

Transcript of the Testimony of
REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS 4-16-2013 8:00

Date: April 16, 2013

Case: THE PROPOSAL CLOSURE OF JOSEPH STOCKTON
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER
THE PROPOSAL CLOSURE OF
JOSEPH STOCKTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2013
COMMENCING AT 8:00 P.M.

CHARLES WINKLER, ESQ.
HEARING OFFICER

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1 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Ladies and gentlemen, may
2 I have your attention, please. Would you please sit
3 down. Thank you. My name is Charles Winkler.
4 About a year and a half ago you would have found me
5 at the Daley Center, probably in a room where 12
6 people, we'll call it the jury, were hearing a civil
7 case.

8 Of course at 8:00 o'clock at night, I guess
9 you wouldn't find any Judge in the courthouse, but
10 what we have here today maybe is a reflection of
11 what goes on in the courtroom, where the community,
12 jury, comes in and listens and makes a decision.

13 Now, you're not called upon to make a
14 decision, and really I am not either. I am not
15 going to be finding for or against anyone in this
16 proceeding, that's not my function.

17 This is a hearing non-adversarial, where
18 everybody who has signed in will have an opportunity
19 later to, and with a matter of two minutes or maybe
20 longer, if we don't have a lot of people, who have
21 signed in, to listen, my function, to what you have
22 to say about the proposal that's on the table.

23 And I won't go into it any further, I think
24 you know that. We're going to be hearing from CPS

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1 here shortly, because they have to go forward and
2 present sufficient documents to me in order to
3 justify proceeding with this hearing.

4 I want to thank you very much on a Tuesday
5 evening, I would imagine a better place to be would
6 be in front of a television screen watching one of
7 your favorite shows. And here we have a forum where
8 the community, and that's you, will tell me what's
9 on your mind regarding the proposal that's on the
10 table.

11 Now, I have no vested interest in the
12 outcome of this case. I am neutral. I have not
13 been hired by CPS. I am in a contract with a
14 company called Resolute Systems. They provide
15 mediators and arbitrators for hearings like this, or
16 in other disputes in the mediation setting.

17 So, what I say to you is this, I have an
18 open mind. I want to hear from you. I'll have some
19 questions, that I am going to put to you and most
20 likely those who present from CPS today, whatever
21 they want me to be aware of. I ask for your
22 patience. If your cell phone is on, would you
23 please turn it off.

24 And when you are called upon to speak, if

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1 you would keep in mind, I ask those who are not
2 speaking, to not at any time cheer on or, let's say,
3 root for anyone, because it causes chaos with our
4 Court Reporter, who is to my left here, who is
5 taking down everything I say, everything you say,
6 everything that's said over on that side of the room
7 from CPS. So we want a nice record because I have
8 to review it at a later time.

9 I am not going to take many notes this
10 evening. If I do, I wouldn't be paying attention to
11 what you have to tell me.

12 So with that thought in mind, I also would
13 like to alert you that we have a timekeeper on the
14 right, who, I don't know exactly, I can't see him
15 here, but I know he's out there somewhere.

16 MS. CHAN: Currently, he's on the left.

17 MR. TIMEKEEPER: I'll move.

18 MR. HEARING OFFICER: There he is. Way over
19 there. Okay. And he may be warning you, in the
20 event you're talking, okay, it's over with.

21 So, with that thought in mind, I am going
22 to call upon the lady that's directly in front of
23 me. If you would be so kind as to introduce
24 yourself and make a presentation.

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1 Oh, I'm sorry, ma'am, I forgot. We have
2 available for those of you who are not conversant in
3 the English language, our translator, who will
4 assist you from the English to the Spanish and from
5 the Spanish to the English language, so that you
6 understand fully what the proceeding is about.

7 Also, the lady who is moving her hands at
8 this time is for those of you who are able to sign
9 read, those of you who are not able to communicate,
10 because of something that prevents them from
11 talking, they will then understand the proceedings
12 in the sign language that is going on at this time.
13 Okay.

14 (Whereupon Mr. Interpreter spoke in Spanish.)

15 MR. INTERPRETER: I was just saying, reiterating
16 that Spanish interpreting is available for anyone
17 who needs, simultaneously for anyone who comes in
18 late, who might need our services, please send them
19 our way, so that we can set them up with a head set.
20 We'll also accompany them, even if they don't want
21 to hear the interpreting, but want to express
22 themselves and make sure that people can be
23 reflected in the record, if they want to be. Thank
24 you.

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1 MR. HEARING OFFICER: All right. We're ready to
2 proceed in the matter of Stockton Elementary and
3 Courtenay Elementary. Please.

4 MS. CHAN: Good evening, Your Honor, my name is
5 Miss Jennifer Chan. J-e-n-n-i-f-e-r, C-h-a-n. I am
6 an attorney in the Chicago Board of Education's Law
7 Department. I am appearing before you today in
8 connection with the proposal of the Chief Executive
9 Officer, or CEO, of the Chicago Public Schools, to
10 close Joseph Stockton Elementary School, or
11 Stockton, and relocate Mary E. Courtenay Elementary
12 Language Arts Center, or Courtenay.

13 At this time, I ask that you admit into the
14 record the CEO's compiled Exhibit 1, already
15 tendered to you, a binder of documents being
16 submitted for consideration in support of the
17 proposal.

18 MR. HEARING OFFICER: I acknowledge the binder
19 and the binder is now in evidence.

20 MS. CHAN: A copy of this binder is also
21 available here in board chambers on the ledge behind
22 me for public viewing.

23 The binder consist of documentary evidence
24 and written statements demonstrating that the CEO's

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1 proposal complies with the requirements of the
2 Illinois School Code and the CEO's guidelines for
3 school actions.

4 Specifically, the written statements and
5 documents demonstrate the following:

6 At tab A, the binder includes notice
7 letters to the Parents and Guardians of the
8 students, school staff members, and Local School
9 Council members at Stockton and Courtenay,
10 accompanied by a draft transition plan.

11 The notice letters and draft transition
12 plan, one, describe the basis of the proposal. Two,
13 explain how the proposal meets the criteria of the
14 guidelines. Three, identify supports for students
15 safety and security, academics, social and emotional
16 needs, and specific supports for the students with
17 disabilities, students with temporary living
18 situations, and English language learners. And,
19 four, identify the students' option to enroll in a
20 higher performing school. Provide information on
21 choice of schools and identify transportation where
22 practicable.

23 Also included are the affidavits attesting
24 to the delivery of notice, via mail, personal

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1 delivery, electronic mail and newspaper
2 publications.

3 Finally, tab A includes an affidavit
4 attesting to the proper publication of:

5 One. The draft guidelines for school
6 actions by October 1st.

7 Two. Finalized guidelines for school
8 actions following a 21 day public comment period.

9 Three. List of qualified independent
10 hearing officers by November 1st.

11 Four. Proposals before March 31st and at
12 least 15 calander days before the first community
13 meeting.

14 And five, summaries from community meetings
15 within five days after the meeting.

16 At tab B, the binder includes the Illinois
17 School Code provisions designating the powers of the
18 board and outlining the procedures for school
19 actions.

20 This tab also includes the board's policy
21 of school performance, remediation, and probation
22 for the 2011-2012 school year. And the policy on
23 the review and the establishment of school
24 attendance boundaries.

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1 Also at tab B, are the Chicago Public
2 School Space Utilization Standards and the CEO's
3 guidelines per school actions for the 2012-2013
4 school year.

5 Finally, tab B includes the CEO's
6 procedures for public hearings on proposed school
7 closing.

8 At tab C, the binder includes written
9 evidence in support of the CEO'S proposal. Tab C
10 contains the transcript and summaries from the two
11 community meetings to elicit public comment, held at
12 a location convenient to the Stockton and Courtenay
13 school communities.

14 Tab C also includes the written statement
15 of Benjamin Felton, the accompanied presentation
16 demonstrating Stockton's underutilization and the
17 space available at the 400, I'm sorry, 4420 North
18 Beacon Street facility for Courtenay to welcome
19 students without exceeding its enrollment, excuse
20 me, it's enrollment efficiency range and a map of
21 the proposed attendance area.

22 Finally, tab C, includes the written
23 statement of Craig Benes and the accompanied
24 documents demonstrating Courtenay's status as a

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1 higher performing school and outlining the supports
2 that will be offered to students as they transition.

3 Your Honor, I would now like to introduce
4 CEO's representative, Benjamin Felton, who will make
5 a statement in support of the proposal. The
6 statement is located in the binder at tab 21.

7 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Mr. Felton.

8 MR. FELTON: Good evening, Your Honor.

9 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Good evening, sir.

10 MR. FELTON: My name is Benjamin Felton,
11 B-e-n-j-a-m-i-n, Felton, F-e-l-t-o-n, and I am a
12 Portfolio Planner for the Chicago Public Schools. I
13 have been in this position since July of 2012. As a
14 Portfolio Planner, I manage the strategic planning
15 to improve the efficient utilization of CPS
16 facilities.

17 Prior to becoming a Portfolio Planner, I
18 worked as a teacher at CPS. I then joined the
19 Tennessee Department of Education, where I focused
20 on teacher and principal evaluation and recruitment
21 and contributed to the department's five-year
22 strategic plan. I have a Bachelor of Science from
23 Vanderbilt University.

24 I have been asked to appear at this hearing

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1 today to convey to you, the parents, and the
2 community, as well as interested members of the
3 public in attendance, information regarding the
4 space utilization of the Stockton facility with
5 respect to the proposal to close Stockton.

