

Board of Education of the
City of Chicago

In Re: The Matter of
The Proposed Reconstitution of
Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School

Before
Fredrick H. Bates
Independent Hearing Officer

Background

Introduction

On or about April 3, 2013, the undersigned was retained by the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) of the Chicago Public Schools (“CPS”) to serve as an Independent Hearing Officer in this matter. On Thursday, May 2, 2013, a hearing was convened at the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 125 South Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois. The purpose of the hearing was to enable the Hearing Officer to receive public comments from concerned persons, specifically including representatives of the CEO, members of the local school council, parents, students, members of the school’s staff, the Principal, representatives of the Chicago Teachers’ Union, and interested members of the public, concerning the CEO’s proposal to Reconstitute Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School pursuant to 105 ILCS 34/5-8.3(d)(4) of the Illinois School Code. CPS served notice of the hearing on the parents, staff members, Principal, and members of the Local School Council. Approximately 62 individuals attended the public hearing, and all 20 of the people who requested to speak, were provided the opportunity to do so at the

hearing.¹ The record was left open for the submission of written materials. Those written submissions are summarized herein below.

Pursuant to the directives provided in the document entitled “**PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PROPOSED SCHOOL RECONSTITUTIONS,**” the undersigned summarizes below the input received at the Public Hearing.

Relevant Statutory Provisions and Board Policies/Procedures

The relevant statutory provisions include, but are not necessarily limited to the following, which state in pertinent part as follows:

Sec. 34—8.3. Remediation and probation of attendance centers

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- (d) **Schools placed on probation that, after a maximum of one year, fail to make adequate progress in correcting deficiencies are subject to the following** action by the general superintendent with the approval of the board, after opportunity for a hearing: ...

(4) Reconstitution of the attendance center and replacement and reassignment by the general superintendent of all employees of the attendance center. (*Emphasis added*).

Sec. 34-18. Powers of the board.

The board shall exercise general supervision and jurisdiction over the public education and the public school system of the city, and, except as otherwise provided by this Article, shall have power:

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- 7. To apportion the pupils to the several schools; provided that no pupil shall be excluded from or segregated in any such school on account of his or her

¹ The School Principal, Dr. Kent Nolen, requested that the School Community be allowed to present its position through a series of speakers that he asked be called in a specific order that did not coincide with the order in which they had signed in to speak. He also asked that they be given more than the two minutes allotted if necessary. Two witnesses yielded their time to this effort. The Hearing Officer exercised his discretion and accommodated the School Community’s request. The primary presenter of the school’s proposal was an LSC Parent Representative, W.T. Harris. His testimony is therefore included herein in its entirety. See *infra*, at pages 25-28. I have also included the vast majority of the testimony of the other school community speakers who presented the balance of the school’s plan.

color, race, sex, or nationality. The board shall take into consideration the prevention of segregation and the elimination of separation of children in public schools because of color, race, sex, or nationality.

* * * *

24. To develop a policy, based on the current state of existing school facilities, projected enrollment and efficient utilization of available resources, for capital improvement of schools and school buildings within the district, addressing in that policy both the relative priority for major repairs, renovations and additions to school facilities, and the advisability or necessity of building new school facilities or closing existing schools to meet current or projected demographic patterns within the district;

The Board's School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2012-2013 School Year provides in part:

That the Chicago Board of Education adopt a School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012 School Year.

I. Purpose and Goals

This policy shall establish the standards and criteria for placing a school on Remediation or Probation for the 2011-2012 school year based on assessments administered in Spring 2011 and other performance data from prior school years. A school's accountability status from the 2010-2011 school year shall remain in effect until such time as the school is notified of their new status issued in accordance with this policy.

This policy sets out a systematic means for identifying schools in need of remedial assistance and increased oversight due to insufficient levels of achievement. Section 5/34-8.3 of the Illinois School Code provides for the remediation and probation of attendance centers and for the Chief Executive Officer to monitor the performance of each school using the criteria and rating system established by the Board to identify those schools in which: (1) there is a failure to develop, implement, or comply with the school improvement plan; (2) there is a pervasive breakdown in the educational program as indicated by various factors such as the absence of improvement in reading and math achievement scores, an increased drop-out rate, a decreased graduation rate, or a decrease in the rate of student attendance, or (3) there is a failure or refusal to comply with the provisions of the School Code, other applicable laws, collective bargaining agreements, court orders, or with applicable Board rules and policies.

