

# **CHICAGO BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**In Re: Public Hearing to Consider the Proposed  
Closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School**

**Report of Richard E. Neville  
Independent Hearing Officer  
April 25, 2013**

## **Introduction**

The undersigned was appointed to serve as an “Independent Hearing Officer”, as that term is used in 105 ILCS 5/34-230. One of the duties of the Hearing Officer is to conduct a public hearing on the proposed school actions. That hearing was convened at the Chicago Board of Education Offices at 125 South Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois at 8:00 pm on Thursday, April 25, 2013. At the hearing, public comments were received from concerned persons, including representatives of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Chicago Public Schools, parents of students (and students themselves) and the principal, assistant principal and teachers of the Matthew A. Henson Elementary School (Henson), representatives of the Chicago Teachers’ Union, neighborhood residents, elected officials, representatives of community organizations and members of the public.

## **Summary of Proposed Actions**

The Chicago Public School District (CPS) faces a \$1 Billion deficit, which makes it difficult to provide the robust supports and services that all children deserve. Currently, the CPS is financing schools and buildings with a capacity for 511,000 students while only serving 403,000 students. This utilization crisis is spreading our already scarce financial resources extremely thin.

To address this crisis, CPS is proposing a plan to address underutilization based on significant input from partners including parents, students, teachers, principals, community and faith leaders, the independent Commission on School Utilization, the Chicago Police Department and the Department of Family and Support Services.

The Plan proposes to close schools that are underutilized, according to CPS, in accordance with the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Action. This decision would include the closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School based on the underutilization of that school.

Henson is a neighborhood elementary school located at 1326 South Avers Ave, in the Austin--North Lawndale Elementary Network of CPS. Henson currently serves 252 students in PE, PK & K-8<sup>th</sup> grades. CPS is proposing that Henson be closed based on the school's underutilization.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools has a Draft Transition Plan for the Proposed Closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School. This action, if approved, will welcome returning students of Henson at Charles Evans Hughes (Hughes) Elementary School, which has sufficient space and can offer a quality academic environment. Hughes is located at 4247 West 15th Street.

Henson's geographic attendance area boundary will be reassigned to welcoming school Hughes, as well as Theodore Herzl Elementary School (Herzl) located at 3711 West Douglas Blvd. and Daniel Webster Elementary School (Webster) located at 4055 W. Arthington St. As a result of this action, all returning Henson students will attend Hughes Elementary. This means that Hughes, Herzl or Webster, depending on the student's home address, will be the new neighborhood school for students living in the Henson boundary who are not currently enrolled at Henson.

Families will also have the opportunity to take advantage of other educational options offered by CPS.

Henson and Hughes families interested in enrolling their student at another school can apply via the re-opened Options for Knowledge process. Applications were provided in the transition packets sent home

and can be obtained by emailing [oae@cps.edu](mailto:oae@cps.edu) or calling 773-553-2060. Students who choose to enroll in their attendance area school do not need to submit an application. They should contact the school directly for registration information.

CPS indicates that the investments it will make to transition students at both Henson and Hughes will provide students with a supportive learning environment and ease the transition process as much as possible.

### **Notice and Opportunity for Public Comment**

The state of Illinois has very specific requirements that govern proposals for school actions. The proposals herein are deemed “school actions” under Illinois law. Section 5/34-230 describes the procedure for such actions. Section 5/34-230(c) provides that, on or before December 1, 2011, the CEO must publish notice of the proposals. That notice must include a written statement of the basis for the proposed action and how the proposed action meets the criteria set out in guidelines published by the CEO. These guidelines set forth the academic and non-academic criteria for school actions.

The notice must also include a preliminary transition plan, the requirements for which are set out in the CEO’s Guidelines for School Actions issued November 29, 2011. Copies of the notice and transition plan must be provided to the principal, staff, local school councils, parents or guardians of students, the State Senator, State Representative and Alderman of the schools affected.

The CEO must provide for at least three opportunities for public comment on the proposed school action at open meetings. At least two of those meetings are to be held at sites convenient to the school and



communities affected and one public hearing must be held at the board offices.

Community hearings were held concerning these two proposals on April 8, 2013 and April 11, 2013 at the Manley High School, 2935 W. Polk St., Chicago, IL. Transcripts of these community hearings were prepared and filed with the Independent Hearing Officer on April 25th at the Public hearing and made a part of the Public hearing record.

The public hearing was held on April 25, 2013 at the CPS central office at 125 S. Clark St. Chicago, IL. The person presiding over this public meeting is called an Independent Hearing Officer and must be a licensed Illinois attorney who is not an employee of the Board and who must not have represented the Board, its employees or any labor organization representing its employees, any local school council or any charter or contract school within the last year. The undersigned, an Illinois attorney has been appointed Hearing Officer.

The Independent Hearing Officer must issue a report summarizing the public hearing and determine whether the CEO has complied with the requirements of the statute and or the CEO's Guidelines for School Actions. If the CEO proposes a school action that does not comply with the statute, the Board shall not approve the proposal during the school year in which the school action was proposed.

## **Guidelines for School Actions**

### **Utilization Standard**

In an effort to achieve its educational goals, the space utilization standard was adopted to help ensure that each school facility is utilized in a manner that improves efficiency, thereby making certain that the district's

limited resources are deployed and operated in an effective manner. Optimizing efficiency can only be accomplished when the district, in partnership with families, local school council members, and community agencies, can rely upon a comprehensive set of measurable indicators that portray the availability and usage of classrooms spaces.

Section 5/34-8.3 of the Ill School Code requires the CEO to monitor the performance of Chicago Pubic Schools using criteria established by the Board. On August 22, 2011, Governor Quinn signed Public Act 097-0474 which added requirements for School Action and Facility Master Planning. This Act requires that the Chicago Public Schools ("CPS") publish space utilization standards by January 1, 2012.

Space utilization standards shall include:

- 1 the method by which design capacity is calculated, including consideration of the requirements of elementary programs, after school programming, the facility needs, grade and age ranges of the attending students, and use of school buildings by governmental agencies and community organizations;
- 2 the method to determine efficient use of a school building based upon educational program design capacity
- 3 the rate of utilization, and
- 4 the standards for overcrowding and underutilization (105 ILCS 5/34-205 (a) (1)-4)

For elementary schools, CPS provides an enrollment efficiency range based primarily upon the total number of instructional classrooms available in the main/permanent school building. Each school building is allotted a number of dedicated general education homeroom classrooms, equaling approximately 76% of the total classrooms available.

As a school's enrollment increases above the efficiency range, a school may be considered overcrowded as programming options are reduced and/or compromised. As an elementary school's enrollment decreases below the efficiency range, a school may be considered underutilized as classrooms are unused and/or poorly programmed, thus making the use of limited resources less effective

There are certain core concepts used to measure the utilization of space. These include both familiar defined concepts from the historical methodology and new concepts defined as follows:

**Maximum Capacity** is defined as the number of classroom spaces designed as such in a given facility multiplied by 30. (30 students)

**Allotted Dedicated General Education Homeroom Classrooms** is defined as the number of classroom spaces required for homeroom use as a consistent and adequate proportion of the total number of classrooms present in a given facility.

**Allotted Ancillary Classrooms** is defined as the number of classroom spaces required for non-homeroom uses, such as science labs, computer labs, art rooms, music rooms, resource rooms, special education rooms, governmental agency and/or community organization special programs, after school programs and other appropriate uses.