6 According to the Chief Executive Officer's
7 guidelines for the 2012-2013 school year, the CEO
8 may propose to close the school if it is
9 underutilized based on CPS Space Utilization
10 Standards and student enrollment numbers recorded on
11 the 20th day of attendance for the 2012-2013 school
12 year.

13 The CEO may propose a closure if the
14 impacted students have the option to enroll in a
15 higher performing school and the resulting space
16 utilization after the closure will not exceed the
17 facility's enrollment efficiency range, as defined
18 by the CPS Space Utilization Standards.

19 I will discuss the details regarding the
20 space utilization of this proposal, while my
21 colleague, Craig Benes, will discuss the performance
22 of the welcoming school and highlight the supports
23 being offered in the draft transition plan.

24 Stockton is currently located at 4420 North

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1 Beacon Street. Stockton is an elementary school
2 that, as of the 20th day of attendance for the
3 2012-2013 school year, serves 475 students in
4 pre-kindergarten through eighth grades.

5 To understand the enrollment efficiency
6 range of a facility, Chicago Public Schools utilizes
7 its Space Utilization Standards, which are located
8 in your binder at tab B14.

9 The enrollment efficiency range is plus or
10 minus 20 percent of the facility's ideal enrollment.
11 For elementary school buildings, the ideal
12 enrollment is defined as the number of allotted
13 homerooms multiplied by 30. The number of allotted
14 homeroom classrooms is approximately 66, or, I'm
15 sorry, 76 to 77 percent of the total classrooms
16 available.

17 As an elementary school's enrollment
18 increases above the efficiency range, a school may
19 be considered overcrowded as programming options are
20 reduced or compromised.

21 As an elementary school's enrollment
22 decreases below the efficiency range, a school may
23 be considered underutilized as classrooms are unused
24 or poorly programmed, making the use of limited

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1 resources less effective.

2 A typical elementary school building has a
3 total of 39 classrooms. Therefore, the number of
4 allotted homerooms, approximately 76 to 77 percent
5 of 39 is 30 classrooms. Multiplying 30 classrooms
6 by 30 equals the ideal enrollment number of 900.

7 Finally, the enrollment efficiency range is
8 plus or minus 20 percent of 900, which is 720, which
9 is between 720 and 1080.

10 If a school in this typical elementary
11 school building had an enrollment below 720, it
12 would be considered underutilized. Alternatively,
13 if the school's enrollment was above 1080, it would
14 be overcrowded.

15 There are 46 and a half total classrooms
16 within the Stockton facility. The half, the point
17 five, indicates the presence of one or more small
18 classrooms. Approximately 76 to 77 percent of this
19 number is 35, is 35, the number of allotted
20 homerooms. This number multiplied by 30 yields the
21 ideal enrollment of the facility, which is 1050. As
22 such, the enrollment efficiency range of the
23 Stockton facility is between 840 and 1260 students.

24 As I stated, the enrollment of Stockton, as

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1 of the 20th day of attendance for the 2012-2013
2 school year is 475. This number is below the
3 enrollment efficiency range, and thus, the school is
4 underutilized.

5 The CEO has proposed that students from
6 Stockton be welcomed by Mary E. Courtenay Elementary
7 Language Arts Center, or Courtenay.

8 Courtenay will be relocated from its present
9 location to the current Stockton facility at 4420
10 North Beacon Street. If this proposal is approved
11 by the Board of Education for the City of Chicago,
12 the resulting space utilization will not exceed the
13 4420 North Beacon Street facility's enrollment
14 efficiency range as defined by the CPS Space
15 Utilization Standards.

16 To fully explain the enrollment trend
17 associated with these schools, I would like to
18 direct your attention to the screen.

19 Projected is a slide that shows the
20 enrolment trend of Stockton and Courtenay. Green
21 hashed lines showing the enrollment efficiency range
22 of the 4420 North Beacon Street facility, and a
23 circle representing the combined projected
24 enrollment for 2013-2014.

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1 Stockton's currently enrollment is 475
2 students, and Courtenay's current enrollment is 281
3 students, for a total of 756 students, below the
4 enrollment efficiency range of the 4420 North Beacon
5 Street facility.

6 Further, the projected enrollment for
7 Stockton for the 2013-2014 school year is 474. And
8 the projected enrollment for Courtenay for next year
9 is 314, for a total combined projected enrollment of
10 788 students, which is also slightly below the
11 enrollment efficiency range.

12 Thus, there is enough space within the 4420
13 North Beacon Street facility for students from
14 Stockton and students from Courtenay.

15 If Stockton is closed, the CEO is also
16 proposing that Stockton's attendance area be
17 reassigned to Courtenay, proposed to be located at
18 4420 North Beacon Street. A map showing the
19 proposed boundary is located in your binder at tab
20 C23, and copies of this map were made available
21 tonight at the registration desk.

22 In proposing this boundary, several factors
23 were considered as outlined in the Review and
24 Establishment of School Attendance Boundaries

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1 Policy, including, but not limited to, the capacity
2 of the 4420 North Beacon Street facility, geographic
3 barriers, travel time, distance traveled, and
4 program considerations.

5 After all of the students within the
6 neighborhood are accommodated, available seats will
7 first be offered to siblings of currently enrolled
8 students, with a lottery, if there are more siblings
9 applicants than seats. The remaining seats will be
10 filled through a city-wide lottery. To access these
11 seats, siblings must apply through the Options For
12 Knowledge process.

13 You will next hear from my colleague, Craig
14 Benes, who will discuss the performance of Courtenay
15 and highlight the proposed transition efforts.

16 Thank you, Your Honor. This concludes my
17 statement.

18 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

19 MS. CHAN: Your Honor, I would now like to
20 introduce the CEO's next representative, Craig
21 Benes, who will make a statement in support of the
22 proposal. The statement is located in the binder at
23 tab 34.

24 MR. BENES: Good evening, Your Honor. My name

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1 is Craig Benes. I am the Chief of Schools for the
2 Chicago Public Schools, Ravenswood-Ridge Elementary
3 Network. Chicago Public Schools are divided up into
4 Networks. Network offices are run by a Chief and
5 provide support and oversight for the schools
6 assigned to them on behalf of the CEO.

7 Courtenay and Stockton are within the
8 Ravenswood-Ridge Elementary Network, and I am
9 responsible for the support and oversight of
10 Courtenay and Stockton on behalf of the CEO. I have
11 been the Chief of Courtenay and Stockton since the
12 Fall of 2011.

13 By way of background, over the past 28
14 years, I have worked in a number of capacities
15 within public education and social services,
16 including crisis team supervisor, special education
17 teacher, behavioral interventionist and curriculum
18 writer for the Department of Curriculum and
19 Instruction.

20 I have also served as assistant principal
21 and principal before becoming Chief in the
22 Ravenswood-Ridge Network. I hold a Bachelor's
23 degree from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.
24 A Master of Science degree in Applied Family and

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1 Child Studies from Northern Illinois University. A
2 Master of Arts degree in Special Education from
3 Northeastern Illinois University. And a Certificate
4 of Advanced Study for Administration and Supervision
5 from National Louis University, with the New Leaders
6 for New Schools Principal Training Program.

7 As you have already heard, Stockton fits the
8 criteria of the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines
9 for School Actions, because it is underutilized
10 based on CPS Space Utilization Standards and student
11 enrollment numbers recorded on the 20th attendance
12 day for the 2012-2013 school year.

13 If this proposal is approved, Stockton
14 students will be welcomed by Courtenay, and
15 Courtenay will relocate to the current Stockton
16 facility, located at 4420 North Beacon Street.

17 The facility at 4420 North Beacon Street has
18 enough space for Stockton and Courtenay students and
19 the resulting combined student enrollment will not
20 exceed the facility's enrollment efficiency range.

21 When Stockton students are welcomed by the
22 Courtenay administration, staff, and students, they
23 will be attending a higher performing school based
24 the CEO's Guidelines for School Actions.

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1 One way that the CEO's Guidelines for School
2 Actions define a high performing school is if a
3 school received a high level on the Performance
4 Policy for the 2011-12 school year.

5 Under the CPS Performance Policy, located in
6 your binder at tab B12, each school receives an
7 annual rating based on it's performance on a variety
8 of student outcome measures, including standardized
9 test scores and student attendance.

10 District-wide schools designated Level 1 are
11 the highest performing and schools designated Level
12 3 are the lowest performing. Stockton received a
13 Level 3 rating for the 2011-12 school year, while
14 Courtenay received a Level 2 rating.

15 The Performance Policy reports reflecting
16 these levels are included in the binder of documents
17 that you have received at tab C25.

18 Please note that the performance policy
19 ratings from the 2011-2012 school year appear under
20 the 2012-2013 header on these reports, as these
21 ratings are used to determine each school's
22 accountability status for the 2012-13 school year.

23 If this proposal is approved, students will
24 receive additional supports at Stockton during the

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1 remainder of this school year and at Courtenay next
2 year, and the Network will provide assistance to
3 ease the transition process as much as possible.

4 CPS has developed a plan dedicating
5 additional resources to address any safety concerns
6 and to fulfill students' academic, social, and
7 emotional, and other individual needs.

8 The draft transition plan, explaining these
9 additional resources, was sent home to all families
10 affected by this proposal and is located in your
11 binder at tab A1.

12 CPS will publish final transition plans, if
13 the Board approves this proposal, which will
14 incorporate feedback from community meetings, this
15 hearing, and additional input received.

16 The CPS Office of Safety and Security, or
17 OSS, has worked with the Chicago Police Department,
18 Department of Family and Support Services, local
19 community groups and faith partners, elected
20 officials, and other sister agencies to develop a
21 plan for the safe transition of students.

