.

б How would you feel if you had a current 7 home ripped away from you and you were told to go 8 somewhere else, a home that you had for most of your 9 life taken away by people who don't even know you 10 just because they can. Just because your peers 11 scored slightly lower so the outcome of your life 12 just got completely changed because of someone 13 else's test score, not yours, and nothing that you 14 say or do could change that.

We are not numbers or letters that could be measured and placed in boxes. We are people. Thanks to our great teachers, our scores are rapidly growing, and at this rate we'll soon surpass the South Loop.

Your Honor, I'm almost done, so can I
 just please have --

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Sir, I have to move you
 along. I still have half more to go. Thank you so
 much.

Page 125 1 This is a student? Are you a student, 2 sir? 3 STUDENT G: Yes. 4 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Carry on. 5 I'm a sixth grader attending the STUDENT G: 6 school NTA. Our school shouldn't be shut down just 7 because people want it for their kids. But my 8 classmates and my peers and I, we deserve a quality education also. 9 10 I'm kind of a problem child at school, 11 and staff at my school do all that they can to make 12 it better for me and the rest of the kids at NTA. 13 Over the past four years that I've been attending 14 NTA, I have been -- people have been helping me and 15 giving me chance after chance, which shows that they do care. Because if they didn't, I would probably 16 17 be expelled. 18 So I appreciate the staff, Ms. Brown, 19 Ms. Brooks, Mr. Castelaz, and a former staff member, 20 Mr. Valencia, and other staff members. NTA is our 21 second home. We all live here, so don't destroy it. 2.2 Thank you, and have a good night. 23 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 24 Will Olivia Shelton please get in line.

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1	And Sarah Bush, will you get in line as well.
2	Are you a student?
3	MS. BOSTON: Nope.
4	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I hope I paid you a
5	compliment. Carry on, please.
6	MS. BOSTON: Yes, you did. Thank you very
7	much. My name is Shantel Boston, S-H-A-N-T-E-L,
8	B-O-S-T-O-N.
9	Hello, I am a parent of three children
10	who currently attend NTA. The current proposal that
11	presents the idea to close NTA and scatter our
12	children into three separate buildings is a huge
13	inconvenience to my family and I. Even though I
14	became a mother at a very young age, I have always
15	aimed to give my children a sense of stability
16	wherever I chose to reside. I have always aimed to
17	do whatever was necessary to assure just that.
18	Even in the time where we lived in a
19	group home clear across town, I traveled miles to
20	get them to a quality school on time every day and
21	walked them to school every day to ensure their
22	safety when we were living in a gang-infested
23	neighborhood. Now we live in a much better
24	neighborhood where our children are allowed to walk

1 by themselves to school.

And now with them being separated to different buildings, my children will have to travel to and from school without the protection of each other, especially my 5-year-old son who will have to travel alone to school.

7 There's room for over 4,000 students at 8 Wendell Phillips High School and also Dunbar High 9 School for residents of the community. The said 10 proposal is supposed to accommodate the high school 11 students to attend currently, and I don't understand 12 why small children will be forced to make a further 13 commute for school when the high school students are 14 at an appropriate age to commute back and forth to 15 school using public transportation.

The fact that these children and their families have made the decision not to attend their neighborhood high school is a choice they have made. But the schools are there and available to all of these communities that are requesting for another school at the cost of our school, NTA, and it is totally unacceptable.

²³ My point in case in all that I have said ²⁴ is that all of our young school age generations

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Page 128 1 deserve a quality education, but must it be at a 2 cost of the inconvenience to some but a convenience 3 to others? I am and will always be opposed to the 4 current proposal of closing NTA. 5 Thank you. 6 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 7 Will Joy Clendenning get in line, please. 8 Carry on, ma'am. MS. SHELTON: Your Honor, my name is Oliva, 9 10 Shelton, S-H-E-L-T-O-N. 11 I'm here to oppose closing NTA. I am a 12 grandmother. My grandson Amil, he's in third grade. 13 Amil used to be an introvert. Since we came to NTA, 14 Amil has really grown. He has been on the honor 15 roll at least for two years. 16 I'm older. I am committed because Amil 17 is committed to going to school, being at school on 18 Amil is committed to being in his class. time. 19 Amil is committed to not wanting to miss anything. 20 Now, why does he feel like that? Because he loves the school. 21 2.2 I love the school by observing and 23 participating. And, most importantly, NTA is a 24 community. Amil is taught -- I love the way they

Page 129 1 position their classes. It's like a community. 2 It's in a round table. He's learning not just 3 academics, he's learning life lessons, how to be in 4 the community and how to be an individual. I really 5 love that. б Also, my grandson has asthma. And the 7 clinic, it's a lifesaver. He has had several 8 episodes. The clinic was able to take care of it just like that. I didn't have to go anywhere. They 9 10 knew what to do. They have his records on file, and 11 they knew what to do. 12 Secondly, I just think that CPS and 13 everybody else needs to know there's never a wrong 14 time to do the right thing. Please do the right 15 thing when it comes to NTA because it's just not fair. It's just not fair. And everybody that 16 17 stands on the sidelines and don't speak up, you're 18 quilty. You should always say something when you 19 have an opportunity. 20 Thank you, Your Honor. 21 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 2.2 Will -- I think it's Priya Shah, if you'd 23 get in line, please. 24 Carry on, ma'am, please.

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1	MS. BUSH: Good evening, my name is Sarah Bush,
2	S-A-R-A-H, B-U-S-H, parent of two daughters at NTA.
3	I want to talk about the process here. First of
4	all, despite a number of what can only be described
5	as pro forma community meetings, there's been very
б	little community input, especially from NTA. As
7	Ms. Feldstein pointed out, this was a plan that was
8	hatched long ago, long before anyone at NTA was
9	consulted.
10	Meanwhile, at the community meetings
11	we've heard speaker after speaker raising concerns
12	about the destruction of our wonderful community,
13	yet the plan before you scatters our students across
14	four different campuses splitting up families and
15	destroying that community.
16	Speakers have pointed out that the
17	proposed high school does not really meet the needs
18	of the full near south community, Chinatown,
19	Bronzeville, Bridgeport. Many are left out. It's
20	simply too small. We've heard about how fast this
21	community is growing. It's going to be overcrowded
22	almost immediately. Students are being forced into
23	a school built for a grammar school.
24	We've asked the Board to consider other

1	options to meet that need in the near south
2	community. Just this past week we've requested that
3	the Office of Family and Community Engagement
4	facilitate a meeting between NTA parents and those
5	in the South Loop, and we were refused that meeting.
б	That should have been the first step in any
7	community-driven process, considering many
8	alternatives.
9	I want to turn then to the personal side.
10	Like many NTA families, my family has already felt
11	the impact of a school closing. My daughter will be
12	one of those fourth graders sent to school with high
13	school students. Simply not acceptable. This
14	instability created by this plan is bad for
15	children, bad for families, and bad for this city.
16	What kind of a school district closes a
17	high-functioning well loved school community? This
18	process has been deeply flawed from the very
19	beginning, and this plan is a terrible one. I stand
20	before you in strong opposition to the plan to close
21	NTA.
22	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
23	Will Kevin Stanciel, if you'd get in line
24	please.

1

Carry on, ma'am.

MS. CLENDENNING: Thank you. My name is Joy Clendenning J-O-Y, C-L-E-N-D-E-N-N-I-N-G, and I'm honored and humbled to stand here with the amazing people in this room and the amazing people in the overflow room.

7 I'm a CPS parent. It's my 16th year. 8 I'm a former public high school teacher. I have a 9 BA from Harvard in history and a master's in 10 education policy from UIC. I'm the managing 11 director for Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public 12 Education, a parent advocacy group, which advocates 13 for equitable and adequate public education funding 14 and education policies which provide quality 15 education to all children.

Over the past eight years, we have worked with parents, students, and schools about facilities and programs at their schools throughout CPS and Illinois. We've read and analyzed the various criteria year after year, the various formuli applied, the legal code.

Our conclusion: Without a robust authentic community engagement process that creates a real comprehensive citywide facilities plan, CPS

Page 133 1 should put a hold on closing and opening schools. 2 Speaking specifically to the case of NTA, Your 3 Honor, this proposal should not move forward because 4 this is not a community developed and community 5 supported proposal, therefore it does not meet that б criteria. 7 And the proposal is not in the best 8 interest of the students. NTA students are at a wonderful school which meets their needs, and they 9 10 are doing well. Moving them is not in their best 11 interest. 12 You have the chance, Your Honor, to make 13 the right and just recommendation, tell CPS that 14 this school action should not move forward. 15 Thank you. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 17 Will Anna Lundvick please get in line. 18 Back up for a second. Carry on, ma'am. 19 MS. SHAH: My name is Priya Shah, P-R-I-Y-A, 20 S-H-A-H. 21 Your Honor, I stand before you today as 2.2 both a veteran CPS teacher and parent to a 2nd 23 grader at NTA. NTA's boundaries should not be 24 decimated, nor should it be closed and converted to

¹ a high school.