**Ideal Program Enrollment** is defined as allotted homerooms multiplied by 30 (Board of Education of the City of Chicago Policy on Class Size 10-0615-PO1)

**Enrollment Efficiency** is defined as an enrollment range defined as Ideal Enrollment less 20% to Ideal Enrollment plus 20%

**Overcrowded status** is defined as an enrollment range greater than Enrollment Efficiency.

**Underutilization** is defined as an enrollment range less than Enrollment Efficiency.

A list of the space utilization assessments for each school will be provided once enrollment data for the 2011-2012 school year has been finalized.

The CPS Space Utilization Standards and school by school reports will be published annually after 20<sup>th</sup> Day enrollment data is available and before December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

#### Performance Standard

The Chicago Board of Education, based on the CEO's recommendation, adopted a School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012 school year. (Board Report 10-0728-P04) The policy sets out a systematic means for identifying schools in need of remedial assistance and increased oversight due to insufficient levels of achievement. The Board recognizes that an effective and fair school remediation and probation system considers student test score performance, student growth, and progress trends. The ratings for elementary schools are (1) which is the highest level, (2) which is a middle level and (3) which is the lowest level. Under Tab 12 of the binder submitted by the Chicago Public School representatives at the April 25<sup>th</sup> hearing, the methodology for determining how a school will be rated is set out in detail.

According to the representatives of CPS, the CEO also takes into account, when recommending the closing of an underutilized school, the school performance of both the school being recommended for closing and the welcoming school. Favor is given to closures that would result in

students of the closed school attending a higher performing school in close proximity to their closed school.

**Summary of Testimony Received at the April 25, 2013, Public Hearing**  
Representatives of the Chicago Board of Education who testified in  
connection with the proposal of the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago  
Public Schools to close Matthew A. Henson Elementary School and  
Welcome returning students at Charles Evans Hughes School

**Michele Hurley** testified that she is an attorney in the Chicago Board of Education Law Department. She tendered and requested to admit into the record the CEO's compiled Exhibit 1, a binder of documents being submitted for the hearing officer's consideration and in support of the proposal.

The binder consists of documentary evidence and written statements demonstrating that the CEO's proposal complies with the requirements of the Illinois School Code and the CEO's Guidelines for School Actions.

The binder contains, among other items, notice letters to the parents and guardians of students, school staff members and local school council members at Henson and Hughes, along with notices of scheduled community meetings and hearing published in the newspaper and affidavits attesting to delivery of notice to parents, guardians, school staff local school council members and elected officials. The transcripts of the referenced public hearings and the written statements of the next two witnesses for the Chicago Board of Education were also included. Finally, the binder enclosed a draft Transition Plan for the proposed closure.



The Transition Plan includes the basis of the proposal, information supporting the manner in which the proposal meets the criteria of the guidelines, identifies supports for students' safety and security, academics, social and emotional needs, and specific supports for students with disabilities, students in temporary living situations and English language learners.

For a list of the specific contents of the binder submitted by CPS, please see the attached "TABLE OF CONTENTS," which follows this report.

**Benjamin Felton** testified to his educational and work history. He is a Portfolio Planner for the Chicago Public Schools and manages strategic planning to improve the efficient utilizations of CPS facilities. He previously was a teacher at CPS, then joined the Tennessee Department of Education, where he focused on teacher and principal recruitments and contributed to the development of the department's five-year strategic plan. He has a Bachelor of Science from Vanderbilt University.

He has been assigned to convey to the hearing officer, the parents and the community, as well as interested members of the public in attendance, information regarding the space utilization of the Henson facility with respect to the proposal to close Henson.

According to the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for the 2012-2013 school year, the CEO may propose to close a school if it is underutilized based on CPS Space Utilization Standards and student enrollment numbers recorded on the 20th attendance day for the 2012-2013 school year.

Mr. Felton testified that the CEO may only propose a closure if the impacted students have the option to enroll in a higher-performing school

and the resulting space utilization, after the closure, will not exceed the facility's enrollment efficiency range as defined by the CPS Space Utilization Standards.

As to Space Utilization, Henson, which is located at 1326 South Avers Avenue, serves 252 students in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten through eighth grade. In addition, the attendance at Henson has continued to be lower each year since the 2005-6 school year.

The Space Utilization Standards are located in Tab 14 of the CPS binder made part of the record in this hearing.

Mr. Felton testified that Henson's ideal enrollment efficiency range would be between 624 and 936 students. (This number was determined by multiplying the number of homerooms (26) by 30 (students). The enrollment efficiency range is the product (780 plus or minus 20%.) Therefore, Henson is highly underutilized.

The CEO has proposed that the students from Henson be welcomed at Charles Hughes elementary school which is located at 4247 West 15th Street. If this proposal is approved by the Board of Education for the City of Chicago, the resulting space utilization will not exceed Hughes' enrollment efficiency range as defined by the CPS Space Utilization Standards.

Hughes has 23 classrooms, and therefore 17 homerooms, which when multiplied by 30 (students) yields an ideal enrollment of 510. Since Hughes only has 286 students and Henson has 252, when added together there would be a total of 538 students, which is within the efficiency range. The projected enrollment of Henson for the 2013-2014 school year is 248, and the projected enrollment for Hughes is 281, for a total of 529, which is also within the Charles Hughes facility's efficiency range. There is enough

space within the Hughes facility for students from both Henson and Hughes.

If Henson is closed, the CEO is also proposing that Henson's attendance area be reassigned to Charles Hughes, Herzl, and Webster at the end of the current school year.

Mr. Felton also presented a map showing the proposed boundary changes at Tab 23 of the CPS binder and had copies available at the registration desk.

**Chandra James**, testified that she is the Chief of Schools for the Chicago Public Schools, Austin--North Lawndale Network. The Charles Hughes school is within the Austin--North Lawndale Elementary Network, and she is responsible for the support and oversight of Charles Hughes on behalf of the CEO. She has been an educational professional for more than 25 years. She has been an elementary school science lab teacher and has held a number of leadership positions within the CPS system, including Elementary Science Manager and Director of the Office of Mathematics and Science. She has also served as an administrator in the Austin--North Lawndale Network, as curriculum coach, Deputy Chief of Schools, and now, as Chief of Schools. She holds a bachelor's degree in speech pathology/audiology and a Masters of Education from Cambridge College, Cambridge Massachusetts.

Henson fits the criteria of the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Actions because it is underutilized based on CPS space utilization standards and student enrollment numbers.

When Henson students are welcomed by the Charles Hughes administration, staff and students, they will be attending a higher performing school based on the CEO's Guidelines for School Actions.

One way that the CEO's Guidelines for School actions define a higher performing school is if a school received a higher level on the Performance Policy for the 2011-2012 school year. The Policy is located in the CPS binder submitted for the record today and Henson received a Level 3 rating (the lowest rating) for the 2011-2012 school year, while Charles Hughes received a Level 2 rating, (the middle rating) which is a higher rating. The Performance Policy reports reflecting these levels are included in the binder of documents that were received for the record at Tab 25.

If this proposal to close Henson is approved, students will receive additional supports at Henson during the remainder of this school year and at Hughes next year, and the Network will provide as much assistance as possible to ease the transition. Also CPS has developed a plan for the dedication of additional resources to address any safety concerns and to fulfill students' academic, social and emotional, and other individual needs.

The draft transition plan, explaining these additional resources, was sent home to all families affected by this proposal and is located in the binder at Tab 1. CPS will publish final transition plans, if the Board approves this proposal, which will incorporate feedback from community meetings, this hearing, and additional input received. The Final Transition Plans, if the board approves this proposal, will incorporate feedback from community meetings, this hearing and additional input from the CPS Office of Safety and Security (OSS) and the Chicago Police Department.

