

ORIGINAL

BOARD OF EDUCATION
CITY OF CHICAGO
PUBLIC HEARING
TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF
JOHN CALHOUN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

17:16:18

Tuesday, April 16, 2013
commencing at 5:30 p.m.

HON. CHERYL A. STARKS
HEARING OFFICER

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had in
the above-entitled matter at 125 South Clark
Street, Room 1550, Chicago, Illinois, commencing
at 5:30 o'clock p.m. HON. CHERYL A. STARKS,
Presiding.

CPS STAFF PRESENT:

MS. SUSAN O'KEEFE - Attorney

MR. PATRICK PAYNE - Portfolio Planner

MS. WANDA WASHINGTON - Chief of Schools for
Garfield Humboldt Elementary Network

17:48:18

Reported By: Karen Fatigato, CSR

License No.: 084-004072

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CPS No. 1

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Public No. 1

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1 (Whereupon, the following
2 proceedings commenced at
3 5:30 p.m.)

4 MS. O'KEEFE: Good afternoon, your
5 Honor, my name is Susan O'Keefe, I'm an attorney 17:32:38
6 in the Chicago Board of Education's Department
7 of Law. I am appearing before you today in
8 connection with the proposal of the Chief
9 Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools to
10 close John Calhoun Elementary School or Calhoun 17:32:50
11 and welcoming returning students at Willa Cather
12 Elementary School or Cather.

13 Before I begin, your Honor, I'd like to
14 point out that there is a Spanish interpreter
15 and a sign language interpreter available for 17:33:02
16 anyone who needs them.

17 HON. STARKS: Ma'am, please state your
18 name for the record.

19 SPANISH INTERPRETER: My name is
20 Aracely Galvan, A-r-a-c-e-l-y G-a-l-v-a-n. 17:33:14

21 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER: My name is
22 Diana Thorpe, sign language interpreter,
23 T-h-o-r-p-e.

24 MS. O'KEEFE: At this time, your Honor,

1 I would like to tender to you the CEO's compiled
2 Exhibit 1, a binder of documents being submitted
3 for your consideration in support of a proposal.

4 HON. STARKS: We'll receive that into
5 evidence. And the binder will be marked as CPS
6 Exhibit 1.

17:33:42

7 (Whereupon, CPS Exhibit
8 No. 1 was marked for
9 identification.)

10 MS. O'KEEFE: Your Honor, a copy of
11 this binder is also available here in the Board
12 conference room on the podium to my left for
13 public viewing.

17:33:58

14 The binder consists of documentary
15 evidence and written statements demonstrating
16 that the CEO's proposal complies with the
17 requirements of Illinois School Code and the
18 CEO's Guidelines for School Actions.
19 Specifically, the binder includes the following
20 documents and written statements:

17:34:08

21 At tab A, your Honor, the binder
22 includes notice letters to the parents and
23 guardians of students, school staff members and
24 Local School Council members at Calhoun and

17:34:20

1 Cather accompanied by draft transition plans.

2 HON. STARKS: Before you start let me
3 just by way of introduction for those
4 individuals who are not familiar with the
5 proceedings -- first of all, can you hear me?

17:34:42

6 THE AUDIENCE: No.

7 HON. STARKS: Can you hear me now?
8 That one works.

9 Just so you know just procedurally my
10 name, first of all, is Cheryl Starks and I'm the
11 hearing officer assigned to hear this matter.

17:35:06

12 And this is a matter regarding the proposed
13 closure of Calhoun School. And we have
14 representing CEO for the Chicago Public Schools
15 Ms. Susan O'Keefe who is an attorney with the
16 Chicago Public School Law Department.

17:35:18

17 The way this procedure will go, first
18 Ms. O'Keefe will present any evidence by way of
19 documents and testimony to the hearing officer,
20 after which you will be allowed as the public to
21 make your comments and your statements. Any
22 exhibits that you have you will then turn over
23 to the court reporter who will mark them as
24 exhibits as part of your statement after which

17:35:34

1 this proceeding will conclude at the end of two
2 hours, 7:30, or after everyone who has spoken
3 who has actually has signed up to speak has
4 spoken, that will be possibly -- I know we have
5 a long list of people here. You are also
6 limited to two minutes because we want everyone
7 to have a chance to speak who signed up and also
8 so if we cut you off we're not being rude or
9 insensitive, it's just that we have another
10 hearing scheduled and we want everyone to have a
11 chance to say something.

17:36:04

12 So at this time, Ms. O'Keefe, you may
13 proceed.

14 MS. O'KEEFE: Thank you, your Honor.

15 At tab A of Exhibit 1, as I indicated,
16 the binder indicates notice letters to the
17 parents and the school staff members and Local
18 School Council members at Calhoun and Cather
19 accompanied by the draft transition plan. The
20 letters and draft transition plan describe the
21 basis of the proposal. They explain how the
22 proposal meets the criteria of the guidelines.
23 They identify supports for student safety and
24 security, academics, social/emotional needs and

17:36:18

17:36:26

17:36:38

1 specific supports for students with disabilities
2 and students in temporary living situations, as
3 well as English language learners. These plans
4 also identify the student's options to enroll in
5 a higher performing school, and they provide
6 information on the choice of school and identify
7 transportation more practicable.

17:37:04

8 Also included in this tab A, your
9 Honor, are the newspaper publications and the
10 affidavits attesting to delivery notice via
11 either e-mail, personal delivery of these
12 letters and draft transition plans. They were
13 sent to elected officials via electronic mail.

17:37:16

14 Finally, tab A includes an affidavit
15 attesting to the proper publication of Draft
16 Guidelines for the School Actions by October
17 31st of 2012, the finalized Guidelines for
18 School Actions following the 21-day public
19 comment period, the list of qualified
20 independent hearing officers by November 1st,
21 2012. And in tab A it also includes evidence
22 that the proposals were published on or about
23 March 22nd, 2013, which was at least 15 calendar
24 days before the first community meeting, as well

17:37:32

17:37:44

1 as the summary from the April 9th community
2 meeting posted on or before April 14th, which
3 was in five days of the meeting as required.
4 Please note that the second community meeting
5 which took place on Saturday, April 13th, the
6 transcript is in the binder but the summary will
7 be posted on or before April 18th in line with
8 the School Code, and I will supplement the
9 record by sending you a copy of that summary and
10 an affidavit attesting to the proper publication
11 by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 19th.

17:38:12

17:38:26

12 HON. STARKS: So noted.

13 MS. O'KEEFE: At tab A (sic) of the
14 binder, your Honor, there are the Illinois
15 School Code Provisions designating the powers of
16 the Board and outlining the process for School
17 Action. This tab B also includes the Board's
18 policy on school performance, remediation and
19 probation for the 2011-2012 school year, as well
20 as the policy on review and establishment on
21 school attendance boundaries. Also included in
22 tab B are the Chicago Public Schools' Space
23 Utilization Standards and the CEO's Guidelines
24 for School Actions for the 2012-2013 school

17:38:36

17:38:52

1 year. Finally, tab B also includes the CEO's
2 procedures for public hearings on proposed
3 school closings.

4 At tab C, your Honor, the binder
5 includes the written evidence in support of the
6 CEO's proposal. Specifically, tab C contains
7 the transcripts from the two community meetings
8 that were done to elicit public comment that
9 were also held at a location convenient to
10 Calhoun and Cather School communities. Also
11 included in tab C is a summary from the
12 April 9th meeting. Again, I will supplement the
13 record by Friday, 5 p.m., with a summary from
14 the second community meeting. Tab C, your
15 Honor, also includes the written statement of
16 Patrick Payne and his accompanied presentation
17 demonstrating Calhoun's underutilization and the
18 space available at the Cather facility to
19 welcome students without exceeding its
20 enrollment efficiency range. Also included in
21 tab C is a map of the proposed attendance area
22 boundary change. Finally, in tab C we have the
23 written statement of Wanda Washington and
24 accompanying documents which demonstrate

17:39:18

17:39:32

17:39:44

17:39:58

1 Cather's status as a higher performing school
2 and outline the supports that will be offered to
3 students as they transition into Cather.