The Board recognizes that an effective and fair school remediation and probation system considers student test score performance, student growth and progress trends. Therefore, this policy establishes a comprehensive system to assess school performance in order to identify, monitor and assist schools with low student test scores as well as schools with stagnant or insufficient rates of student improvement.

II. Scope of the Policy

All Chicago Public Schools (“CPS”) shall be subject to this policy, except charter schools under contract with the Board. A charter school shall receive an accountability designation using the criteria hereunder for purposes of comparison to other CPS schools and public reporting. A decision to renew or revoke a school’s charter is governed by the terms of a school’s applicable performance agreement and accountability plan with the Board. Schools newly established by the Board shall receive an accountability designation after the third year of operation or at such time as adequate measures of student achievement become available.

III. Definitions

Remediation: An accountability designation assigned to schools where the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) determines that a school’s budget or any amendment thereto may compromise the implementation of the school’s No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) Corrective Action measures or Restructuring Plan.

Probation: An accountability designation assigned to non-performing schools where the CEO determines, utilizing the criteria set out in this policy, that a school requires remedial probation measures as described in this policy, including increased oversight, to address performance deficiencies.

Good Standing: An accountability designation assigned to schools where the CEO determines, based on the criteria set out in this policy, that student performance and improvement meets or exceeds district standards.

Adequate Yearly Progress: School rating issued by the Illinois State Board of Education that identifies if students are improving their performance based on the established annual targets.

Achievement Level 1: Shall mean the rating for:

- an elementary school with a total performance score of thirty (30) or above or with at least 71% of the available performance points; or
- a high school that obtains a total performance score of twenty-eight (28) or above or with at least 66.7% of the available performance points.

Achievement Level 2: Shall mean the rating for:

- an elementary school with a total performance score of twenty-one (21) to twenty-nine (29) or with 50%-70.9% of the available performance points; or
- a high school that obtains a total performance score of eighteen and two-thirds (18.67) to twenty-seven and two-thirds (27.67) or with 44%-66.6% of the available performance points.

Achievement Level 3: Shall mean the rating for:

- an elementary school that obtains a total performance score of twenty (20) or below or with less than 50% of the available performance points; or
- a high school that obtains a total performance score of eighteen and one-third (18.33) or below or with less than 44% of the available performance points.

Value-Added: Shall mean the metric that assesses school effects on students' academic growth, controlling for student characteristics, grade level, and prior performance through a regression methodology. Academic growth is measured by the change in scale score points on the ISAT from one year to the next.

ISAT: means the Illinois Standards Achievement Test.

ISAT Composite: means the composite score from ISAT Reading, Mathematics and Science test results.

PSAE: means the Prairie State Achievement Examination.

PSAE Composite: means the composite score from PSAE Reading, Mathematics and Science test results.

EPAS: means the series of three assessments (Explore, PLAN and ACT) that are administered to high school students in the following order: (1) Explore – administered to high school freshmen, (2) PLAN –administered to high school sophomores, and (3) ACT - administered to high school juniors.

Freshmen On Track: Shall mean the percentage of first-time freshmen students who earn five credits in their freshman year and fail no more than one semester core course (English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science).

One-Year Drop-out Rate: Shall mean the percentage of students who drop-out in a given year who have not previously dropped out.

Membership Days: Shall mean the number of days that the students on a school's enrollment register should be in attendance. Membership days will

end for 8th and 12th graders on the date of graduation authorized by the Board and shall be adjusted for students with medically fragile conditions.

Attendance Rate: Shall mean the total number of actual student attendance days divided by the number of total student membership days.

Advanced Placement (AP) Class: Shall mean a college-level course approved by the College Board to be designated as AP in accordance with established requirements.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Class: Shall mean a college-level course approved by the International Baccalaureate Organization to be designated as an IB class in accordance with established requirements.

AP Exam: Shall mean the end of course exam established by the College Board that is administered upon completion of an AP Class.

IB Exam: Shall mean the end of course exam established by the International Baccalaureate Organization that is administered upon completion of an IB class.

IV. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

A. Calculation of Score

Every school shall receive a performance score based upon its level of current performance, trend over time and student growth as described in Section V below. A school will be evaluated on each of the accountability indicators identified in Section V using best available data and will receive a score for each indicator as well as a total performance score that accounts for the school's overall performance on all accountability indicators. The total performance score will be used to determine whether a school qualifies for an Achievement Level 1, 2 or 3 rating. A school shall receive an accountability status hereunder whereby the school shall be identified as either on Probation, in Good Standing or in Remediation, as further described herein.