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

Students will receive academic supports as they transition:

A Principal Transition Coordinator (PTC) will be assigned to help the Principal of Henson Maintain academic rigor for the remainder of the school year and ensure a smooth transition to Charles Hughes, and the Hughes administration will receive comprehensive, student specific data on all transitioning students to allow staff to proactively identify student needs. Ms. Washington also committed that she will support the principals as they consider how to use the extra resources and approve their decisions.

Students will also receive social and emotional supports to help them adjust to a new school environment, such as intervention groups or peace circles, led by CPS staff members, aimed at helping students work through concerns associated with the transition. There are plans for the implementation of restorative practices, such as peer circles and peer juries to encourage peer-to-peer problem solving and resolution. There will also be one-on-one attention provided where needed.

Ms. Washington outlined additional support she personally will give to the parents, students, teachers and community groups if the proposal is accepted.

In the materials in the CPS CEO's binder which has been made part of the record for this hearing, there is a note that the CEO is evaluating different locations for the health clinic that is now a part of the Henson facility, but no decision has been made as to where it will be relocated.

In conclusion, she stated that Henson is underutilized, the combined enrollment of Henson and Hughes students at the 4247 West 15th Street facility will not exceed the facility's enrollment efficiency range, and Hughes is a higher performing school. The CEO believes that this proposed school closure will help the District better serve all students and is prepared to assist students with additional supports as they transition.



This concluded the presentation in support of the CEO's proposal.

**Members of the Community who Made Public Statements Regarding the Proposed Closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School. 117 people attended this hearing.**

The below are summaries of the comments of those who testified. Some of the statements were written and addressed to the CPS Board after the close of the public hearing but prior to the submission deadline of 5 PM on Friday, April 26. These submissions were provided to the hearing officer and are attached to this report for review by anyone interested.

**Alderman Michael D. Chandler, 24th Ward** testified that he is fighting to keep all schools in his ward open and to increase instructional and capital resources (ex: use of TIF funds). He listed a number of reasons why he thought that Henson should not be closed, as follows:

The CPS documentation is based on inaccurate information. For example, Henson has two computer labs, but the CPS says it does not.

The transition plan for Henson school may create safety concerns for students.

Henson also has a Full Service Health Clinic, which is providing health services to Henson students, their families and the overall community.

Henson has some resources that Hughes does not: Henson has a 606 person capacity auditorium with a separate gymnasium. Hughes doesn't have an auditorium and Hughes has no air conditioning, while

Henson does. In addition, Henson has made recent investments in improving the physical structure of the school.

Henson has shown growth under the NWEA assessment standards in both reading and math in the 2012-2013 academic year.

The Alderman provided a written copy of his testimony, which is attached to the Exhibits that are filed with this report and the transcript of this Hearing.

**Demetrius Hobson**, Principal of Matthew A. Henson School became the Principal in July, 2011. A high quality education impacts significantly on a child's life, especially in the lives of the under resourced and underfunded. I understand the heavy financial challenge facing CPS and understand the strategy to close underutilized schools and reallocate funds, to ensure that all children receive resources and supports.

If there is any option to withdraw the proposal to close Matthew Henson School we will collaborate with Tracey Mart Thompson, Chief of the Office of the Strategic Services to increase the rate of improvements at Henson.

If CPS continues with the proposed plan to close Henson, my administrative team, my instructional staff, my support staff, my local school council, my parent advisory council, my community partners, and my transition team, as well as myself, will diligently work to support our students and families to have a smooth, safe and inspiring transition to the recommended welcoming school.

Our scheme of education is liberation and we define education is high quality teaching and high quality learning. We want our graduates to have the freedom to choose their college and their careers and our students will

have the freedom to choose the life of their dreams and the spirit of liberation.

**There were 15 Students who gave testimony at this hearing.**

**Students' names are not allowed to be used because this is a public hearing. As a result, the students were assigned numbers when called to testify at this hearing. So the following record will include a summary of all their testimony without individual names.**

In general, the students spoke up to express their loyalty to their school, love for their teachers, worries about traveling to and fitting in at a new school. The students feel they are receiving a quality education at Henson, and that they have made academic progress because of attention and instruction they have received there. Here are some selected quotes from the students:

"I don't want Henson to close. I like recess, music and gym and have learned a lot each year I have been at Henson. I love walking to school. I will miss my teachers if Henson closes."

"Henson is not as bad as you think it is, and we will have to walk a lot of blocks to Hughes school. My younger brother and sister are doing well at Henson.

"CPS and the Mayor want to close my school, and I want to come back here after I graduate to tell my teachers "thank you." I love Henson, and if it is closed, it will be a long way to Hughes and I have two little sisters and a brother and they can't go alone."

"Please don't close Henson, I've been there since pre-school, and now they won't learn at Hughes."

"I've been at Henson since I was 3, and at 4 I could read and am able to do all my work, and I went up 15 points in math. My teacher is great and helps me and I'll pray that CPS will keep Henson open.

"Henson will open the golden doors to freedom. I want to learn and grow at Henson.

I love Henson. Keep it open. My teachers help me learn."

"I'm in 8th grade now. I was a problem child with poor grades, and now, because of the teachers at Henson, I am an A and B student. I'm going to Steinmetz Baccalaureate as a result. Combining two schools will create conflict as happened when Fraizer closed and those students came here."

"I'm a 6th grader, and I want to graduate from Henson. We have great teachers and staff members here. Henson is peaceful, positive and productive. CPS should keep this school open. My NWEA scores went from 1999 to 2300."

"I am a 3rd grader. This year I started yoga after school and have learned to calm my mind and body. Don't close Henson."

"I am a 3rd grader and I'm upset and angry. Closing it is wrong and not fair. My NWEA scores have improved from 187 to 197 and math from 194 to 210, and I am a better reader. Don't close a peaceful, positive and productive place."

"I have the greatest teachers in Ms. Pike, Ms. Murray and Mr. Ballogg. When we are having a problem we can talk to Ms. Hatter our great assistant principal. Mr. Hobson is a great man and pushes us to work hard, and he makes us think about the consequences of our actions. He has taught me that education is the key to unlock the golden doors for freedom so that we can attain any college I want. My class went on a field

trip to Northern Illinois University and we at Henson have the same teachers as the college professors and the same facilities that I saw there. I'm begging you not to close Henson."

"I am a 7th grader, and Henson should remain open because there is more that we can experience at Henson as the staff is working very hard in helping us achieve our goals. [It has] a fresh free market on school days, an active clinic, and counselors for us to talk with. This has the most caring and loving teachers and principal as any school I've been at. Although I'm only at Henson for a short time, I've learned a lot and my NWEA scores are up 15 points from 221 to 236 in math. This school gives us hope, faith, courage and love."

"I am a 6th grader and the top student in my class, on the honor roll and with high test scores. The students and teachers are providing CPS with positive essays as to why Henson should stay open. The best reason is the Clinic, which is very important to my family as I have a bad heart and bad kidneys and needed surgery, but still get sick. When I feel bad or my little brother who had two brain surgeries and gets bad headaches need help, we get it at the clinic. Henson is a life saver for my family."

"I am in Karate, the Girl Scouts and don't want the school to close."

"Henson is a good school and we are safe there."

"I am 13 years old and have been at Henson since pre-Kindergarten. My mother and uncles attended Henson. I think Henson is great and has done a great job educating me."