4 At this time, your Honor, I request
5 that the CEO's compiled Exhibit 1 be admitted
6 into the record.

17:40:24

7 HON. STARKS: Okay. The CPS compiled
8 Exhibit No. 1 will be admitted into evidence.

9 MS. O'KEEFE: Thank you, your Honor.

10 At this time I would like to introduce
11 the CEO's first representative, Patrick Payne,
12 who will make a statement in support of the
13 CEO's proposal.

17:40:38

14 HON. STARKS: Okay. Mr. Payne, is he
15 here? Please come forward.

17:40:50

16 MS. O'KEEFE: That's at tab 20, your
17 Honor.

18 MR. PAYNE: Good evening, your Honor.

19 HON. STARKS: Good evening.

20 MR. PAYNE: My name is Patrick Payne,
21 P-a-t-r-i-c-k, P-a-y-n-e, and I am a Portfolio
22 Planner for the Chicago Public Schools. I have
23 been in this position since March of 2012. As a
24 Portfolio Planner, I manage strategic planning

17:41:16

1 to improve the efficient utilization of CPS
2 facilities. Prior to becoming a Portfolio
3 Planner, I worked as an analyst for Wells Fargo
4 financial as a strategy consultant. I have a
5 Bachelor of Science from Drake University and a
6 Master's of Business Administration from the
7 University of Chicago, Booth School of Business.

19:24:40

8 I have been asked to appear at this
9 hearing today to convey to you, the parents and
10 the community, as well as interested members of
11 the public in attendance, information regarding
12 the space utilization of the Calhoun facility
13 with respect to the proposal to close Calhoun.

19:25:02

14 According to the Chief Executive
15 Officer's Guidelines for the 2012-2013 school
16 year, the CEO may propose to close a school if
17 it is underutilized based on CPS Space
18 Utilization Standards and student enrollment
19 numbers recorded on the 20th attendance day for
20 the 2012-2013 school year. The CEO may only
21 propose a closure if the impacted students have
22 the option to enroll in a higher performing
23 school and the resulting space utilization after
24 the closure will not exceed the facility's

19:25:24

19:25:44

1 enrollment efficiency range as defined by the
2 CPS Space Utilization Standards. I will discuss
3 the details regarding the space utilization of
4 this proposal, while my colleague, Wanda
5 Washington, will discuss the performance of the
6 welcoming school and highlight the supports
7 being offered in the draft transition plan.

19:26:14

8 Calhoun is currently located at 2833
9 West Adams Street. Calhoun is an elementary
10 school that, as of the 20th day of attendance
11 for the 2012-2013 school year, serves 314
12 students in prekindergarten and kindergarten
13 through 8th grades.

19:26:30

14 To understand the enrollment efficiency
15 range of a facility, Chicago Public Schools
16 utilizes its Space Utilization Standards, which
17 are located in your binder at tab 14.

19:26:46

18 The enrollment efficiency range is plus
19 or minus 20 percent of the facility's ideal
20 enrollment. For elementary school buildings,
21 the ideal enrollment is defined as the number of
22 allotted homerooms multiplied by 30. The number
23 of allotted homerooms is approximately 76 to 77
24 percent of the total classrooms available. As

19:27:06

1 an elementary school's enrollment increases
2 above the efficiency range, a school is
3 considered overcrowded as programming options
4 are reduced or compromised. As an elementary
5 school's enrollment decreases below the
6 efficiency range, a school is considered
7 underutilized as classrooms are unused or poorly
8 programmed, making the use of limited resources
9 less effective.

19:27:40

10 A typical elementary school facility
11 has a total of 39 classrooms. Therefore, the
12 number of allotted homerooms, approximately 76
13 to 77 percent of 39, is 30. Multiplying 30
14 allotted homerooms by 30 equals 900, the ideal
15 enrollment. Finally, the enrollment efficiency
16 range is plus or minus 20 percent of 900, which
17 is 720 to 1,080. If a school in this typical
18 elementary school facility had an enrollment
19 below 720, it would be considered underutilized.
20 Alternatively, if the school's enrollment was
21 above 1,080, it would be considered overcrowded.

19:27:58

19:28:18

19:28:52

22 There are 31 total classrooms within
23 the Calhoun facility. Approximately 76 to 77
24 percent of this number is 23, the number of

1 allotted homerooms. Twenty-three multiplied by
2 30 yields the ideal enrollment of the facility,
3 which is 690. As such, the enrollment
4 efficiency range of the Calhoun facility is
5 between 552 to 828.

19:29:30

6 As I stated, the enrollment of Calhoun,
7 as of the 20th day of attendance for the
8 2012-2013 school year, is 314. 314 is below the
9 enrollment efficiency range, and thus, the
10 school is underutilized.

19:29:50

11 The CEO has proposed that the students
12 from Calhoun be welcomed at Willa Cather
13 Elementary School, or Cather. If this proposal
14 is approved by the Board of Education for the
15 City of Chicago, the resulting space utilization
16 will not exceed Cather's enrollment efficiency
17 range as defined by the CPS Space Utilization
18 Standards.

19:30:12

19 Cather has 35 total classrooms.
20 Approximately 76 to 77 percent of this number is
21 26, the number of allotted homerooms. 26
22 multiplied by 30 yields the ideal enrollment of
23 the facility, which is 780. As such, the
24 enrollment efficiency range of the Cather

19:30:24

1 facility is between 624 and 936 students.

2 Cather currently has 237 students enrolled.

3 To fully explain the enrollment trend
4 associated with these schools, I would like to
5 direct your attention to the screen. Projected

19:31:04

6 is a slide that shows the enrollment trend of
7 Calhoun and Cather, the green hashed lines show
8 the enrollment efficiency range of the Cather
9 building and a circle representing the combined
10 projected enrollment for 2013-2014. Calhoun's
11 current enrollment of 314 students and Cather's
12 current enrollment of 237 students combines to a
13 total of 551 students is below the enrollment
14 efficiency range of the Cather facility.

19:31:24

15 Further, the projected enrollment of Calhoun for
16 the 2013-2014 school year is 331 and the
17 projected enrollment for Cather is 234 for a
18 total of 565 students, which is also below the
19 Cather efficiency range. Thus, there is enough
20 space within the Cather facility for the
21 students from Calhoun and students from Cather.

19:31:50

22 If Calhoun is closed, the CEO is also
23 proposing that Calhoun's attendance area be
24 reassigned to Cather at 2908 West Washington

19:32:12

1 Boulevard at the end of the current school year.
2 A map showing the proposed boundary change is
3 located in your binder at tab 22 and copies of
4 this map were available tonight at the
5 registration desk. In proposing this boundary
6 change, several factors were considered as
7 outlined in the Review and Establishment of
8 School Attendance Boundaries Policy, including,
9 but not limited to, the capacities of Calhoun
10 and Cather, geographic barriers, travel time,
11 distance traveled and program considerations.

19:32:50

19:33:14

12 You will next hear from my colleague,
13 Wanda Washington, who will discuss the
14 performance of Cather and highlight the proposed
15 transition efforts. Thank you, your Honor.
16 This concludes my statement.

19:33:30

17 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

18 MS. O'KEEFE: As Mr. Payne indicated
19 the CEO is now ready to introduce the next
20 representative, Wanda Washington, who will also
21 make a statement in support of this proposal.
22 This statement is located at tab 23.