As an educator, I'm deeply offended that this proposal even exists. The proposal is rooted in racism and blatantly ignores the tremendous achievement that NTA has shown during its tenure as a Chicago public school.

Working in a high-achieving selective enrollment school on the north side, I'm painfully aware that these types of proposals never attempt to destroy school communities in more affluent areas. As a parent, the options that have been presented for my son and his peers are unacceptable.

I reject Option 1, to send him to a school that spans three buildings and has 1800 plus students. There's no data that supports 6,000 schools that are so immensely large, especially for low-income minority students.

I also reject Option 2, keeping him at NTA. The prospect of keeping him at a school that is slowly being destroyed and reduced year by year while half of his schoolmates are transferred to another school is equally unacceptable. As the youngest grade in the building, he would be a 4th grader. My son would no longer have opportunities

1	to shine as a mentor to younger students as our
2	phenomenal NTA middle-schoolers who are behind me do
3	on a daily basis.
4	Your Honor, my message to you is this:
5	Encourage the Chicago Board of Education to vote
6	against this proposal. Show integrity by asking
7	them to visit NTA to see firsthand the magic that
8	occurs there on a daily basis. Have the courage to
9	view the proposal objectively without the influence
10	of politics and those with wealth and power.
11	Finally, do what is right for my child and NTA's
12	children.
13	Thank you.
14	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
15	Rochelle Mc Gee, if you'd get in line,
16	please.
17	I'd like the record to show that we're
18	beyond the time of 8:30 when this hearing was to
19	have terminated. However, we have a number of
20	speakers to go. I'm going to continue until all the
21	cards that I have, everybody has had their
22	opportunity to have their two minutes. But I'm
23	going to ask everybody please keep to the two
24	minutes so that we can get everybody through the

Page 136 1 system tonight. 2 Thank you so much. 3 Sir, carry on. 4 MR. STANCIEL: Kevin Stanciel, S-T-A-N-C-I-E-L. 5 I'm a resident of the GAP, which is between 6 31st-35th Michigan and King Drive, for over 25 7 years. Personally my 18-year run at CPS ends this 8 spring when my daughter graduates from high school, 9 my youngest daughter graduates from high school. At 10 no time did either of my daughters have a good high 11 school option. I'm here not for myself, I'm here 12 for all of my neighbors so that they don't have to 13 travel very far or pay for private high schools as 14 they do right now. 15 In the GAP we have eight high schools 16 within six blocks of our neighborhood, five citywide 17 charters, two military academies, two alternative 18 schools, an all girls school, an all boys school. 19 All of those schools but one are Level 2 or 2+. 20 In your press release for this, Pastor 21 Earl Grandberry is quoted saying all of our kids 2.2 deserve access to a high-quality high school in 23 their community. If this plan is approved, students 24 from the North Bronzeville area will no longer have

Page 137 1 to travel far outside their community to reach their 2 dream school. 3 Well, in my neighborhood they won't. 4 We're in the preference enrollment boundary. If you 5 choose to go forward with this plan, I ask that you 6 include the Pershing boundaries within this plan. 7 Because the thing is -- and let me say that as a 8 proud Pershing graduate also. 9 According to your numbers, the GAP and 10 Lake Meadows have a total of 87 students. So you're 11 telling me that you can't find -- using about 12 31 percent of the students would attend, you cannot find about 45 seats for the students in our 13 14 communities? 15 Thank you. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. 17 Rochelle Mc Gee, would you get in line, 18 please. And also will C.W. Chan get in line. 19 Ma'am, continue. 20 MS. LUNDVICK: Anna Lundvick, L-U-N-D-V-I-C-K. 21 Two Chicagos. When Dr. King delivered 2.2 his "I Have a Dream" speech, he challenged a promise 23 made in the Declaration of Independence. We hold 24 these truths to be self-evident, that all men are

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created equal with certain unalienable rights, life,
 liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Dr. King
 said it is obvious that America has defaulted on
 this promissory note.

Instead of honoring this sacred
obligation, American has given the negro people a
bad check, a check that has come back marked
insufficient funds.

9 Two Chicagos. The plan to close NTA 10 centers around one school, Phillips, a Level 2 high 11 school who students are majority of black and 12 economically disadvantaged. A powerful South Loop 13 community leader shared with the media that Phillips 14 is not an option and that it's no wonder South Loop 15 parents scramble to find a better high school for 16 their children.

CPS supports the belief that Phillips is not quality in a letter to South Loop families stating that converting NTA to a high school provides, quote, a continuum of high-quality school options. And at the same time CPS is declaring that Phillips is quality for displaced black students from Englewood.

24

In a letter to Englewood families, CPS

1 states that Phillips provides Englewood students 2 with a, quote, higher performing high school that is 3 a good match for their needs. Their needs? Whose 4 needs? Black students' needs? Definitely not white 5 students' needs. б Two Chicagos. CPS promises a commitment 7 to every child from every community, but do they 8 really? Where else but in Chicago would a school 9 Board close a top-rated school transforming the 10 lives of black students. Where else but in the city 11 CNN reported as the most segregated in a nation 12 would a school board close a school where black 13 students grow more than 75 percent of students 14 nationwide. This is another bad check, another 15 promissory note coming back marked insufficient 16 funds. 17 Two Chicagos. Eliminating NTA in order 18 to provide a high-quality school option --19 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 20 Your time is up. Ma'am, your time is up. 21 Carry on, please. Will Heidi Chan get in 2.2 line, please. 23 MS. MC GEE: My name is Rochelle Mc Gee, 24 R-O-C-H-E-L-L-E, last name M-C capital G-E-E.

Page 140 1 What I would like to do is to yield my 2 position here to the gentleman next to me. 3 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Who is the gentleman 4 next to you? 5 MS. MC GEE: Leonard Mc Gee. 6 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Sir, did you already 7 testify here earlier. 8 MR. MC GEE: Yes, sir. 9 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: In fairness to the 10 other people who want to be heard, I think that I'm 11 going to hold you until the end. We'll have the 12 time at the end, and we'll hold you then. 13 MR. MC GEE: Thank you. 14 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I won't deny that, but 15 in fairness to everybody else. 16 MR. MC GEE: Thank you. 17 MS. MC GEE: Thank you. 18 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Will Cathy Nieng, I 19 hope I got that right, get in line, please. 20 Mr. Chan, if you will. 21 MR. CHAN: Hi. I'm C.W. Chan. I'm chairperson 2.2 for the Coalition for Better Chinese American 23 Committee, also chairperson for Chinatown Steering 24 Committee that's in charge of development of the

¹ community.

2	So how long we been talking about this
3	issue of the high school issue. A few months ago
4	when the community came to the public hearings, me
5	as a parent, put up these T-shirts saying that we've
6	been waiting for 40 years. 40 years only indicate
7	these people, the parents that experience. 40 years
8	means a lifetime for them. I have talked to people
9	over 80 years old. 60 some years ago they already
10	talking about experience taking two hours to go to
11	high school growing up in Chinatown. So when we
12	celebrate the Chinatown
13	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Excuse me, sir.
14	The clock, please.
15	MR. CHAN: Oh, thank you very much.
16	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Trust me, sir, I know
17	how much time you have.
18	MR. CHAN: Recently Chinatown was having
19	discussion few years ago commemorating the
20	community's centennial, which means we have been at
21	the same location for over a hundred years. Very
22	few people realize that.
23	Look at the City of Chicago. As an
24	ethnic community, I think we've been at the same

1 location longer than anybody else. So we have 2 experienced, we have seen the history of neglect and 3 inequities. For the whole hundred years, we never 4 had a high school. So when we engaged in this 5 recent plan, we interviewed about 2,000 people in 6 the community. 7 The high school issue came out to be one 8 of the top concerns for the whole community. That 9 brought us to come to the hearing for last few 10 months. We have been to every single public hearing 11 and board meeting for last few months just to state 12 our case. 13 We started with several approach. We 14 came up with data statistics. It was never 15 questioned that we had a need. But then I think 16 nothing happened. So we started having emotional 17 response like is it because we've been advocating --18 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Sir, thank you for your 19 time, your time here this evening. Thank you. 20 MR. CHAN: Well, I think you have to give me 21 the benefit of doubt when you make a mistake about 2.2 the time. 23 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Excuse me, your time is 24 up. Please, we have a lot of other people that want

Page 143 1 to be heard. 2 MR. CHAN: I challenge my time. 3 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: For the record, your 4 challenge... 5 Cathy or Caitlyn Nieng, we'll put that б aside. 7 Is it Sara? Can't read the name. ГГГТ 8 give these -- why don't you come up and get these 9 and see what you can do about identifying whoever 10 those might be. 11 Milica Medved. 12 Carry on, ma'am, please. 13 MS. CHAN: Hi. I'm Heidi Chan, H-E-I-D-I, 14 C-H-A-N. 15 I've been living in Chicago over 50 16 years, and I have seen a lot of problems in 17 Chinatown area and also social problems. Now it's 18 come to the school. When I saw my friends and some 19 people younger than me or some nephew or nieces, 20 they finish school, they could not go to a local 21 high school. And they have to travel so far away, 2.2 more than one hour, more than three miles to go. 23 They have to get up so early. So we have the 24 problem.

