

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE HEARING OFFICER

RE: THE PROPOSED CO-LOCATION OF
THE NEW NOBLE STREET CHARTER-
ORANGE HIGH SCHOOL
WITH BOWEN HIGH SCHOOL

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2013

COMMENCED AT 11:30 A.M.

HON. JAMES F. HENRY
JUDGE OF CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY (RET.)
AN INDEPENDENT HEARING OFFICER

HON. JAMES F. HENRY (RET.)
RESOLUTE SYSTEMS, INC.
(800) 776-6060 EXT. 163

DATE OF SUBMISSION
MAY 2, 2013

REPORT OF HEARING OFFICER

This represents the independent report of The Hearing officer Hon. Judge James F. Henry (Ret.) a former Judge of The Circuit Court of Cook County. The hearing was timely commenced and all interested parties were given an opportunity to present their opinions and suggestions. Also, the Hearing Officer advised all present to transmit written comments to The CPS by 5:00 p.m., Monday April 22, 2013 if they wished.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the hearing was to receive public comments from both representatives of CPS, specifically Ms. Jaculin Jerman-Milovich an attorney for The Chicago Public Board of Education's Law Department; Cory Davis, Director of Capital Renovation and New Construction; and Ashley Richardson, a Portfolio Planner for Chicago Public Schools who has obtained a Masters of Education Policy and Management from the Harvard Graduate School of Management.

Member of Local School Councils, parents of the schools' students, member of the staffs, the Principals, students and any other interested party were invited to participate.

Notice of The Public Hearings were served on the parents, teachers, staff, Principals and members of the Local School Councils of the affected schools via U.S. Mail, as required by Illinois Law and/or applicable policies of the Boards Guidelines and procedure. Notice by Publication was also served by publication in The Chicago Sun Times (CPS Exhibits in evidence Exh. 3,4,5 and 6).

Additional written comments were in fact timely received after the meeting by 5:00 p.m. April 22, 2013 and will be made part of this report.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

* **AMALIA MICHELLE NIETO-GOMEZ:** She is the Executive Director of the Alliance of The Southeast (ASE). This organization is multicultural, interfaith alliance of churches, schools, non-profits and other organizations in the South Chicago and the East Side Community. Bowen H.S. is one of the partners.

She indicated disappointment that her group had not received a notice. She was also unaware that any actions were to be considered by the Board regarding High Schools.

Most importantly, in the last two years, four schools were consolidated into one for Bowen H.S. There are other programs, including after school programs and a possible art program in which Bowen is the only available space that can accommodate the ambitious standards set by the arts education plan in the district. If a charter school does come into the school these programs and plans should not be interrupted. See Exh. 2 attached: Important.

* **DAINA DUMBRY**S: She is a science teacher at Bowen and was part of the consolidation that previously took place at the school. This turned into a devastating event and they didn't understand why Miss Byrd-Bennett is proceeding with this proposal since the school has recently gone through devastating changes.

The school is functioning better under the leadership of Principal Kirmes. A new early childhood program is planned for space proposed to be used by Noble and when the program was running before the school was awarded a special award through Chicago Ready to learn funding. A new Grant for the program is expected from CPS.

Finally, she reiterated the importance of the arts program into Bowen to grow the current school which is blossoming. She feels the Charter School would take precedence over Bowen and ultimately see the closing of Bowen and an overtaking of the facility by Noble.

* **MARIA ESTRADA**: She is a mentor of the Local School Council and has two sons attending Bowen. The recent addition of four schools was a disaster and now to bring in another school defies recent experience.

Finally, there is another charter school in the area (Epic High School).

* **DANIEL ESTRADA**: He is the LCS Chairman at Bowen. Under his involvement and leadership he tried to facilitate the recent consolidation of the four school into Bowen this turned into a disaster. He stated that he encouraged the Community to try to make it work but it failed.

Under a new principal the school is prospering but now the community is upset because the new proposal is interrupting the school activities and Noble representatives are "walking around

with ready made plans interrupting classes.” He wished he had more prior notices and an opportunity to discuss the plan and be able to update the parents whose children currently attend Bowen. He feels strongly that his credibility with this school community has been severely impacted.

* M.E.: He is a student, a junior at Bowen, number one in his class and student representative for the Local School Counsel. Responses from his fellow students of all years was negative. They felt threatened and could not understand why the proposed co-location was taking place two years after the consolidation where almost half of his class from the CDA had already left.

