

Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Ignance Paderewski Elementary Learning Academy

April 13, 2013; 12:30– 2:30 p.m.

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

CPS Facilitators:

Robert Boik, Chief of Staff, CEO

Susan Kajiwarana-Ansai, Officer, Professional Learning

Also in Attendance:

Stephen Zrike Jr, Chief, Pilsen-Little Village Elementary Network

CPS Presentation

Mr. Boik summarized the overall process of the meeting and stated that this was the second of three meetings regarding the proposal to close Paderewski. He mentioned that summaries of the meetings and responses to questions would be posted on the CPS website. He stated that CPS is partnering with the community, Streets and Sanitation, and the police department to ensure that students will have safe passage to and from the school. He provided an overview of the handout distributed to the audience. He then transitioned to Ms. Kajiwarana-Ansai. Ms. Kajiwarana-Ansai provided an overview of the meeting logistics including the agenda and the two minute speaking limit.

Brief Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Ignance Paderewski Elementary Learning Academy and welcome students at Lazaro Cardenas Elementary School and Rosario Castellanos Elementary School, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. The speakers were parents, staff, and community members. The most common theme revolved around the capability of Ms. Lewis, the principal and how she increased enrollment. The speaker comments are summarized below:

- One speaker said that Paderewski children will not be accepted at Castellanos and Cardenas.
- One speaker talked about the challenges that Paderewski students face, including poverty, violence, and lack of food.
- Concern was raised about “the corner of Penn” where gangs and drug dealers frequent.
- Multiple speakers complemented the principal, Ms. Lewis, on her effectiveness at increasing enrollment at Paderewski and bringing in new programs.
- One speaker criticized the use of TIF money in the city.
- Concern was raised about gangs in the area and children’s safety.

- Multiple speakers referenced the number of applications for pre-K that Paderewski received.
- One speaker claimed to live on 24th and Millard and said gang bangers are always there.
- One speaker criticized CPS leadership changes over the past several years.
- One speaker asserted that it costs more to close schools than to keep them open.
- One speaker criticized a new park being built and said the money should instead be directed to keep Paderewski open.
- One speaker claimed that Cardenas was overcrowded.