22 If this proposal is approved, OSS will take
23 the following steps:

24 First, OSS will review and update school

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

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

7 Third, OSS will provide Safe Passage
8 supports for students and staff traveling to and
9 from school. Safe Passage workers wear identifiable
10 vests and stand on designated street corners to
11 monitor students' safety during their travel to
12 school in the morning and home in the afternoon.

13 Prior to the start of the 2013-14 school
14 year, OSS will work with the Courtenay
15 administration and the community to designate
16 specific intersections for safe passage supports.

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

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

1 Courtenay.

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

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

11 Third, I held parent meetings on April 3rd,
12 with Courtenay and Stockton families. I am open to
13 holding more parent meetings to welcome families and
14 students affected by this action to discuss concerns
15 and educational options.

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

22 I will support the principals as they
23 consider how to use these resources and approve
24 their selections once decisions are made.

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1 Students will also receive social and
2 emotional supports to help them adjust to a new
3 school environment, including the following:

4 First, CPS will help school staff members
5 facilitate intervention groups or peace circles
6 aimed at helping students work through concerns
7 associated with the transition.

8 Second, CPS will help staff members
9 implement restorative practices, such as peer
10 circles and peer juries, to encourage peer-to-peer
11 problem solving and resolution.

12 Third, Groups of students in need of more
13 individualized attention will be provided with
14 access to high structured interventions.

15 Fourth, to foster an environment that is
16 both supportive and inclusive for all students, CPS
17 will provide resources to the Courtenay leadership
18 to implement culture-building activities, such as
19 staff luncheons and team and trust-building
20 activities.

21 Resources will also be provided to sponsor
22 activities such as school visits for families,
23 coffee chats with the principal, picnics, field
24 trips, or parent meetings to help transitioning

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1 families get to know their new school.

2 Finally, additional transition supports will
3 be provided to ensure that Stockton students who
4 have unique needs or circumstances are adequately
5 supported in this transition, including students
6 with diverse learning needs, students in temporary
7 living situations, English language learners, and
8 early childhood participants.

9 For example, the Snoezelen room at the 4420
10 North Beacon Street facility will continue to
11 provide a specialized selection of sensory equipment
12 and materials to assist students with sensory
13 stimulation and to advance education and therapy
14 goals.

15 Other additional supports are described in
16 more detail in the draft transition plan, located in
17 your binder at tab A1.

18 In conclusion, Stockton is underutilized,
19 the combined enrollment of Stockton and Courtenay
20 students at the 4420 North Beacon Street facility
21 will not exceed the facility's enrollment efficiency
22 range, and Courtenay is a higher performing school.

23 The CEO believes that this proposed school
24 closure will help the District better serve all

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1 students and is prepared to assist students with
2 additional supports as they transition.

3 Thank you for your time and attention. This
4 concludes my statement.

5 MR. HEARING OFFICER: I have a couple of
6 questions. And maybe we can focus on this, if it's
7 something that I think we're all aware of. The
8 children traveling from a present location, where
9 they're comfortable, to one, we'll call it almost
10 foreign territory in a way, but yet it's not because
11 they know it's there.

12 This business of providing safe passage,
13 this business of a, making sure that the children
14 are not in harms way, I know you have addressed it.
15 Could you explain a little bit about at what stage
16 it's at, so that our audience here this evening get
17 some idea of what is being developed that would
18 assure them that the children will be protected and
19 in a safe environment?

20 MR. BENES: The next step is really to engage
21 parent and teacher leadership on the transition team
22 by each school to meet together, to work with the
23 Chicago Police Department, our Office of Security
24 and Safety, to assess any issues of safety and to

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1 have a plan that both communities feel confident
2 about.

3 MR. HEARING OFFICER: All right. So we're
4 looking then probably within the next 90 to 100 days
5 or so, a formation of a definitive way of taking
6 care of the concerns that are, that I see present in
7 the community, correct?

8 MR. BENES: Yeah, I think we begin as soon as we
9 can with both communities and we continue that work
10 ongoingly, always assuring for safety of all of our
11 students.

12 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you so much.

13 MR. BENES: Thank you.

14 MS. CHAN: Your Honor, this concludes the
15 presentation in support CEO's proposal. If you have
16 any additional questions, we will be available to
17 answer them.

18 Thank you for your time and attention.

19 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm
20 going to suggest that we all stand for a moment. I
21 know some of you got here early and sat down and you
22 have been sitting maybe for an hour or longer, so
23 right now, just about a two minute, we're going to
24 call it up-break, and then we'll sit back over here,

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1 okay. How is that?

2 (Whereupon a break was taken.)

3 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Okay. Are you ready to
4 sit down, everybody, please.

5 From the list of those who have signed in,
6 I believe we have at least 16 who have indicated
7 that they would like to address this forum, address
8 me, and I am now about ready to call the names, and
9 if I don't pronounce your name properly, just point
10 it out to me, I'll do my best.

11 We're going to have in place the two-minute
12 rule, because of so many people that will be
13 speaking now for probably the next hour.

14 So starting off with the first person that
15 is on the list, Tammy Lunetto. Tammy, will you come
16 forward, please. And if you would go to the mic
17 and.

18 MS. LUNETTO: I'm Tammy Lunetto, I'm the
19 assistant principal at Courtenay Language Arts
20 Center, and I am speaking with Jill.

21 MS. BESENJAK: Hi, I'm Jill Besenjak, I'm the
22 principal at Stockton Elementary School.

23 MR. HEARING OFFICER: All right. Well, welcome,
24 and whose is going to go first?

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1 MS. BESENJAK: Good morning or evening, oh, my
2 goodness.

3 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Okay.

4 MS. BESENJAK: We're here together and we're
5 speaking together today because we wanted to, first
6 of all, address the fact that we understand that
7 both of our schools are very special to our
8 communities, and we know that sometimes difficult
9 decisions need to be made.

10 So, I will read our statement. We
11 understand that the proposal of transitioning
12 Stockton and Courtenay Schools together is not
13 without its challenges. The loss of jobs at
14 Stockton School is devastating to those who will be
15 affected, but we are here, administrators, to
16 propose that this, if this proposal does, in fact,
17 comes to fruition, that we will do our best to bring
18 the best of both off our schools together. We will
19 work collaboratively for the good of our students
20 and staff.

21 MS. LUNETTO: I had the opportunity to work at
22 both schools, and I have to say that both
23 communities have many positive aspects to bring
24 together, including excellent teachers and staff

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1 members, hard working students and collaborative and
2 involved parents.

3 MS. BESENJAK: We understand that the merging of
4 Courtenay and Stockton Schools has a lot of
5 potential and promise, and we will embrace those new
6 opportunities that this proposed transition could
7 provide for both communities. I have to say that I
8 know while Stockton School is a Level 3 school, our
9 staff works very hard and does a tremendous job and
10 that I think both of our staffs, working together,
11 would do a wonderful job.

12 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Could I ask you two to
13 state your name again, please.

14 MS. BESENJAK: Sure. It's Jill, J-i-l-l. Last
15 name is Besenjak, B-e-s-e-n-j-a-k.

16 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you so much.

17 MS. BESENJAK: Uh-huh.

18 MS. LUNETTO: Tammy Lunetto. T-a-m-m-y.
19 L-u-n-e-t-t-o.

20 MR. HEARING OFFICER: All right.

21 MS. LUNETTO: Okay. If the school action is
22 approved, CPS, Courtenay and the Stockton
23 communities will have a huge job ahead of us. It is
24 imperative that we receive the supports and

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1 resources necessary through the beginning of the
2 transition process. We're hopeful that challenges
3 that may come will provide outcomes that are
4 positive, build character, and forge new friendships
5 as well as ensure stability for both school
6 communities. Thank you.

7 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you so much.
8 Appreciate your comments.

9 The next speaker will be Anne Cuddy. Anne,
10 please.

11 MS. CUDDY: I am not speaking. Thank you.

12 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Do you wish to pass?

13 MS. CUDDY: I will pass.

14 MR. HEARING OFFICER: All right. Damaris
15 Woodbury?

16 Good evening.

17 MS. WOODBURY: Good evening. My name is Damaris
18 Woodbury. I am a kindergarten teacher at Stockton
19 Elementary School. I am also one of two Local
20 School Council teacher representatives. And I stand
21 here before you on behalf of the Stockton teachers
22 to say that at the end of the day, we don't want to
23 see any school closing, and we don't want to see
24 Stockton School closing.

1 Given the fact that it means a loss of jobs
2 to our colleagues and people who have become our
3 friends and, however, if this proposal were to be
4 approved, we want everyone to know that we are
5 absolutely committed to our children by working with
6 the Courtenay teachers.

7 And we hope that after the, once the
8 proposal is voted on, if it is voted to merge the
9 two schools, that the necessary and vital resources
10 are made so that this transition can be successful,
11 with the highest quality of transition personnel,
12 the highest quality of time and commitment from
13 full-time social workers, full-time nurse, not
14 privatized, but provided to us on a full-time basis.

15 As a Level 3 school, we all at Stockton,
16 and I speak on behalf of the teachers, want everyone
17 to know that Level 3 is not indicative of our
18 commitment, of our daily grind, in serving our
19 students.

20 And we will continue to serve our students
21 from sun-up to sundown as well as welcome any other
22 new students, because that is what we do as
23 teachers. That is what every child deserves, no
24 matter where they are from, what neighborhood they

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1 live in, what boundary they touch, what boarder they
2 step on, so that's pretty much I think what our
3 teachers wanted to communicate today and I hope I
4 have done that.

5 MR. HEARING OFFICER: You have communicated it
6 very well. Thank you.

7 MS. WOODBURY: Okay. Thank you.

8 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Tonya Hunter? Tonya
9 Hunter?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's at another hearing.