B. Determinations

1. Scoring Exceptions: Schools that do not qualify for all performance points hereunder due to the following circumstances shall have their Achievement level determinations based on the percentage of available points earned rather than the actual points earned: (a) if data for the two previous years is not available for a particular metric measuring change over time, the school will not get a score for that metric; (b) if data is available but not reliable due to no fault of the school, the CEO may remove the affected metric from consideration and the school will not get a score for that metric. ISAT and PSAT scores of students who are English Language

Learners in program years 0-5 will not be factored into current status or trend scores hereunder.

2. Accountability Status Determination: A school with an Achievement Level 3 score hereunder shall receive Probation status. A school with an Achievement Level 1 score or an Achievement Level 2 score hereunder shall receive Good Standing status, except for the following which shall receive Probation status hereunder:

- a. A school that has not satisfied the following minimum ISAT or PSAE composite score requirement:
 - i. Elementary school minimum 2011 ISAT Composite score - 50% meeting or exceeding state standards.
 - ii. High school minimum 2011 PSAE Composite score - 10% meeting or exceeding state standards.
- b. A school that has not satisfied all applicable sustained academic improvement requirements set out in Section VII. as follows:
 - i. A school with a prior Probation status must receive an Achievement Level 1 rating or Achievement Level 2 rating for 2 consecutive years to be removed from Probation; or
 - ii. A school where the Board has taken an action under 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(d)(2) or (4) must remain on Probation for a minimum of 5 years or until the school has made Adequate Yearly Progress for 2 consecutive years, whichever occurs later.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a school with Good Standing status may be placed in Remediation in accordance with Section IV.B.3.

3. NCLB School Improvement Status: For schools not on Probation but that have either “Corrective Action”, “Restructuring Planning” or “Restructuring Implementation” status under NCLB, the CEO reserves the right to place the school in Remediation status at any time if the CEO determines that the school’s budget or any amendment thereto may compromise the implementation of the school’s NCLB Corrective Action or Restructuring Plan.

V. ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS, STANDARDS AND SCORING

A. Elementary School Indicators, Standards and Scoring

An elementary school may receive a total performance rating score ranging from zero (0) to forty-two (42). For the 2012-2013 school year, the current status, trend and growth indicators and standards that determine an elementary school’s performance score shall be as follows:

1. ISAT Mathematics – 6 possible points

a. Current Status - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students ***meeting or exceeding*** state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT mathematics results. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT mathematics results from tests administered in Spring 2011 and Spring 2012. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

80% or more meeting or exceeding = 3 points
70%-79.9% meeting or exceeding = 2 points
50%-69.9% meeting or exceeding = 1 point
Under 50% meeting or exceeding = 0 points

b. Trend - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students ***meeting or exceeding*** state standards on ISAT Mathematics. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2012 score with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT mathematics assessment, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points
Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point
Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points
Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or more of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT mathematics assessment automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

2. ISAT Reading – 6 possible points

a. Current Status - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students ***meeting or exceeding*** state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT reading results. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT reading results from tests administered in Spring 2011 and Spring 2012. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

80% or more meeting or exceeding = 3 points
70%-79.9% meeting or exceeding = 2 points

50%-69.9% meeting or exceeding = 1 point
Under 50% meeting or exceeding = 0 points

b. Trend - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students *meeting or exceeding* state standards on ISAT reading. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2012 score with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT reading assessment, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points
Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point
Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points
Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or greater of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT reading assessment automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

3. ISAT Science – 6 possible points

a. Current Status - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students *meeting or exceeding* state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT science results. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT science results from tests administered in Spring 2011 and Spring 2012. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

80% or more meeting or exceeding = 3 points
70%-79.9% meeting or exceeding = 2 points
50%-69.9% meeting or exceeding = 1 point
Under 50% meeting or exceeding = 0 points

b. Trend - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students *meeting or exceeding* state standards on ISAT science. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2012 score with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT science assessment, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points
 Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point
 Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points
 Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or greater of students meeting or exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT science assessment automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

4. ISAT Composite - All Grades – 6 possible points

a. Current Status - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students in all grades who are ***exceeding*** state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT Composite. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT Composite results from tests administered in Spring 2011 and Spring 2012. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

25% or more exceeding = 3 points
 15%-24.9% exceeding = 2 points
 5%-14.9% exceeding = 1 point
 Under 5% exceeding = 0 points

b. Trend - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students in all grades who are ***exceeding*** state standards on ISAT Composite. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2012 score for all students with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students in all grades exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT Composite, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points
 Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point
 Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points
 Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or greater of students in all grades exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT Composite automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

