

Community Meeting for the Proposal to Close John P. Altgeld Elementary School and relocate
Daniel S. Wentworth Elementary School
April 15, 2013, 7:30pm-9:30pm
Location: Harper High School 6520 S. Woods St.

CPS Staff in Attendance:

Leonard Moody, Internal Audit Officer
Adrian G. Willis, Chief of Elementary Schools, Englewood Auburn Gresham Network
Mirlene Dossous, Family and Community Engagement

Also in Attendance:

Andrea Zopp, CPS Board Member
Alderman Latasha Thomas, 17th Ward

CPS Presentation: Leonard Moody, Internal Audit Officer, welcomed those in attendance and introduced the meeting. Mr. Moody spoke briefly about the community meeting process, investments in safe passage and introduced the note taker and court reporter. He ensured that all public comments would be recorded and submitted to the CEO for review. Mr. Moody provided briefly reviewed the contents of the packet of information that the attendees of the meeting received. Mr. Moody gave the time and location for the public hearing related to this action. He then opened the meeting for public comment.

Brief Summary:

The purpose of this meeting is to receive public comment on the proposal to close Altgeld Elementary in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-230. The speakers ranged from parents, students and teachers to community members and representatives from local organizations. CPS officials made a presentation regarding this proposal and then opened the meeting for public comment. There were about 29 community members in attendance and 11 speakers. The speaker comments focused on a variety of topics including:

- Concerns that Wentworth would lose its partnership with the Salvation Army if they relocated
- Concerns about students having to cross multiple busy streets
- Requests that CPS ensure students in the Altgeld facility receive hot lunches, as they currently do at Wentworth
- Concerns about students having to cross violent neighborhoods and gang lines to get to school
- Request that CPS not proceed with the closure of Altgeld
- Alderman Thomas voiced her opposition to this proposal. She described how CPS failed to take into consideration the special education populations of the school and how the schools use the classrooms. She is also concerned that CPS did not take into consideration the homeless population at the school. She contested the CPS space utilization standards, stating that it is important for schools in Englewood to provide wraparound services. She challenged that

Wentworth is a higher performing option for students. Alderman Thomas talked about her concern for students traveling through multiple gang territories. Lastly, she stated that this community has already had school closings and that further instability would be even more disruptive for students.

- Concern that Altgeld students will lose their valuable partnership with the Children's Home and Aid organization
- Testimonials about how well Altgeld has served its students, even in the face of significant challenges
- Community frustration that CPS is now considering making significant investment in the facilities, only when one of the schools is closing.
- Students discussing how important Altgeld has been to them
- Concern about the two communities coming together in order to create a strong partnership
- Challenges about CPS methodology in designating a higher performing option for students