



**Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Williams Elementary and Williams Middle and relocate Drake Elementary School to 2710 S. Dearborn St. and to co-locate Drake Elementary School and Urban Prep Academy - Bronzeville**

April 10, 2013: 5:00pm-8:00pm

Location: Dunbar High School, 3000 S. King Drive

**CPS Staff in Attendance:**

John Price, Chief of Elementary Schools, Burnham Park  
Robert Boik, Chief of Staff  
Ginger Ostro, Officer, Budgets and Grants

**Also in Attendance:**

Pat Dowell, Alderman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward

**CPS Presentation:**

Ginger Ostro, Officer of Budget and Grants, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. She introduced the sign language interpreters and Spanish translators. She asked if anyone required Spanish translation. The Spanish translator introduced himself and explained his process to the audience. Ostro then presented an overview of the proposal, reviewed the materials available to meeting attendees, and explained the meeting rules and procedures. Robert Boik, Chief of Staff, introduced himself and opened the meeting for public comment at about 5:05pm.

**Brief Summary:**

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comment on the proposal to close Williams Elementary and Williams Middle School and relocate Drake Elementary and to co-locate Drake and Urban Prep – Bronzeville, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were about 31 attendees and 24 speakers. The speakers ranged from parents and teachers to interested stakeholders. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including the following:

- A request from the Alderman that CPS change the handouts to state that Urban Prep-Bronzeville will be using the Drake building until Urban Prep is relocated to another facility
- Multiple concerns that the proposal is confusing and unclear
- Expressed concerns about the process to determine the school name and requested the community be involved in the process
- Concerned that Drake is not a higher performing option for students and requested more data to show how it is higher performing
- Request consideration for the positive attitude of the Williams teachers and the highly qualified principal
- Explanation of the programs offered at Williams
- Claims made that CPS has set schools up for failure and that politics has played a role as well
- Williams Elementary students met or exceeded state standards
- Stated the utilization data was incorrect because it does not account for the needs of special education students
- Expressed specific concerns about moving special education students and students in temporary living situations too often
- Felt the probation data for Williams was incorrect

- Concerned that it is not a proposal because facilities and HR have already visited Williams
- Asked why supports were not provided to Williams last year
- Questioned whether CPS will guarantee teachers will be rehired
- Wondered if the reconstruction of the Dearborn Homes contributed to underutilization around the school
- Opposed all school actions that impact children
- The accessibility of the Williams building
- Wanted to know why CPS officials were not answering questions in the meeting
- Felt CPS is spending more money to close schools than it will save
- Concerned that plan for school closings is not organized
- Stated that the process has disrupted students' lives and communities
- Encouraged CPS staff to walk through neighborhoods and go teach in classrooms
- Concerned about students traveling to school in the winter
- Asked when special education students will be notified so families can make decisions about placements
- Felt the process disempowered parents and the communities
- Concerned over status of the LSC because of the voting period
- Asked that CPS provide resources to Williams now and into the new school year
- Concerned about the individual safety plan for students
- Stated the need for a moratorium on school closures
- Concerned about capacity in the Williams facility given current issues with Urban Prep
- Asked when final decisions will be made
- Concerned that upgrades were made when Urban Prep moved in but the same upgrades were not made at Williams Elementary and Middle