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**Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Garvey Elementary School**

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

Location: Harlan High School, 9652 S. Michigan Avenue

**CPS Staff in Attendance:**

Dr. Karen Saffold, Chief of Elementary Schools, Rock Island Network

Tim Cawley, Chief Administrative Officer

Dr. Stephanie Whyte, Chief Health Officer

**Also in Attendance:**

Captain Gibson, Chicago Police Department

Thyathira Towns, FACE Manager, Rock Island Network

**CPS Presentation:**

Dr. Stephanie Whyte, Chief Health Officer, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. She introduced the sign language interpreters and Spanish translators. Dr. Whyte then presented an overview of the proposal and reviewed the materials available to meeting attendees. Tim Cawley, Chief Administrative Officer, then explained the meeting rules and procedures. The meeting was opened for public comment at 7:40pm.

**Brief Summary:**

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Garvey Elementary School in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were about 300 attendees and 50 speakers including teachers, staff, community members, parents, students, and alumni. The speaker comments focused on various topics including the following:

- Concern for safe passage to welcoming schools because of gang lines
- Academic performance compared to other welcoming schools as well as the growth in math and reading scores at Garvey
- The family-like culture and climate at Garvey that focuses on life-long lessons and not just academics
- The relationships, rapport, and community built within and around Garvey over multiple generations
- The hope Garvey provides in the community academically and professionally
- How Garvey has higher ISAT scores than Mount Vernon
- The national recognition Garvey has received for its instructional practices and other competitions with which the school has been involved. Specifically, Garvey won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Panasonic video competition and has been chosen to represent the United States in Japan
- The academic environment at Garvey prepares students for high school and college
- Concerns about larger class sizes at welcoming schools
- Garvey's role in providing resources to parents and the community at large
- The legacy of Garvey in the Washington Heights community
- Concerns that CPS has misinformed the public regarding the lack of a prekindergarten program at Garvey when Garvey has a prekindergarten program based on curricula used at the Chicago lab school, which has received national recognition. Specifically, "The Story Bus" was filmed at Garvey and this and other footage will be utilized district wide for a CPS webinar this year
- Slideshow presentations set to music displaying photos and videos from with and around Garvey

- Comments regarding the strength of the leadership and staff
- Opposition to the district plan to close more than 50 schools and the individuals who made the decisions
- Garvey’s recognition as a 2009 Spotlight School by the Illinois State Board of Education for “exemplary education and closing the achievement gap...”
- Dissatisfaction that school closings would not happen outside of the city of Chicago
- Explanations of how every classroom in Garvey is being utilized and has air conditioning
- The national recognition Garvey has received for its social-emotional learning curriculum
- Stakeholders stating that Garvey has only been on academic probation for 1 year, while Mt Vernon has been on probation for 10 years
- How it was a mistake to take prayer out of schools
- An alumni spoke of how Garvey prepared her for selective enrollment and IB high schools