5. ISAT Composite – Highest Grade Students – 6 possible points

a. Current Status - An elementary school shall be evaluated on the percentage of students in the school's highest grade level who are *exceeding* state standards as indicated by the school's ISAT Composite. Current status is determined by averaging the school's ISAT Composite results for students in the highest grade from tests administered in Spring 2011 and Spring 2012. If the school does not have two years of data, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

- 25% or more exceeding = 3 points
- 15%-24.9% exceeding = 2 points
- 5%-14.9% exceeding = 1 point
- Under 5% exceeding = 0 points

b. Trend - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement in the percentage of students in the school's highest grade level who are *exceeding* state standards on ISAT Composite. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2012 score for students in the highest grade with the average score of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with 0%-89.9% of students in the highest grade exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT Composite, points are earned as follows:

- No Improvement = 0 points
- Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 3.0 percentage points = 1 point
- Improvement of at least 3.0 but under 6.0 percentage points = 2 points
- Improvement of at least 6.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with 90% or greater of students in the highest grade exceeding state standards on the 2012 ISAT Composite automatically earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

6. Attendance – 6 possible points

a. Current Status - An elementary school shall be evaluated on its average attendance rate from the two most recent school years. To determine current status, a school's average attendance rates from the 2010-2011 school year and from the 2011-2012 school year will be averaged. If two years of data are not available, one year of data will be used. A school shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

- 95% or more attendance rate = 3 points

93%-94.9% attendance rate = 2 points
90%-92.9% attendance rate = 1 point
Under 90% attendance rate = 0 points

b. Trend - An elementary school shall be evaluated on improvement of its average attendance rate. Improvement trend is determined by comparing the 2011-2012 attendance rate with the average rate of the three previous years. If the school does not have three previous years of data, the previous two years will be used. A school shall receive points as follows:

- For schools with a 2011-2012 attendance rate of 0%-94.9%, points are earned as follows:

No Improvement = 0 points
Improvement of at least 0.1 but under 0.5 percentage points = 1 point
Improvement of at least 0.5 but under 1.0 percentage points = 2 points
Improvement of at least 1.0 percentage points = 3 points

- Schools with a 2011-2012 attendance rate of 95% or greater earn 3 points regardless of improvement.

7. Value-Added – ISAT Reading – 3 possible points

Current Status – An elementary school shall be evaluated on its Value-Added scale score gain for ISAT reading and shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

At least one standard deviation above the district average in 2012 = 3 points

Greater than or equal to the district average, but less than one standard deviation above the district average in 2012 = 2 points

Below the district average, but by no more than one standard deviation in 2012 = 1 point

More than one standard deviation below the district average in 2012 = 0 points

8. Value-Added - ISAT Mathematics – 3 possible points

Current Status – An elementary school shall be evaluated on its Value-Added scale score gain for ISAT mathematics and shall receive points towards its overall performance score as follows:

At least one standard deviation above the district average in 2012 = 3 points

Greater than or equal to the district average, but less than one standard deviation above the district average in 2012 = 2 points

Below the district average, but by no more than one standard deviation
in 2012 = 1 point

More than one standard deviation below the district average in 2012 = 0 points

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VI. SCHOOLS IDENTIFIED AS NEEDING REMEDIAL ASSISTANCE

On a date to be determined by the CEO or his designee, after school performance data is available, schools will be notified as to their accountability designation hereunder.

A. Schools Placed on Remediation

Any school that receives a Remediation status as described in Section IV.B. hereunder shall participate in a remedial program in which a Remediation Plan is developed by the CEO. A Remediation Plan may include one or more of the following components:

1. Drafting a new school improvement plan;
2. Additional training for the local school council;
3. Directing the implementation of the school improvement plan; and
4. Mediating disputes or other obstacles to reform or improvement at the school.

In creating a Remediation Plan, the CEO or designee shall monitor and give assistance to these schools to ensure that all aspects of the plan, including the school budget, address the educational deficiencies at these schools and ensure the development and full implementation of a school's NCLB Corrective Action measures and/or Restructuring plan.

For all schools placed on Remediation, the CEO or designee shall approve the final Remediation Plan, including the school budget.

