

**Community Meeting Summary to co-locate New Noble St. High School Campus and Bowen High School**

Monday, April 15, 2013; 7:30pm-9:30pm

Location: Chicago Vocation Career Academy, 2100 E. 87<sup>th</sup> Street

**CPS Staff in Attendance:**

Jennie Huang, CPS Treasurer

**Non CPS members:**

Captain Ruth Wedster –Executive Officer of the 4<sup>th</sup> District

**CPS Presentation:**

Jennie Huang opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. She introduced staff members, provided logistics and stated the purpose of the meeting which is to listen to the concerns of the community regarding this specific school action. The audience was informed that this was the 2<sup>nd</sup> community meeting and that the community hearing which will be held on April 20<sup>th</sup> in Room 1550 from 11:30am until 1:30pm. She also reminded the audience that all comments made will be given to the CEO and the Board. The summary of this meeting will also be posted on the website within five (5) days. Ms. Huang mentioned that CPS will try their best to answer questions via the website. She briefly reviewed the handout that was provided for audience members and encouraged them to take note of the changes that would occur with the co-location, which includes sharing the auditorium and swimming pool. She also pointed out the information about safety and security, campus sharing and social/emotional supports for students, as needed. She further reminded them that CPS has linked up with 311 to get information to parents, students, and the community.

**Brief Summary:**

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the CEO's recommendation to co-locate a New Noble Street High School Campus and Corliss High School in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were approximately 30 audience members. The meeting began at 7:30pm and concluded at 9:25pm.

**Public Comment:**

**Ronald Jackson, member of the NAACP**

Mr. Jackson questioned why Noble cannot purchase its own facility and was disappointed that CPS has not been responsive particularly with the 311 hotline. He was also concerned about the two schools co-existing in the building from a safety standpoint. He questioned why the community meeting didn't occur at Bowen School. He feels that this was a deliberate attempt by CPS. He expressed his concern around the interests and resources needed by special needs students. He discussed that he would plan to file an injunction to stop the Board from the illegal act of putting corporate schools in the name of a public school.

**Emily Barnowsky, teacher**

Ms. Barnowsky started a Special Olympics team and the Best Buddies Program that is currently in the facility that the Noble school is planning to use if the action is approved. She expressed that her biggest fear is all of the separate entryways, administration, gymnasiums, lunchrooms will actually be very difficult to implement and set up. She concerned about how students would feel in a building where everything is separate.

**Vanessa Schwartz, community member**

Ms. Schwartz worked with Bowen when it was four small schools. She worked with the community and Bowen to get Bowen into one school. She believes that Bowen has a great principal – Jennifer Kirmes. She spoke highly about the principal who has enacted different policies to make certain students are getting a quality education. She’s helped to bring the staff back together because the consolidation was not planned well. She feels that putting two schools back into Bowen will disregard the community’s wishes. She wants Bowen to have another chance considering all of the work they’ve already begun.

**Cynthia Barron, faculty for Urban Ed Leadership Program at UIC**

Ms. Barron asked that the Board defer the co-location decision because there has already been too many actions. She states that she was the AIO that oversaw Bowen’s conversion into four small schools and learned that the district did not do a good job with that. She states that Principal Kirmes has been working hard and just got a \$3 million School Improvement Grant. The school just received the early childhood grant which happens to be in the place that’s designated for Noble Street science labs.

**Angela Hurlock, community member**

Ms. Angela strongly expressed that the Board should wait to consider this action until everyone understands the parameters around utilization. She claims that there are other charter schools in the area that are already collaborative partners with Bowen and it would have been nice to have the community provide input in order to determine the best partner to share this space.

**Daina Dumbrys, teacher**

Ms. Dumbrys discussed that the past consolidation was difficult for students and that another curve ball would be difficult for students to adjust to. She felt that there has been a lack of trust and that CPS has already made their decision because of the school visits they have conducted. She also claimed that the population within the area is declining.

**Mark Walden, community member**

Mr. Walden questioned the number of new jobs that would be created at Noble and also requested to receive the community engagement plan for this process. He also expressed that he would like to understand the history of co-locations and how we can learn from these actions and ensure that they are successful.

**Daniel Estrada, parent**

Mr. Estrada expressed his distrust of CPS and discussed how he will continue to represent the community and their interests throughout this process.

**M.E. [Student]**

She expressed that students have been rebellious and claims that CPS has done a poor job consolidating in the past.

**Vincent Gay, principal with Noble**

Mr. Gay stated that Noble Street has 10,000 students who are safe and in nurturing high schools environments with great expectations. He also mentioned that Noble campuses are 9 of the top 10 selective public high schools in the city and that 90 percent of their graduates go on to college every year. He believes that the proposed co-location with Bowen gives them a chance to serve more scholars and families in the South Chicago community and beyond. He states that this campus will have a specific focus – rigorous curriculum that includes political science and civic engagement for every student. He also stated that Noble is committed to doing the community engagement work so that it becomes a strong partner for families and the community. Lastly, he mentioned that he has spoken with the principal at Bowen on several occasions and she and he both believe that they will have a successful partnership for the students and staff.

**Yvonne Johnson**

She's a former Bowen student speaking on behalf of Noble Charter School and believes that the school has benefited her child tremendously.

**David Vance**

Mr. Vance expressed that he doesn't understand how the CEO will have the bandwidth to read all the transcripts.

**Marion Tucker Johnson**

Mr. Johnson expressed that he was happy that Noble would be moving into the community and that this would provide his daughter with an option that is closer to home.

**Don Lightfoot**

Mr. Lightfoot questioned how many resources would be shared between the school and what supports would be in place for this action.

**Amalia Nieto Gomez**

Ms. Gomez was frustrated with the co-location process and does not believe that CPS is actually listening. She claimed that there have been actions taken at Bowen within the past two years and didn't know new actions would occur. Further, Bowen is doing better – new programs – 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Schools investment, early childhood education program was recently approved, a magnet art program and youth leadership council meetings are supposed to take place at Bowen.

**Charles Kyle**

Mr. Kyle believed that both district and charter schools are failing students.

**Josephine Durand, parent**

Ms. Durand's daughter has been challenged in every way in the classroom and in sports and believes that there are many opportunities at Noble and wants everyone to work together to encourage academic excellence in the highest need communities.

**Frank Horton, retired principal**

Mr. Horton believes that charter schools are actually masking their actual graduation rate as students get counseled out.

**Charlene Schwartz**

Mr. Schwartz was concerned about the academics of Bowen and believes they need more investments in the school library.

**Rhonda Coleman, parent**

Ms. Coleman expressed that the community need facts about both schools and believes that each parent has a choice in where they send their child.