Page 144 1 Chinatown is already 100 years old, and 2 we've been waiting for about 40 years to get a high 3 school. And now we have a chance to hear that we 4 have a high school. But I'm for that. 5 And I agree all the people in this area, 6 they try to help the kids to go to a quality high 7 school. And also the length of traveling. So I'm 8 for this because when I heard the people say you can 9 go to Phillips, Dunbar or something, but when you 10 finish school, would you send your kid to Dunbar or 11 Phillips or something else? 12 Thank you very much to listen to me. 13 Thank you. 14 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 15 Your name, full name, please? 16 MS. NIENG: My name is Cathy Nieng, C-A-T-H-Y, 17 N-I-E-N-G. 18 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Sorry about what I did 19 to your name. 20 MS. NIENG: That's okay. 21 Good evening, Your Honor. 2.2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Good evening. 23 MS. NIENG: I'm standing here today to strongly 24 oppose this proposal when I should be in bed

recovering from the flu. I am the parent of a NTA
 student and a 14-year South Loop resident.

It's interesting to me that many people who are for this proposal go on and talk about how they're not racist or that this is not a racist plan. So I would like to talk about something that everybody can get behind, and that is traffic, that is transportation.

As a resident who lives north of
Roosevelt Road, when my husband and I drive our
daughter to and from school, we pass by where the
new South Loop school is going to be. There is a
Mariano's there. There is also a Daystar Elementary
School, a private Christian school that is also
planning on expanding.

16 Because of this, there is going to be a 17 severe traffic and congestion issue in this area. 18 There's nothing I can do personally to stop this 19 school from being built, but because of this plan, 20 the students from NTA who are going to be displaced 21 are going to be displaced -- the youngest ones are 2.2 going to be displaced to the old building at 1212 23 South Clinton.

24

Considering the fact that many students

	Page 146
1	have already been displaced from Iches and the
2	Hilliard Homes had the opportunity to walk to NTA
3	and be able to do that. The youngest, most
4	vulnerable of them would have to travel that much
5	further without the help of being in the
6	neighborhood and having to take public
7	transportation.
8	This is not fair to the students who are
9	the most vulnerable and would need the most help to
10	do this. This is one very practical reason that I
11	oppose this plan.
12	Thank you very much for your time.
13	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
14	Will Hannah El-Amin get in line, please.
15	Carry on, ma'am.
16	MS. STRASSER: My name is Sara Strasser,
17	S-A-R-A, S-T-R-A-S-S-E-R. And I just want to start
18	off by saying good evening and how much I really
19	don't want to be here tonight. My daughter is
20	really sick. She called me crying on the way down
21	here. This has been an enormous strain on my
22	family. The amount of meetings that we have had to
23	attend is something that no family he should have to
24	do.

But I'm here to talk about how this plan affects my family and families like mine with more than one child. I am here with a final attempt to get you to listen and to allow me to keep my children together.

I have three kids. They're all three
years apart. This plan splits my kids apart. My
son, he would stay at NTA. My daughter has to go to
South Loop. And my young child would not be able to
go to either one. NTA is the school that my husband
and I chose for them. We visited many schools. We
ranked NTA No. 1, and we chose NTA.

13 Sometimes people ask why didn't I choose 14 my neighborhood school, and I'm going to add a small 15 fact here. Aside from the fact that they're on 16 their fourth principal in four years, CPS tried to 17 do a very similar thing to my neighborhood school. 18 Last year they proposed consolidating and 19 overcrowding two majority black schools, one which 20 was my neighborhood school, to relieve overcrowding 21 at a nearby school that just happened to be 2.2 85 percent white.

I am trying, CPS, but we are really going to become one of those families that are all too

	Page 148
1	familiar in this city that have given up and left
2	CPS for the sanity of their families. I ask that
3	you not allow this boundary change as it splits
4	apart many families just like mine.
5	Thank you.
6	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
7	Would Nadiah Mohajir get in line, please.
8	Carry on, ma'am, please.
9	MS. MEDVED: Hi. My name is Milica Medved.
10	That's M-I-L-I-C-A, M-E-D-V-E-D. My son is in
11	kindergarten at NTA. I first of all want to say
12	that this proposal is a wrong solution because it's
13	wrong and it's also a solution for a wrong problem
14	because everybody keeps saying we need a high
15	school, we need a high school. There is a high
16	school. Everybody has a high school.
17	Okay, so apparently there's a problem
18	with Phillips. Why is there a problem with
19	Phillips? We had the Prairie District Neighborhood
20	Association come here on record to state that they
21	have been working on this problem since 2006. So
22	that's 12 years. That's 12 years of opportunity to
23	work with CPS, to invest in a neighborhood school,
24	to ask for money and investment. Look at all this

Page 149 1 energy and all the money and all the investments and 2 all the construction that is involved in this 3 proposal. A lot of grief could have been avoided if 4 that money were invested in Phillips. So there's 5 that. б On the other hand, I wanted to put it on 7 record that I have been to NTA to check whether or 8 not that's a good school for my son. I happened to 9 walk into the open house, and I looked at the data 10 that was presented, and it was really astounding. I 11 have seen the growth charts for students, 5th, 6th, 12 7th, 8th grade, this is neighborhood students which 13 are growing two or three times more than the 14 projected growth based on the testing standards. 15 That is huge. This is how you pick schools. You don't 16 17 pick a South Loop school because the students test 18 well. You pick a school where children will grow. 19 And this is what NTA gives their students, an 20 opportunity to grow. 21 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 2.2 Will Noir Mohajir get in line, please. 23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: She left. 24 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Do we have Hannah?

Will you give your first and last name and spell it
for the court reporter, please.

MS. EL-AMIN: Hannah El-Amin, H-A-N-N-A-H, E-L hyphen A-M-I-N.

I want to speak to the idea or the notion
that the results of the proposal are not harmful.
The 3rd Ward where NTA is housed has had more
closures and more displacement of African-American
economically disadvantaged students than any other
ward in Chicago.

11 Research shows the ill-effects of 12 displacement, again, in one year before displacement 13 and lasts up to three years after in terms of 14 attendance, academic performance, college attendance 15 as well. Merge that data with the fact that many 16 NTA families have already lived through displacement 17 two to three times, including getting kicked out of 18 the very school community that is now asking them to 19 move once again to use our building for their needs 20 shamelessly and comically cloaking this in righting 21 a wrong. Also previous mergers in the ward have 2.2 been shown to drop the ratings of low-performing 23 schools, including Pershing Elementary.

This proposal would serve to create the

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largest elementary school in the CPS school district
 spread across three to four campuses when school
 size has been shown to adversely affect academic
 achievement.

5 I know that we have been told that the 6 children are being moved to a better school or that 7 South Loop Elementary is a better school than NTA, 8 but the achievements at South Loop Elementary are 9 expected from school with greater economic 10 advantages, access to resources, and no history of 11 the repeated destabilization of their education. 12 Compare that to NTA who has exactly the opposite set 13 of circumstances which has risen from the lowest 14 possible CPS ranking to the absolute highest 15 possible CPS ranking in just three years.

And we're also one of only 18 schools out of over 600 in CPS that serve the African-American community with this academic and community profile in this way, one of only 18, I want to state that again, and are we set to take this away.