11 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Is she outside?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

13 MR. HEARING OFFICER: She's at another hearing?

14 Okay. We'll try that again. Let's try now
15 Desaree Franklin? Desaree Franklin?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Out.

17 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Outside too?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Out.

19 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Out, okay.

20 Martin Ritter? Martin?

21 MR. TIMEKEEPER: Sorry, can I make a note to the
22 rest of the speakers, just to honor the Judge's two
23 minutes, I'll have 30 second and then when your time
24 is up.

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1 MR. RITTER: Good evening. My name is Martin
2 Ritter, I'm an organizer with the Chicago Teachers
3 Union. I was a teacher for eight years. I taught
4 at Marshall High School and Hyde Park High School
5 before that. I have a Master's in Education
6 Leadership and I have a Type 75, which is lot more
7 certifications than many of the people who are
8 making the decision about our schools actually have.
9 Many of them aren't certified to be substitutes in
10 CPS, but that's a whole other story.

11 All the money that we're going to spend on
12 this is not going to save CPS any money. And the
13 reality is is that the Board projects that it's a
14 billion dollars in debt, but it's going to borrow
15 another 329 million dollars to pay for all the
16 upgrades that it should have done years ago at all
17 of these schools.

18 So it's like I'm in the hole and I'm just
19 going to keep digging a deeper hole, but that's a
20 solution for CPS, is to manufacture crises, so that
21 they can make major decisions about our children and
22 further privatize public education.

23 All the money that we're going to spend on
24 the new Courtenay-Stockton highbred school on

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1 security, we should actually spend that on lowering
2 class size, which, I believe, many of the Courtenay
3 parents have at their school currently, because
4 small class sizes actually work. And small class
5 sizes is actually what the Mayor, himself, has
6 chosen for his own children at the private school.

7 It's kind of funny that I mention that
8 because the numbers of classes and enrollment
9 numbers at that school would be underutilized in
10 CPS' model, but it's okay for him to chose that for
11 his own children but then to declare for thousands
12 of other children, you know, an underutilization
13 crisis, like I said, a manufactured crisis.

14 I have mentioned earlier at the prior
15 hearing that, you know, the tough decisions are not
16 to close the school of 40,000 children, the tough
17 decisions are for the Mayor and the CEO to ask the
18 corporate elites of Chicago to pay their fair share.
19 To ask the Board of Trade and the Mercantile
20 Exchange member to whom make billions in profits
21 every year to pay their fair share to fund Chicago
22 Public Schools, because, you know, that would be the
23 right thing to do.

24 I also think it's a tough decision for the

1 Mayor and the CEO of CPS to close the TIFF districts
2 in downtown, which siphons hundreds of millions of
3 dollars away from CPS. These solutions and more can
4 be found in the Chicago Teachers Union web site and
5 other publications.

6 Lastly, if we're actually going to provide
7 these kids a students first style transition, we
8 should provide adequate numbers of mental health
9 clinicians, properly certified by the State, not
10 privatized low wage mental health workers. These
11 workers would include clinicians, that means
12 counselors, case workers, social workers,
13 psychologists, et cetera. That would be the best
14 thing to do for our children.

15 Unfortunately, CPS currently has 400 social
16 workers for 400 thousand children, which is highly
17 above the ratio that the State recommends. I please
18 ask you to please include these in your comments to
19 the CEO, and may they reflect the position of the
20 Chicago Teachers Union that we should put students
21 first by asking those who have the means to
22 contribute more to our public education system. And
23 I am done. All right.

24 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Would you mind, Martin,

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1 Mr. Ritter, can I call you back just for a second.
2 I want to thank you, again, I know you have taken
3 this evening away from your family, you have been
4 here, you have made a statement. I am very pleased
5 that you have addressed me in the manner that you
6 have. And I would again ask you, do you want to put
7 that in writing, I want to take a hard look at it,
8 and I will say something about it, believe me.

9 MR. RITTER: That's appreciated. It's far
10 better then last years hearing officers, to be
11 honest. Thank you.

12 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, sir.

13 Okay. Now we have Symantha Lancastere. Am
14 I pronouncing that?

15 MS. LANCASTERE: Lancaster, Your Honor.

16 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Okay. You have got to
17 help me out over here.

18 MS. LANCASTERE: No problem. Hello, my name is
19 Symantha Lancaster, and I am a staff member career
20 service at Stockton Elementary School. Earlier I
21 spoke upon the concerns and issues of safety as far
22 as kids going into neighborhood schools.

23 Now, I just heard Mr. Craig Benes had spoke
24 about the safety issues. I have seen some of those

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1 safety issues, especially on the south side where
2 schools have been closed. I am just getting into
3 something else.

4 And to have something like that, we had it
5 when we had the high schools, when we had kids
6 transfer from one neighborhood school to another.
7 One, a student got his head bashed and killed,
8 because he was going into another neighborhood.
9 This is high school.

10 Now we talking about little bitty kids
11 going into neighborhood schools. Why? Because it's
12 fair for all. It may be, I don't know. All I know
13 is that I am concerned about, you know, the
14 transitioning because, yes, it may be a good change.
15 Yes, it may be fair for everybody, and it will bring
16 in more prosper. I don't know, but all I know is
17 that when you have little kids coming into another
18 school, that's not like the big kids.

19 Big kids have a problem by themselves, now
20 you got little six year olds up to eighth grade
21 going into foreign areas. And, yes, it's okay for
22 me, because I can kind of defend myself, but what
23 about when the parents ain't there and the safety
24 monitor is not there on time or whatever.

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1 I am just concerned, because, like I said,
2 there was an incident over at the CPC, when I was, I
3 am a staff member there and I was working, and there
4 was, this was during broad daylight while school was
5 going on, a shooting happened and killed a person
6 right out in front of the school.

7 And there was nothing happen. Now they
8 start to put stuff in place, but, you know, I am
9 just saying that things happen. I know the
10 neighborhoods in Chicago have a reputation, and now
11 you bring in the little kids into foreign neighbors,
12 into foreign schools.

13 Yes, it's good, but, yeah, you can start
14 it, but how long will it continue on. Would this be
15 a process that's going to be going on for years and
16 years or are we going to have it where it's going to
17 be within a year or two and everything stops and
18 kids got to come to school which ever way, by foot,
19 by transportation, by car, or whatever, I am just
20 concerned about the safety issues of transferring
21 kids out of these schools into other neighborhoods
22 schools.

23 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you very much. I
24 appreciate your comments.

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1 MS. LANCASTERE: Thank you, Your Honor.

2 MR. HEARING OFFICER: At this time I would like
3 Patricia Crumley to come forward. Patricia Crumley.

4 MS. CRUMLEY: Hi, my name is Patricia Crumley,
5 and I am a parent of a student at Courtenay. And I
6 am speaking in support of this initiative.

7 My husband and I chose Courtenay for our
8 child because of the wonderful quality of education
9 and the fantastic culture and environment that that
10 school brings.

11 When we heard about the proposed merger
12 with Stockton, we had some concerns, and as we
13 evaluated it, we actually decided we think this is a
14 fabulous opportunity.

15 We think a small Courtenay is a wonderful
16 school. A bigger Courtenay is a better school with
17 more resources, with science labs, with gyms, with
18 other types of things.

19 Also, I am a resident of Uptown. I have
20 lived in Uptown for 25 years. And I am telling you
21 ours is a safe community. Ours is a good community.
22 The people who have kids from the community going to
23 Courtenay and Stockton, we can create a wonderful
24 environment and a great school for everybody that

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1 wants to come together. And I just hope we all have
2 the opportunity to do that. Thank you.

3 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

4 Claudia Pesenti.

5 MS. PESENTI: Hello.

6 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Good evening.

7 MS. PESENTI: 27 years ago I began my journey
8 teaching at Stockton School. I had 38 plus
9 inclusion students in my fifth grade classroom. We
10 also had a class that was on the stage in the
11 assembly hall.

12 I would consider this not efficient and
13 overutilization, and I would hate for us to return
14 to those days. We are only Tier 3 this year, due to
15 attendance, and yet we don't have truant officers
16 and we have a half-time social worker and nurse to
17 serve our population, of which almost 10 percent are
18 homeless student, STLS students, and over 30 percent
19 of students with special needs.

20 We have many concerns about what is going
21 on with this schools, not just Stockton School but
22 schools all over the City. I polled my staff, I am
23 also the CTU delegate at my school, and we don't
24 believe that any schools in Chicago should be

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1 closed. Most especially Stockton School.

2 Both schools have over 30 percent special
3 ed students, and that requires smaller class sizes
4 for optimal learning. Presently there are about two
5 classrooms per grade from kindergarten through
6 seventh at Stockton, and our eighth grade right now
7 is over 35 students, which is not optimal or
8 efficient, but our teacher is exemplary, so, of
9 course, he is doing as well as he can.

10 Our question is how will nine homerooms
11 from Courtenay be accommodated and be able to be in
12 Stockton without losing rooms and programs that we
13 already have?

14 Will we lose our music room, with our
15 fantastic music teacher and all of her equipment and
16 supplies for our children? Our science lab, our art
17 lab? We're worried about our programing space. How
18 about indoor recess, where will we put the children
19 on days when the weather is inclement.

20 The space utilization is very important
21 with regards to the many services we give our
22 students. Our clinicians and other people who work
23 with our children. We're all for iPads but there is
24 no app for a full-time social worker. There is no

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1 app for a full-time nurse.

2 We have many refugees and ELL families and
3 students. We need a full-time ESL teacher. Again,
4 there is no app for that. Safe passage, this is a
5 City where they deploy helicopters to ensure that
6 some students make it home alive.