17:47:52

23 MS. WASHINGTON: Good evening, your
24 Honor.

1 HON. STARKS: Good evening.

2 MS. WASHINGTON: My name is Wanda

3 Washington, W-a-n-d-a, W-a-s-h-i-n-g-t-o-n. I

4 am the Chief of Schools for the Chicago Public

5 Schools Garfield Humboldt Elementary Network.

17:48:22

6 Chicago Public Schools are divided up into

7 networks. Network offices are run by a chief

8 and provide support and oversight for the

9 schools assigned to them on behalf of the CEO.

10 Cather is within the Garfield Humboldt

19:11:08

11 Elementary Network, and I am responsible for the

12 support and oversight of Cather on behalf of the

13 CEO. I have been the Chief of Cather since

14 September 27, 2012.

15 By way of background, I have been with

19:11:30

16 the Chicago Public Schools for over 20 years as

17 a teacher, assistant principal and manager. For

18 the last six years I have had executive-level

19 responsibility for multiple schools. In

20 September of 2012, after serving as the Deputy

19:11:58

21 Chief, I became the Chief of Schools for the

22 Garfield Humboldt Network. In this role I

23 supervise and provide strategic guidance for 24

24 schools in the area of instructional practices

1 in the classroom and professional development
2 for the teaching staff. I have a Bachelor's in
3 mass communications from Illinois State
4 University and a Master's in educational
5 leadership from Concordia University.

19:13:10

6 As you have already heard, Calhoun fits
7 the criteria of the Chief Executive Officer's
8 Guidelines for School Actions because it is
9 underutilized based on CPS Space Utilization
10 Standards and student enrollment numbers
11 recorded on the 20th attendance day of the
12 2012-2013 school year. Calhoun students will be
13 welcomed by Cather, located at 2908 West
14 Washington Boulevard. The facility at 2908 West
15 Washington Boulevard has enough space to welcome
16 the Calhoun students and the resulting combined
17 enrollment will not exceed the facility's
18 enrollment efficiency range.

19:13:30

19:13:52

19 When Calhoun students are welcomed by
20 the Cather administration, staff and students,
21 they will be attending a higher performing
22 school based on the CEO's Guidelines for School
23 Actions. One way the CEO's Guidelines for
24 School Actions define a higher performing school

19:14:16

1 is if a school received a higher level on the
2 Performance Policy for the 2011-2012 school
3 year. Under the CPS Performance Policy, located
4 in your binder at tab 12, each school receives
5 an annual rating based on its performance on a
6 variety of student outcome measures, including
7 standardized test scores and student attendance.
8 District-wide schools designated at Level 1 are
9 the highest performing. And schools designated
10 Level 3 are the lowest performing. Calhoun
11 received a Level 2 rating based on its
12 performance during the 2011-12 school year,
13 while Cather received a Level 1 rating. The
14 Performance Policy reports reflecting these
15 levels are included in the binder of documents
16 that you have received at tab 24. Please note
17 that the Performance Policy ratings from the
18 2011-12 school year appear under the 2012-2013
19 header on these reports as these ratings are
20 used to determine each school's accountability
21 status for the 2012-2013 school year.

19:14:54

19:15:30

19:15:50

19:16:12

22 If this proposal is approved, students
23 will receive additional supports at Calhoun
24 during the remainder of this school year and at

20

1 Cather next year, and the Network will provide
2 assistance to ease the transition process as
3 much as possible. CPS has developed a plan
4 dedicating additional resources to address any
5 safety concerns and to fulfill students'
6 academic, social and emotional and other
7 individual needs. The draft transition plan,
8 explaining these additional resources, was sent
9 home to all families affected by this proposal
10 and is located in your binder at tab 1. CPS
11 will publish final transition plans, if the
12 Board approves this proposal, which will
13 incorporate feedback from the community
14 meetings, this hearing and additional input
15 received.

19:16:40

19:16:56

19:17:20

16 The CPS Office of Safety and Security,
17 or OSS, has worked with the Chicago Police
18 Department, Department of Family and Support
19 Services, local community groups and faith
20 partners, elected officials and other sister
21 agencies to develop a plan for the safe
22 transition of students. If this proposal is
23 approved, OSS will take the following steps:

19:17:40

24 First, OSS will review and update

1 school safety audits, security personnel
2 allocations and school safety technology systems
3 to make enhancements as appropriate.

4 Second, OSS will be available to
5 address specific safety concerns raised by
6 students and staff.

19:18:18

7 Third, OSS will provide Safe Passage
8 supports for students and staff traveling to and
9 from school. Safe Passage workers wear
10 identifiable vests and stand on designated
11 street corners to monitor students' safety
12 during their travel to school in the morning and
13 home in the afternoon. Prior to the start of
14 the 2013 school year -- 2013-2014 school year,
15 OSS will work with the Cather administration and
16 the community to designate specific
17 intersections for Safe Passage supports.

19:18:32

19:18:50

18 Additionally, students will receive
19 academic supports as they transition, including
20 the following:

19:19:04

21 First, a Principal Transition
22 Coordinator, or PTC, will be assigned to help
23 the principal of Calhoun maintain academic rigor
24 for the remainder of the school year and ensure

1 a smooth transition to Cather. PTCs are former
2 principals or other administrators with
3 significant experience who will be a resource
4 for the administration and ensure continuity of
5 support for the faculty and students.

19:19:36

6 Second, the Cather administration will
7 receive comprehensive, student-specific data on
8 all transitioning students to allow staff to
9 proactively identify individual student needs
10 and prepare to meet those needs.

19:19:54

11 Third, I will set aside dedicated time
12 to hold office hours and will welcome families
13 and students affected by this action to discuss
14 concerns and educational options. I will hold
15 dedicated office hours on Wednesdays, May 1st,
16 May 8th and May 15th between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
17 at 2908 West Washington.

19:20:10

18 Fourth, the principals will receive
19 discretionary resources to provide direct
20 academic support to students. For example,
21 these funds may be used to provide an
22 instructional coach, teacher leader or to obtain
23 an academic tutoring position or program for
24 students in reading and math. I will support

19:20:32

1 the principals as they consider how to use these
2 resources and approve their selections once
3 decisions are made.

4 When Calhoun students are welcomed --
5 students will also receive social and emotional
6 supports to help them adjust to a new school
7 environment, including the following:

19:21:00

8 First, CPS will help school staff
9 members facilitate intervention groups or peace
10 circles aimed at helping students work through
11 concerns associated with the transition.

19:21:18

12 Second, CPS will help staff members
13 implement restorative practices, such as peer
14 circles and peer juries, to encourage
15 peer-to-peer problem solving and resolution.

19:21:42

16 Third, groups of students in need of
17 more individualized attention will be provided
18 with access to highly structured interventions.

19 Fourth, to foster an environment that
20 is both supportive and inclusive for all
21 students, CPS will provide resources to the
22 Cather leadership to implement culture-building
23 activities, such as, staff luncheons and team-
24 and trust-building activities. Resources will

19:21:56

1 also be provided to sponsor activities such as
2 school visits for families, coffee chats with
3 the principal, picnics, field trips or parent
4 meetings to help transitioning families to get
5 to know their new school.

19:22:34

6 Finally, additional transition supports
7 will be provided to ensure that Calhoun students
8 who have unique needs or circumstances are
9 adequately supported in this transition,
10 including students with diverse learning needs,
11 students in temporary living situations, English
12 language learners and early childhood
13 participants. These additional supports are
14 described in more detail in the draft transition
15 plan located in your binder at tab 1.

19:22:58

19:23:14

16 In conclusion, Calhoun is
17 underutilized. The combined enrollment of
18 Calhoun and Cather students at the 2908 West
19 Washington Boulevard facility will not exceed
20 the facility's enrollment efficiency range and
21 Cather is a higher performing school. The CEO
22 believes that this proposed school closure will
23 help the District better serve all students and
24 is prepared to assist students with additional

19:23:32

1 supports as they transition.