B. Schools Placed on Probation

1. School Improvement Plan and Budget: Each school placed on Probation shall have a school improvement plan and a school budget for correcting deficiencies identified by the Board. The CEO or designee shall develop a school improvement plan that shall contain specific steps that the local school council and the school staff must take to correct identified deficiencies. The school budget shall include specific expenditures directly calculated to correct educational and operational deficiencies identified at the school.

In creating or updating the required plan, the CEO or designee shall give assistance to Probation schools to ensure that all aspects of the plan,

including the school budget, reflect and are tailored to the individual needs of the school and that the plan addresses the educational deficiencies at these schools. For schools with a federal school improvement status for failure to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), the school improvement plan shall also include strategies and activities to achieve AYP and ensure the development and full implementation of the school's NCLB Corrective Action measures and/or Restructuring plan, as applicable.

The Board shall approve school improvement plans and budget for all schools, including schools placed on Probation, as part of the annual school fiscal year budget resolution. Any updates to such school improvement plan or school budget to address new data on the deficiencies at Probation schools and schools with a federal school improvement status shall be approved by the Board in accordance with the state's timeline for Board approval of federal school improvement plans. Thereafter, any amendments to the school improvement plan or budget shall be approved by the CEO or designee.

Except when otherwise specified by the CEO, the Chief of Schools and designees of the Chief of Schools shall serve as the probation team that will identify the educational and operational deficiencies at Probation schools in their Network to be addressed in the school improvement plan and budget presented to the Board for approval.

2. Monitoring: The CEO or designee shall monitor each Probation school's implementation of the final plan and the progress the school makes toward implementation of the plan and the correction of its educational deficiencies.

3. Additional Corrective Measures: **Schools placed on Probation that, after at least one year, fail to make adequate progress in correcting deficiencies are subject to the following actions by the approval of the Board, after an opportunity for a hearing:**

- a. Ordering new local school council elections;
- b. Removing and replacing the principal;
- c. Replacement of faculty members, subject to the provisions of Section 24A-5 of the Illinois School Code;
- d. Reconstitution of the attendance center and replacement and reassignment by the CEO of all employees of the attendance center;**
- e. Intervention under Section 34-8.4 of the Illinois School Code;
- f. Operating an attendance center as a contract turnaround school;
- g. Closing of the school; or
- h. Any other action authorized under Section 34-8.3 of the Illinois School Code

The Law Department shall develop and disseminate hearing procedures for hearings required before taking any of the corrective actions specified above. (*Emphasis added*).

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Finally, the role of the hearing officer, and manner in which he or she is to receive comments, are set forth in the **“PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PROPOSED SCHOOL RECONSTITUTIONS.”** Those Procedures state:

Upon considering to recommend to the Chicago Board of Education (“Board”) that a school be reconstituted in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3, an independent hearing officer shall be appointed to conduct a public hearing.

- a. The hearing will commence and conclude at the time designated in the notice of hearing;
 - b. The hearing will be transcribed;
 - c. The hearing officer will be solely responsible for conducting the hearing and will conduct the hearing in an efficient and impartial manner.
2. Chief Executive Officer’s Presentation
 - a. An attorney will present the Chief Executive Officer’s proposal by marking an opening statement and submitting evidence in support of the proposal to be considered by the hearing officer.
 - b. The attorney may also introduce witnesses, who will present statements regarding the proposal. The hearing officer may ask the witnesses questions to clarify any statements they made.
3. Public Participation
 - a. The hearing officer will receive relevant statements, comments, documents or written proposals from members of the public. Written comments will be accepted at the hearing, hearing registration table, and on the next business day, before 5:00p.m., if delivered by hand to the CPS Law Department (125 S. Clark, Suite 700) or electronic mail (Qualityschools@cps.edu).
 - b. All those wishing to comment on the matter being considered will be required to sign up to do so as provided in the notice of hearing.
 - i. Registration must be made in person by the individual who will be commenting on the proposal; and
 - ii. An individual may not sign in to speak on behalf of another person.
 - c. The number of individuals in each hearing room will be limited based on room capacity.
 - d. The hearing officer will determine the order of speakers.
 - e. When called by the hearing officer to speak, the speaker shall proceed promptly to the microphone area where s/he will have two minutes to present his/her remarks and materials to the hearing officer.

