

**Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close Dumas Technology Academy and Relocate Wadsworth Elementary to 6650 South Ellis Avenue**

April 15, 2013; 5:00pm – 7:00pm

Location: Kenwood Academy High School, 5015 South Blackstone Avenue

**CPS Staff in Attendance:**

Susan Kajiwarra-Ansai, Officer, Professional Learning

Pat Taylor, Chief Facilities Officer

John Price, Chief of Elementary Schools, Burnham Park Network

**Also in Attendance:**

Leslie Harriston, 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman

Amber Damerow, Manager, Students in Temporary Living Situations

Chasda Martin, FACE Manager, Skyway Network

**CPS Presentation:**

Pat Taylor, Chief Facilities Officer, welcomed those in attendance and opened 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. Taylor then presented an overview of the proposal and reviewed the materials available to meeting attendees. Susan Kajiwarra-Ansai, Officer of Professional Learning, explained the meeting rules and procedures. The meeting was then opened for public comment.

**Brief Summary:**

The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comments on the proposal to close Dumas Technology Academy and to relocate Wadsworth to 6650 South Ellis Avenue, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. There were approximately 95 attendees and 45 speakers. The speakers ranged from parents and teachers to interested stakeholders. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including the following:

- The positive atmosphere and welcoming climate of Dumas
- The constant struggle of being a reassigned teacher
- Belief that underutilized schools are the result of changes in the communities including lower birth rates and families moving to the suburbs
- Felt that school closings are temporary solutions
- Discussed the positive quotes displayed throughout the halls of Dumas
- The tutoring the teachers provide to students
- Students want to see their same teachers next year

- Concerned about the supports being offered to special education students
- Training the teachers have received in the Orton Gillingham Reading program
- The strength of the Dumas administration
- Concerned about the breakdown of institutions in the city including schools
- The supportive environment at Dumas for both staff and students
- Call and response between a student and parent regarding how student felt about the school closing
- Mentioned the positive responses Dumas' received on the My Voice, My School survey
- Worried that the caliber of education Dumas students are receiving will be compromised
- Discussed successful effort to address truancy and suspension rates at Dumas
- Noted the importance of strong relationships for children's academic success
- Talked about the five year partnership between Dumas and DePaul university to support student achievement and parent and community involvement
- How Dumas provides much needed stability for students
- The community liaison discussed the parent room and programming offered for Dumas parents
- Asked whether CPS can guarantee student will receive a better education from Wadsworth teachers
- Worried that students will leave school and join gangs as a result of the proposed closure
- Suggested the Board of Education keep both principals because they know the students
- Belief the CPS is moving Wadsworth to allow the University of Chicago Charter School to expand
- Asked what kind of training will be provided for the safe passage staff and if CPS has the money to maintain the program for the next five to ten years
- Concern for the social-emotional needs of students
- Comments on the experience level of the pre-school staff
- Felt that CPS is pitting schools against one another
- Discussed that Dumas already had plans to add a media and computer lab to their facility
- Worried about young students walking from 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Stony Island to 67<sup>th</sup> Street and Ellis Avenue
- Asked why transportation was not being offered to student
- Alderman felt that CPS has non-educators making decisions about schools
- Requested that Board members walk the routes children will have to travel to welcoming schools
- The programs offered to help students cope and appropriately deal with anger including working with college students and using peace circles
- Discussed the play put on by teachers and parents at Family Literacy Night and left CD of the play
- Mentioned that Dumas already has the technology for a STEM program but would welcome the resources to enhance program

- Concerned about the lack of time to apply through the re-opened Options for Knowledge program and suggested that CPS change the April 19<sup>th</sup> deadline
- Belief that school actions are a way to punish the teachers for the strike
- Listed the various activities available at Dumas including African dance, leadership training, piano lessons, healthy eating, Spanish and Japanese language instruction