2 Thank you for your time and attention.

3 This concludes my statement.

4 HON. STARKS: Okay. Ms. Washington, I
5 do have one question. Do you have the numbers
6 in terms of what the actual enrollment was past
7 the 20th day of attendance, even though I know
8 that you used the 20th day as a marking point,
9 what is the subsequent enrollment?

17:58:08

10 MS. WASHINGTON: I do not have that at
11 this time, your Honor, but I will make sure that
12 we get that information for you.

17:58:26

13 HON. STARKS: Okay. And get that for
14 Cather as well.

15 MS. WASHINGTON: Cather.

17:58:38

16 HON. STARKS: Cather, yes. Thank you.

17 MS. O'KEEFE: Your Honor, this
18 concludes the presentation support of the CEO's
19 proposal, if you have any additional questions
20 we will be available to answer them. Thank you
21 for your time and attention.

17:58:48

22 HON. STARKS: Okay, thank you,
23 Ms. O'Keefe.

24 Now, at this time, ladies and

1 gentlemen, we will open up the hearing to the
2 general public, and I understand that we have
3 Alderman --

4 ALDERMAN FIORETTI: Fioretti.

5 HON. STARKS: Fioretti. Please take
6 the stand.

7 ALDERMAN FIORETTI: Leslie, can you
8 give a copy of this to the court reporter?

9 (Whereupon, Public Exhibit
10 No. 1 was marked for
11 identification.)

12 ALDERMAN FIORETTI: Thank you, Madam
13 Hearing Officer and members of the Board and, of
14 course, the people and folks from Calhoun North.

15 I believe -- my name is Alderman Bob Fioretti,
16 2nd Ward, City of Chicago. I believe closing
17 Calhoun North would be a mistake. CPS is
18 severely limiting its ability to serve students
19 in the Rockwell CHA area. CPS is proposing to
20 close Calhoun North, the neighborhood school
21 that serves the Rockwell CHA redevelopment area.
22 This mixed income redevelopment has new housing
23 that currently houses 300 children in the
24 Calhoun North attendance boundary and within 18

17:59:06

18:00:12

18:00:30

1 months an additional 76 students will be added.
2 There are plans for additional phases to be
3 built in the near future. CPS is proposing to
4 close four grammar schools adjacent to the
5 Rockwell area Calhoun North, Dodge, Dett and
6 King. By closing Calhoun North and the rest of
7 these schools CPS would be limiting its ability
8 to serve the students who live in the area who
9 would be moving -- and who would be moving into
10 this area.

18:01:04

18:01:20

11 CHA has demolished many of the social
12 service buildings within the Calhoun North
13 boundary. The Head Start Program that was at
14 Western and Adams demolished to accommodate the
15 Jesse White facility that was ultimately located
16 elsewhere and Marcy Newberry, among others.
17 Calhoun North now provides many of those
18 services. In a recent survey conducted by CHA,
19 the number one request of Rockwell residents was
20 to have additional safe indoor recreation
21 facilities and programs. Calhoun North is
22 helping to provide these services to the
23 community. CPS needs to support the Rockwell
24 development rather than undermining it by

18:01:34

18:01:52

1 closing Calhoun and these other schools that
2 serve the area.

3 Calhoun North has quality programs and
4 performance. Calhoun North has achieved major
5 increases in test scores over the last few
6 years. It has a Head Start Program, computers
7 for every student, a high-quality principal and
8 strong community support. These are all key
9 elements that the University of Chicago
10 Consortium on Chicago School Research has
11 identified as the basis of a strong school. By
12 closing Calhoun North, CPS would eliminate this
13 highly successful school and there is no way to
14 estimate whether this school community would be
15 maintained or improved by Cather. The principal
16 of Cather may be retiring at the end of this
17 school year. If moving Calhoun North to Cather
18 is predicated in large part on improving test
19 scores or at least not reducing the quality of
20 the educational experience, then this throws the
21 basis of this move into serious question.

22 LEARN Charter is proposing to move to
23 another facility. LEARN charter was established
24 across the street from Calhoun North in Marillac

18:02:28

18:02:46

18:03:06

18:03:26

1 House just a few years ago. This has split some
2 of the students that have been attending Calhoun
3 North between the schools. However, LEARN is in
4 a facility that is becoming overcrowded and has
5 facilities that are inferior to Calhoun North.
6 LEARN has no auditorium or outdoor playground.
7 LEARN officials have discussed the idea of
8 moving out of their current facility. CPS
9 typically allows charters to choose their own
10 location so there is no way to determine whether
11 LEARN will continue to use Marillac House or
12 will move to another neighborhood. LEARN is a
13 Tier 3 school, and Calhoun North is almost a
14 Tier 1 school. If CPS is closing Calhoun North,
15 assuming that LEARN will continue to serve this
16 neighborhood, there is no basis for this
17 assumption.

18:04:02

18:04:20

18:04:40

18 The proposed Cather boundary bisects a
19 major gang boundary. And I want to just -- I'm
20 going to off my prepared remarks for a few
21 moments to discuss what I've always witnessed,
22 but in the last three weeks I drove the area
23 many times between 7 in the morning and 8:30 and
24 in the late afternoon when school is out and the

18:05:00

1 early evening. The proposed Cather boundary
2 would require many Calhoun North students and
3 their families to travel to school going across
4 Madison, a major gang boundary.

5 I also must point out that Wilcox and
6 Francisco, despite all the efforts that I've
7 tried to do and work with the Chicago Police
8 Department, is a major distribution of heroin in
9 the City of Chicago. This is a dangerous
10 situation and CPS has provided no plan to
11 protect Calhoun North children and families.

12 CPS is not proposing to provide any bus service
13 to protect the Calhoun North children and bus
14 service would not protect the families going to
15 and from Cather. If families are unwilling to
16 cross that boundary then Cather can never become
17 a strong major -- a strong community center that
18 Calhoun North is for the neighborhood.

19 I would also like to point out that
20 almost kitty-corner from Cather on the 2700
21 block of West Washington is a hotel that we have
22 been trying to close because it is not a hotel
23 that somebody stays there overnight.

24 I also want to point out that Cather is

18:05:32

18:05:48

18:06:04

18:06:26

1 not a secure facility. Oh, and by the way,
2 there was extensive testimony before the City
3 Council about giving a license to that hotel,
4 the Hotel Paris because of the short hours, two
5 hours and four hours, the residents and churches
6 in the area testified against giving a sign and
7 a canopy there.

18:07:00

8 Cather is not a secure facility.
9 Cather has experienced multiple break-ins, five
10 over Christmas 2012 holidays alone. These
11 break-ins targeted the computers at Cather and
12 it took months for CPS to do the security
13 repairs being requested by me and the principal
14 at Cather. The students at Cather only had a
15 few computers to utilize to take their tests
16 this year. The CPS promise to put a computer
17 lab in Cather would only partially reproduce
18 what all the students have at Calhoun North,
19 their own computers. It is not clear that CPS
20 has resolved the security issues at Cather.

18:07:18

18:07:36

18:07:58

21 Cather has an unfinished campus.
22 Cather was supposed to have a new playground and
23 a campus constructed years ago. However, I was
24 informed that the project was started but the

1 contractor failed to finish the job and
2 absconded with construction funds and the
3 project was never finished. Calhoun North has
4 high-quality playground and facilities. CPS has
5 made no proposal to finish the work that was
6 abandoned at Cather.