7 I really think with the monies were being,
8 that are being spent on PTC and all these other
9 acronyms for inventory, the money would be better
10 spent at Stockton School to keep it open and to
11 service our students to the best of our abilities.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

14 Wendy Auffant or Auffant. Wendy, you're
15 going to have to help me here.

16 MS. AUFFANT: Good evening, sir, it's Auffant.

17 I am here tonight to speak about the
18 process of this proposal. I am a parent of a
19 student at Courtenay, and I just feel that the
20 process that CPS went through in proposing this has
21 been really disingenuous and I feel that CPS hasn't
22 follow their own rules.

23 When I think about an ideal school, I
24 describe it as having three important pillars.

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1 Strong and effective leadership, amazing dedicated
2 effective teachers, and the third pillar is engaged
3 and involved parents. Because I believe
4 passionately in that third pillar, upon beginning
5 the year at Courtenay, I immediately got as involved
6 as I could in the school. I signed up for fund
7 raising committees, school beautification
8 committees, you know, I helped create a program in
9 my child's classroom that would get parents actively
10 helping the classroom teacher with enrichment
11 activities.

12 CPS claims that they also value parents
13 roles in the schools, however, in the case of our
14 school, Courtenay, they have not demonstrated it
15 with their action.

16 First, CPS violated their own procedures by
17 not providing Courtenay, the Courtenay community,
18 with a forum. This means prior to when the proposal
19 was put forth on March 27th to our families.

20 So we were not given the forum to provide
21 feedback and maybe parents might have had an idea of
22 how this merger could have come together, but we
23 weren't asked.

24 And, further, I feel like the action

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1 against Courtenay is really disingenuous in calling
2 it a school relocation. Everything about it, to me,
3 feels like a school closer. We're moving buildings.
4 We are, you know, losing our school's model, and
5 further, Courtenay was not, does not, the Board, the
6 action proposed against Courtenay does not identify
7 Courtenay as one of the five identified criteria for
8 school action.

9 So, if these actions represent how CPS
10 values parent participation in schools, it's sort of
11 no wonder that they have a utilization crisis. You
12 know, there are way too many seats and not enough
13 families, but families are getting the message that
14 their feedback and their opinions don't matter. And
15 that, to me, that says that CPS doesn't value our
16 commitment as parents to our schools. Thank you.

17 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

18 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Cynthia Heywood.

19 MS. HEYWOOD: Good evening.

20 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Good evening.

21 MS. HEYWOOD: My name is Cynthia Heywood. I am
22 the middle school math teacher at Courtenay Language
23 Arts Center, and also teacher representative on the
24 local school council.

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1 In a perfect world, I would love to keep
2 our very special Courtenay model intact. And keep
3 all the wonderful teachers employed in both our
4 schools. In the real world of CPS, that seems
5 unlikely.

6 As a teacher who lives every day in
7 Courtenay's deficient building, I welcome the
8 opportunity to teach in the superior Stockton
9 building. But I also know that the building does
10 not make the school, the school community does.

11 Therefore, I welcome the chance to work
12 with the excellent teachers, students, parents, and
13 the community of both schools to create one learning
14 community that is the best it can be.

15 Change is very difficult for all of us, and
16 this is an enormous change. I hope that CPS has
17 heard the very valid concerns of Courtenay and
18 Stockton parents regarding class size and sibling
19 enrollment.

20 If this relocation occurs, addressing these
21 concerns could be a quick fix. More difficult to
22 fix is the lack of confidence in the CPS planning
23 process. That seems to be broken.

24 This could have been mitigated if real

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1 communication and consultation had occurred prior to
2 decision making, instead of this lip service.

3 If the community is on board with the
4 process, we will make, we will have a smoother
5 transition.

6 I believe this move is in the best interest
7 of both communities, and with extraordinary support
8 from our communities and CPS, we can make it a
9 success. Thank you.

10 MR. HEARING OFFICER: I thank you also.

11 Melanie Bienemann, please.

12 MS. BIENEMANN: Hi.

13 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Good evening.

14 MS. BIENEMANN: My biggest concern, I guess, is
15 the special education students at Stockton and
16 Courtenay. The model at CPS as stating is 30 kids
17 per classroom. I don't see how you can put 30
18 special ed kids in a classroom, so I think that that
19 should have been calculated separately.

20 30 percent at Stockton, 30 percent
21 Courtenay, where are these kids going to go?
22 Special ed kids need structure and consistency. CPS
23 should be happy that they have schools that are
24 taking care of these children, they should not be

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1 penalizing these schools.

2 One special ed teacher explained to me that
3 when administration told them that they had to move
4 children from one room to another room in the same
5 building, they had to work all summer with these
6 children to prepare them for this transition. And
7 that was with the same teachers, the same students,
8 and the same building.

9 Can you imagine these same children in a
10 different building, a different classroom,
11 potentially changing teachers, adding new pupils to
12 the mix. And adding 800 plus students or 788
13 students in the hallway, the chaos that goes on.

14 Someone told me these kids aren't your
15 problem. I can't do that. I can't turn a blind
16 eye. I am a humanitarian. We live in the
17 interconnected web of life.

18 We can't just bus these children out.
19 Somebody told me that the children are going to,
20 special ed kids are going to get bused out in order
21 to make room for the other kids,

22 Obviously, the parents brought them or
23 bused them to this school because their neighborhood
24 school couldn't take care of them or didn't have the

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1 resources, didn't have the proper people to take
2 care of them.

3 Maybe they were forced out of their
4 neighborhood school. My child went to two different
5 schools before she went to Courtenay. In one short
6 year of pre-school, at age 4, at age 4, one school
7 forced her out after a semester. They didn't give
8 get her assessed. They didn't do anything to lift a
9 finger to help her. At the end of the semester they
10 just said, Jada can't come back, she's too much
11 trouble, take a hike.

12 The second school was our neighborhood
13 school. So we took her there, asked to get her
14 assessed, it took me three-fourths of the semester
15 to get them to agree to assess her.

16 And when I asked the principal whether she
17 could be in a classroom, if Ravenswood could take
18 care of her, whether she would thrive in the
19 neighborhood school, the principal told me no, Jada
20 could not survive and thrive in a classroom of 28
21 children. So, these special ed kids need help.
22 They don't need to be shoved out. Thank you.

23 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

24 At this time I would like to turn to

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1 Ignacio Vazquez-Hernandez.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He wishes to pass.

3 MR. HEARING OFFICER: All right. Ramon Goggins.
4 Mr. Goggins.

5 MR. GOGGINS: Yes. Ramon Goggins. How you
6 doing. I'm a middle school social studies teacher
7 at Courtenay, and I have been there for two years,
8 all in the capacity of an aid and then a full-time
9 classroom teacher this year.

10 I was listening to some of the comments,
11 especially from Miss Woodbury from Stockton, and my
12 colleague, Miss Cynthia Heywood, and, you know, I'm
13 looking forward, I am, first of all, I'm grateful to
14 be at Courtenay and part of such a great staff. And
15 I know that we are going to work as hard as we can
16 with the Stockton teachers to make this the best for
17 all students, regardless of where they come from.

18 I went to CPS schools, you know, my life
19 isn't perfect, you know, do we have to reach out and
20 do some things that maybe we're uncomfortable with
21 or not sure we're going to, how we're going to get
22 it done? Yes. But we're going to get it done.
23 We're going to work as hard as we can, if this
24 proposal goes through.

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1 If it doesn't go through, a lot of the
2 dialogue is like CPS isn't communicating properly or
3 we don't have the proper support. But now, going
4 forward, regardless of this, you know, the proposal
5 does not go through, I'm sure we'll be in close
6 contact with Mr. Benes and everyone else, so we have
7 to keep moving forward to make it better for both
8 schools.

9 If Courtenay becomes Stockton, you know, I
10 heard a parent say they were from Uptown, these
11 neighborhoods are not across town, we can make this
12 work. Now I understand some parents feel that the
13 culture of Courtenay may change, you know, our class
14 sizes may grow, you know, we're going to do the best
15 we can with whatever we are given. That's what the
16 teachers at Courtenay have been doing, they have
17 been making lemonade with lemons.

18 The facilities aren't the best, but they do
19 the best that they can. They're going, you know, to
20 do the same thing at Stockton, and I know Stockton
21 teachers do an excellent job.

22 This Level 2 versus Level 3 thing, we have
23 got to stop looking at these like this, and we can
24 all, you know, provide the best education we can for

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1 our students. And look at everything in a much
2 better light than just, you're this, you're that, if
3 we have to come together, we have to come together,
4 and we have to get this done and do the best way
5 possible. And I think that we can get this done.
6 Thank you.

7 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, sir.

8 At this time I would like to call Corinna,
9 I think it's Chau. Corinna

10 MS. CHAU: Hi, good evening. I am a Courtenay
11 parent, and I have two students at Courtenay
12 Language Arts Center, and, actually, a few years ago
13 we came to Courtenay from a private school. So
14 Courtenay was an ideal place to go and have two
15 children that are happier now than they were at
16 private school.

17 So, the first thing that I will say is, you
18 know, there are issues at every school. Every
19 single school, my kids are in upper grades, I have
20 seen this administration and these teachers do a
21 phenomenal job working through all different kinds
22 of issues.

23 When I hear people say that Courtenay is
24 effectively closing, I almost take personal insult

1 to that, because I have been at that school, I have
2 worked with the teachers, I have worked with the
3 administrators, I think it's taking a lot of credit
4 away from the people that actually make the school
5 what it is. And the people that make what the
6 school is is your teachers, your staff, your
7 educational professionals, your administrators, and
8 your involved parents, they can do that in any
9 building.