**Crystal Anderson, a parent** testified as follows: I am an LSC member and a parent volunteer. I have raised 4 children at Henson, 3 with professions and the youngest entering the Steinmetz International



Baccalaureate School. Henson has helped my children be successful.

Why close this school?

**Eular Hatchett, a parent:** I have a child at Henson, and he has already been moved from Fraizer School. He is doing well at Henson, but going to Hughes will knock him down, and the Hughes neighborhood is dangerous. I will walk away from Hughes and home school my children.

**Allen Anderson, a grandparent.** Henson's history is raising my 4 kids, and two are professionals, and one is a supervisor at UIC college and my daughter graduating from culinary school. So your information that Henson doesn't teach is just wrong. You say you have no money, and that is a lot of garbage as the Alderman says. The kids will be scared and then can't learn if Henson is closed.

**Tina Smith, a parent:** I'm co-chair of LSC, with two graduates of Henson and a 3rd grader now. We have safe streets and air conditioning and two computer labs so needing more police protection, putting air conditioning and computer labs into Hughes is wrong. Save the money and use it to save Henson. How will the children get home after dark when they have to cross busy streets? We have safe passage already.

**Shamata Mortican Shaw, a parent:** I have a 2nd grader, and she struggled academically and socially, and Henson has saved by daughter's life for many years. Henson provided counselors to help her. She now gets A's and B's as a result of the hard work and dedication at Henson. There was a dope sale in front of my house, spend the money to clear that up and keep the schools open.

**Lemetria Johnson, LSC chair.** I have 6 children. Two have graduated from Henson and gone to college, and 4 more are at Henson. It took 5 years to get my children in a proper learning environment. Because of

Henson my children are successful. Hughes is too far, and I can't imagine starting all over with. Give our principal, Mr. Hobson, the opportunity to make his vision work for all the children.

**Amanda Cleves, counselor and case manager:** I transitioned into Henson at the same time as the principal and assistant principal, in August 2011. We have worked to transform Henson into not only a peaceful and productive school, but also a community center to support the needs of our families. CPS has incorrect information about Henson.

We only have 27 classrooms, not 30 core classrooms as a technology lab takes one and a library takes two. A science lab takes one, a music room takes one and a private clinic takes three. The clinic is looking to expand with a \$500,000 grant.

**Kristin Monroe-Pei, teacher:** I'm a third generation teacher, after my grandmother and mother. I teach special ed at Henson. Under the leadership of Principal Hobson, Henson is headed toward excellence. Special education progressed in 2011-2012 with new administration, teachers and guidance counselor aligned schedules who wrote compliance IEPs and for the 1st time in 10 years, Henson passed the education connection audit. We monitor the students every 7 to 10 days with tested reading comprehension. Henson has a beautiful auditorium, a gem of a health clinic and well maintained and updated facilities.

**Antoinette Bailey, a parent** of 6 children with 4 at the Henson school. Henson is like a village and has had a great impact on my family. The staff members pour their heart and soul into the children, and my children are safe. The school has the clinic, food pantry and clothing drive. I've become a better parent as a result of the counseling I've received with my children, and the teachers have relationships with the children, and their

grades have improved. I thank Mr. Porter, Ms. Pike, the math teacher and Mr. Hobson and Ms. Hatter for their hard work.

**Davonna Florence, a parent:** I've enrolled my two children. I started my education at Henson, and now have enrolled my granddaughter. I'm a parent volunteer and a parent educator. I've gone back to school to pursue my education in child development. Over the years I've seen my family benefitting from Henson. Henson is a safe haven for the Lawndale area, and it has always provided quality programs during school breaks and holidays and before and after school programs.(At this time approx 25 children stand and show placards with different programs at Henson that are available and that they use). Please don't lose all this support for Henson from the stakeholders. We have the ingredients to produce students ready for higher education

**Valerie Leonard, neighbor.** I'm with the Lawndale alliance and we are here to support Henson, and we oppose closing this school. Henson has about 22 students per class and that is comparable with the state level. So if it is good for the state, it is good for our community. In addition, the students are improving significantly on nationally norm tests, in spite of 47% mobility. Project Star did a scientifically controlled experiment and found that small classes are beneficial for minority and primary grade students. We respectfully request CPS to NOT CLOSE HENSON. Also, the boundaries we believe that most Henson students will go to Herzl not Hughes and Herzl is not a higher performing school. We also believe that CPS is inflating the projected cost of maintaining and updating Henson. And Safety is a deep concern as Henson is in a neutral gang zone but Hughes is in the midst of rival gang territory.

**Bernadette Shields, a teacher.** I've been a teacher for 22 years. I always wanted to be a teacher and I was taught, "Remember, people don't care what you know until they know you care." I'm here today to defend my school, and we are not underutilized. Each classroom is complete with instruction and filled with love. This new administration has given us rebirth, with higher test scores, and brought in clinics, the partnerships, the technology, resources and programs. Every child has a mentor for support. Through caring and teaching we are building life-long relationships. I've gone to homes to help with young people lost in the crowd of a big school. Mr. Cocheral does weekend warrior games with young men. Mr. Porter does outreach ministry for students and parents. I've been helped by neighbors in the area when my car broke down. The relationships at Henson keep us together. The fact Henson is a small school is the beauty of it.

**Ian Ballogg, a teacher.** I'm the PE teacher and teach every student at Henson. Since I only have two minutes I can't share all of our success stories. Instead I'll tell you about one. He was failing, fighting with others, kicked out of classes, suspended, cursing, struggling in a gang and drug infested neighborhood. I've watched the Henson staff find the resources to help kids like him. The Erie Clinic, Karate, after school all stars, GE programs, Saturday ISAT classes, food market, yoga, sit and stay reading, Harris Bank program, SEC tutoring and the list goes on. I've also reached him through Basketball and now he is our leader and wants to improve and through our leadership and motivation he is growing academically, with improved scores on all his tests. I watch our students take ownership of their school work. We are on our way to greatness, and I don't want to

teach anywhere but Henson. We want to help all at our school to succeed. Education is Liberation.

**Frank Bass, resident of North Lawndale.** I've been shot twice in the back a decade ago. I am here because I don't want the Henson students caught in the gang violence. These kids will have to walk through three gang areas. I work as a lobbyist in Springfield, and I've had an accountant find flaws in the CPS budget and those deficits are not so huge. They have a surplus of \$328 million, not a deficit of \$231 million. My written submission has many other cost savings and suggestions on how to reallocate funding. Studies have shown that smaller class sizes offer more benefits to economically disadvantaged students. CPS should be moving in that direction, for better test scores.

**Portia Dowd, a parent of four.** I have a graduate of Henson, and all the others started in kindergarten. My daughter is at the head of her class, and the school shouldn't be closed. Children are safe at Henson.

**Tenesha Hatter, assistant principal.** My role is not typical. I am an instructional Leader, not a typical dean. Not being locked into a disciplinary role is part of the exceptional vision of our leader, allowing me growth and building my capacity. This is part of the school success. I've recruited faculty and staff for all factions within the building to maintain equity within our departments. We have a framework around discipline. Our teachers use Champ training and 90% have completed it. We have established over 50 partnerships to help deal with our students' emotional and social needs. Without these partnerships the students would not have access to field trips and grants of substantial monies and therefore the culture and climate of our school is extraordinary. I do acknowledge the decision to consolidate



schools, but ask to support the vision of our leader Demetrius Hobson and keep Henson open.

