

Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Bethune Elementary School

April 11, 2012: 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Location: Manley High School, 2935 W Polk St.

CPS Staff in Attendance

Tracey Martin Thompson - Chief of Strategic School Supports

Stephaney Donovan – Chief of Staff, Office of Strategic School Supports

Herald Johnson, Deputy Chief of Schools – Garfield-Humboldt Elementary Network

CPS Presentation

Ms. Martin-Thompson summarized the overall process of the meeting and advised that this was the second of three meetings regarding the school action. She summarized the proposal. The audience was provided an overview of the handouts.

Brief Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Bethune Elementary, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were about 83 community members in the audience and 50 speakers, although several parents and students spoke more than once. The speakers' comments focused on a variety of topics including the following:

- Concerns over safety and the distance required to walk to Gregory
- Highlights of the progress that the school has made since 2009 after the turnaround
- The historical importance of the school and what it represents to the community
- Safe haven that the school provides for students and the community
- Concern that programs at the school will be discontinued including SPARK, Don't Drink and Drive Program, and Homework Help
- Addition of computer labs has been very beneficial to students
- Claim that school has gone through transformation over the past few years
- Parents and community involvement has drastically increased in the past few years
- Questioned what would happen to the Bethune building after the school is closed
- Concern that younger kids will have to walk longer blocks
- Many parents do not have cars and are therefore unable to take their students to school
- The historic nature of the community is being threatened by removing the memory of Mary Jane McLeod Bethune