

## **Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Leif Ericson Elementary School**

April 12, 2013; 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Location: Manley Career Academy High School, 2935 W. Polk Street

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

Beth Mascitti-Miller, Director of Early Childhood

Leonard Moody, Director of Audit Services

Alexandra Lopez, FACE Site Manager

Wanda Washington, Garfield-Humboldt Chief

Herald Johnson, Deputy Chief of Garfield-Humboldt

Tracey Ginwright, Assistant Deputy Chief

A.Amram, Principal of Ericson

**CPS Presentation:** The principal from Manley welcomed the community. Leonard Moody, Director of Audit Services introduced the meeting. Moody commented on the *Safe Passage* plan that is being developed and explained what resources welcoming schools would receive. Moody then presented an overview of the proposal. Moody briefly reviewed the handouts for the meeting and directed the audience to seek more information from the website and by calling 311. Beth Mascitti-Miller reviewed the procedures for the speakers. Mascitti-Miller also reviewed the procedure for submitting written comments.

### **Brief Summary:**

The purpose of the meeting is to receive public comment on the proposal to close Ericson Elementary School and transfer the students to Sumner Elementary School located at 4320 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. 159 community members were in attendance. The meeting was opened for public comment around 7:50 p.m. The speaker's comments included:

- Ericson has high attendance and have had solid scores in the upper 50<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Almost every speaker commented that Ericson is a family and that it is safe
- Ericson is a neighborhood school and this would transfer the students from East to West Garfield Park. Even though it is a magnet, most of the students are from the neighborhood.
- Sumner is a downgrade for the Ericson students because Ericson is a magnet school. A magnet school is above a STEM school. Ericson is one of the only magnet schools in East Garfield Park.
- iPads and air-conditioning should not be perks, they should be standard practice

- Safety is a concern. There is no “straight line” to walk between the schools. The streets are not safe. The students are not known to the new area and they do not know the new area.
- Ericson has 4-500 students. Sumner has ~200. It is difficult to welcome when the influx of people is more than double the present population.
- Consolidations in the 28<sup>th</sup> Ward shift children further west. East Garfield Park is a great community. Closing so many schools in the area depletes the area – the proposed closings leave only one school in that area (Faraday). Ericson is a beautiful school right on the park.
- Closing the school stigmatizes the children and the area.
- The Ericson Creed was recited by many students
- Claimed that there has been a high principal turnover and CPS should give the school an opportunity to improve
- Students with disabilities are nervous to attend a school where staff/administration do not know their situation
- Presented information including 17/31 closed facilities are currently in use. 24 of the vacant facilities are a haven for crime and drugs
- School is the anchor of the community