18:08:26

7 The Calhoun North area needs safe
8 indoor recreation options. Over four years ago
9 the Chicago Park District closed the field house
10 in Touhy Herbert Park, the one facility serving
11 the area around Calhoun North. Closing Calhoun
12 north would remove one of these key facilities
13 that takes the place of facilities that have not
14 been provided by the Chicago Park District in
15 this area. I have asked schools in the Calhoun
16 North to cooperate in supporting this need for
17 recreation facilities like after school programs
18 open to the community and an open gym. This is
19 still in the process and Chicago Park District
20 has not yet taken any steps to replace Touhy
21 Herbert.

18:08:42

18:08:58

18:09:16

22 CPS needs to maintain Calhoun North to
23 continue to serve this growing and needy vibrant
24 neighborhood. Thank you.

1 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

2 Linda Johnson-McClinton, principal,
3 please take the podium.

4 PRINCIPAL JOHNSON-McCLINTON: Good
5 afternoon, your Honor, guests. My name is Linda
6 Johnson-McClinton, and I am the principal at
7 Calhoun North Elementary School. I would like
8 to submit this binder as evidence to refer to,
9 if that's okay.

10 HON. STARKS: Yes, you may give it to
11 the court reporter, and it will be marked as
12 Public Exhibit No. 2.

13 (Whereupon, Public Exhibit
14 No. 2 was marked for
15 identification.)

16 HON. STARKS: You may proceed.

17 PRINCIPAL JOHNSON-McCLINTON: Thank
18 you. I've been at Calhoun North for the past
19 three years as an administrator. I worked as
20 the assistant principal and this year I'm the
21 current principal. During that time I've been a
22 part of the educational process at Calhoun North
23 where we've been moving our students from good
24 to great.

18:09:54

18:10:26

18:10:32

1 I want to cite something that's in tab
2 4 of our binder that refers to the Apples to
3 Apples Comparison. It was an article that was
4 written December 2012.

5 HON. STARKS: Give me one second.

18:10:48

6 PRINCIPAL JOHNSON-McCLINTON: That
7 would be the last tab, your Honor.

8 HON. STARKS: You may proceed.

9 PRINCIPAL JOHNSON-McCLINTON: Thank
10 you.

18:11:08

11 The Apples to Apples release
12 underutilized CPS elementary schools
13 overestimated by 24 percent. This was written
14 December 2012. I'm just going to pull a quote
15 from it. As a result the current formula
16 calculates a much higher number of underutilized
17 schools than what actually exist based on class
18 size recommendations. Using the CPS utilization
19 formula to determine school closures there are
20 several Level 1 high performing and gifted
21 schools that were considered underutilized in
22 2011, which includes Calhoun North Elementary
23 School. That's pulled straight from that
24 article. It also states, what this tells us is

18:11:18

18:11:32

1 that underutilization alone is not a good
2 indicator as to whether a school should be
3 slated for closure.

4 Calhoun North has had a decrease -- I'm
5 sorry, does that include the pause?

18:12:00

6 Calhoun North has had a decrease in our
7 population over time since 2006 so, therefore,
8 we do not have every room as a homeroom, but we
9 do have every room utilized for instructional
10 purposes, which includes our Push In and Pull
11 Out Program. Because of that since 2006 we have
12 made astronomical gains on our ISAT scores,
13 which includes us as this past year being 82
14 percent for our meets and exceeds category,
15 which is over what the State and District
16 average is. Because we are a math, science and
17 technology school we use these rooms to support
18 all of the initiatives that are given to us by
19 Chicago Public Schools and as a result we have
20 been able to not only obtain high test scores
21 but maintain them over time. Thank you.

18:12:14

18:12:28

18:12:46

22 HON. STARKS: Before you go I have a
23 question. Do you know what your enrollment was
24 for after the 20th day?

1 PRINCIPAL JOHNSON-McCLINTON: After the
2 20th day our numbers did get as high as 332.
3 HON. STARKS: All right. Thank you.
4 Michael Charles Walker from Renaissance
5 Learning Center. He's not here. 18:13:18
6 David Montgomery. You're a Calhoun
7 teacher.
8 MR. MONTGOMERY: Yes. Good evening,
9 your Honor.
10 HON. STARKS: Good evening. 18:13:36
11 MR. MONTGOMERY: I'm also our school's
12 data analyst.
13 HON. STARKS: Okay.
14 MR. MONTGOMERY: I am going to be
15 referring to the binder as well. 18:13:40
16 HON. STARKS: Okay.
17 MR. MONTGOMERY: I wanted to speak
18 today to reinforce the idea that Calhoun should
19 not
20 be -- should be removed from the closing list 18:13:48
21 and it should remain open at its current
22 location.
23 I wanted to talk briefly about the
24 Performance Policy review that was mentioned.

1 It's on Page 3 in the -- what I wanted to look
2 at was Page 3 in that Performance Policy tab and
3 the concern with how they calculated our current
4 Performance Policy.

5 Last year during the ISATs, during the
6 middle of the ISATs on the 8th of March, we had
7 a student enter our school who took two of the
8 three tests for the ISAT test, that means he
9 received zero days of instruction from us before
10 taking the test. Now, one of his scores, his
11 ISAT science score, which can be found on the
12 following pages, his ID number and score -- and
13 performances have been highlighted, he scored a
14 warning level on his science ISAT test. Now, if
15 his science ISAT score is taken out due to
16 receiving zero days of instruction from us, our
17 numbers become rather drastically different.
18 Our ISAT meets -- science meets and exceeds
19 score jumps to an 81.4 for the 2012 school year,
20 which means our current status jumps up to an
21 80.2, which according to the Performance Policy
22 says that we earn three points instead of two
23 points, that extra point if you look near the
24 bottom of that page gives us 30 out of 42 points

18:14:14

18:14:28

18:14:46

18:15:08

1 for a 71.4 percentage, which makes our school a
2 Level 1 school at that point.

3 This is one student who has received --
4 who entered our school during the middle of
5 ISATs, not midyear as was stated on the note
6 section from our previous community meeting, but
7 middle of ISAT, not midyear; and whose ISAT
8 score has caused us to be down one point into
9 that Level 2 instead of at a Level 1 school,
10 which according to our CEO means that our school
11 is off the closing list.

18:15:38

18:15:56

12 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

13 MR. MONTGOMERY: Thank you.

14 HON. STARKS: Angela Northrup.

15 MS. NORTHROP: Good evening, your
16 Honor.

18:16:26

17 HON. STARKS: Good evening.

18 MS. NORTHROP: I'm here to speak on
19 behalf of Calhoun. I'm a PE teacher there.
20 I've been there for ten years. First of all,
21 Calhoun should be removed from the closing list.
22 Second of all, we need to remain open at our
23 current location.

18:16:34

24 I'm going to talk to you about the

1 walking route between Calhoun and Cather. The
2 distance between the schools is a half a mile,
3 the most direct route is up Francisco. Along
4 this route our children cross the major streets
5 of Madison, Warren and Washington. At this time
6 Madison has one crossing guard for four lanes of
7 traffic. Warren has a stop sign and no crossing
8 guard. And Washington has one crossing guard.
9 There's no traffic lights along that route and
10 I'd like to know how long it is before one of
11 our children get hit by a car?

18:16:54

18:17:10

12 The other things I noticed along the
13 route were several empty lots with broken glass
14 and trash. I personally counted 11 empty lots,
15 but there were actually 88 empty lots in the
16 half-mile route from the school to the school.
17 We turned this information in on a binder last
18 Tuesday at our previous meeting and it details
19 all of the addresses of the empty lots. It also
20 details that they're City owned.

18:17:24

18:17:40

21 HON. STARKS: Would you like to submit
22 your binder as an exhibit?

23 MS. NORTHROP: The binder was turned in
24 on last Tuesday, however, I have a copy of it

40

1 here and I can give it to you.

2 HON. STARKS: Okay.

3 (Whereupon, Public Exhibit

4 No. 3 was marked for

5 identification.)

