

### **Community Meeting for the Proposal**

April 12, 2013; 5:00pm-8:00pm

Location: Kenwood High School, 5015 South Blackstone Avenue

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

Denise Little, Chief Officer of Networks

Tom Tyrell, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Erick Pruitt, Deputy Chief of Elementary Schools, Burnham Park Network

#### **CPS Presentation**

Tom Tyrell, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. He introduced the sign language interpreters and Spanish translators. He asked if anyone required Spanish translation. Tyrell then presented an overview of the proposal and reviewed the materials available to meeting attendees. Denise Little, Chief Officer of Networks, then explained the meeting rules and procedures. The meeting opened for public comment at 5:10pm.

#### **Brief Summary:**

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comment on the proposal to close Canter Middle School, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were approximately 100 attendees, a number of whom also spoke. The speakers ranged from parents and teachers to interested stakeholders. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including the following:

- Concerns raised about vandalism at vacant school buildings after closure and the negative affect on property values
- Concerns about students who have been impacted by school closures previously
- Worried about safety can security
- Frustrated that hearings are scheduled on the same day as report card pickup which forces parents to chose
- Belief that CPS cannot be trusted
- Worried that closing a large number of schools will create chaos
- Felt the public should have more say in the school closing decisions since they fund schools with their tax dollars
- Astonished that CPS did not have other solutions besides schools closing to address budget challenges
- Discussed the strength of the math programs at Canter, specifically algebra and pre-algebra
- Belief that Canter is a safe school
- Worried about the effect of the transition on students
- Strong belief in the value of a middle school program
- Concerns about student retention
- Worried about job loss in the Hyde Park community
- Frustrated the closing could lead to large class sizes
- Felt that CPS will not provide air conditioning in welcoming schools

- Anxious about the ability for Ray and Harte to handle middle school students given they do not serve middle school students currently
- Concerned about pedophiles and homeless people in the neighborhood
- Parent who had a student at Price and believed it should have closed but does not feel the same way about Canter that welcomed her child openly
- Felt that CPS has been underfunded which has led to current financial crisis
- Offered the idea of phasing out Canter
- Worried about impacted teachers finding jobs
- Questioned how extra-curricular activities will be made available at
- Asked if responses to questions posed at meeting will be posted on CPS website
- Frustrated the facilitators would not answer questions
- Confusion over which school students will go to, specially the Shoesmith student
- Felt the plan for closures is incomplete
- Frustrated that hearings are not conversations
- Alderman expressed frustration about not receiving notice about new principal at Ray