

### **Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Owens Elementary School**

April 11, 2013; 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Location: Harlan HS, 9652 South Michigan

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

Melinda Gidart, Controller

Todd Babbitz, Chief Transformation Officer

Harrison Peters, Chief of Schools, Far South Side K-12 Network

#### **CPS Presentation**

Melinda Gidart, CPS Controller, welcomed those in attendance and then introduced CPS staff. She presented an overview of the proposal, explaining the meeting rules and procedures. Todd Babbitz explained the information on the handouts and reminded the audience of the upcoming hearing related to this proposal.

#### **Brief Summary**

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comment on the proposal to close Jesse Owens Elementary School, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were about 58 community members in attendance and 43 speakers. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including:

- Perceived lack of support for failing schools
- Concern over lack of funding for the school
- Concern regarding student safety
- Claim that there has been an error in the decision making process
- Claim that the proliferation of charter schools are to blame given CPS enrollment is declining
- Support for early childhood programs and desire for the program to continue at the new school
- Claim that Owens has historically performed better than Gompers
- Claim that Owens already has air conditioning throughout the building
- Statement that a safety plan at Owens is already in place and an additional one is not needed