**Kenneth Bay, coordinator at Clair Senior Apartments.** We ask that you reconsider your decision to close Henson. President Obama campaigned for smaller classroom sizes. Mayor Emanuel was selected as Mayor on the strength of Obama. Surely, the CPS and Mayor shouldn't be adverse to the President. The holistic approach of solving community issues can't be disregarded. We provide Black History classes for the children at our facility, performances and inter-generational mentoring. We love this school. I salute the Principal Hobson and all the teachers and staff at Hobson. Principal Hobson has done a remarkable job with Henson, and it will be a shame to allow his sincere efforts to go in vain. His work is not yet done.

**Sel Dunlop, community activist "on steroids."** I have an appreciation for Mr. Hobson. I spoke to prison inmates and asked "where are the Jews or Chinese?" Everyone got the point. They weren't there. That is because of their culture. In Hobson we have a valuable leader who will and is influencing the children's culture. You must measure the value of a leader, by his influence on the children's culture. He has embraced my concept of a war on filth and fear. He thereby will eliminate violence.

**Wendy Pearson, activist.** CPS is attempting to do what the Aldermen did 36 years ago by closing 54 schools in a minority community. CPS has closed schools in the past 12 years leaving murders, torn down spirits, truancy, and dropouts.

CPS will be locking children out of their home schools and communities and sending them into unfamiliar drug havens and gang boundaries and crossing the path of sexual predators. Leaving behind 24

buildings, CPS has proven they cannot manage, close or secure school buildings, or even sell buildings it claims are underutilized. In schools that are closed, the mobility rate is higher than in other schools. Homeless population is higher, special education needs are higher, the amount of money spent boarding up and demolishing homes is twice as high as other areas where they are not closing schools. The areas where they are closing schools are minority areas.

**Anita Wright Jones, representative of Illinois Action For Children.** I

am here to speak on behalf of the partnership that we have entered into with the parents of Henson school. I thank Principal Hobson for that opportunity. We create parent relationships in learning and encourage regular attendance of Head Start children. We have weekly meetings, and community engagement has grown to where parents of children from K to 8 now participate regularly, even though the program was originally only for children in head start. A minimum of 15 parents attend our weekly sessions, and through their energy, they are making the school a true community center. Henson has been exemplary in its atmosphere of openness, respect and community involvement.

**Seaeed Blakemore, parent.** I have 4 children at Henson, and it is the first school that has a full pantry, that offers a GED program for parents, and offers help for my son who has ADHD. Whenever I need help, the staff, teachers, the principal, the assistant principal, all are great people and they are all helpful. I moved to 16<sup>th</sup> and Springfield and walked to (Hughes school) and along the way, I saw gangsters and abandoned buildings and I said to myself, NO WAY. I am not letting my child walk that way without a parent. I don't want my son influenced by gangs, and I don't want to be

crying over the loss of a child. Henson is a good school and should stay open.

## **FINDING OF INDEPENDENT HEARING OFFICER**

One of the roles of the Independent Hearing Officer is to determine whether the Statute and Guidelines have been followed.

It is the express finding of the undersigned that the requirements of state law (105 ILCS 5/34-230) and the CEO's Guidelines have been complied with, as to the proposal of the CEO for the Henson school.

There is no question that Henson is underutilized per the Guidelines and that Hughes has sufficient space and classrooms to welcome all the Henson students, and that after the combination of the two school populations, Hughes will be within its efficiency range. It is also appropriate for the attendance area boundaries of the surrounding schools to change and adapt for the residents of the area if Henson closes.

The CEO has presented uncontested evidence of all required notices having been provided within the time frames set out in the statute as to the proposal under consideration, to close Henson. Copies of those notices were made part of the record at the April 25th public hearing. All the notices appear to have been provided in a timely fashion and public and community hearings have been held in accordance with the statutes and guidelines.

The School Closing proposal of the CEO meets all of the requirements of law and the policies of the Board of Education.

### **Additional Comments of the Independent Hearing Officer**

During this hearing for the proposal to close the Henson School, I saw a close knit student, parent, teacher, principal and community relationship. The principal and assistant principal recognized that Henson could be closed based on the Guidelines. However, they hope that their strong presentation from the staff, teachers, themselves, parents, students, community activists, and school partners will convince the Board of Education to allow Henson to remain open as a small school.

The following request and observations are based on the very strong connection that Mr. Hobson has built with the community and parents in the area and in his school. In addition, he has been able to put together an impressive array of partnerships from his area and beyond to help the children, parents and the entire community. In addition, he has provided an impressive presentation by the Henson students, showing both great Trust and Hope that he remain as the leader of this institution and an understanding and respect for the work of the teachers and the Henson school administration.

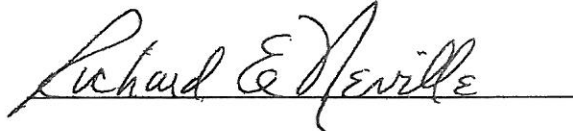
I would ask the CEO and Board to consider the following if it is determined that Henson has to be closed as underutilized:

- 1) That some way is found for Mr. Hobson and the staff and teachers to be able to continue their successful implementation of progress for these students and parents.
- 2) That the Clinic now located within Henson be moved to an area that is still accessible to this community, especially since they have a grant to implement improvements.
- 3) That the Safe Passage Program and the Parent Group and School Council and community leaders, all commit to communicate fully to

form an effective safe environment for these children, if they have to travel to a new school.

- 4) That Principal Hobson be given the necessary help to retain the important partnerships he has secured for Henson and the community, wherever the students are attending school, if Henson must be closed.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard E. Neville", is written over a horizontal line.

Richard E Neville  
Independent Hearing Officer

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**PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF  
MATTHEW A. HENSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**APRIL 25, 2013  
COMMENCING AT 8:00 P.M.**

**HON. RICHARD NEVILLE  
HEARING OFFICER**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**A. NOTICES OF HEARING**

1. Notice Letter to Parents or Guardians of Students at Matthew A. Henson Elementary School and Charles Evans Hughes Elementary School dated March 21, 2013 and Draft Transition Plan for the Proposed Closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School
2. Notice Letter to School Administrators, Faculty, Staff, and Local School Council Members at Matthew A. Henson Elementary School and Charles Evans Hughes Elementary School dated March 21, 2013 and Draft Transition Plan for the Proposed Closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School
3. Affidavit of Jeff Broom, Performance Data Analyst for Chicago Public Schools Regarding Mail and/or Personal Delivery of Notice Letters to Parents/Guardians, School Personnel and Local School Council Members of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School and Charles Evans Hughes Elementary School on or about March 21, 2013
4. Affidavit of Leonard Langston, Chief of Staff, Office of Public and Community Affairs for Chicago Public Schools Regarding Electronic Mail Delivery of Notice Letters to Elected Officials on or about March 21, 2013
5. Affidavit of Jason Van Patten, Director of Web Services for Chicago Public Schools Regarding Publication of: (a) List of Independent Hearing Officers for Hearings and Draft Guidelines for School Actions on or about October 31, 2012, (b) Guidelines for School Actions on or about November 30, 2012, (c) Proposals on or about March 21, 2013, and (d) Summaries from Community Meetings on or before April 13, 2013 and April 16, 2013
6. Public Notice of Hearing and Community Meeting by Newspaper Publication in the Chicago Sun-Times on April 3, 2013

