

## **Community Meeting for Proposed Co-location of Dodge and Morton Elementary School**

Location: Al Raby High School

Monday, April 8, 2013

**CPS Staff in Attendance:** Phil Hampton, Susan Kajiwaru-Ansai, Wanda Washington, Amy Rome, AUSL, Pamela Price, Lionel Harris, Sherry Bushre', Allayna Ratliff, Rhonda Kimbrough, Elba Negrón, Dora Turrubiates, Luretha Phillips, Stephen Long, Pedro Soto, Eric Washington, Chicago Police Department 11<sup>th</sup> district, Kenny Mixon, Marcus Brady and Mr. Marshall.

**Brief Summary:** Phil Hampton opened the meeting at 7:31pm and explained the nature and procedures for the meeting. He also gave dates and times for the next public meetings. He directed everyone's attention to the proposal handout explaining the information on each page. Mr. Hampton then turned the meeting over to the facilitator, Susan Kajiwaru-Ansai. She gave procedures and time limits for the speakers. She also stated that if there is time remaining then community members are welcome to speak again.

### **Public Comment**

#### **Alderman Burnett**

Alderman Burnett claimed that he was surprised because these two schools were not on the original list for actions. He opposed the proposal because safety was a significant concern for him. He felt the schools were not being treated the same as the other schools that are proposed to be closed. If the action were to happen, he felt the parents of students who attend the schools should be given priority in obtaining safe passage jobs. He proposed that the community can make money to better support their families and simultaneously keep the community safe. He was also concerned about the viaduct that obstructs students from walking to school.

#### **Lisa Bark, Representative from Alderman Fioretti's Office**

Ms. Bark has concerns around safety. She stated that Dodge has a beautiful facility and many of the alternative schools in the surrounding area are also slated for closing, so that doesn't leave the parents with options for their children. Spoke about the new CHA Housing that has already been approved for this area, so where are the students going that are moving into this area with so many of the schools closing. She stated that this is a done deal, so what is CPS plan for the additional families coming.

#### **Morena Lacy, Dodge Parent**

Ms. Lacy brought a student to show that it would be difficult for the student to walk to school unless escorted by some type of security representative. She was specifically concerned because she expressed that students are too small to walk to Morton. She also stated that this action affects parents who work and have to adjust their

schedules so that students can attend the school. They should not have to worry about the safety of their children and the safety of their job.

**Wendy Pearson, Community Person**

Ms. Pearson claimed that a CPS official has broken a law by living in Ohio breaking City Ordinance Codes. She also stated the salaries of those directly responsible. She addressed closings that seem to be aimed only at African American children. She spoke of an incident of a girl being raped and the need for CPS to take these violent crimes seriously. She expressed the need for decisions to be made from the community members at the onset. Pearson concluded and encouraged CPS officials to attend meetings and give concrete answers on the proposed action.

**Wendy Pearson, 2<sup>nd</sup> speech**

Ms. Pearson stated that West Garfield and Lawndale has the most grey stones, in the City of Chicago and noted the number of bike trails that have been added to these communities. She believes that the schools that will be closed will not be closed.

**Ms. Wilson, Grandparent of Dodge Student**

Ms. Wilson did not understand whether the teachers will remain and does not want her children to go through too much change. Ms Wilson opposed the action because Dodge should remain in the same location due to safety reasons.

**Annette Brittin, Concerned Person**

Ms. Brittin claimed that there is a safety issue with the many vacant lots and buildings and gangs are not the only problems.

**Lacy Markesha, Dodge Parent**

Ms. Markesha has a kindergartner who attends Dodge who was very disturbed because he didn't want to leave his school. She expressed that saving money is not a good thing all the time.

**Lacy Markesha, 2<sup>nd</sup> speech**

Ms. Lacy wanted to understand the process of who made the decision on the closings. She was opposed to this school action.

**Sandra Brinson**

Ms. Brinson stated that she attended many of the schools and CPS and believes that the crime is too dangerous if the action is carried out.

### **Natasha Nichols**

Ms. Nichols was a product of CPS. She put her children in Dodge because she wanted to keep her child in the community. She didn't want her child to have to leave their community like she did. She believed that this process was not happening in the affluent areas. She stated that elected officials children have never attended public schools in CPS. She encouraged CPS officials to visit schools and provided an example in which teachers were always available to students by giving students their cell phone numbers. She also stated she has decided to home school her incoming kinder gardener because she has lost faith in CPS. She believed that CPS officials should reduce their salaries in order to save money.