10 I think it's a phenomenal opportunity. I
11 live in Uptown. I also will vehemently say that
12 Uptown is not the neighborhood that some people are
13 pretending or attempting to portray it as.

14 I raised my children in Uptown. We don't
15 walk down the street through gang lines. We don't
16 cross gang lines. Is it crime free? Is any
17 neighborhood in Chicago crime free? I don't know of
18 any. I lived and worked in Wicker Park in one of
19 the most, you know, in one of the best zip codes,
20 supposedly, in the City and someone got shot right
21 around the corner from us.

22 So when you live in the City, you know,
23 there's going to be crime. I have no worries that
24 my children are going to cross gang lines, like

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1 Mr. Goggins said, these two schools are walking
2 distance from each other. If anyone is coming into
3 a neighborhood right now, it's all the Courtenay
4 children coming from all kinds of neighborhoods all
5 over the City into that neighborhood. It's not
6 going to change that much.

7 Is it going to be a lot of work?
8 Absolutely. And I have absolute faith in the
9 teachers, the administrators, and the parents that
10 are going to be dedicated to this. That they can
11 take the new school, Stockton, Courtenay, and push
12 it beyond what it is now.

13 I guess that's, I know, I'm getting my 30
14 seconds. I think it's, what I have seen at CPS over
15 the last years, it's not, no offense to anyone, it's
16 not CPS that makes the school a school. It's all
17 the people that are involved at the actual building
18 and at the school. And when you have that kind of a
19 formula, which we have at Courtenay, you can take
20 that and you can transplant it somewhere else and
21 make it fantastic. So that's all I have to say.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

24 Taryn Kurth.

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1 MS. KURTH: Hi, I'm speaking today both as a
2 parent of a first grade student and as a parent LSC
3 member. First I'm going to speak and give you some
4 results of an informal survey that we gave to our
5 community and then I have a brief personal
6 statement.

7 We sent out a survey, 71 percent of the
8 respondents were parents, the rest were staff and
9 teachers. 55 different people responded. Issues
10 they said were either important or very important to
11 them. 92 percent said small class size. 76
12 percent, transition plan. 81 percent, safety. 58
13 percent, sibling admission. 65 percent, the
14 enrollment process. 72 percent, special education.
15 78 percent, principal selection, as we are in the
16 process of selecting a principal. 72 percent,
17 resources made available. 58 percent, the building
18 amenities.

19 Some comments that were made, I'll repeat
20 that were entered into the survey from respondents.
21 I think that it is important there be adequate space
22 to meet with students in small groups for both
23 academic and social reasons.

24 I really don't believe it's a good idea and

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1 in the students' interest to relocate Courtenay.
2 Let's leave Courtenay alone and let the authorities
3 find the right solutions for Stockton and rest.

4 All of these are equally important. Can the
5 LSC please find out exact information about the new
6 Stockton school. How many kids per class, how many
7 grades per class.

8 It is important that we are either a part of
9 the process from the onset, January, or relocated as
10 a citywide school, not a neighborhood school.

11 I am very supportive of the move to
12 Stockton, and I believe the relocation will bring
13 many wonderful experiences and opportunities for all
14 of our students from Courtenay and all the Stockton
15 population. It is what is best.

16 We were already deprived nearly one and a
17 half years of CPS support services for my son. Now
18 we got into Courtenay. Having to find another
19 school for him is challenging, but it has come to
20 that.

21 All aspects of the Courtenay culture are
22 very important to me. I chose Courtenay for my
23 daughter for its high academic achievement, small
24 class size, small overall student population, safe

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1 location, racial and socioeconomic diversity, among
2 other factors.

3 Moving to Stockton is not in the best
4 interests of the Courtenay and Stockton students. It
5 will be impossible to maintain class sizes as a
6 neighborhood school. For the new Courtenay to truly
7 be Courtenay, it must remain a hundred percent
8 lottery school with sibling preference.

9 My largest issue is the larger the class
10 size then the larger the chances of bullying.

11 I think all of the above are important to
12 the success of the school. I am most concerned with
13 the principal selection and a successful transition
14 plan.

15 All of these are very important to me,
16 students at Courtenay and the children of Chicago.
17 Why should we have to pick and choose them? Special
18 education is important to my daughter. Sibling
19 admission and enrollment process for my son. Class
20 size for every child in the City, since it's the
21 greatest single indicator of academic success.
22 Resources are pretty awesome too. On none of these
23 issues do I feel neutral.

24 Special education teachers need to get to

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1 the new location as soon as possible to take
2 pictures, look at handicap accessibility, classroom
3 and locker set up. We are writing goals for next
4 year, and we do not know what resources are
5 available, changing tables, prone standers,
6 positioning equipment, et cetera. Many goals will
7 need to be rewritten in September.

8 Those were comments made by a variety of
9 respondents. I see my time is up, I don't know if
10 you will indulge me in a brief personal comment?

11 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Go ahead.

12 MS. KURTH: Okay. I am a parent of a first
13 grade student at Courtenay and an LSC member and I
14 support the relocation proposal. We chose Courtenay
15 because of the intimate atmosphere and exceptional
16 academics, and we have not been disappointed.

17 We have an exceptional faculty and
18 administration who are dedicated to our students and
19 academic rigor, and I am excited we will be able to
20 bring that to more students in a larger facility
21 with amenities that weren't possible in our current
22 building.

23 I am excited to see my daughter and her
24 classmates perform in an auditorium on a real stage,

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1 to gain hands-on experience in a proper science lab,
2 and participate in sports in a gymnasium instead of
3 a partitioned cafeteria. I do not think my child's
4 education will be diluted because it will happen in
5 a different building, if anything, it will be
6 enhanced by the additional resources that will be
7 available.

8 A large part of the Courtenay culture is the
9 value we place on small class sizes and inclusion of
10 and respect for all students. After meeting some of
11 the teachers and parents at Stockton, I believe this
12 is something that Courtenay and Stockton share in
13 common.

14 Historically, our students have been
15 admitted not through selective enrollment, but
16 blindly, regardless of ability, and our teachers are
17 exceptional at assessing the strengths and
18 weaknesses of the individual student and finding
19 creative ways to keep students engaged.

20 I am aware that Stockton is being closed
21 as an underutilized school, and not an
22 underperforming school. I have met some of their
23 talented and passionate teachers as well, and I
24 personally am hopeful that many of them will be able

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1 to remain as part of the Courtenay community. Thank
2 you.

3 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

4 Calling on Wendy Katten. Wendy.

5 MS. KATTEN: Good evening. I am with a parent
6 group called Raise Your Hand, and I am not a parent
7 at either of these schools, my son is actually in an
8 overcrowded school down the road, but I am here
9 because I have been on 22 walk-throughs of these
10 buildings, and Stockton is one of them.

11 I am not here to oppose or support this
12 action, but I'm here because I am really worried
13 about the lack of facts at this point in the game,
14 where you're weighing in, and we have sort of a very
15 broad, we don't have, we should have the floor
16 plans. Because I have been to that school and the
17 CPS space utilization formula does not allow for
18 schools with high special education populations.

19 I'm sorry, Mr. Felton? Mr. Felton's boss
20 admitted that, Todd Babbitz, to the Chicago
21 Education Facilities Task Force. We thought that
22 they would then address that issue, and we have
23 heard nothing. It's been over a month.

24 So you can't look at two schools, and,

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1 again, I am not here to say this is a good thing or
2 not, but as I have gone to schools across the City,
3 and I have looked at the utilization numbers, they
4 absolutely do not match what you find in the
5 buildings many times.

6 I can promise you that. I can invite you
7 on some tours, but Stockton, I just wish there was a
8 more honest conversation at this point. When you
9 have schools that have 30 percent special ed, that
10 means you have to have a bunch of rooms that hold 8
11 to 15 students.

12 And so I do think that Stockton will
13 probably have increased class size and/or loss of
14 program space, and I just wish all of the parents on
15 both sides had honest information. I don't know if
16 you're going to be presiding over other hearings,
17 but I think if anyone making these decisions can
18 come here and just look at the emotions and the, we
19 think we can work it out. Parents deserve to go in
20 to school and see what will be lost. How will class
21 size be impacted? It's not just all wonderful and
22 it's going to work out. There's actually not room
23 for a thousand students at Stockton, if they're
24 going to be merged with a school that has, I mean

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1 they already, it's 30 percent special ed population
2 means I think there are like 8 rooms that have 8 to
3 15 kids.

4 CPS will tell you that that doesn't impact
5 the overall map, but it's just so untrue that, I
6 have seen it with my own eyes, and I wish more
7 people would go into these buildings to see how this
8 works out. I'll finish.

9 I want to say, in addition, another school
10 in this network is getting an addition and they're
11 at a hundred percent utilized. The formula allows
12 for mass overcrowding, I can promise you that too.

13 It allows for a building to be efficient
14 with 36 children in every room. This is not what we
15 want across the City. I can promise you, if you're
16 doing this, there are going to be a lot of bad
17 decisions, and that's Bell School. It is a school
18 with options programs wherein other parts of the
19 city, kids are being move around with desk chairs,
20 with options programs.

21 This network needs to have an honest
22 conversation. Why wouldn't you put options programs
23 in an underutilized building instead of closing it?

24 Two schools in our network are getting

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1 additions. And so we have a lot of, people are
2 saying, oh, you know, there's change, we got to, no,
3 no, we're going to have overcrowding at a lot of our
4 schools and loss of program space.

5 Again, it's up to the parents if they want
6 this, but someone, they deserve a floor plan at
7 least, to see what it's going to look like. Thank
8 you.

