

Community Meeting For the Proposal to Close John P. Altgeld Elementary School and Relocate
Daniel S. Wentworth Elementary School
April 10, 2013, 7:30 – 9:30 P.M.
Location: Harper High School, 6520 S. Wood

CPS Facilitators:

Leonard Moody, Internal Audit Officer

Elizabeth Mascitti-Miller, Early Childhood Education Officer

CPS Presentation

Leonard Moody, Internal Audit Officer for CPS, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. He presented an overview of the materials available to meeting attendees, and provided information about subsequent meetings. Elizabeth Mascitti-Miller, Officer in the Department of Early Childhood Education, reviewed the meeting's purpose, rules and procedures. CPS presented the dates and locations of upcoming meetings and hearings. The facilitators opened the meeting for public comment.

Brief Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Altgeld Elementary School and relocate Wentworth Elementary School in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were approximately 32 community members in attendance and about 12 speakers. The speakers included parents, teachers, community members, students, and Alderman Thomas. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including the following:

- Community concerns that the closing will create overcrowding in the new school
- Community concerns about student safety; specifically concerned that students will have to travel additional distances through dangerous communities
- The social and emotional needs of the students; concerns that CPS will not provide adequate social and emotional supports if school does not have additional counseling services and social workers
- Concern that CPS did not consult the community in designing school closings
- Information about student performance data; specifically in regards to ISAT scores and AYP designations
- Questions about the criteria that CPS used to designate which schools should close
- Concerns about whether students will be able to receive social services that they currently receive
- Requests for CPS to reconsider the proposal
- Concerns that schools that CPS is not properly defining underutilization; that classrooms at school are all being effectively used

- Testimonials about the dedication and effectiveness of Altgeld's teachers and staff
- Concerns that CPS is only interested in financial gain and not concerned about welfare of students
- Alderman Thomas voiced her opposition to the school action. The Alderman is concerned that CPS did not take into consideration the technological resources and library resources at the school. She also discussed the high rate of student mobility and homeless population at the affected schools, and voiced her concerns that school closings would potentially put student's in harm's way. She is concerned about the distance between the two schools and the gang lines that students would have to cross to attend their welcoming school. The Alderman discussed recent school closures in her community and declared that further school closures would be destabilizing. She reiterated that she does not support the school actions and asked those in attendance to remain involved
- Community questioned why the two schools couldn't both operate at Altgeld facility
- Community voiced support for Altgeld and the importance of the school to the community