18:17:54

6 MS. NORTHROP: Within two blocks of
7 that walking route there were 51 additional
8 empty lots also owned by the City. Generally in
9 the mornings the lots are pretty empty. In the
10 afternoons as the children leave school the lots
11 are occupied by men drinking out of paper bags,
12 smoking cigarettes and dropping more trash.
13 Along this route also lives 65 convicted sex
14 offenders, 63 of them are pedophiles. How many
15 of these 63 pedophiles are hanging out in these
16 empty lots waiting for our students to walk by?
17 How many of them are living in the hotel across
18 the street from Cather that Mr. Fioretti
19 mentioned?

18:18:14

18:18:30

20 At our previous meetings we've also
21 expressed grave concern about the gangs in the
22 area. Madison is a line between gang
23 territories, closing Calhoun will force our
24 students to enter rival gang territory to get to

18:18:42

1 school. Though our elementary school children
2 are not directly affiliated with any gangs, some
3 of their older siblings and parents are and many
4 of them are coming from Marshall and Crane High
5 Schools to pick up younger brothers and sisters,
6 it's only a matter of time before one of our
7 children are killed in the violence that will
8 occur.

18:19:06

9 I'll close tonight with questions many
10 of us have.

18:19:18

11 Number 1: How is CPS going to keep our
12 children safe?

13 Number 2: Why is CPS closing a high
14 performing school?

15 Number 3: Why does the City of Chicago
16 own all the empty lots around Calhoun and
17 Cather, yet they do nothing with them?

18:19:28

18 And finally, number 4: How can you
19 expect to have better educated children by
20 stuffing 30 or more into every classroom?

18:19:40

21 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

22 Sasha Preble.

23 MS. PREBLE: I'm not speaking.

24 HON. STARKS: Okay, you're not

42

1 speaking.

2 Beverly Hickerson, are you speaking?

3 Valerie Miles. Shontil Sanders. Joan Lowe.

4 MS. LOWE: Here.

5 HON. STARKS: Jamica Brown. 18:20:14

6 Joan Lowe?

7 MS. LOWE: Yes.

8 HON. STARKS: You're speaking.

9 MS. LOWE: My name is Joan Lowe. I

10 used to go to Calhoun. I started Calhoun in the 18:20:20

11 4th grade and I went to 8th grade. And when I

12 heard that Calhoun was closing it really hurt my

13 feelings because it's been in our community for

14 a while. CPS, I don't know what you guys are

15 doing. You are constantly messing with our 18:20:36

16 schools trying to close us up. If you promised

17 a charter school a school, you guys, I said this

18 once before when you guys tried to close Tilton,

19 if you promised them a school, get them a

20 building, build them a building, leave our 18:20:52

21 schools alone please because you guys haven't

22 walked a mile in our shoes at all. You don't

23 live in our hood, you all don't know what's

24 going on. You all don't know what our kids have

1 to walk through, what they have to go through,
2 kids be bullied going to other schools. Leave
3 our schools alone.

4 HON. STARKS: Carolyn McGee. Wesley
5 Penn. Yes, please step up, Mr. Penn.

18:21:32

6 MR. PENN: Good evening, everyone, my
7 name is Wesley Penn, I'm employed at Calhoun
8 North Elementary. And I would first like to
9 start out by saying we'd like to see Calhoun
10 removed from the close list.

18:21:58

11 Second, I would like to say that
12 Calhoun should be remained open at our current
13 site location. I'd like to think that this was
14 an open process, that no decisions have been
15 made, but coming here today it seems like a
16 decision has already been made that
17 reinforced -- here recently we've had people
18 come into the building, already started the
19 inventory. And we've been told that nothing has
20 been official but, you know, the outcome that
21 we're receiving is a decision has already been
22 made. So I truly hope this is an open process
23 and that if some information which has been
24 presented and reviewed and has come back, you

18:22:12

18:22:28

1 know, favorable that it would be reconsidered
2 and keep Calhoun open.

3 I think the information that had come
4 out about usage has been vague and ambiguous at
5 best. To talk about usage between Calhoun and
6 Cather is difficult for us to understand because
7 we all know as the Calhoun family Cather had an
8 entire charter school occupying its whole second
9 floor just a few years ago, the same area where
10 the Network Office occupies right now. And they
11 seem to appear to be more utilized than we are?
12 We don't think so at all.

18:22:56

18:23:14

13 In talking about performance, the
14 performance shows just last year. Data records
15 show eight, nine, ten years of Calhoun has
16 outperformed not only Cather but other schools
17 in our Network area as well as those on the list
18 to close as well as those that are to receive
19 students. Please look at the records, look at
20 the data. Calhoun has been performing wonderful
21 for year after year after year. Thank you.

18:23:34

18:23:50

22 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

23 Tshenna Finley. Pamela Shephard.

24 Jacklyn Dale. Victoria Aguirre. Some of these

1 names are indicated not speaking, but I'm
2 calling them for the record indicating that they
3 did sign up.

4 Victoria Aguirre. JR. Linda Lewis.

5 STUDENT A: Good evening, everyone. 18:24:58

6 HON. STARKS: Good evening.

7 STUDENT A: My name is JR, I'm a 1st
8 grader at Calhoun Elementary. I love the
9 principals and my teacher. Please don't close
10 my school because Calhoun has helped my mom with 18:25:10
11 my brother and I. I love my school.

12 HON. STARKS: Linda Lewis. I think
13 this is Carl (sic) Rohe.

14 MS. ROHE: Cari Rohe.

15 HON. STARKS: Cari, sorry. 18:25:38
16 You may proceed.

17 MS. ROHE: Good evening, over the last
18 few weeks -- your Honor, I'm actually referring
19 to the closing and welcoming tab in the binder,
20 it says closing/welcoming comparison tab. Over 18:25:58
21 the last few weeks we've presented Mr. Anderson
22 and Mr. Babbitz of CPS with lots of data and
23 documentation that Calhoun is the higher
24 performing school. We made the front page of

1 the Chicago Tribune last Friday because CPS
2 keeps stating that we are going to a better
3 performing school, yet we have consistently
4 outscored them on the ISAT each year and you can
5 see that data in the binder.

18:26:24

6 We have made annual yearly progress
7 three out of the five last years in which Cather
8 has never accomplished not once since NCLB
9 started almost ten years ago. Cather is on
10 academic watch by the State standards, meanwhile
11 Calhoun is a fully recognized school by the
12 State and is in compliance with all State and
13 Federal mandates. Cather, on the other hand,
14 has been in school improvement status for 13
15 years.

18:26:40

18:26:54

16 But the real reason we are standing
17 here today is because CPS has been waiting for
18 the opportunity to give our building to LEARN
19 Charter, otherwise when all the Level 1 and,
20 quote, unquote, on the rise schools were looked
21 at to come off the list, we would have come off.
22 We missed Level 1 status by three tenths of a
23 point, how much closer can we get? When schools
24 are being looked at to close and when you are

18:27:06

1 going to change the lives of everyone in that
2 building data should have been gone through with
3 a fine tooth comb.

4 Calhoun is everything the District
5 wants a school to be. We have high academics 18:27:28
6 and are fully recognized by the State of
7 Illinois. We deserve a better option than
8 closure. Our success speaks for itself and the
9 right thing to do is to keep our school open for
10 another year until the District can create an 18:27:42
11 action plan that allows us to continue to
12 educate our children. As parents and educators
13 we try to teach our children that hard work and
14 determination pays off. To close our school
15 after all the hard work our students have put in 18:27:54
16 goes against the values we have tried to instill
17 in them.

18 The Board knows right from wrong,
19 closing our doors for the mere reason that a
20 charter school wants our building is wrong. Do 18:28:04
21 the right thing, keep Calhoun open and renew our
22 faith in CPS.