You will hear some voices in support of this proposal, but I want to make sure that you're careful to notice that the only support that you hear are those with everything to gain and nothing

Page 152 1 to lose. 2 Thank you. 3 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 4 Will Sayeed El-Amin get in line, please. 5 And you are? 6 MS. MOHAJIR: Hi. My name Nadiah Mohajir, 7 N-A-D-I-A-H, M-O-H-A-J-I-R. I am a parent at NTA. 8 Your Honor, I'm here to express my strong 9 opposition to this plan. I'm here to tell you that 10 this is not about me being emotional. This is 11 actually about doing what's right. 12 I have three children and have applied to 13 various schools using the central application 14 process for the last eight years. We have had the 15 experience of being registered or enrolled at eight 16 different schools at different times during the last 17 eight years, and we have visited over 26. 18 I have seen the great work that is 19 happening at NTA, which surpasses any of the other 20 schools that we've been at or visited. Not simply 21 just because of the phenomenal academics but because 2.2 of the strong social justice curriculum values that 23 they are exposed to since kindergarten. 24 NTA gives me the hope for not only the

kind of citizen my children and their peers will become but for the future of this amazing city. I truly believe that tomorrow's activists and public servants will come from National Teachers Academy. Schools like this should be highlighted, replicated, and improved and not underutilized or closed down.

⁷ Unfortunately, though, we're here today ⁸ because CPS has decided it's in the best long-term ⁹ interest for the near south community to dismantle ¹⁰ this great work that's happening.

11 Your Honor, tonight I ask you will a new 12 thousand-seat building really serve the needs any 13 better than the existing 4,500 vacancies? What if 14 CPS added an excellent ESL program in bilingual 15 education at one of these schools like Kelly High 16 School has been offering to its students from time 17 to time for decades? Or why not an IB program or 18 STEM partnership with IIT to these underutilized 19 high schools? Invest in the teachers and the 20 administration to make these schools more 21 attractive.

Our children deserve a better plan.
 Chicago deserves a better plan. And I stand today
 with the NTA community in calling a pause for this

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Page 154 1 plan because this proposal should not move forward. 2 We cannot sacrifice a successful school and must 3 find alternatives. 4 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 5 We're not going to have the student's 6 name, but I have to know, you just spoke, did you 7 not, ma'am? 8 MS. EL-AMIN: This is my son. 9 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I understand. But I'm 10 trying to determine is this Noir? 11 MS. EL-AMIN: It is not. 12 MS. BRIZUELA: Noir is not speaking. It's the 13 other student. 14 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Begins with an S? 15 MS. EL-AMIN: Begins with an S. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Student, or sir who 17 begins with an S, you're going to be Student H. 18 Carry on, please. 19 STUDENT H: Hi. I'm a fifth grader at National 20 Teachers Academy. I've been there since 1st grade. 21 I think that this proposal is a bad idea 2.2 because it will move a lot of kids, and it's already 23 a perfect school for too many people. It will break 24 our community apart. I say community because NTA is

Page 155 1 more than just a school to us. It's our home, our 2 family. This includes our amazing principal, 3 Mr. Castelaz; our inspired teachers; and our beloved 4 friends. 5 As with all good families, NTA is a 6 source of stability and confidence. We need to 7 learn and grow in school and outside of school. We 8 do this well and deserve to be supported and not 9 torn apart like how my brother and I will be split 10 between schools. 11 I want to also share that at NTA we have 12 something that's called the NTA way. The NTA way 13 encourages us to always display courage, commitment, 14 awareness, and integrity. Because of this, even 15 though I used to be a very shy kid, I have developed 16 the courage to speak up here for my school tonight 17 and show my commitment to my school. 18 And out of the NTA way, I also ask our 19 school leaders to have awareness to be able to see 20 that this plan is hurtful and have integrity to be able to reject it. Please think of us children and 21 2.2 do better. We are putting trust in you. 23 And I would also like to add our slogan, 24 We are NTA, and NTA is here to stay. This these

Page 156 1 might not sound like much, but it demonstrates NTA 2 and its core values. We spent money that we don't 3 have to promote these slogans, and they're not to be 4 thrown around just like we would with a crass 5 proposal. 6 Thank you. 7 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. Bonnie Sanchez-Carlson. And then is it 8 Bathni Toldon? 9 10 Counsel, you may want to see if you can 11 get somebody to identify that, please. 12 Gregg McClure, would you get in line, 13 please. 14 Carry on, ma'am. 15 MS. SANCHEZ-CARLSON: Bonnie Sanchez-Carlson, 16 B-O-N-N-I-E, S-A-N-C-H-E-Z hyphen C-A-R-L-S-O-N. I 17 represent Near South Planning Board, a 18 community-based organization serving the community 19 since 1946. 20 Our organization was deeply concerned 21 about the boundaries for the plan that was presented 2.2 before us. In fact, on August 25th we provided a 23 letter to CPS questioning the boundaries proposed 24 for the new elementary school.

In our letter we were adamant that the boundaries be extended south, in particular, south to include what was the former Iches housing project so that all the right to return former residents and new students had equitable access to a quality education.

7 In our most recent review of the updated 8 plans, we were pleased to discover that our recommendations are being considered and have been 9 10 incorporated in the newly-released proposal. As I 11 mentioned also in our August 2017 letter, the 12 unprecedented growth of our residential population 13 in the past decade with more units proposed for 14 future development necessitated the call for a 15 public high school to serve the community.

In reviewing the recent changes made to The plan and the extension of the boundaries noted in said plan, Near South Planning Board supports the newest version of this plan.

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
 Will Mike or Mic Lockwood and Tara
 Lockwood get in line, please.

Before we go any further, Rochelle
Mc Gee, are you still in the room?

Page 158 1 MS. MC GEE: Yes. 2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: On the card itself, one 3 of the rules is that you cannot cede your time. So if you'd like to take your time in the next couple 4 5 minutes, I'll put you in, okay, or we'll hold you to 6 the end. But you can't cede your time. 7 Carry on, sir. 8 MR. McCLURE: I am Gregg McClure, Gregg, M-C 9 upper case C-L-U-R-E. Good evening. 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Good evening. 11 MR. McCLURE: To the NTA staff, parents, and 12 our supporters, I applaud and I celebrate you. You 13 took the fight to the very doorsteps of the hidden 14 figures that have drawn up these new boundaries. 15 The city and this neighborhood in which NTA thrives 16 is in the spotlight. But be careful, though, I was 17 once told that all publicity is not good publicity. 18 I stand here disappointed. I am 19 disappointed for believing in my city, my mayor, the 20 3rd Ward alderman, and everyone else involved in the 21 decision of kicking out our children of NTA. Ι 2.2 mean, kudos to those that are considered powers that 23 be or the people with the money to influence. Your 24 point was proven.

1 Maybe instead of teaching my children 2 that going to school every day and doing the best in 3 class and in your community and being the best 4 person that you can be is simply not enough. I need 5 to teach them that their money and the people that 6 they form their allegiances with is what really 7 matters. 8 I gambled five years ago when I chose NTA 9 for my son, not on the school but on CPS. You see, 10 my parents were on to something back in 1980 when 11 they decided to send me to catholic school K through 12 college. It wasn't because we were devout 13 catholics, and it wasn't about the quality of the 14 education, but it was about the instability, the 15 political influence, and the questioning of the true plight of our city schools. 16 17 I now get it. NTA was never built for 18 the inhabitants that are in there today. NTA was 19 targeted since 2010 as an important asset to others. 20 My time is splitting up. 21 I implore the appointed Board to make 2.2 history today and vote down the measures that CPS 23 leadership is presenting. This is the only way to 24 right this wrong. Leave the NTA children and

Page 160 1 community be. We've only shined up the jewel that 2 has been sitting in the rough for years, and we only 3 want it to continue to shine. 4 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 5 Louis Makarewicz, if you'd get in line, б please. 7 Mr. Lockwood? 8 MR. LOCKWOOD: Good evening, Your Honor. My 9 name is Mark Lockwood, M-A-R-K, L-O-C-K-W-O-O-D, and 10 I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you 11 this evening. 12 Throughout these proceedings the NTA 13 families have been characterized as loud, rowdy, 14 even hateful. I'm here to tell you today, Your 15 Honor, that we are not hateful. I would like to ask 16 you to come to NTA for yourself and see the love 17 that is at NTA. It's a very impressive place. We 18 can sit here all night and talk till we're blue in 19 the face about how wonderful NTA is. I wish you 20 would take the opportunity to stop by and see for 21 yourself. 2.2 It's very troubling tonight to hear the 23 members who are in favor of this motion to speak 24 about NTA as if it's a vacant building. They are

