

Community Meeting For the Proposal Close Anna W. Bontemps Elementary School

April 9, 2013, 7:30 – 9:30 P.M.

Location: Harper High School, 6520 S. Wood

**CPS Facilitators:**

Melinda Gildart, Controller

Jack Elsey, Chief Officer of Innovation and Incubation

**CPS Presentation**

Melinda Gildart, Controller, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. She presented an overview of the materials available to meeting attendees, and provided information about subsequent meetings. Ms. Gildart introduced Jack Elsey, the Chief Officer of Innovation and Incubation. Mr. Elsey reviewed the meeting's purpose, rules and procedures. He introduced the court reporter and note taker and time keeper, and ensured that all public comments would become part of the public record. The meeting was then opened for public comment.

**Brief Summary**

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Bontemps Elementary School in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were about 23 community members in attendance and approximately 14 speakers. The speakers ranged from parents and teachers to interested stakeholders. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including the following:

- Bontemps' academic performance; community members claimed that Bontemps has made significant academic progress in Reading, Math and Science
- Concern that CPS is "giving up" on Bontemps' students
- Concern that CPS officials have not visited Bontemps
- Concern that CPS is unconcerned with children's safety
- Demands that Bontemps stay open
- Claims that CPS has mislead the public in their distributed materials
- Relationships that Bontemps' teachers and staff have made with students
- Student concerns about their school closing
- Community concerns about closing schools that have limited resources; the perception that CPS has not adequately set schools up to succeed.
- Parents' concerns about students' academic progress
- Concerns about student safety; students having to cross gang lines and busy streets even if transportation is provided
- Concerns that CPS is disinvesting in students in low-income communities
- Community's concerns that CPS is not listening to community feedback about its proposals; that community meetings are not genuine engagement
- Concern about highly qualified teachers at Bontemps losing their jobs