23 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

24 Danielle Ranieri.

1 MS. RANIERI: Good evening, everyone,
2 my name is Danielle Ranieri, and I'm here to
3 talk a little bit about special education at
4 Calhoun. We have a very high performing special
5 ed program. We have all types of disabilities
6 and all levels of students. Our staff works
7 very hard and it's shown by our ISAT scores just
8 of special ed.

18:28:38

9 We took apart some of the data and
10 found that on average 60 percent of our students
11 met or exceeded the reading portion in special
12 ed, and 81 percent met or exceeded the math
13 portion. On average our special ed students
14 were higher than the District in State average
15 on the math portion of the ISAT.

18:28:50

16 Our students already attend a higher
17 performing school. Higher performing is data,
18 our data is higher than their's. Not only that,
19 but we have the resources that CPS talks about
20 putting in the welcoming school. They talk
21 about putting in computer labs and a library, we
22 have that. We have two computer labs, laptops
23 for all of our students, two science labs where
24 we have plenty of experiments going on and

18:29:04

18:29:22

1 hands-on activities, a library, a separate
2 cafeteria, gym and auditorium, none of that is
3 considered in the utilization that CPS has to
4 offer. They want to put money in instead in
5 these other buildings to give the same thing
6 that we already have.

18:29:48

7 Not only that, but what I just heard,
8 30 students in a classroom, anyone who knows
9 anything about special ed knows there cannot be
10 30 special ed students in a classroom, that's
11 illegal. So obviously CPS does not consider
12 these students in special ed.

18:30:00

13 To put it simply, our students are at a
14 high performing school. They have the resources
15 they need, and we utilize our building. Thank
16 you.

18:30:14

17 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

18 Geraldine Young.

19 MS. YOUNG: My name is Geraldine Young,
20 and I'm a community person. I have a
21 13-year-old that attend Calhoun North. And I
22 have questions. Only thing I want to know, how
23 do you improve on perfection? All these known
24 that you have set, we have met. We don't want a

18:30:36

1 new school, we want Calhoun. We don't need a
2 new school, we want Calhoun.

3 Now, I worked for the Alderman in that
4 area for a long time, and I do know the 13th
5 District Police Station is across Washington,
6 and Madison Street is on this side. If it's not
7 a major crime, if you call the police at the
8 school the 13th District will come, but if you
9 cross over Madison Street you got to call the
10 11th District. And what could happen to our
11 kids in that District? We don't want another
12 school. How can we improve on perfection? We
13 want Calhoun. Leave Calhoun open.

14 HON. STARKS: Cheryl Burton-West.

15 MS. BURTON-WEST: I made a promise to
16 everybody I wasn't going to cry.

17 I just wanted to mention a couple of
18 things. One is in the formula that CPS is using
19 for underutilization, what I don't understand is
20 if we have four special education classrooms and
21 the students in those classrooms are assigned to
22 a specific teacher that they report to every day
23 that's their homeroom and that teacher takes
24 attendance for those students, why are those

18:31:06

18:31:22

18:31:52

18:32:06

1 classrooms not considered homerooms used in the
2 formula? When we did our research on utilizing
3 classrooms and then we added the preschool in,
4 which is a Head Start Program, we found that we
5 were 88 percent utilized. So I guess we're
6 confused about why those classrooms aren't used
7 in the formula for determining how many
8 homerooms there are in the school.

18:32:38

9 I want to talk about academic rigor and
10 I want to talk about children being college
11 bound, and I'm going to talk until your heart
12 stings because I'm going to show you a picture
13 of one of my students. And he wants to go to
14 UIC. We have a partner in Marillac House, and
15 when they found out that our classroom is
16 representing UIC within our building they took
17 the kids to one of the Chicago Flames games. So
18 I'm going to submit a picture of Dwayne.

18:32:52

19 HON. STARKS: If you can mark this as
20 Public Exhibit 4.

18:33:04

21 (Whereupon, Public Exhibit
22 No. 4 was marked for
23 identification.)

24 MS. BURTON-WEST: He wants to be a

52

1 dentist because Mark Drennan (phonetic) for our
2 classroom went to UIC to become a dentist.

3 I'm going to read something from the
4 Chicago Tribune to you. We were featured on
5 Page 1, but I'm going to read something to you
6 from Page 6. It says that for schools to make a
7 difference when you're moving you need to be in
8 the upper 25 percent of performance. We're
9 already there so it doesn't make sense for us as
10 to why Level 3 schools are remaining open and
11 we're almost a Level 1 school but because of one
12 student we're not and we could be a receiving
13 school and make a difference in children's
14 lives. I'll submit the article to you. And
15 there was a study done at University of Chicago
16 that will corroborate this idea that you need to
17 move from one school to a school that's
18 significantly higher in performance to make a
19 difference in the grades the children receive.

20 (Whereupon, Public Exhibit
21 No. 5 was marked for
22 identification.)

23 HON. STARKS: Marshetta Ross.

24 MS. ROSS: Good afternoon, my name is

18:33:50

18:34:08

18:34:24

18:34:36

1 Marshetta Ross, I am an alumni of Calhoun North.
2 I attended Calhoun for seven years. I was an
3 honor roll student there, perfect attendance and
4 at the time when I attended Calhoun it was not
5 so -- such a highly performing school, but it
6 has always been a great school.

18:35:36

7 Now, my children attend Calhoun North.
8 I have a disabled child, Marquill Ross, he has
9 cerebral palsy, he also has asthma. Before he
10 even attended school, Calhoun, they didn't even
11 accept disabled children, but I went into that
12 building and I gave them my story and I asked
13 them to give my child a chance. And for them to
14 give my child a chance, they gave him a change
15 in life.

18:35:52

16 Calhoun needs to remain open because if
17 my son has to change again it's going to deter
18 him. He's already struggling with people
19 teasing him and most of the kids there have
20 learned to accept him. And if he has to change
21 again he is not going to have a chance in life.
22 Calhoun needs to remain open. Thank you.

18:36:06

18:36:20

23 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

24 Marquira Ross.

1 MS. ROSS: Marquita.

2 HON. STARKS: Okay.

3 MS. ROSS: Good evening, my name is
4 Marquita Ross, I am a parent of Calhoun North,
5 also alumni there. I'm concerned about the
6 school closing because like they said if these
7 kids have been molded and told all this time
8 that if you work hard, you get good things in
9 life, they feel that their school is a great
10 school. I just want to know that if you all
11 change this these kids have to go all the way
12 over there to Cather, walk through all of this,
13 drug, gang, violence, everything that's going
14 on, like they said, it's going to be major chaos
15 going on. And I just want to know do the City
16 of Chicago really care about us?

18:36:52

18:37:08

18:37:26

17 HON. STARKS: I believe Delores Benton,
18 is she here?

19 MS. BENTON: Hi, my name is Delores
20 Benton, I've been at Calhoun School area for the
21 past 64 years. My mother and grandmother bought
22 our house in 1949. My oldest son is 45, he went
23 to Calhoun. I was a volunteer parent there for
24 ten years every day until I got hired by the

18:38:04

1 Board. I was at The Joint of Truth. Well, the
2 Board closed The Joint of Truth and we were the
3 highest ranking school over there.

4 People are not listening to me.

5 This -- when she talked about the vacant lots
6 owned by the City, this is a form of Urban
7 Renewal because Calhoun is the only thing that's
8 there right now, and if they move us out then
9 there goes the neighborhood.

10 I worked in Cabrini, if you saw Cabrini
11 back in 2004, have you seen it now? It's not
12 about your color, they see the color green this
13 City. And if you have not walked that walk in
14 that neighborhood, Calhoun is a safe haven.