1 right when they say that it is a very valuable 2 asset. And the asset is inside the walls. 3 So I want to be clear, we're only here 4 for one fundamental reason. We're here to defend 5 against the closure of a Level 1+ Chicago Public 6 School that serves mostly black low-income children. 7 That's it. We're here to defend against the closure of a Level 1+ CPS school. I don't know if that 8 9 sounds odd to you, but it's hard for me to wrap my 10 mind around that. 11 I want to let you know I've been coming 12 here for weeks and weeks and weeks. I object to the 13 hostile takeover of my son's school. I object to 14 being dragged into this contentious situation 15 unwillingly. I object to the CPS leaders using NTA to divide these Chicago communities. We love our 16 17 community members in Chinatown and in South Loop and 18 Bridgeport. I object to the mayor going on TV and 19 keeping praise upon Forrest Claypool when he should 20 be praising NTA. 21 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Sir, thank you for your 2.2 time. 23 Tara Lockwood, please. 24 MS. LOCKWOOD: Good evening. Tara, T-A-R-A,

1 Lockwood.

2	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: L-O-C-K-W-O-O-D?
3	MS. LOCKWOOD: Just as previous, yes.
4	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you.
5	MS. LOCKWOOD: I'm here to read a letter that
б	was written to the Chicago Board of Education of the
7	Chicago Public Schools by the parents of students at
8	National Teachers Academy, its Regional Gifted
9	Center, but I'd like to make clear that that isn't a
10	distinction I'm generally comfortable making. For
11	the most part, my child is just another student at
12	NTA; however, CPS makes that distinction.
13	So it is on our behalf I'd like to say
14	we're writing to address the current proposal to
15	change the South Loop attendance boundary and
16	convert National Teachers Academy into a
17	neighborhood high school for the South Loop
18	community. This would also involve moving or
19	phasing out NTA's RGC.
20	We strongly disagree with this effort and
21	urge you not to move forward with the plan that will
22	erase our school. The decisions that we made for
23	our children's education were deliberate. For many
24	of us, this started with visiting different Regional

1 Gifted Centers across the city, registering and 2 testing our children, and carefully ranking schools. 3 We talked with teachers, administrators, and parents 4 and subsequently selected NTA as the best choice for 5 us. б We had other options. We could have gone 7 with different Regional Gifted Centers, 8 high-performing magnets, or neighborhood programs. 9 But we chose NTA knowing that, unlike some other 10 Chicago RGCs, it is a school that put RGC students 11 and neighborhood students together for lunch, 12 recess, and enrichment. 13 This was important to us as we saw the 14 school that was racially and socially and 15 economically and religiously diverse. Also, the 16 level of academic rigor at NTA is second to none, 17 and NTA has high expectations for students both 18 academically and socially. 19 We ask that you keep our NTA's growing 20 RGC intact adding a kindergarten class each year 21 until each grade has an RGC so that we continue to 2.2 remain a part of the NTA community. 23 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 24 Will Jasmine Harris please get in line

¹ and Denetta Jones behind her. Thank you.

Sir.

2

3 MR. MAKAREWICZ: Good evening, Your Honor. 4 Louis Makarewicz, L-O-U-I-S, M-A-K-A-R-E-W-I-C-Z. 5 I'm here as one of the representatives from Chicago 6 United for Equity, otherwise known as CUE, which 7 recently produced community reports and racial 8 equity analysis on the NTA question. I also served 9 as one of the authors of that community report and 10 was also a facilitator of the racial equity analysis 11 that engaged over 300 participants from impacted 12 communities over three town hall sessions over the 13 past couple of months.

Some major community concerns that made themselves repeatedly apparent included unequal benefits to burdens on low-income students of color who have been accepting the burden of the sacrifice in this question, and service of advantages, which are largely taken over by more affluent peers.

Additional concerns highlighted the Additional concerns highlighted the displacement of students, especially within the context of historical legacies of school closures in Chicago as well as the disproportionate impact on poor communities of those closures.

Messaging sent by shutting down a 1+ rated program, especially given that existing programs such as Dunbar and Phillips are currently available and have the potential to be strengthened was of additional concern for participants.

б Alternative proposals exist, including 7 moving NTA to new independent facilities; investing 8 and strengthening existing high schools, including 9 Dunbar and Phillips; selling the old South Loop 10 facilities to generate up to \$35 million in capital 11 funding for a new high school; redistributing 12 selective enrollment seats from Jones College Prep 13 and moving on to Phillips and Tillman; and, 5, 14 housing South Loop's K through 6 in the current 15 facility and expanding the 7th through 12th grades in the new building at 16th and Dearborn allowing 16 17 NTA to persist at its current location.

Thank you very much. Alternative
 proposals exist. The community hopes that they are
 considered.
 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.

Will Germayne Cade get in line, please.
Is this Jasmine?

24 STUDENT I: Yes.

Page 166 1 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: And you're a student? 2 STUDENT I: Yes. 3 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Bring that microphone 4 down. Please begin. 5 STUDENT I: I am a 3rd grader at NTA. I don't 6 want you to take my school away because I have the 7 best time at NTA. I have learned reading, science, 8 swimming, and math. My school is a Level 1+ school, 9 and I don't want to lose it. 10 I love the way my classmates are so nice. 11 They made our school a Level 1+ school. My teacher 12 taught me a lot of things, and I don't want that to 13 qo away. Please don't take my school away, please. 14 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 15 Will Karen Wong get in line, please. Did 16 Germayne get in line? 17 MR. McCLURE: She's gone. 18 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. Ι 19 appreciate that. 20 MS. CADE: Germayne, I'm here. 21 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Get in line, please. 2.2 Carry on, ma'am. 23 MS. JONES: Hi. My name is Denetta Jones, 24 D-E-N-E-T-T-A, J-O-N-E-S.

1	I have two students at NTA. I'm a NTA
2	parent. In 2013 they were displaced from their
3	previous school. The new school that they attended
4	did not bode well for them. They both had academic
5	and emotional problems. I know from experience.
б	They would get frustrated. I would get frustrated.
7	My prayers were answered when I moved to
8	2030 South State because NTA is right across the
9	street. When I registered them, I had such the
10	nicest time registering because the staff is just
11	the staff of NTA is phenomenal.
12	My daughters went from being Ds and F
13	students to As and Bs. They love the school. They
14	love the students there. They love their teachers.
15	My youngest daughter gives everyone a hug at the
16	school.
17	I'm begging you not, please do not close
18	the school because my daughters have already been
19	through an emotional trauma being displaced from one
20	school. I do not want them to go through that
21	again.
22	Thank you.
23	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
24	You are?

	Page 168
1	MS. WONG: I'm Karen Wong.
2	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Excuse me for one
3	second.
4	Will Ben Shanbaum get in line, please.
5	Thank you.
6	Go ahead, Karen.
7	MS. WONG: My name is Karen Wong, spelled
8	W-O-N-G. I'm a lifelong Chinatown/Bridgeport
9	resident and attended CPS schools throughout my
10	entire educational career. I'm here to speak to
11	Chinatown's need for a neighborhood high school. I
12	think the greatest need that the high school would
13	address is the issue of language access or lack
14	thereof in our community.
15	Now, I was lucky enough to test into
16	Walter Payton Prep, but a lot of my families were
17	not as fortunate. My cousin Alex, for instance,
18	immigrated from China to start his sophomore year of
19	high school in Chicago. He did not place into any
20	selective enrollment high school and enrolled at a
21	south side neighborhood high school.
22	Class material was already difficult on
23	its own but was even harder for Alex to follow due
24	to the fact that the class was taught in the English

1 language, which he was not well versed in at all 2 just having immigrated from China a month ago before 3 school started.

4 With no access to language support, he 5 started falling behind and was too embarrassed to 6 ask for help or raise his hand in class. He 7 eventually stopped attending class altogether. The 8 weight of the new material he had to learn coupled 9 with the inability to understand the language the 10 classes were taught in in the first place led him to 11 drop out of high school his junior year. That was 12 2011.

13 Today it's even harder for kids. Now 14 that there's a rigorous tier system, ESL and ELL 15 children who live in Tier 3 but do not actually have the socioeconomic privilege of Tier 3 must reach 16 17 impossible standards to get into schools that meet 18 their needs. This is why language access is 19 important. Chinese students deserve an equal 20 opportunity at doing well and succeeding in school 21 even if English is not their first language. 2.2 Furthermore, a language access is also

important because bilingual language accommodation 24 is important for parents to get involved in their

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vehemently opposed to converting it or transforming
it into a high school.

There are people who have asked me that are not familiar with NTA, Germayne, your son has access. He has choices. Why do you care so much? A couple reasons.

One, because one child is not the sum of
a population of the school.