- f. The total number of persons speaking at the hearing will be subject to the sole discretion of the hearing officer.
 - g. The hearing officer and the Board's Office of Safety and Security may impose any other reasonable procedures or limitations necessary to ensure that the proceedings are orderly and efficient.
 - h. Courteous, respectful and civil behavior is expected from all speakers and all persons attending a hearing, and individuals who are disruptive may be removed from the hearing.
4. Hearing Officer's Written Report
- a. Following the hearing, the hearing officer will prepare and submit to the Chief Executive Officer a written report summarizing the public comments and the documents received at the hearing.
 - b. The hearing officer's written report may also recommend to the Chief Executive Officer whether to proceed with the proposal.

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

Testimony Received at the Public Hearing

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Affiliation</u> |
|---|---|
| Ryan Crosby | Director, Performance Data and Policy, CPS |
| <p>Mr. Crosby testified as follows: "I am the Director of Performance Data and Policy for the Chicago Public Schools. In this capacity I oversee the implementation of the District's Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy, or "Performance Policy", and compliance with state and federal school accountability policies. I have been in this position since June 2012, but have maintained oversight of the Performance Policy since June 2008.</p> <p>I am appearing before you today to present specific data highlighting the low academic performance of Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School. This data will be displayed on the PowerPoint presentation currently being shown.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer's proposed recommendation that Chalmers be reconstituted is based on section 34-8.3 of the Illinois School Code. There is a copy of the statute in the binder of documents that you have received in support of this proposal. Section 8.3 grants the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Education the authority to take certain corrective measures with respect to schools with academic deficiencies. One of those measures is placing schools on probation, which allows the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Education to take additional corrective actions intended to correct the school's academic deficiencies. Specifically, section 8.3 allows the Chief Executive Officer, with the approval of the Board of Education, and after a hearing, to reconstitute</p> | |

the school if, after a maximum of one year, the school has failed to make adequate progress in correcting its academic deficiencies.

The Board of Education has adopted policies setting forth the criteria for determining when a school is subject to being placed on probation and when it can be removed from that status. Specifically, the Performance Policy is the District's school accountability policy. Under this policy, each school receives an annual rating based on its performance on a variety of student outcome measures, including standardized test scores and student attendance. This rating is based on a point system. Points are received for the school's current level of performance and improvement over time on standardized tests and attendance, as well as the growth of individual students from year-to-year on the state test. There are 14 separate metrics on which schools are evaluated, each worth up to three points, for a total of 42 available points. Elementary schools that receive less than 50% of the total available points earn a rating of Level 3 and are placed on probation.

CPS began using this structure for the Performance Policy in 2008. As you can see, in each of the last five years Chalmers has been a Level 3 school. In the 2007-2008 school year, Chalmers received 35.7% of available points. In the 2008-2009 school year, it received 9.5% of available points. In the 2009-2010 school year it received 28.6% of available points. In the 2010-2011 school year, it received 42.9% of available points. In the 2011-2012 school year, it received 40.5% of available points. Prior to five years ago, CPS still had a policy determining a school's accountability status. Chalmers has been on probation for the past six consecutive school years. The notices of Chalmers' Performance Policy status for the last five school years, which were sent to the Chalmers principal, are included in the binder of documents that you have received.

The next slide shows the results of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test, or ISAT, for the 2011-2012 school year for Chalmers, the geographic network in which Chalmers is located, and the District. Chalmers is located in the Austin-North Lawndale network. The term "geographic network" refers to the schools that are currently in the Austin-North Lawndale Elementary School network, as well as elementary schools located within the community, but managed independently, such as charter schools. The calculations used in this testimony exclude full-site selective enrollment schools. The reason for using geographic network in this calculation was to show how Chalmers is performing compared to all other schools within its community.

As you can see, Chalmers' 2011-2012 ISAT Meets or Exceeds Composite score, which is the combined result of the ISAT reading, mathematics, and science assessments, was 54%, compared to a geographic network average of 65.7% and a District average of 76.4%. In reading, the percent of Chalmers students meeting or exceeding state standards was 51.5%, compared to a geographic network average of 63% and a District average of 73.4%. In mathematics Chalmers' performance was 55.1%, compared to a geographic network average of 70.4% and a District average of 80.5%. In science Chalmers' performance was 59.2%, compared to a geographic network average of 59.1% and a District average of 72.9%.

