

Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Garvey Elementary School

Saturday, April 13, 2013; 12:30 to 2:30 p.m

Location: John M. Harlan Community Academy High School, 9652 South Michigan Ave.

CPS Staff in Attendance

Tom Tyrell, Deputy Chief Administrator Officer

Anthony McPhearson, Chief of Staff - Information & Technology Services

Dr. Karen V. Saffold, Chief of Schools - Rock Island Elementary Network

Adrian Willis, Chief of Schools - Englewood-Gresham Elementary Network

CPS Presentation

Mr. Tom Tyrell welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. Mr. Tyrell gave a brief overview of the CPS safe passage commitment made by CPS and the handout provided to attendees after introducing the panel. Mr. Anthony McPhearson explained the meeting rules and procedures.

Brief Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Garvey Elementary School in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were about 250 community members in attendance and 50 speakers. The speakers ranged from parents and teachers to interested stakeholders. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including the following:

- Character of Garvey with caring parents involved in the school
- Academic performance improvement
- Opposition to school closing
- Perception that CPS has invested in Mt. Vernon, but not Garvey
- Garvey's many graduates
- Perception that Garvey has been improving and Mt. Vernon has not
- Suggestion that Mt. Vernon students should be moved to Garvey
- Grandparent program that has great participation and a pattern of mentoring at the school
- Garvey teachers care for their students
- Garvey has air conditioning, art, libraries and science labs
- Garvey role as a safe haven
- Concern that this proposal will force students to face gang members
- Perception that Garvey outperforms other schools in the area
- Garvey offers online tutoring for thirty minute sessions leading to student improvement in reading
- Concern that businesses near the school will be closed
- Police helicopters and violence in the neighborhood
- ISBE Spotlight Award
- Belief that Garvey has outperformed Mt. Vernon for the last sixteen years
- Community values Garvey's preschool program, which was shown on Story of US
- Belief that Garvey has been on academic probation for a few months while the welcoming school has been on probation for years
- Concern for student safety en route to Mt. Vernon
- Church across the street from Garvey collected five hundred signatures from the community