⁹ Two, because NTA has values that we live ¹⁰ by. The fact that Principal Castelaz holds not only ¹¹ the staff and teachers accountable, he holds the ¹² students and the parents accountable. He leads with ¹³ transparency, and we all collectively as a community ¹⁴ have come together to make the school what it is ¹⁵ today.

I think thirdly, because it's a case of have and have nots and right or wrong. So I've listened to when we talk about we've developed a plan. But when one party of the plan has started developing it years before the other party is privileged to it, it's not right.

And so I think, Your Honor, you are on the precipes. I liken you to Chief Justin Earl Warren. You are in a place where you're going to

Page 172 1 have to make a decision. You're going to have to 2 make a decision that may be unpopular on the side of 3 politics, but it's the right thing to do when you 4 look at the transcripts of what you've heard today. 5 Thank you, Your Honor. 6 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. I wish I 7 was getting his salary too. 8 Debbie Lynn, would you get in line, 9 please. 10 Carry on, sir. 11 MR. SHANBAUM: Thank you, Your Honor. Ben 12 Shanbaum, S-H-A-N-B-A-U-M. 13 I'm the parent of a child attending South 14 Loop and a child attending NTA. I've spent years of 15 my life and several gray hairs on my beard working 16 with the South Loop community to try to help address 17 its overcrowding problem, and I am vehemently opposed to the solution that has been put forth. 18 19 It's bad. It manages to be a nonsolution to an 20 imminent catastrophe to just about everybody 21 involved. 2.2 First, it's clearly bad for NTA. Now, 23 you've heard plenty of people talking here, and it's 24 not the fancy brickwork and the class windows, the

1 lockers. It's not that that makes NTA what it is. 2 It's the hard work and devotion, dedication, purpose 3 of the people who are working there, of 4 Mr. Castelaz, the principal; Mrs. Riffenberg, who 5 you heard from earlier today; that have turned that 6 school from a Level 3 to a Level 1+ in four years. 7 It's bad for the South Loop community 8 because, as I said before, we've spent years and years fighting an overcrowding problem that has 9 10 clearly resulted in sacrifices I've witnessed 11 firsthand for my daughter. We end up with a 12 solution that just puts a new school at capacity, 13 potentially overcapacity from day one with the 14 potential it's only going to get worse. It's really 15 not a solution for those who are seeking a good high 16 school. 17 Now, this is a tempting apple that has

¹⁸ been thrown in the direction of this neighborhood; ¹⁹ however, we have to look at the numbers and the ²⁰ demographics. NTA, as a building, can house 250 to ²¹ 300 people per grade level. Right now it's being ²² promised to 500 people per grade level in the ²³ guaranteed spot, another 150 per grade level in the ²⁴ preference boundary, and another 350 people per

Page 174 1 grade level in nearby private schools. It's not a 2 solution for anybody. 3 Thank you. 4 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 5 Ivy Lam, if you'd get in line, please. б You are Chris Johnson? Is Chris Johnson 7 in the room? 8 You're Debbie Lynn? 9 MS. LIU: Liu, L-I-U. 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: I'm sorry. Would you 11 be good enough to spell your first and last name. 12 MS. LIU: It's Debbie, D-E-B-B-I-E, L-I-U. 13 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Go ahead. 14 MS. LIU: So I've been able to witness CPS at 15 its best as a proud alum of receiving college prep 16 and at its worse by limiting public education from 17 those who need it. I grew up with three younger 18 sisters. One of the sisters worked hard but 19 struggled with test taking. She wasn't able to 20 grasp the topics as quickly as her peers. Overall 21 she was just a B student. 2.2 She did her best, but she was not matched 23 with her chosen selective enrollment. So my parents 24 enrolled her at private school at De La Salle. Ι

1 remembered she cried for days wondering why she 2 wasn't good enough after receiving the rejection 3 letter. But this story is not coming from any 4 residents in greater Chinatown. CPS should not be 5 in the business of only educating or especially 6 educating high achievers. 7 Average students like my sisters and new 8 immigrants who barely speak english and have other 9 issues deserve an opportunity to reach college and 10 reach the top echelon of society. However, for 11 residents of Armour Square and Bridgeport growing up 12 in an elementary school that is rated 1+ are left 13 with 2 or lower nearby options, it is no wonder that 14 families are sending their kids to private schools 15 or moving out of the community altogether. 16 So this NTA conversion is the first 17 serious attempt by CPS to address a long-term 18 serious need of Chinatown. While this plan is 19 beneficial for greater Chinatown, NTA does stand the 20 most to lose. So should this unprecedented proposal 21 pass, thoughtful and considerable long-term and 2.2 transparent district-wide planning should accompany 23 this and future plans. 24 Thank you.

1	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
2	Would Angela Lou or Lin. And also will
3	Hongbo Wang please get in line as well.
4	Go ahead, please.
5	MS. LAM: Your Honor, my name is Ivy Lam,
б	L-A-M. We all have a long day today, especially we
7	saw a lot of NTA's students and parents. We respect
8	everybody's thought. Actually, I've been sacrifice
9	for two of my kids, which is back to 1999. Because
10	of the high school issue, I make a decision to
11	moving away from Chicago to west suburb.
12	But since my kids, when they were still
13	in elementary school because they're 18 months
14	apart, my daughter and my son, and my daughter would
15	say, mommy, I really want to be with my brother in
16	the same school. So we decided to move.
17	Of course I understand not that many
18	parents can afford to move away from their homeland,
19	Chinatown. Especially me myself, I have to work in
20	Chinatown, so I have to drive every day 45 minutes,
21	and my husband have to drive over two hours to his
22	work. But after that the main thing is my kids lost
23	their childhood friends from elementary school.
24	They have to build their relationship and new

Page 177 1 friends in their high school. 2 When they come back to Chinatown, they lost all their connection. Even my daughter just 3 4 got married. When she came back from New York, she 5 asked me, mommy, we still don't have high school in 6 our neighborhood? I said, yeah. So thank you very 7 much. This is just my experience. I'm in favor on 8 CPS proposal. 9 Thank you. 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 11 Would Joji Yu get in line, please. 12 Carry on, please. 13 MS. LIN: Hi. Good evening. I'm Angela Lin, 14 A-N-G-E-L-A, L-I-N. 15 I'm the community outreach coordinator for CBCC, the Coalition for a Better 16 17 Chinese-American Community, which is a political 18 advocacy and community development organization in 19 Chinatown. 20 Despite the Chinese having lived in this 21 area for over 100 years, Chinatown still has needs 2.2 that are not met and have historically been pushed 23 to later dates. This is not just schools. For 24 example, Harding Square and Stanford Park were the

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1	only recreational facilities that serviced Chinatown
2	for a long time. They were torn down in 1962 when
3	the Dan Ryan Expressway was being built, which also
4	split Chinatown in two. That was pretty
5	devastating. And it wasn't replaced until 2000.
6	In the 40 years that Chinatown was
7	neglected, other park investments were popping up in
8	the rest of Chicago. This neglect applies to
9	schools as well.
10	Chinatown was on its own in the '60s at a
11	time when there were clear racial lines that were
12	never crossed. Since the '20s, there was Italian
13	Armour Square to the right, Irish Bridgeport to the
14	left, and the Blackbow as it was called to the
15	south. If you crossed any of these lines, you'd get
16	beaten up. And even in the lines many Chinese were
17	still harassed.
18	Half a century later, immigration
19	policies have changed in Chinatown and Chicago so
20	much, but the high school assignments have not
21	changed to accommodate the ongoing flux of
22	immigrants who are the backbone of the residential
23	and economic community.
24	So we surveyed like a bunch I'm

Page 179 1 running out of time. But we surveyed 2,000 2 residents in 2012 for their needs, and education was 3 one of the highest. We've been going to all the NTA 4 meets and racial equity analyses. It's really 5 touching to see the strength that they show even 6 though they have been displaced so many times. 7 And Chinatown hasn't really been 8 displaced, but it has been neglected. And we do need a high school that fits the language access 9 10 needs of our community. 11 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 12 Rochelle Mc Gee, do you want to get in 13 line to give your comments now? 14 Okay, carry on, please. 15 MS. WANG: Hi. My name is Hongbo Wang, last 16 name W-A-N-G. 17 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: And spell your first 18 name. 19 MS. WANG: H-O-N-G-B-O. 20 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. Carry on. 21 I'm a community activist. MS. WANG: As a 22 educator and a parent, I always strongly, strongly 23 believe that all the children are equal and all the 24 children deserve to receive the best education they

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1	should. Children or those students in Chinatown
2	community definitely deserve a high quality
3	neighborhood school, neighborhood high school.
4	But the more town hall meeting I went,
5	the sadder I feel because I gradually realized that
6	the satisfaction of one group means sadness of
7	another group. That means when people in one group
8	get something, means another group will lose some
9	benefit. I don't think it's fair.
10	I know CPS is very resourceful and very
11	creative. I believe CPS is able to find a solution
12	which will meet the needs of both communities.
13	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you.
14	Will Wong Lu get in line, please.
15	Carry on.
16	STUDENT J: Hi. I'm a student from Kelly. And
17	I'm a junior this year.
18	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Hold on. Just one
19	moment. Don't start her time yet, please.
20	Go ahead, please.
21	STUDENT J: It's been over like several hours,
22	and I have a final tomorrow, so I'll go quick.
23	The last time I speak is a year ago.
24	This school thing is not done over a year. I really

1 want to say something based on my experience of 2 Kelly's school life. It's not a bad school, but it 3 also provide bilingual program. But I really want 4 to like have a high school in Chinatown because the 5 immigrants keep coming. Kelly is over-containing. There's so many Chinese, and new people keep coming. 6 7 I think the school is really like out of control 8 sometimes. So I don't think the Chinatown high school is a bad idea. 9

Further, I also want future immigrant can receive higher education. I really want the high school of Chinatown can have higher quality education.