**B. RELEVANT LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS**

7. 105 ILCS 5/34-18 ("Powers of the Board"), effective July 13, 2012
8. 105 ILCS 5/34-200 ("Definitions"), effective July 13, 2012
9. 105 ILCS 5/34-225 ("School Transition Plans"), effective November 30, 2012
10. 105 ILCS 5/34-230 ("School Action Public Meetings and Hearings"), effective August 22, 2011
11. 105 ILCS 5/34-232 ("Proposed School Action Announcement and Notice; 2012-2013 School Year"), effective November 30, 2012
12. Chicago Board of Education School Performance, Remediation, and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012 School Year (Policy Manual Section 302.6A, Board Report 10-0728-PO4)
13. Chicago Board of Education Policy on Review and Establishment of School Attendance Boundaries (Policy Manual Section 703.2, Board Report 05-0622-PO1)
14. Chicago Public Schools Space Utilization Standards (Issued December 28, 2011)
15. Guidelines for School Actions, 2012-2013 School Year (Issued November 30, 2012)
16. Chief Executive Officer's Procedures for Public Hearings on Proposed School Closure, Consolidation, Co-Location, Phase-Out, or Reassignment Boundary Change

**C. DOCUMENTS AND WRITTEN EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSAL**

17. Transcript of the April 8, 2013 Community Meeting regarding the Proposed Closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School
18. Summary of the April 8, 2013 Community Meeting regarding the Proposed Closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School
19. Transcript of the April 11, 2013 Community Meeting regarding the Proposed Closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School
20. Summary of the April 11, 2013 Community Meeting regarding the Proposed Closure of Matthew A. Henson Elementary School

21. Written Statement of Benjamin Felton, Portfolio Planner for the Chicago Public Schools
22. Presentation Accompanying Benjamin Felton's Written Statement
23. Map of Proposed Attendance Area Boundary Change
24. Written Statement of Chandra James, Chief of Schools of the Austin-North Lawndale Elementary Network for the Chicago Public Schools
25. Matthew A. Henson Elementary School and Charles Evans Hughes Elementary School Performance Policy Reports

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED AFTER THE  
HEARING BUT PRIOR TO APRIL 26<sup>TH</sup> DEADLINE**

STATEMENT BY  
24<sup>TH</sup> WARD ALDERMAN MICHAEL D. CHANDLER  
HENSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TRANSITION PLAN  
CPS PUBLIC HEARING

- CPS SHOULD CEASE PUTTING OUT INACCURATE AND MISLEADING INFORMATION ON SCHOOL RESOURCES. (EX: HENSON HAS TWO COMPUTER LABS/CPS DOCUMENTS SAY IT DOES NOT).
- CONTINUE TO FIGHT TO SUPPORT (HENSON) ALL SCHOOLS IN MY WARD TO REMAIN OPEN.
- TRANSITION PLAN FOR HENSON SCHOOL MAY CREATE SAFETY CONCERNS FOR STUDENTS.
- INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL AND CAPITAL RESOURCES – (EX: USE OF TIF FUNDS).
- HENSON HAS A FULL SERVICE HEALTH CLINIC THAT PROVIDES VALUABLE HEALTH SERVICES TO HENSON STUDENTS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THE OVERALL COMMUNITY.

- HENSON ALREADY HAS A PreK HEAD START PROGRAM THE SAME AS HUGHES ELEMENTARY.
- HENSON SCHOOL HAS CONDUCTED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS NEW WINDOW SILLS, EXTERIOR DOORS, NEW BOILER, ABESTOS REMOVAL, FENCING AND PLAYGROUND.
- HENSON ELEMENTARY HAS A 606 CAPACITY AUDITORIUM WITH A SEPARATE GYMNASIUM AND LUNCHROOM. HUGHES DOES NOT HAVE AN AUDITORIUM.
- HUGHES SCHOOL CURRENTLY HAS NO AIR CONDITIONING. HENSON HAS 100% COOL AIR CIRCULATION AND 50% OF CLASSROOMS HAVE AIR CONDITIONING.
- HENSON STUDENTS HAVE SHOWN GROWTH UNDER THE NWEA ASSESSMENT STANDARDS IN BOTH READING (77%) AND MATH (79%) IN THE 2012-2013 ACADEMIC YEAR.



- **55% OF HENSON ELEMENTARY STUDENTS HAVE MET/SURPASSED THEIR GROWTH GOAL IN READING AND 70% HAVE MET/SURPASSED GROWTH GOAL IN MATH UNDER THE NWEA ASSESSMENT STANDARDS IN THE 2012-2013 ACADEMIC YEAR.**
- **DON'T HOLD OUR CHILDREN HOSTAGE TO THE CPS BUDGET PROCESS. REDUCE CPS BLOATED CENTRAL OFFICE BUILDING.**

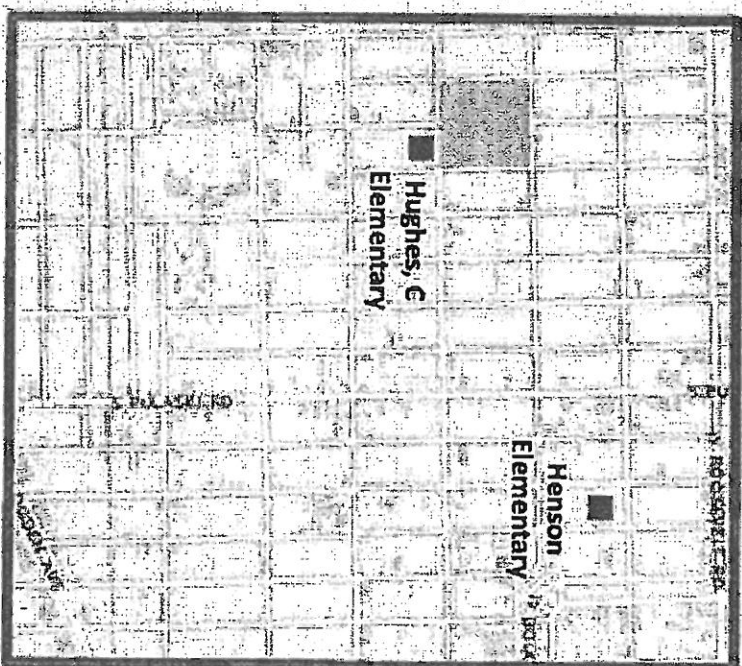
## Providing A Better Education For All Students *Henson Elementary and Hughes, C. Elementary*

As Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Barbara Byrd-Bennett is committed to ensuring that every child in every neighborhood receives a high-quality education that prepares them to succeed in college, career, and life. Right now, the reality is that too many of our children are being cheated of the quality education they deserve because they are trapped in underresourced and underutilized schools. Rather than fund half-empty buildings that are costly to maintain and repair, the District will redirect those funds for investments that parents, CTU and CPS agree children need to thrive, such as, air conditioning, a library, counseling and social work supports and technology and science upgrades.

### Henson Elementary

*Why CPS recommends to close this school:*

- Enrollment has declined by 40% over the last 5 years (425 to 252)
- Building is less than half full
- Building requires \$9.3 million to maintain and update
- Building lacks a computer lab



### Hughes, C Elementary

*As a welcoming school, Hughes, C will offer:*

- A Level 2 school
- A Prek program
- Air conditioning in every classroom
- A building with an upgraded computer lab
- A school safety plan to provide a smooth and safe transition for all students

CPS has heard your concerns and after a thoughtful, rigorous engagement process, we have looked at every individual school and our decision incorporates the feedback we received from more than 20,000 of you – parents across the city and community members in every neighborhood. A series of supports will be provided so that our students have a safe and seamless transition to a higher performing academic environment at their welcoming school in fall 2013. Please call 311, City Services, with questions or visit [cps.edu/qualityschools](http://cps.edu/qualityschools).