Finally, he indicated that some of the students at Bowen were contemplating doing rebellious things to disrupt the entry of new students. He did not agree with those comments.

* SYDNEY BROOKS: Mr. Brooks indicated strong support for maintaining Bowen as one school. He is a member of the community and expressed his understanding that other Charter Schools in the community are experiencing growing problems and students are leaving those schools although they were successful when they first opened. He reiterated what the previous speaker the student member of The LCS stated that the potential for problems between the students is real. His nephew had attended one of those Charter Schools and withdrew and his son did not attend the public schools because of safety problems.

Bowen high school is making progress and to project that the Charter school will have 900 students in from four years while Bowen will stay at 400-500 is an unknowable projection. Bowen should stay a free standing school and let them stay on the course they are on.

* DAVE VANCE: Mr. Vance is a local school council member. Based upon the prior consolidation being a disaster Bowen has settled into a calm school and not being disrupted.

He also reiterated that Barbara Byed-Bennett has stated in press release that any school “that had recently undergone a significant school action would be taken off the closing list.”

Although Bowen is not on a closing list, the negative sharing of the school facility after the recent experience should be given consideration to maintain Bowen as one school.

* **FRANK HORTON:** Current Board Member at Bowen. Employed for 35 years with CPS, he has been a teacher, counselor, assistant principal and finally a principal.

His first concern was the allocation of space. Because a special needs student would require space where there might be fewer children in that classroom. This is something that must be taken into consideration.

The second issue is whether Noble will pay rent to the Board of Education for their space. This was addressed by a representative from Noble who indicated they did pay the full cost even if some of the Noble students had withdrawn during the school year.

The third issue was some of the co-schools or small schools that had failed at Orr, DuSable and South Shore and Bowen. Having different schools in one building would be a failure. And the alienation of those kids in different schools is going to result in a safety problem.

* **RONALD JACKSON:** Mr. Jackson is a member of the NAACP and a supporter of no school closings. He felt that CPS had not followed State Law and adopt a 10 year plan for school utilization as required by State Law and the Chicago Educational Task Force.

* **VINCENT GAY:** Principal for the Noble Orange Campus at Bowen. Mr. Gay presented an overview of how the Noble Charter School operates. The school is non-selective and no fees associated with attending the school. It operates as a non-profit and there is a sizable waiting list to get into the building. 90% of their students go to College each year. He hopes the parents can come together and do what's right for the kids.

Further, Mr. Gay stated that 80% of the kids that live in that area are not attending Bowen. 648 high school aged live in the attendance zone and only 80 attend Bowen. He feels there are enough students in the area to support both schools.

* **JACQUELINE SAMUEL:** She is the director of The New Community Program Director at Claretian and Associates located in South Chicago. The organization oversees a quality of life plan written for the community in 2007 through investments by the Local Initiative Support Corporation. She further provided information that on the first day of Safe Passage three years ago, there were two shootings on the first and second day of that Safe Passage. Clearly the consolidation

didn't work and since the turnaround violent incidents have been reduced by 97 percent. Also, the truancy rate has dramatically declined.

* **MS. JENNIFER KIRMES:** Ms. Kirmes is the Principal of Bowen H.S. She initially commented on the July 2011 consolidation of 4 small schools into one which was called the new Millennium School of Health. She was the Principal of that school. The name of the school was changed back to Bowen. She is fully committed to the school.

The proposed co-location with Noble Charter will also be a challenge but she feels that there could be potentially new opportunities. Prior to her coming to Bowen there had been six different Principals over a very short period of time.

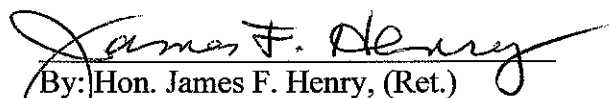
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the strong support of the Principal, parents, students, teacher and community groups, The Board should strongly consider keeping Bowen as a stand alone high school. Particularly because the last attempt had such controversial and difficult results particularly at the high school level. Give the school a chance to continue to grow and excel.

All participants in the hearing are on the same path with visible improvement, great promise for the future and less potential for violence.

1. The CEO complied with the requirements of 105 ILCS 5/34-230 and the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Action.