14 By the way, like Chinatown is a really 15 awkward location. Kelly is really far away. And I 16 have to get up at 6:00 every morning to get to 17 school on time. So for me I really encourage this 18 school. I think this thing is working for the 19 future immigrants, future high school students who 20 is now going to Haines or James Wood because it's 21 not a bad thing. The location will be really good 2.2 for the future immigrants.

23

24

Thank you.

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.

Page 182 1 Will Lirin Leon, I hope I pronounced 2 that -- Did I pronounce it close? Okay, get in line, please. 3 4 Ma'am, if you will. 5 MS. MC GEE: Shall I state my name again? 6 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Yes, please. 7 MS. MC GEE: Rochelle Mc Gee, R-O-C-H-E-L-L-E, 8 last name M-C-G-E-E. 9 My statement is that the boundary for the 10 school should include the people that actually paid 11 to build the school initially. Our community would 12 like to have the boundary for NTA to include the 13 Tift. This neighborhood high school option is very 14 good for the community. Your Honor, please consider 15 the expansion of the boundary. 16 Thank you. 17 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 18 Did Wong Lau, it looks like L-A-U, is 19 that you? 20 Are you a student? 21 STUDENT K: Yes. 2.2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Carry on, sir. Are you 23 a student? 24 STUDENT K: I'm a freshman at Kelly High School

1 and a graduate from James Wood Elementary School. Ι came from China in 2016. English is not my first 2 3 language, so going to school here has been 4 difficult. When people told me that Kelly High 5 School had a bilingual program, therefore many 6 recent immigrants like myself often end up attending 7 there. 8 I took the 62 Archer bus Chinatown to get 9 to school. My commute is about 40 minutes. But 10 it's not the school I am suited for. Although I 11 attend Kelly, I do not like the school. When I was 12 in China, students work very hard to excel in every 13 class. I feel the school environment here is 14 different. 15 At Kelly I notice that a lot of students 16 were not learning and even skipping class. In my 17 class students are noisy, and I cannot listen to my 18 teacher clearly. Make it more difficult to learn as 19 I do not understand English as well as my peers. 20 Also the facility is not as clean. Also the school 21 study was near the bus stop. This make it hard for 2.2 me to learn and stay motivated in school. 23 None of this would have been acceptable 24 back home. And my parents would worry about my

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1	future education. But I will still strive for the
2	best. I wish for a school where the environment is
3	safe and filled with hard-working student and staff
4	who understand the needs of immigrant kids as well.
5	I want a school to prepare students for the future.
б	Thank you.
7	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much.
8	Will Aaron Sanders and David Shapiro get
9	in line, please.
10	Student L, carry on.
11	STUDENT L: I'm a freshman from Lane Tech
12	College Prep High School, and I graduated from James
13	Wood Elementary School. I spend over 40 minutes
14	going to school on the L compared to a minute walk
15	when I went to James Wood. I've been hearing that
16	NTA is a great school and it should not be taken
17	down for a new high school for the Bridgeport
18	neighborhood. However, I feel bad, and I don't know
19	what else I could do.
20	All I know is that Chinatown has been
21	asking for a high school for many years, and it is
22	unfair that people are repeatedly putting this need
23	aside. I hope CPS can make a decision with best
24	reasoning.

Page 185 1 Thank you. 2 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. 3 Will Simon Shiu, would you get in line, 4 please. 5 Carry on. б MR. SANDERS: Aaron Sanders, S-A-N-D-E-R-S. 7 I'm a parent of two scholars at National Teachers 8 Academy. 9 Your Honor, I come before you, I know 10 you're relatively new to the process, but I've been 11 going to these various events for a fairly long 12 time. And as someone who works in the business 13 community in Chicago, I have to say I am extremely 14 disappointed with the way that the administration, 15 the way that Chip Johnson has managed the process 16 with respect to the interaction between the 17 different interested parties in this particular 18 process. 19 So I'm going to talk a little bit about 20 the process for a couple minutes, couple seconds 21 actually. This process has effectively divided four 2.2 different neighborhoods and all of the interested 23 parties in it. I blame Chip Johnson. I blame 24 Janice Jackson. I blame Alderman Dowell behind me

for exactly creating the situation that you have
 here.

Most of the Chinatown residents, as I've come to understand, badly do need their own neighborhood high school, but they're not actually getting that out of this process. And they were never really contemplated as part of the process either. Neither, for that matter, were the residents within South Loop.

You've only heard from one individual within South Loop who's actually described this plan as a good one for him, and it is, because his kids happen to be in seventh grade right now. So that means that they can immediately jump into this new NTA high school.

Everyone else that you've heard from, the alderman, Tina Feldstein, the other interested parties from South Loop who have come into the town halls, they all have other interests at heart, not necessarily for any of the kids there. You haven't heard anything like this from those parents.

Lastly, I want to talk a little bit about the high school. Someone's already described the numbers, the situation we have here. I happen to

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1	work in numbers. The math here really doesn't work,
2	Your Honor. There's over 2,400 individuals. We're
3	only going to talk about 2,000 because of public
4	schools. There's only going to be 1200 seats for
5	these individuals. I urge you to reject this plan
6	and take it back to the board.
7	HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you.
8	Will Mya Cicero please get in line and
9	also Mayra Romero.
10	Carry on, sir.
11	MR. SHAPIRO: Good evening, Your Honor. My
12	name is David Shapiro, S-H-A-P-I-R-O. I am the
13	proud father of a first grader at National Teachers
14	Academy. Obviously a whole range of problems with
15	the CPS proposal have been identified tonight. The
16	one I'd like to focus on is that it is reckless and
17	profoundly irrational in the sense that it is
18	sacrificing two known and proven institutions based
19	upon the idea that it will create a fantastic new
20	school in the South Loop and a great new high
21	school.
22	But the fact is that these hypothetical
23	future institutions, no one knows if they're going
24	to be any good. That's a purely speculative

¹ assertion. CPS ought to know that you don't just ² open a school and be able to assume that it's going ³ to be great. But all of the comments that we've ⁴ heard in favor of this new high school are just ⁵ assuming that in a profoundly irrational manner.

Meanwhile an assumption is also being Meanwhile an assumption is also being made that you combine National Teachers Academy and South Loop Elementary into a single school, that that's going to be smooth. Who knows. It could be that's going to be smooth. Who knows. It could be a total failure as evidenced by the other comments that have been made about larger schools being generally less successful.

13 This is a classic example of the idea 14 that rational people don't trade a bird in a hand for one in the bush. We're talking about shutting 15 16 down, profoundly transforming two extremely 17 successful 1+ level institutions and replacing them 18 with a total unknown. That is not a rational 19 choice. That is not the sort of recklessness that 20 is appropriate with children. 21 Thank you, you were.

HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you, sir.
 And Rekeia Williams, if you'd get in
 line, please.

1	
-	

Go ahead, sir.

2 MR. SHIU: Hi. My name is Simon, S-I-M-O-N, 3 S-H-I-U. I live in the Bridgeport area for 45 4 years. My kid goes to Healy. I'm the LSC member 5 and a past chairman. We have 1,500 students over 6 there. And then I got my master's degree at DePaul. 7 I've believe in higher education. Higher education 8 you build from the ground up. Right now we're stuck 9 over here because Healy 8th grade students graduate, 10 they cannot go anywhere. Some students smart, they 11 can go enrollment. Some students not.