## Providing A Better Education For All Students Henson Elementary and Charles Hughes Elementary

### *Pending Board approval of proposed closure*

Current Henson students will be enrolled at Charles Hughes Elementary for the 2013-14 school year, located at 4247 W. 15<sup>th</sup> St., unless families choose to enroll their student at another school.

Current Charles Hughes students will continue to attend Charles Hughes Elementary, unless families choose to enroll their student at another school.

CPS is in the process of identifying a suitable location to relocate the school-based health center currently located at Henson.

- **Attendance area boundaries:** Henson's attendance area boundary will be assigned to Charles Hughes, Webster Elementary and Herzl Elementary. Note, all current Henson students will be enrolled at Charles Hughes.
- **Enrollment options:** Henson and Charles Hughes families interested in enrolling their student at another school can apply via the re-opened Options for Knowledge process. Applications were provided in the transition packets sent home and can be obtained by emailing [oea@cps.edu](mailto:oea@cps.edu) or calling (773) 553-2060. Applications need to be submitted by April 19th. Students who choose to enroll in their attendance area school do not need to submit an application. They should contact the school directly for registration information.
- **Safety & Security:** CPS Office of Safety & Security (OSS) is working on school-specific plans to address safety for all students. OSS continues to work in close collaboration with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) to plan Safe Passage. Close collaboration with CPD and families will continue through the start of the new school year to adjust plans as needed.
- **Teachers:** Many teachers will follow their students per a joint CPS-CTU agreement. If additional teachers are needed at Charles Hughes given an increase in enrollment, tenured teachers from Henson can be assigned to these positions if they are rated in the top two performance rating categories and a position is available in the area they teach. Eligible tenured teachers will be notified of these assignments if the Board votes to approve this action and after organizational and budgetary planning activities have concluded.
- **LSC:** If a school closes, the Local School Council is dissolved at the end of the school year. Per school code, Local School Council elections at all schools will be held in Spring 2014.
- **Partnerships:** CPS will engage the Henson and Charles Hughes communities and school leaders to enable the transfer of Henson's external partnerships and programs.

## Providing A Better Education For All Students

### *Investments in All Welcoming Schools will Provide Children with a Quality, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education*

#### Customized safety plan at every school, including:

- Safe Passage supports to provide safe routes for students traveling to and from school
- Additional security personnel inside each school
- Additional safety technology, such as, entry screening equipment

#### Facility and capital improvements

- Air conditioning in every classroom
- A library in every school
- New or upgraded technology supports, such as expanded Internet bandwidth
- iPads for all students in grades 3-8
- Improved ADA accessibility
- Upgraded school interiors and improvements such as fresh paint, new ceilings and floors

#### Academic and social emotional needs of students

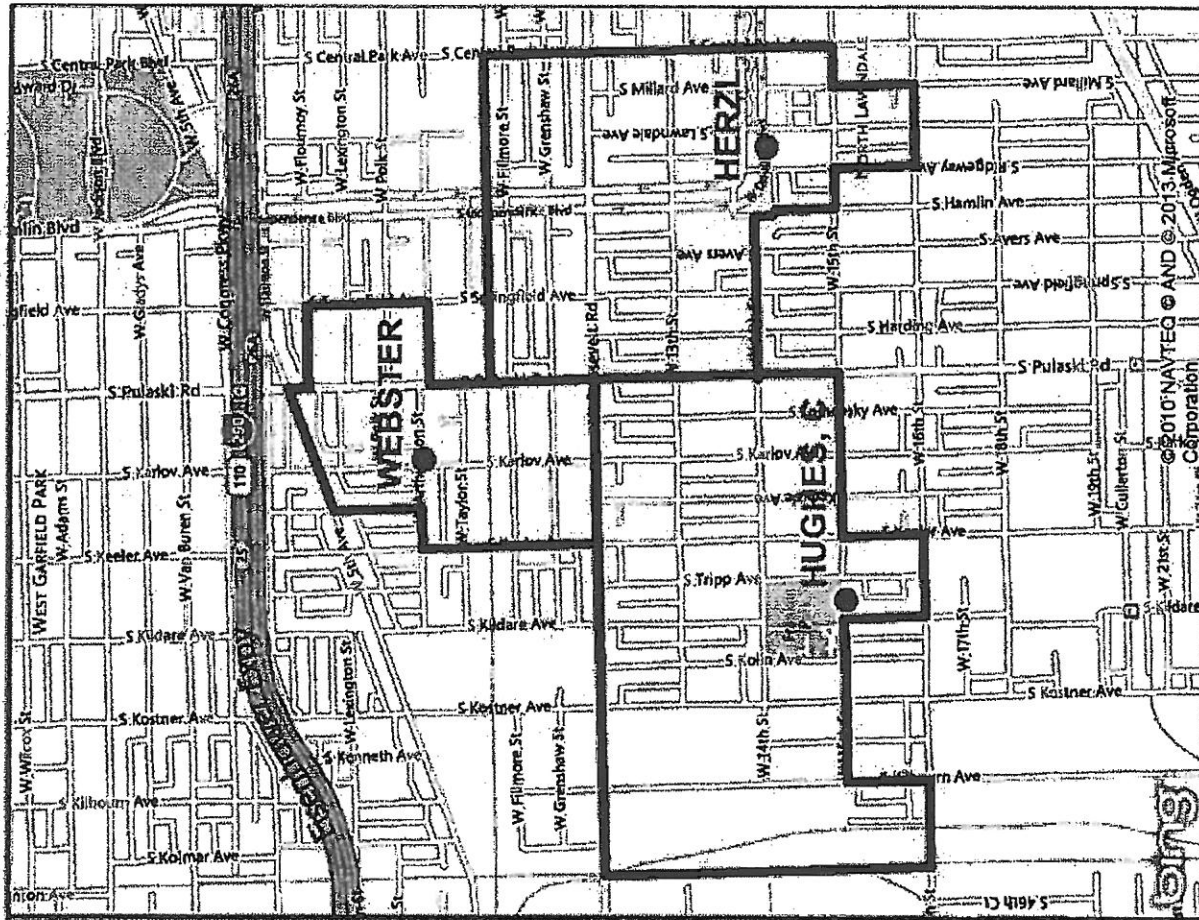
- "Welcoming School Fund" for principals to choose programs and services to address academic, social emotional, and language needs of students, such as:
  - Academic intervention programs
  - Activities to bring together parents, staff and students of both schools to build a new school community
  - Lessons and small group interventions for students to build coping and conflict resolution skills
- Principal Transition Coordinators (former CPS principals) to support school leaders, faculty and students of closing and welcoming schools to create a safe, seamless transition and build a new school culture

#### **Specific transition supports will be provided for special student populations. For details, please contact the relevant department.**

- For questions regarding students with disabilities, contact the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services, (773) 553-1800, [odlss@cps.edu](mailto:odlss@cps.edu)
- For questions regarding English Language Learners, contact the Department of Language and Cultural Education, (773) 553-1930
- For questions regarding students in temporary living situations, contact the STLS Department, (773) 553-2242



## Proposed 2013-14 Boundaries



*The mission of Matthew Henson Elementary School is to become a peaceful, positive, and productive school that facilitates rigorous learning opportunities for all students in all academic disciplines. We aim to provide a curriculum that prepares students to develop the critical thinking skills that they need to be successful at Henson, in high school, college, career and life.*

### **Student Growth**

This school year in particular the students in K-2 made considerable gains academically due to the use of the **Wireless Generation System** (TRC, Mclass math, Dibels). Everyday every grade level receives a minimum of **30 minutes of Intervention** from an additional certified teacher to support our students in need with specific skills that must be strengthened. We secured a contract with a character based sports program, **Courtology** to build a Recess/Intervention team who also support student achievement using the **BURST Intervention System** to help our lowest performing Kindergarten to Second graders develop stronger reading skills. In grades K-2 we offer AM Achievers in the morning to support students who are struggling academically. In grades 3-8 we have 4 SES after school programs that are geared towards preparing them not only for the ISAT and NWEA but for the next grade and beyond.

