

**Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Mayo Elementary School and
Relocate Wells Prep to 249 E. 37th Street**

April 13, 2013; 10:00am - 12:00pm

Location: Kenwood Academy High School, 5015 South Blackstone Avenue.

CPS Staff in Attendance:

Ginger Ostro, Officer, Budgets and Grants

John Barker, Chief Officer, Accountability

John Price, Chief of Elementary Schools, Burnham Park Network

Michael McGehee, FACE Manager, Burnham Park Network

CPS Presentation:

Ginger Ostro, Officer of Budgets and Grants, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. She noted that there was a court reporter, note taker, Spanish translator and sign language interpreter. She asked if anyone required translation services. Ostro then presented an overview of the proposal and reviewed the materials available to meeting attendees. John Barker, Chief Officer of Accountability, explained the meeting rules and procedures. The meeting was then opened for public comment.

Brief Summary:

The purpose of this meeting was to receive public comment on the proposal to close Mayo Elementary School and relocate Wells Prep to 249 E. 47th Street, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were about 35 people in attendance, 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:

- Former principal of Mayo stated that Mayo and Wells Prep collaborated for many years
- Statements about the dedication and commitment of the Mayo teachers
- Former principal discussed how the staff brought test scores up to the 70s from the 20s
- Worried about classes becoming overcrowded
- Mayo is a fixture in the community
- Family feel of Mayo
- Concerned students will not get along given past incidents between the two schools at basketball games
- Felt Mayo needed more time to bring its scores back to where they used to be
- The calm and caring atmosphere at Mayo compared to other schools
- Stated that Mayo has only been on probation once
- Asked why Mayo could not take over Wells instead
- The strength of the special education teachers and programs
- Worried about transportation to and from new school given crime in the area
- Frustrated that CPS is improving the facility now that Mayo will close
- Referenced a 2009 University of Chicago study stating that welcoming schools should be of significantly higher academic quality if school closures are to be successful
- Spoke about the promise of the IB program at Wells

- Argued research suggests welcoming schools are often the same schools that later close
- Opposition to the closing of any school in Chicago
- Discussed how teachers and staff are stabilizing forces in student's lives that will be disrupted by school actions
- Statements about the caliber of the teachers and instruction at Mayo
- Asked about the social emotional support that would be offered
- Requested information on the district's plans for violence prevention
- The fact that Mayo has been in the community for 50 years
- Insulted by the CEO's claims that people are using gangs to keep students in underperforming schools when Mayo was put on lockdown due to gang violence the same day the CEO made these comments
- Shocked and emotional about the school closure process
- Stated the need for strong leadership and guidance if the closure and relocation are approved
- Belief that Wells Prep is on probation and not a higher performing option
- Concerns over the loss of teaching jobs
- Wished that the media would highlight the positive aspects of Mayo and not the negative ones
- Belief that CPS is setting up children for failure
- Belief that there should be a moratorium on all school closings
- Requested that stakeholders have more time to ask relevant questions given the lack of answers
- Hope the transition teams, networks, and appointed staff take all suggestions seriously and make a plan to ensure the academic success and safety for all who will be impacted
- Discussed the challenges of the Price students
- Concerned that the new IB program at Wells Prep will fail
- Suggested that school closure might be an effort to keep cheap teachers
- Felt CPS could not answer why Mayo was closing
- Worried about losing contact with each other after the closure
- Stated Mayo was featured by the mayor during the city's bid for the Olympics
- The presence of culturally supportive curriculum at Mayo
- Invited people to visit Mayo to see what the school is doing
- Support for the drama and tap dancing programs at Mayo
- Belief that the district's budget crisis is fabricated