Just like my neighborhood, they are Spanish, Italian, Italy, they have different country people living on my block. But the thing is they are frustrated trying to find a good high school for their own kid.

17 And then for Healy, the center within a 18 mile. Doesn't matter go east, west, south, north. 19 I'm hearing that elementary school. I didn't hear any high school at all. I come here 45 years ago. 20 21 I am frustrated for the high school. I go far away, 22 at least an hour per day. In the wintertime it's 23 about one and a half, two hours one way. If I had 24 spent that time to study instead of playing the game

Page 190 1 or stuck in traffic, I can go for the Ph.D. But 2 right now I'm stuck there. 3 I know NTA is a limited seat for all the 4 elementary school. So my proposal is to say go for 5 it and then build a second NTA. б Thank you. 7 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much. 8 Now, is this Mya? 9 STUDENT M: Yes. 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: And Mya is a student? 11 STUDENT M: Yes. 12 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: You are Student M. 13 Carry on, Student M. 14 STUDENT M: Hello. I am a second grader at 15 NTA. I love NTA a lot, so we need to keep it open. One reason is because if NTA turns into a high 16 17 school, all of the teachers at NTA will lose their 18 jobs. Also, if NTA turns into a high school, I 19 probably will never see all my friends again. And 20 plus there are a lot of enrichment classes that I 21 enjoy. 2.2 So please, CPS, please do not convert NTA 23 into a high school. 24 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you.

Page 191 1 Are you Mayra? Spell your first and last 2 name. 3 Excuse me for a second. I apologize. I 4 asked you to do something. I'm speaking over you. 5 Is Rekeia Williams present? 6 Is it Jennifer Sill? 7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: She left. 8 Chris Heck? 9 MR. HACKER: Hacker. 10 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Okay, would you get in 11 line, please. And Adowa James. 12 Okay, carry on, please. 13 MS. ROMERO: Good evening, Your Honor. My name 14 is Mayra, M-A-Y-R-A, last name R-O-M-E-R-O. 15 I am a proud NTA parent of a 2nd grader. 16 All her teachers and staff are outstanding. I know 17 her teacher works long hours, including weekends, 18 because she cares about her students. Everyone 19 there has very high standards for all students. 20 NTA is a Level 1+. Why close a top level 21 school? It is not fair for NTA students. There are 2.2 other options. 23 Some parents have complained about their 24 teenagers commute having to take one to two buses or

Page 192 1 trains. I also took one to two buses or walked for 2 blocks to avoid taking two buses. It's just for 3 four years. That's just what people do here in 4 Chicago to go to school. Most of the people took at 5 least one bus, whether it was a neighborhood or 6 selective enrollment school. 7 Also, I don't want my young daughter to 8 be in the same building with 14- to 18-year-old 9 boys. Please do not close NTA. 10 Thank you. HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. 11 12 Is it Adowa James? Matsuo Marti, would 13 you get in line, please. Alex Au, A-U. Alex Au. 14 Carry on, sir, please. 15 MR. HACKER: Good evening, Your Honor. My name is Chris Hacker, H-A-C-K-E-R. First all, thank you 16 17 for keeping the session open. 18 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: You're welcome. 19 MR. HACKER: I don't envy your position. My 20 grandfather, Edgar Jones, served as a labor 21 arbitrator for over 50 years and as Judge Jones on 2.2 television in the late '50s into the early '60s. He 23 shared many stories about the challenge that he 24 faced during the times that he had to decide against

the company, in the case of labor arbitration, that had chosen him due to the scene, the margin facts that were presented to him independent of the ever-present emotional realities.

There are practical issues that have been discussed tonight. I want to highlight three of them as a parent of what will be a rising 4th grader who will be as part of the RGC in the, under the plan, combined hybrid school. The first thing is overcrowding.

11 The boundaries, and we keep hearing 12 people keep asking for them to be expanded. Aside 13 from that, the model that CPS has used assumes that 14 the retention rate for the local people to attend 15 their neighborhood school will remain the same as it 16 is now with underperforming schools. But the goal 17 here is to produce a high performing school, which 18 if in fact they do that, that retention rate will go 19 Those 500 kids, where we can only seat 250 or up. 20 300 kids, is going to go way over the top.

The second issue was just spoken about, having my 4th grader sharing schools with kids four to six years older than him.

24

The last issue that I want to raise with

Page 194 1 the situation with respect to the plan is that --2 sorry, my screen didn't cooperate. The investment 3 options talked about with respect to Phillips are a 4 false choice. They have been facility's 5 investments, not anything else. б This is a closure. The policies and 7 procedures haven't been followed. 8 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you very much, 9 sir. 10 Your name, sir, please? 11 MR. MARTI: Matsuo Marti. 12 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Would you spell the 13 first and last name, please. 14 MR. MARTI: M-A-T-S-U-O, last name is Marti, 15 M-A-R-T-I. 16 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you. Carry on. 17 MR. MARTI: Two Chicagos. CPS promises a 18 commitment to every child from every community, but 19 do they really. Where else but in Chicago would a 20 school board close a top-rated school transforming the lives of black students? 21 2.2 Two Chicagos. Where else but in a city 23 CNN reported as the most segregated in the nation 24 would a school board close a school where black

students grow more than 75 percent of students nationwide?

Two Chicagos. Where else but in a city that the term hypersegregation was created to describe would a school board identify the same exact school as not high quality for more affluent, more powerful families and high quality for less affluent, less powerful Englewood families.

⁹ Two Chicagos. Where else but in a city ¹⁰ divided by the have and have nots would a school ¹¹ board change the rules for school inactions to ¹² include unnamed requests as a trigger to ¹³ intentionally close a high-performing school.

Two Chicagos. Where else but in a city known for the Chicago way would a school board claim a lack of city funds to build necessary resources yet have money for a new police academy, new sports arena, and a new Ferris wheel.

Two Chicagos. Eliminating NTA in order to provide a high-quality school option for people that are more affluent and more powerful continues to prove that all men aren't created equal. Chicago has a long history of proving we don't actually live the promise of the Declaration of Independence.

Page 196 1 Two Chicagos. Demand a just Chicago. 2 Get woke, and black students matter. 3 Thank you very much. 4 HEARING OFFICER DOLAN: Thank you, sir. 5 I do not have any other cards in front of 6 me for anybody who has signed up to be heard this 7 evening. I will call these names again to see if 8 somehow somebody has gotten passed over. 9 Is it Bathni, it looks like B-A-T-H-N-I, 10 Toldon, T-O-L-D-O-N. 11 Chris Johnson. 12 Rekeia, R-E-K-E-I-A, Williams. 13 Adowa, A-D-O-W-A, Jones or James, excuse 14 me. 15 Looks like Jennifer S-I-L-L, Sill, or 16 S-I-L-K. 17 And Alex Au, A-U. Alex A-U. 18 This concludes the presentation of the 19 evidence on behalf of the CPS and the comments on behalf of the community. I want to remind you that 20 21 the record in this case will remain open until 2.2 tomorrow, Tuesday, January 30th, at 5:00 p.m. You 23 can submit written materials you want me to consider 24 and make part of the record until that time.

1	You can either hand deliver those
2	materials to the attention of CPS Law Department at
3	42 West Madison or by using e-mail using the
4	following e-mail address: Transitions,
5	T-R-A-N-S-I-T-I-O-N-S, @CPS.EDU.
б	I want to thank everybody who's present
7	still in the room, especially the members of the
8	audience, for taking your time. There are a few
9	things more important to us than the work that we've
10	done here tonight. In terms of the next generation,
11	you are the future for all of us. So I thank you
12	for your dedication, your time for being here, and
13	sharing your thoughts.
14	At this time we will show that it is
15	9:46. There are no further speakers, no other
16	evidence to come before this hearing, no other
17	business to come before this hearing, therefore I
18	close this public hearing again with thanks. You
19	all be well.
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	

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1	STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3	COUNTY OF C O O K)
4	I, Melissa A. Belice, a Certified
5	Shorthand reporter of the State of Illinois, do
6	hereby certify that I reported in shorthand the
7	proceedings had at the hearing aforesaid and that
8	the foregoing is a true, complete, and correct
9	transcript of the proceedings of said hearing as
10	appears from my stenographic notes so taken and
11	transcribed by me.
12	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do hereunto set my hand at
13	Chicago, Illinois, this 1st day of February, 2018.
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17	Certified Shorthand Reporter
18	CSR License No. 084-003391
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196:13	104:9 109:8	169:4,18,22	15:16 16:12	59:11,12	advantages
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102:2	151:3,18	accessible	17:5 26:1,2	94:18	164:18
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