15 Being a volunteer parent and a counselor I'm on
16 my back porch when the kids are coming out of
17 the building so I can watch on the alley on both
18 ends to see if anybody is out there, any type of
19 danger. If you're not there, you're not in the
20 classrooms, you don't know and you don't

21 consider the other people that work for the
22 Board of Education, not just the teachers, okay,
23 you got your career service, your janitors have
24 to clean when they come in, your lunchroom

18:38:38

18:38:52

18:39:14

18:39:30

1 people are in there getting the food ready for
2 the children, security is there making sure the
3 school is safe. You all don't know us. And
4 they closed our schools and we lost a lot of
5 good people. This City is losing a lot of good
6 teachers and people that work inside. I rest my
7 case. I can't talk no longer.

18:39:56

8 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

9 Mischelle Sanders. I'm sorry, Janice
10 Shephard.

18:40:20

11 MS. SHEPHARD: Hello, my name is Janice
12 Shephard, I'm a product of John Calhoun. I have
13 three kids that are a part of John Calhoun. I
14 have two kids that had learning disabilities,
15 both my kids went through college and has
16 finished very successful. I have my grandkids
17 there, my great granddaughter there. And for
18 you to tell me that you're going to close
19 Calhoun because we're underutilized, you ain't
20 never been inside Calhoun.

18:40:44

18:41:00

21 First you need to come inside Calhoun
22 to see what Calhoun is about because every room
23 in there is used. You're telling me Cather is a
24 better school for my kids, I don't see it, not

57

1 even in black and white, I don't see it. What's
2 good for my kids is John Calhoun School. What's
3 good for my kids is every teacher, every social
4 worker, every lunchroom worker, every janitor in
5 John Calhoun. So when you can show me that it's
6 different over there then I'll get on board, but
7 as for now you ain't rocking nothing.

18:41:32

8 HON. STARKS: Is Mischelle Sanders
9 here?

10 Harriet Parker.

18:41:56

11 MS. PARKER: Good evening, everyone, my
12 name is Harriet Parker. Hi, Ms. O'Keefe. And
13 I'm an attorney and I'm also a member of the
14 Cook County Bar Association, so I'm here
15 representing the Cook County Bar Association in
16 opposition to the closing of Calhoun School.
17 Our bar association has been actively working in
18 this school for eight, ten years. I can tell
19 you it's a wonderful school. It's very
20 well-organized. The children are very happy. I
21 have participated in a number of the activities
22 there. I was there earlier this year for a
23 wonderful program, and I've also served as one
24 of the judges at their science fair and it's a

18:42:14

18:42:30

1 wonderful thing to see little children excited
2 about science.

3 I just want to say that coming up here
4 there was so much security, I mean, you had to
5 go through layer on layer, they took my badge,
6 and it would be nice to know that our children
7 who you want to send across Madison Avenue six
8 blocks are going to have the same level of
9 security that you imposed upon the people here.
10 That's a wonderful school in the black community
11 and schools that really should not close. It's
12 a Level 1 school, I mean, we're playing with
13 semantics here, it's a Level 1 school. And
14 schools that work should not -- should not
15 close. Please keep our school open.

16 HON. STARKS: I have MF. Is ML here?
17 For your name I'm going to mark you as Student
18 B. And the first young man will be Student A
19 just for the record.

20 You may proceed.

21 STUDENT B: My name is MF and I'm a 6th
22 grader at Calhoun. I don't want Calhoun to
23 close because there are so many wonderful things
24 at Calhoun. I am a member of the after school

18:42:58

18:43:18

18:43:34

18:44:30

1 science club and I am a student athlete. The
2 science club -- in the science club we learn --
3 the science club is always intriguing because we
4 learn about space and how the sun works.
5 Mr. Montgomery took us to the Adler Planetarium
6 on a Saturday field trip. He is a great teacher
7 and so is my homeroom teacher, Ms. Williams. He
8 is strict, smart and nice and so is every
9 teacher at Calhoun. Please keep Calhoun open
10 because we have great teachers who care about us
11 a lot because some of the students there read
12 over their grade level and their math is over
13 their grade level, like me.

18:44:54

18:45:10

14 HON. STARKS: Thank you.

15 UNKNOWN PERSON: Tell them your grade
16 level that you read and your math level, son.

18:45:26

17 STUDENT B: I read at a 9th grade -- I
18 read at a 9th grade level and do math at an 8th
19 grade level.

20 HON. STARKS: EM, are you here? Is she
21 speaking? And EM will be marked as Student C
22 for the record.

18:45:40

23 STUDENT C: Hello, my name is EM, I'm a
24 6th grader at Calhoun North. I want you to

60

1 please keep Calhoun open because teachers
2 challenge me and make sure I don't get
3 distracted from learning what I need to do at
4 school.

5 What I like about Calhoun is my
6 principal because she is friendly and she cares
7 about us. Ms. Williams, my math teacher, and
8 Mr. Montgomery, my science teacher, never let me
9 give up and always say I can do it. Please keep
10 Calhoun open because -- yeah, because I have
11 been there since preschool and I want to
12 graduate from there.

13 My math level is the second highest and
14 my reading level is in the 8th grade.

15 HON. STARKS: Okay. Thank you.

16 Markell Flax. Markell. Is she speaking?

17 THE AUDIENCE: No.

18 HON. STARKS: Okay.

19 All right. Is there anyone who signed
20 up who changed their mind about speaking or
21 making a comment, this is your last chance?

22 What's your name? Did you sign up to
23 speak?

24 MS. MILES: No, I didn't sign up, you

18:46:16

18:46:32

18:46:50

18:47:10

1 called my name earlier Valerie Miles, M-i-l-e-s.

2 HON. STARKS: Okay.

3 MS. MILES: I'm a technology teacher at
4 Calhoun. I'd first like to ask that you
5 consider Calhoun be taken off of the close list.
6 And secondly that our school stay in its current
7 location.

18:47:50

8 Calhoun it's been said that we have
9 facilities, such as, a separate auditorium,
10 gymnasium, full lunchroom facilities, we have
11 two science labs and two computer labs. We have
12 laptops for every student. We have been
13 considered and used as a model for the Network
14 and some of the programs have spanned over the
15 entire City. I think that if money is to be
16 spent upgrading Cather then make that money
17 available to Calhoun. I think that with the
18 progress that we have made over time Calhoun can
19 continue to be the greatest secret on the west
20 side that it is and now is the time to make a
21 difference. Now is the time to put our students
22 first because we say we need -- we won't leave
23 any child behind, and I bet you we'll do just
24 that if we transfer these kids. So my prayer is

18:48:12

18:48:38

18:49:12

1 that this will remain an open forum and that you
2 will consider keeping Calhoun open.

3 HON. STARKS: Thank you very much.

4 I believe that's all the comments we
5 have in terms of this hearing.

18:50:02

6 And does the Board have anything
7 additional to present?

8 MS. O'KEEFE: No, we do not, your
9 Honor.

10 HON. STARKS: All right. At this time
11 this hearing is now concluded. That was the
12 time, she finished a few seconds earlier.

18:50:10

13 All right. And as you know you can
14 find the posting in terms of the decision of the
15 Board it will be post posted on the Board's
16 website. Thank you all for coming out.

18:50:26

17 (Whereupon, the hearing
18 concluded at 6:50 p.m.)

19

20

21

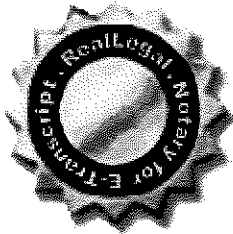
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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)
4

5 Karen Fatigato, being first duly sworn,
6 on oath says that she is a court reporter doing
7 business in the City of Chicago; and that she
8 reported in shorthand the proceedings of said
9 public hearing, and that the foregoing is a true
10 and correct transcript of her shorthand notes so
11 taken as aforesaid, and contains the proceedings
12 given at said public hearing.



13
14 Karen Fatigato

15 Karen Fatigato, CSR

16 LIC. NO. 084-004072
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