The next few slides show Chalmers' performance over time on the metrics used in the Performance Policy. These slides demonstrate that the performance gap between Chalmers and other schools in the network and across the District has been persistent over time. Chalmers' ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 6.1 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 11.7 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 21 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 22.4 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

In addition to measuring the percentage of student meeting state standards, CPS also measures the percentage of students exceeding state standards. In 2011-2012 Chalmers' ISAT Composite Exceeds score was 4.2%, compared to a geographic network average of 9.8%, and a District average of 18.9%. Chalmers' Composite Exceeds score was 2.5 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 5.6 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' Composite Exceeds score was 8.5 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 14.7 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

Another measure on the Performance Policy is the percent of students exceeding state standards on the ISAT at the school's highest grade level. This allows us to see how well students are doing as they exit the school. In 2011-2012 Chalmers' ISAT Composite Exceeds score for its 8th graders was 0%, compared to a geographic network average of 9%, and a District average of 15.8%. Chalmers' 8th Grade Composite Exceeds score was 2.6 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' 8th Grade Composite Exceeds score was 8.5 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 15.8 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

The performance gap between Chalmers and the District is consistent across subjects. Chalmers' ISAT Reading Meets or Exceeds score was 5.9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 11.5 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' Reading score was 19.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 21.9 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

Chalmers' ISAT Mathematics Meets or Exceeds score was 8.1 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and 15.3 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' Mathematics score was 23.4 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 25.4 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

Chalmers' science scores fluctuated between 2006 and 2011, before showing a large improvement in 2012. Chalmers' ISAT Science Meets or Exceeds score was 0.4 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006 and was 0.1 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' Science score was 19.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006 and 13.7 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

In addition to standardized test scores, the CPS Performance Policy evaluates schools on attendance rate. The attendance rate for Chalmers had been consistently lower than the District average until the 2011-2012 school year, when it was 96.7%, compared to a District average of 95.3%.

The Value-Added metric, which is a component of the Performance Policy, compares student academic growth on the ISAT at a school with the growth of similar students across the District. This is done through a regression methodology that controls for nine student-level factors, including grade level, prior performance on the ISAT, free or reduced lunch eligibility, race or ethnicity, mobility, participation in the Students in Temporary Living Situations program, Individualized Education Program (or IEP status), English Language Learner status, and gender. Controlling for these factors allows us to see how much impact the school had on its average student over the past year. Because we control for prior performance, this metric allows us to identify schools with low test scores where growth is rapid, and schools with high test scores where growth is slow.

The Value-Added metric is a standardized measure with a mean of zero. Standardization means that the score is reported in standard deviation units, which is a measure of how far away the school's score is from the District average. A positive number means that students at the school are growing at a faster pace than similar students in the District. For example, a positive 1 indicates that the school is one standard deviation above the mean, meaning that the school's students are growing at a faster pace than approximately 84% of schools in the District. A score near zero means that students at the school are growing at about the same pace as similar students in the District. And a negative score means that students at the school are growing at a slower pace than similar students in the District.

Chalmers' reading value-added score was -2.3 in 2009-2010, 1.2 in 2010-2011 and -2.1 in 2011-2012. Its mathematics value-added score was 0.5 in 2009-2010, -0.7 in 2010-2011 and -1.7 in 2011-2012. This means that, on average, students at Chalmers grew at a below-average pace in reading and mathematics in two of the last three years. As a point of reference, Chalmers' reading value-added score of -2.1 in 2011-2012 was in the 2nd percentile and its math value-added score of -1.7 was in the 4th percentile.

To conclude, Chalmers Elementary School is on probation in accordance with state law and the Performance Policy. The school has low performance, this performance is consistently low across subject areas, and the school is not making sufficient progress in catching up to the rest of the District.”

Chandra James Chief of Schools, Austin-North Lawndale Elem. School Network

Ms. James testified as follows: “I am employed by the Board of Education of the City of Chicago as the Chief of Schools for the Austin-North Lawndale Elementary School Network. Chicago Public Schools are divided up into Networks, managed by a Chief, and provide support and oversight for the schools assigned to them on behalf of the CEO.

Chalmers is within the Austin-North Lawndale Elementary School Network and I am responsible for the support and oversight of Chalmers on behalf of the CEO.

By way of background, I have been an educational professional for more than 25 years. I have been an elementary school science lab teacher, and I have held a number of leadership positions within the Chicago Public Schools system, including Elementary Science Manager and Director of the Office of Mathematics and Science. I have served as an administrator in the Austin-North Lawndale Network, where Chalmers is located, as curriculum coach, Deputy Chief of Schools and now as Chief of Schools. I hold a bachelor's degree in speech pathology/audiology and a Master's of Education from Cambridge College in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Chalmers has been on probation for six consecutive school years for failing to meet the CPS required standards for minimum student performance. As my colleague, Ryan Crosby, testified, the school has demonstrated low academic performance across subject areas and students are not growing at a rate consistent with other comparable schools in the geographic network and the District. Based on the Performance Policy and my observations, I have concluded that Chalmers has made insufficient progress in improving student academic achievement.