Submitted this 2nd day of May, 2013


By: Hon. James F. Henry, (Ret.)
Hearing Officer
Resolute Systems
(800) 776-6060 Ext. 163

Testimony by Amalia NietoGomez
Executive Director, Alliance of the SouthEast (ASE)
CPS Hearing on the Co-location proposal for Bowen High School
Chicago, April 20, 2013

I testify as the Executive Director for the Alliance of the SouthEast (ASE). ASE is a multicultural, interfaith alliance consisting of churches, schools, businesses, and community organizations that prioritize grassroots participation to address the challenges facing our neighborhoods in SouthEast Chicago. Our mission is to build the capacity of leaders, organizers, and associations that carry out community change by impacting decision makers and winning real improvements in our neighborhoods. ASE is currently made of 17 partner organizations, representing thousands of people in South Chicago and the East Side.

I am here today to speak about the proposal for the co-location of Noble Charter School on the Bowen campus. Bowen High School is one of our partners. This process has been very frustrating. We were originally told that high schools were taken off the table and would not be closed. Then, this plan was announced after all the hearings for the school closing had taken place. The hearings that then took place, took place at another school, not Bowen. One of the hearings took place on April 15, tax day. This hearing is downtown, and not in the neighborhood. This process has not been transparent, nor has there been a serious effort to gain parent or student input.

Furthermore, the guidelines that were established for the reconsideration for school closings have been completely ignored in this process for the co-location at Bowen High School. The guidelines were as follows:

1. No recent major actions
2. Other programs or uses for the school
3. Significant academic improvement

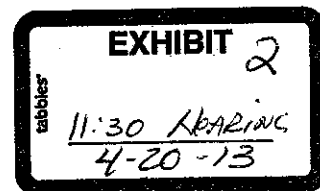
First, Bowen has had a recent action. Bowen was consolidated from four schools into one school within the last two years. This was a major process and many students were disillusioned from this process. To go through this again, would completely demoralize students.

Second, Bowen campus is utilized for other programs.

- Bowen has after school programs and currently receives an investment from the 21st Century Community schools Program.
- Additionally, Bowen was approved for an Early Childhood Child Care Center as well as an Early Childhood Program, to train students in early childhood education and to give them hands on experience in the child care center.
- Bowen has also applied to become a Magnet Art Center, as a number of feeder schools have art programs.
- Bowen High School is also where our organization holds Youth Leadership Council meetings.

Third, Bowen High Schools has had significant academic improvements.

- Attendance has increase 10% in the past year alone. This has been a result of focused staff efforts to engage students.
- An additional 20% more freshmen are on track to graduate compared to the last school year. This means that 90% of this year's freshmen are on track to graduate.



- An additional 40% of sophomores are on track to graduate compared to the last school year. This means that 90% of this year's sophomores are on track to graduate.

I urge the CPS board to vote against the co-location of the Noble Charter School on the Bowen Campus. Bowen has made significant strides in academic performance in the last year alone. One reason is the leadership of the new principal, Jennifer Kirmes. The other is that Bowen has undergone a transformation due to input from the community. Additionally, the Board needs to consider the other uses of the campus space, especially the fact that a new daycare center is to be placed in the school. Moreover, the Bowen community has already undergone a major action, and should not be considered for yet another major action in such a short time frame, especially given that there are current students attending the school that were around for the last major action- the consolidation of schools on campus.

I urge CPS to give Bowen a chance to continue its transformation. I also encourage CPS to invest in Bowen and the students. I urge them to approve the Art Magnet School program and to continue to support of current programing, including the 21 Century Community Schools program, the Early Childhood Program and Early Childhood Care Center.

Attorney Jaculyn Jerman
Officer Jim Henry

Hearing

Chicago Public Schools Public Hearing
Considering the Co-Location of New Noble 2
Into Bowen High School

Saturday, April 20, 2013
11:30am-1:30pm
Room 1550

1	Annalia Michelle	Partner	Yes
2	Daina Dumbrys	Teacher	Yes
3	Maria Estrada	Parent/LSC	Yes
4	Melissa Estrada	Student	No
5	Christopher Estrada	Student	No
6	Daniel Estrada	Parent/LSC/Chairmen	Yes
7	Michael Estrada	Student/LSC Rep.	Yes
8	Sydney Brooks	Community Member	Yes
9	David Vance	LSC	Yes
10	Frank Horton	LSC	Yes
11	Rosalyn Major-Cobwell	Parent/LSC	No
12	Ronald Jackson	Advocate	Yes
13	Vincent Gay	Principal Noble	Yes
14	Jennifer Kirnes	Principal Bowen	No
15	Jacqueline Samuel	Community Member Bowen	Yes
16	Arthur Slater	Network Chief	No
17			
18			
19			
20			