

### **Community Meeting for the Proposal to close Fermi Elementary**

Date: April 10, 2013, 7:30p.m. - 9:30p.m.

Location: Kenwood Academy High School, 5015 S. Blackstone Ave.

#### **CPS Staff in Attendance**

Patricia Taylor- Chief Facilities Officer, Annette Gurley- Chief Teaching & Learning Officer, LaTanya McDade - Chief of Schools - Skyway Elementary Network, Eric Pruitt-Deputy Chief of Schools - Burnham Park Elementary Network

#### **CPS Presentation**

Chief Annette Gurley welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. She presented an overview of the proposal closures as per the handouts given to those in attendance, in addition to providing dates/times/locations of upcoming meetings. The meeting rules and procedures were explained.

#### **Brief Summary**

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Fermi Elementary, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were about 25 community members in attendance and 26 comments. The speakers ranged from parents and teachers to interested stakeholders. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including the following:

- Concern that the welcoming school, South Shore Fine Arts, has a citywide enrollment policy and would not be a viable option for neighborhood children. Question raised regarding the siblings of Fermi students and whether they would be allowed a spot at South Shore Fine Arts
- Concern that Wadsworth Elementary, which is receiving the Fermi attendance boundary, is over a mile away which may pose a danger to students
- Dissatisfaction that the community meeting was not located in the community
- Fermi has a high special education population (30%) and the kindergarteners would be especially vulnerable
- South Shore should receive more funding for extra support, for example, interventionist, dean, security personnel, fine arts teachers, etc. if it were to welcome Fermi students
- Concern that the special education students would lose the staff that understand their physical, mental, psychological, and emotional well-being
- Need security, counselors and social workers to follow students to help them adjust
- Question regarding when the transition supports will be deployed

- Fermi students have been affected by violence, gangs, drugs, and need stability
- Lack of a neighborhood school in the area if Fermi closed
- Concern over real estate value decline if a neighborhood school is closed
- Concern that 311 is not responding to calls