9 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

10 Katherine Reed.

11 MS. REED: Good evening. My statement is simple
12 tonight, Courtenay is not truly being relocated, if
13 its hundred percent lottery model is abandoned,
14 we're a school that welcomes children city-wide,
15 whose neighborhood schools are not a good choice for
16 them. I wish we had been given the forum prior to
17 this proposal being written, so we could have
18 collaborated on a model that best serves the
19 children of Courtenay and Stockton.

20 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

21 Keti Tuthorn.

22 MS. TUTHORN: Hi, my name is Keti Tuthorn and
23 I'm a parent of a student at Courtenay. Of course
24 Courtenay will make due, but the societal issues

1 that impact Stockton won't disappear with Courtenay
2 at the helm. I believe that that insults Stockton's
3 current faculty and staff that is doing a phenomenal
4 job at their school.

5 I am here to fight for the integrity of
6 Courtenay. I believe that Courtenay actually stands
7 as an example of how CPS is violating its own
8 guidelines. Courtenay is a high performing, well
9 utilized school. It is ineligible to be included on
10 CPS' proposed closure plans.

11 To say that you're not closing Courtenay is
12 semantics and rhetorics. If you close the school,
13 shift the students into a different school and
14 neighborhood and change the enrollment policy, you
15 are, in fact, closing the school.

16 Welcoming school is a factitious definition
17 created to try to fit Courtenay into a plan that was
18 originally unintended for them, CPS' promise impact
19 to schools relocate to one of the same or a higher
20 level. Again, this is not the same with Courtenay.

21 Courtenay was into the included in the
22 February 2013 actions list, therefore, we were
23 denied community forum to defend our school, the way
24 CPS promised. The basis for the closing list

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1 extended from December 1st to March 31st, was based
2 on the need to obtain community feedback.

3 I can only then assume that CPS does not
4 want Chicago to know that they are closing a rising
5 star school in a safe neighborhood that allows
6 city-wide admission. In short, by closing
7 Courtenay, you're shutting down a valuable resource
8 that is available to all of Chicago, strong
9 neighborhood, strong schools, yet here is an example
10 of one that's slated to be destroyed.

11 Removing Courtenay does not benefit the
12 public's interest. What would benefit Chicago is to
13 expand Courtenay and do it responsibly and not in
14 haste.

15 For instance, if you're going to close down
16 Stewart, you can actually divide Stewart between
17 Brennan and Stockton. That would not overcrowd
18 either school. You can also co-locate Courtenay.
19 You can relocate it to a nearby empty facility and
20 allow for the 200 students on its wait list to be
21 enrolled.

22 You can also expand Courtenay pre-K to 12,
23 like Disney 2 is. I guarantee you there would be a
24 line outside the door for admissions.

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1 There should not be a rush to close down a
2 city-wide school that wasn't proposed to be closed
3 to begin with.

4 And for the people that say Uptown is safe,
5 why are your kids attending Courtenay?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Courtenay is a better
7 school academically.

8 MS. TUTHORN: Courtenay is a good school
9 academically, but again, it is -- okay, everyone is
10 throwing around, you know, their degree. Okay. I
11 have a Master's in clinical psychology, you cannot
12 take away parental support, parental support is one
13 of the best indications of, you know, performing
14 students.

15 If you have a student that is enrolled in
16 Courtenay, the parents naturally had to go through
17 extra steps in order to get them enrolled in that
18 school, that means automatically that they are more
19 involved.

20 Instead of right sizing schools, as it was
21 said before, why don't we talk TIFF reform. 29.5
22 million dollars diverted from our schools were given
23 to developers who invest in an upscale skyscraper in
24 River North.

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1 There's an estimated 250 million dollars a
2 year that taxpayers provide that would actually be
3 put into schools, instead of diverting it into a
4 TIFF fund. And, again, what about the CME's tax
5 break, we should allow them to tax all transactions
6 and we can use it to pay for the schools.

7 And, lastly, if Chicago schools are so
8 underutilized, why is UNO, the largest charter
9 organization, lobbying for money so they can open up
10 more schools. If we don't have enough children to
11 fill the buildings we already have now, what is the
12 point of building more charter schools?

13 Again, we can merge Stewart with Stockton,
14 Brennan. Stockton can stay in their neighborhood
15 school. They will not become overcrowded. It will
16 not kill the CPS' finances to keep Courtenay as is
17 until we can find a responsible way to either expand
18 Courtenay or to co-locate it somewhere. Thank you.

19 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

20 John Meadows.

21 MR. MEADOWS: Pass.

22 MR. HEARING OFFICER: John James Humpherys.

23 MR. HUMPHERYS: Your Honor, I am happy to be
24 here tonight. I didn't plan on speaking, but I

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1 appreciate this opportunity.

2 There's a lot of passion from the parents
3 here, and I appreciate all of their comments. I
4 appreciate the work of our LSC to make this a
5 process that works for everybody, and that they will
6 continue to make it a process that will work for
7 everybody.

8 I, like all the parents, I think Courtenay,
9 including all the ones that have spoken tonight. We
10 support the CPS' goals to make a better educational
11 environment for our kids, and for the families in
12 Uptown and for the families in Courtenay, we want
13 schools that are better utilized, just like CPS
14 does, and we want better resources for our kids.

15 I think, Craig Benes, you have a big task
16 ahead of you. I think that there are some
17 significant impediments as the goals of CPS apply
18 specifically to Courtenay.

19 The first significant impediment I see is
20 one that's legal in nature. And I think if you look
21 at the CPS proposal longitudinally, from a time
22 perspective, last fall's forums were granted to
23 schools that were affected by these school actions,
24 any school that was subject to a school action, and

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1 we all knew that, CPS knew it, but in December
2 Courtenay parents were given a head fake by CPS when
3 they sent a letter to all parents saying that
4 Courtenay was not, congratulations, Courtenay isn't
5 one of the schools that is going to be closed.

6 I echo the comments that have been made
7 tonight, that is a disingenuous letter being sent by
8 CPS. Speaking firsthand, it was deceptive in
9 nature. Courtenay isn't being closed, according to
10 CPS semantics. Like others that have spoken
11 tonight, I do believe that it's being closed,
12 fundamentally. Under the law there is a concept of
13 where you can, you can own something, but if
14 somebody takes certain actions, in a manner that
15 deprives you of your use of that something, the
16 court can deem that thing to be constructively
17 repossessed by that person. So they call it
18 constructive dispossession of your property.

19 And here I don't see many differences,
20 where all that's left under the law scenario is you
21 have property by name only.

22 Courtenay is being constructively closed.
23 You have a school that is being merged with another
24 school, it's losing its building. It's, a lot of

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1 the parents don't know for sure if they can send
2 their kids there. We understand that it will be a
3 neighborhood school, not necessarily a magnet
4 cluster, I think, which has been thrown around a few
5 times.

6 And we think that it's -- allow me to
7 conclude, if that's okay.

8 We think that the process by which CPS has
9 gone about its proposal has been disingenuous to
10 Courtenay parents. We're being deprived of our
11 fundamental right to a forum, according to the
12 statute, and we request that, according to the
13 remedies under the statute, that this decision be
14 postponed until the next academic year.

15 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Eugene DeRamos.

16 MR. DeRAMOS: Good evening.

17 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Good evening, sir.

18 MR. DeRAMOS: My name is Gene DeRamos, I'm a
19 parent at Courtenay, and let me say that I support
20 the initiative, with reservations, but support it
21 nonetheless.

22 Frankly, I did not plan to speak tonight
23 because I don't have prepared remarks, but something
24 was said that got my juices going, and I would like

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1 to address it.

2 But before we do that, let me address a
3 couple of other things. Courtenay has 15 and a half
4 classrooms, and it has 34 percent of its kids are
5 special ed. Stockton has 44 and a half classrooms,
6 and maybe 30 percent of its kids are special ed.

7 We somehow seem to get by with those ratios
8 at Courtenay. And I suspect we'll get by even
9 better with those ratios at Stockton, with so many
10 more classrooms. I'm befuddled, quite frankly, why
11 we think that's going to be such an impediment, when
12 we have shown we can do, proportionately, we have
13 more special ed kids than Stockton, and we, and
14 about a third of the classroom space, and we have
15 figured out a way to do this.

16 Perhaps it's because a lot of our special
17 ed kids are blended in with the regular classrooms.
18 I don't know if they do that at Stockton or not, but
19 we tend to blend our kids in to the extent that they
20 can be.

21 And if they don't do that at Stockton, and
22 we can, then maybe we'll bring something very
23 positive to that environment, because I think that's
24 very helpful to the kids who can be blended with

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1 others and move forward.

2 The other thing I want to mention very,
3 very briefly is this idea of magnet cluster. If I
4 understood, and I forget Benjamin's last name, but
5 when you were reading your remarks, were you not
6 describing a magnet cluster school or something very
7 similar to it, in terms of how it works?

8 MR. FELTON: So Courtenay's current enrollment
9 procedures are very similar to magnet cluster
10 enrollment.

11 MR. DeRAMOS: And is it true those are going to
12 continue?

13 MR. FELTON: Yes.

14 MR. DeRAMOS: That's what I thought.

15 MR. FELTON: So Courtenay will absorb Stockton's
16 (inaudible) in proposal.

17 MR. DeRAMOS: Yes.

18 MR. FELTON: But the rest of the enrollment
19 policy will remain unchanged.

20 MR. DeRAMOS: Yes. And I am a resident of
21 Uptown and we have three schools there, and frankly,
22 I know that all three are half empty, because Uptown
23 simply does not have the kids to fill up a school,
24 let alone three schools.