### **Student Performance**

We celebrate the achievements of students that demonstrate positive gains on the district wide benchmark assessment NWEA. Special awards, certificates, and medals were given to the students that performed at the top of their class on the NWEA and those who showed the most growth. Every student has an individual data binder to track their own growth towards their personal goals. Which assists them in remaining focused on achieving their goals. This year so far **77%** of our students have showed growth in Reading. **79%** of our students showed growth in Math. **55%** of our students met/surpassed their growth goal in Reading and **70%** of our students met/surpassed their growth goal in Math.

### **School Climate**

"Peaceful, Positive, Productive!" and "Education is Liberation." are the mantras school leadership has implemented and staff and students have taken ownership of, often heard in chants throughout the week. The leadership believes that language is important and influential and that the organization must speak into existence its own improvement. This is used to positively enhance the environment and increase the optimistic mind set of all people in the organization. Daily announcements led by students which also include - Pledge of Allegiance, **Henson Student pledge** and outstanding attendance announcements helps to give our students ownership of the school climate and their responsibility to add to it. As we educate the whole child we have actively engaged our students in a well organized sports program offering Volleyball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Track and Field.



### **Family and Community Engagement**

Henson has reached out to the families through various types of activities such as Muffins with Moms and Donuts with Dads. The **PAC Organization** meets biweekly to train parents on current parenting and/or student concerns/issues. On a weekly basis there are scheduled meetings, workshops and activities geared towards family and community enhancement. We have hosted 2 Annual Back to School Rallies. Staff and community stakeholders either volunteered or donated needed materials to make the event a great success. The implementation of daily call logs to check on students who are often absent and or tardy. Also staff is encouraged to call for positive reports as well.

**Greater Food Depository** comes out bi-monthly and supplies the families with fresh produce. The school actively sends out memos, letters and administers phone calls to keep families aware of the schools events.

### **Leadership**

Henson has a new **Principal**, Assistant Principal, and Counselor as of July 2011. The Principal, Demetrius Hobson is an alum of the **Chicago Leadership Collaborative** through the **Harvard Graduate School of Education**, **Teach for America** and **Chicago Public Schools** partnership. Principal Hobson is a graduate of **Chicago public elementary and high schools**. He works to implement a distributed leadership framework that includes the empowerment of adults in the building. Principal Hobson identified the most talented and influential staff members to serve on the **Instructional Leadership Team**. The ILT meets weekly to analyze school data, investigate solutions to areas of concern, implement strategies, and provide support to their colleagues. ILT members then meet throughout the week with **Teacher Teams** (K-2nd, 3rd-5th, and 6th-8th). **Foundations Team** is representative of all staff members whose mission is to improve the school climate. Administration provides teachers with the opportunity to take on leadership roles and responsibilities by attending professional development workshops and bringing the materials, ideas, and strategies back to the rest of the staff by **facilitating in-school professional development**. **Principal Scholars** are students with high academic proficiency and character skills who are empowered to demonstrate their leadership skills. The administration ensured that all teachers are highly qualified. Henson has three **National Board Certified Teachers**, and seven teachers that currently hold their Type 75, administrative certification.

### **Collaborative Teachers**

On a weekly basis **Teacher Teams** meet to discuss student achievement, analyze student data, create purposeful and quality activities and lessons for intervention. Teacher teams who teach various subjects, including those who serve students with disabilities in separate settings, **meet to ensure that students are receiving the highest quality education possible and that all classrooms are consistent in the curriculum that is being delivered**. Teachers work together in grade bands to create meaningful unit plans that focus on the skills needed to be college and career ready. Over the summer staff members organized resources that could be used in planning unit plans, lessons and rigorous activities.

### **Discipline**

The **Foundations Team** was established to create and implement a school-wide discipline plan to maintain cohesiveness regarding school-wide expectations. The staff collaborated and created policies/procedures for common areas, including our lunchroom, hallways and bathrooms. In order to further support classroom management strategies, and to establish a clear understanding of expectation, consequences and procedures, we ensured that **90 % of all teachers have been trained through PBIS CHAMPS**. An **Incentive Committee** has been established to acknowledge students who exhibit a pre-determined trait of the month. This group of children are invited to a special celebration. Established **In-School Suspension Room** - opposed to out-of-school suspension for students with behavior challenges. Implemented **After-School Detention** - led by Teachers as well as **In-school detention** during recess.

### **Partnerships and Resources**

**Erie Health Clinic** is a full service clinic with a nurse practitioner and a nurse who provide health services to all of Henson students, their families, and the community. The Erie Clinic ensures that our school stays at **100% compliance for all immunizations and physicals**. They provide first aid services, wellness check ups, clinical services, STI checks, and pregnancy testing. Erie has a **full time social worker** who provides individual counseling twice weekly for 20 of Henson's most challenging students. Erie also has a **full time student health and wellness coordinator** that works with groups of students on health, wellness, nutrition, asthma education, and sexual wellness. She also coordinates a fluoride rinse clinic for all of our students twice a year and an eyeglass clinic at Henson for 50 students to be screened and fit for **new prescription glasses**. Erie coordinates our bi-weekly food pantry in collaboration with the **Greater Chicago Food Depository** to provide fresh fruit, vegetables, and non-perishable food items to Henson families. Lastly, Erie hosts parent meetings on health topics twice a month such as healthy cooking, stress reduction, and exercises classes.

Formed a three year relationship with **Project Launch**, which provides Henson with a part time mental health consultant to work with the counselor, teachers, students, and parents in order to promote young children's physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and behavioral growth.

**Illinois Action for Children (IAFC)** brings families and community constituents together to work towards identification of resources that can ultimately improve their quality of life. IAFC facilitates a weekly parent meeting with a family strengthening curriculum to help parents identify goals for their families, themselves, and the school. IAFC helps parents match resources to ultimately meet their goals.

**Chicago Cares** began partnering with Henson starting in the Winter of 2011 to discuss Henson's needs that could not be fulfilled through our school's budget. Chicago Cares matched Henson with **Symphony IRI** who donated their time to paint our auditorium, paint large planters in the front of the school, landscape the entire front of the building, and construct custom Henson benches for the gymnasium. Chicago Cares then linked Henson with **HMB law firm** who donated sets of supplies and book bags for each child in the building as well as six iPads.

**Habilitative Systems** provides support for our families who are having difficulties within their families. Currently the social worker meets with three families for family therapy weekly, servicing 15 of Henson's most difficult students.

Resources within:

Established a resource room for literacy

Mathematics

Active library

Established a resource room for

Computer Lab

Additional partnerships from throughout the past two school years:

Erie Health

Teach for America

Chicago Chamber Musicians

Imagination Theatre

Chair Christian Church

WITS Program, BMO Harris Bank

Delta Dental

Woods Family Foundation

Corporation

NET IP

America Scores

Shedd Aquarium

Communities in Schools Initiative

Mars Hill Baptist Church

Courtology Institute

Junior Achievement

Greater Chicago Food Depository

North Lawndale Christian Development