

Community Meeting for the Proposal to Phase out Attucks Elementary School

April 9, 2013 7:30pm-9:30pm

Location: Dunbar High School 3000 S. King Dr.

CPS Staff in Attendance:

Leslie Fowler - Executive Director of Nutritional Support Services; Patricia Taylor - Chief Operations Officer, Elizabeth Mascitti-Miller - Early Childhood Education Officer, Erick Pruitt, Deputy Chief of Schools, Burnham Park Elementary Network

CPS Presentation

Ms. Taylor opens the community forum by welcoming everyone who is in attendance and introduces the panel. She then explained that tonight's meeting was the first of 3 meetings, and gave the date/time/location of all future meetings. Finally she referenced the documents provided to each person in attendance and briefly explained what was on each page. Ms. Fowler shared the norms and forum for tonight's meeting.

Brief Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to phase out Attucks Elementary in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were about 62 community members in attendance and 8 speakers. The speakers ranged from parents and teachers to interested stakeholders. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including the following:

- Support for the phase out process
- Desire to see CPS investing resources in Attucks and Beethoven over the next two years so that students are able to transition successfully. These resources should assist students in getting to know each other and become familiar with their future facility.
- Request to see the allocation of resources and plans for use outlined in the board report
- Concern for the mental and psychological implications of this process on the students
- Belief that decisions should be made not based on money but based on children's lives
- Concern that closing the PreK program will lead to the school's enrollment decreasing since the preschool students have other siblings in the building
- Allowing the school to stay for 2 years then close as opposed to phasing out
- Concern with the loss of jobs, and the difficulty teachers will face in finding new employment
- ISAT scores may be misjudged because analysis has not taken into consideration the high mobility rate of students due to the transient nature of the community
- Attucks provides many homeless children with a loving atmosphere, a place where they feel comfortable and can learn to trust people. Concern that students will experience setbacks if enrolled at a large school
- Concern over traveling to another school in a neighborhood that is not perceived as safe
- Music and art programs offered by Attucks
- Question regarding the rationale for closure in two years
- Bronzeville community being impacted by school actions over the years

- St. Maria church opposition to any school actions that leave students behind
- Claim that historically, welcoming schools never received the promised renovations or funds
- 45% of the children attending Attucks are considered homeless and need a stable environment
- Staff dedication
- Social work resources should be added to the school