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1 The typical neighborhood in Chicago has
2 about 24, 25 percent of its kids, population is
3 school age. Uptown has about 12 percent of its
4 population is school age. We have about half the
5 ratio of kids than most neighborhoods. Partly
6 because they have a lot of DINKS, double income, no
7 kids. We have a lot of elderly people along the
8 lake front who don't put pressure on the schools.
9 And, frankly, we have a lot of gays, who don't put
10 pressure on the schools.

11 So we basically have empty buildings and
12 they're going to remain empty until people start to
13 move in or the DINKS start having kids. So as a
14 practical matter, as a practical matter, what Uptown
15 will produce in terms of enrollment will be far less
16 than a third of what the population of the school
17 will be over time, that's just my assessment and my
18 opinion.

19 I am supposed to conclude. I'll say one
20 final thing, and this is what really got me up, and
21 this is this idea about safety. And I wanted to
22 respond particularly to the young woman who said
23 somebody got shot in front of the school, I guess
24 years ago, and I don't, I can't say whether it

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1 happened or not. I am not aware of it. But whether
2 it did or not, the thing that really bothered me is
3 this notion that somehow the little kids can't come
4 into the schools or can't be brought into this
5 environment, it's going to be unsafe, the six year
6 olds, five year olds and what have you. I think
7 that's amounts to slander, absolute slander on the
8 kids that go to Stockton, and I want it to stop.
9 It's the second time I have heard you say it. Stop
10 it.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is it untrue?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, it's true because I
13 worked in the school.

14 MR. HEARING OFFICER: I'm going to ask both of
15 you at this time, please, cut it off. Go to another
16 topic.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

18 MR. DeRAMOS: I'll tell you who I am in a
19 minute.

20 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Please.

21 MR. DeRAMOS: I'm finished, sir, but that
22 disturbs me.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It disturbs me too.

24 MR. DeRAMOS: And not one shred of proof or one

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1 piece of evidence that any Stockton kid has ever
2 been hurt.

3 MR. HEARING OFFICER: All right, sir, thank you
4 so much.

5 Corinna Chau. Corinna Chau.

6 MS. CHAU: I already spoke.

7 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Corinna, is it Chau?

8 MS. CHAU: I already spoke. Do you want me to
9 speak again?

10 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Maybe I'm going backwards
11 a little here, but I thought you were on the list.
12 I guess you were on the list twice somehow.

13 Why don't we do this.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: One of the folks who was
15 not here at the beginning did show up.

16 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Okay. I would like at
17 this time, those who had signed in and were out of
18 the room probably when I called your name, if you
19 would come forward. Young lady.

20 MS. HUNTER: Yes sir.

21 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Your name is?

22 MS. HUNTER: Tonya Hunter.

23 MR. HEARING OFFICER: And spell your last name.

24 MS. HUNTER: H-u-n-t-e-r.

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1 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

2 MS. HUNTER: Yes, sir.

3 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Please proceed.

4 MS. HUNTER: I'm sorry, let me get my notes
5 here. I would just like to say thank you for
6 allowing us to have this opportunity, pretty much a
7 made member of this process, because I don't have,
8 my children are both grown, and I don't have a
9 vested interest in, personally, with the school, but
10 I have a vested interest with the schools because I
11 am concerned. I really felt bad for everyone here
12 and I have a question to ask, and the question is,
13 is the power really with the people or is it with
14 the administration? Because if it's with the
15 administration, then I think I can feel safe in
16 saying that we're pretty much wasting our time, and
17 so can we just live in a bit of realty here, as far
18 as where the power lies, I mean is the train already
19 in motion, running.

20 Because if it is, then I guess the question
21 on the floor for me would be do we have any data,
22 because the data that I have read has not supported
23 that school closings has benefited children overall.

24 And I am not saying that everything is, you

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1 know, what I am saying is altogether right, but I
2 just want to find out is there a low or high level
3 of probability that the parents will get what they
4 want. Because it doesn't seem like it's possible,
5 at this point, but is there any level of
6 probability, honestly, that this train can stop
7 moving and maybe the parents can somehow get what
8 they want.

9 I guess my concern, when you talk about, I
10 worked in CPS and I know with IEPs, individual
11 educational plans, when you have special ed
12 children, and the one thing that they tend not to do
13 well is with change, and stabilization is very, very
14 important, so I'm just concerned with the children.
15 Yes, sir, I see, yes, sir, thank you.

16 The children who have individualized
17 educational plans, is there specifically a plan to
18 ensure that those plans will be implemented and not
19 interrupted, because I don't think parents are
20 really fascinated with black ink and white paper.
21 And I think that's where we're at right now, which
22 is writing and writing and talking. And I am just
23 concerned that, I'm hopeful that we can get, you
24 know, what our children need at this point, and

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1 that's my real concern. Thank you for your time.

2 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you.

3 Anybody else that has not taken the mic?

4 And your name, sir.

5 (Whereupon the Speaker spoke
6 through an Interpreter.)

7 MR. VAZQUEZ: Ignacio Vazquez.

8 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Okay. Ignacio, we called
9 you earlier, thank you for coming up. Please
10 proceed.

11 MR. VAZQUEZ: Truly, I am not in agreement that
12 they close the school, because I have two kids that
13 go there, and they have progressed a lot there, and
14 so I don't agree with them closing it.

15 And since they're going to change them
16 over, I don't think they're going to get the same
17 amount of attention with all these kids. I just
18 simply don't think they're going to get the same
19 amount of attention.

20 And last year they told us that they were
21 going to close, and then we weren't going to close,
22 and now we're all surprised, because it looks like
23 they're going to close our school.

24 And I want to thank all the teachers, they

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1 all have done a really good job. Now it looks like
2 they're going to close it. I don't know if they're
3 all going to be there, so they have all done good
4 work, and I want to thank them.

5 The kids aren't going to get the same
6 attention they're getting now, because there's going
7 to be more kids. That's it. Thank you.

8 MR. HEARING OFFICER: And thank you, Ignacio.

9 Do we have anyone else in our audience who
10 has had not had the opportunity, after signing in --
11 did you sign in, sir?

12 MR. GONZALEZ: No, I did not.

13 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Come on up anyway. We
14 have a couple of minutes. Come on up.

15 Good evening.

16 MR. GONZALEZ: Good evening. My name is Jesus
17 Gonzalez, my son and my stepson goes to Stockton.
18 We have a lot of lacking information on Stockton in
19 regard to the process. Very little we have known
20 about the merger. I speak several languages, and
21 none of the language that I know says a merger of
22 two schools with means one school takes over, but
23 that's what it looks like to me. I speak four
24 languages, and none of those say the same thing.

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1 So, I'm sorry, to me, it's taking over.

2 I have a four year old boy in pre-school,
3 and he is doing very well. And when someone say
4 that different levels, like Level 3, Level 2, I
5 think my son should be in Level 1, because he reads,
6 writes, and he's in pre-K, only four years old,
7 thanks to the help of the teachers at Stockton.

8 And I am sure Courtenay is a very good
9 school, and I met with several students, I'm sorry,
10 teachers and parents from Stockton, and I am sure
11 it's very, very good. But I don't think it would
12 be, the takeover would be the best for Stockton.

13 I have my stepson with me, he's a very good
14 student at Stockton. My niece just moved from
15 Naperville to Stockton, very good schools in
16 Naperville, and she find it to be fine for her.
17 Security, someone mentioned, I went to Truman
18 College, and I always feel safe in Uptown for the
19 past 24 years.

20 So I would like to get more information
21 through the principals in both of schools, if this
22 takeover could continue, I just would like more
23 Stockton parents to be participants in the
24 takeovers, in the takeover of Stockton.

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1 Because Stockton will disappear, the more
2 and more I hear Stockton will not continue to be
3 Stockton. Thanks.

4 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Sir, before you leave,
5 would you write your name on a piece of paper and
6 bring it up to the Court Reporter. I would like it
7 to be a part of the record.

8 MR. GONZALEZ: Okay.

9 MR. HEARING OFFICER: Thank you so much. All
10 right. I think that we have now heard from all of
11 those who wished to address this forum. And I think
12 the hour is probably getting closer to 10:00.

13 Does anybody have the exact time?

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 9:38.

15 MR. HEARING OFFICER: 9:38. While we have a
16 couple of minutes, I wish to thank you, all of you
17 who have taken the time from, let's put it this way,
18 things that you might enjoy doing better than
19 sitting in this room. But your presence here has
20 not only been informative, it's been inspiring.

21 I had the honor of being called upon last
22 year to preside over a hearing, and I had some very,
23 what I considered, thoughts when I left that hearing
24 that I didn't harbor when I walked in the door, and

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1 that's what happened to me this evening.

2 Much of what you say is very enlightening
3 and eventually you'll have a chance, probably in two
4 or three weeks, to see the final product.

5 I wish you well. I know you're all
6 concerned, and I think that we share a common
7 interest, and that is to see that our children are
8 properly educated and properly cared for.

9 So with that thought in mind, I wish you
10 well. Be safe and God bless you.

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) ss:
3 COUNTY OF COOK)

4 DENNIS M. HARTNETT, being first duly sworn,
5 deposes and says that he is a Certified Shorthand
6 Reporter in Cook County, Illinois, and reporting
7 said forum;

8 That he reported in shorthand and
9 thereafter transcribed the foregoing hearing;

10 That the within and foregoing transcript is
11 true, accurate and complete and contains all the
12 comments which was received.

13
14
15
16 Dennis M. Hartnett
17 DENNIS M. HARTNETT, CSR
18 TOOMEY REPORTING
19 205 West Randolph Street
20 Suite 1230
21 Chicago, Illinois 60606
22 April 18, 2013
23
24

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