Through my review of the Chalmers School Improvement Plans, Continuous Improvement Work Plan, information I have gained from Network staff, my own knowledge of the District's initiatives, and my work with Chalmers since 2011, I am aware of how the District has supported Chalmers in an attempt to correct its deficiencies during the last several years with programmatic, professional development and mentoring supports.

Since Chalmers has been on probation, the District has provided oversight of its discretionary budget to ensure funds are allocated in line with the goals for improved student outcomes. Prior to this school year, this was done through the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement, or SIPAAA. The SIPAAA was created with input from data and several stakeholders to identify the key areas where the school needed improvement, plan interventions to support the school, and allocate funds accordingly. The Chief provided input in the creation of the SIPAAA, and the Board of Education also approved the SIPAAA. Copies of the SIPAAA for 2010 through 2012 and Board Reports adopting them are located in your binder at tabs 12 and 13.

The Network has provided additional support to Chalmers in an effort to correct academic deficiencies at the school. During the 2011-2012 school year, the Network assisted Chalmers in the following ways:

- First, the Network Instructional Support Leaders, or ISLs, visited Chalmers to provide coaching sessions for teachers on delivering instruction and implementing the Common Core State Standards.
- Second, the Network secured grant funding and coordinated partnerships for the Chalmers teachers with Loyola and DePaul Universities. Teacher leaders were offered six professional development sessions on middle school mathematics

instruction, provided by DePaul, and four professional development sessions on middle school science instruction, provided by Loyola. Additionally, the Chalmers principal was provided with two professional development sessions on science instruction, provided by Loyola.

- Third, the Network offered monthly professional development sessions for principals and assistant principals focused on the District's set of principal competencies.
- Fourth, the Network facilitated performance management sessions with principals, including the principal of Chalmers, to analyze student data and discuss strategies for monitoring student progress throughout the year using assessment data.

Beginning this school year, the District began providing oversight of Chalmers' discretionary budget and goals for improved student outcomes through the Continuous Improvement Work Plan, or CIWP. The CIWP is a two-year strategic plan, created by a team of participants at the school level with support and guidance from the Network Chief. A CIWP team consists of 6 to 12 committed stakeholders, including parents, teachers, the principal, and other members of the school community such as Local School Council representatives. The CIWP team uses data and self-evaluation to set student performance goals, develops strategic priorities, identifies milestones and creates an action plan for each priority, and allocates funds in the budget to align with its goals and strategic priorities.

My Network Strategist and I provided support to the Chalmers Instructional Leadership Team, or ILT, as they developed school goals for the CIWP and identified milestones for achieving these goals. Additionally, the Network School Improvement Coordinator reviewed the Chalmers CIWP and budget to ensure that allocations were aligned to goals for improving student achievement. The Board of Education also approved the CIWP, and copies of the Board Report approving the Chalmers 2012-2014 CIWP are located in your evidence binder at tab 14.

The Chalmers CIWP set the following strategic priorities and created an action plan for each.

- The first goal was to strengthen implementation of the Common Core State Standards in literacy and mathematics.
- The second goal was to ensure all teachers were differentiating instructional strategies.
- The third goal was to improve student science instruction to prepare students to meet the rigorous requirements of college and career readiness.
- The fourth goal was to facilitate a school climate and culture conducive to accelerated student achievement and college and career readiness.

The Network has provided additional support to Chalmers this school year in an effort to correct academic deficiencies in the following ways:

- First, the Network has offered monthly professional development sessions for principals and assistant principals focused on the District's set of principal competencies, including instructional practices and school culture.
- Second, the Network has provided 11 professional development sessions for teachers regarding implementation of the Common Core State Standards.
- Third, I have provided coaching to the Chalmers principal regarding teacher support and constructive feedback. I observed the principal as he held conferences with teachers and gave concrete feedback on how to coach teachers and discuss areas for growth.
- Fourth, Network ISLs have visited Chalmers seven times to provide coaching sessions for teachers on delivering instruction and implementing the Common Core State Standards.
- Fifth, the Network has provided quarterly professional development for the Chalmers Instructional Leadership Team regarding implementation of positive behavior supports for students.
- Sixth, I have led three performance management sessions with the principals in my Network, including the principal of Chalmers, to analyze student data and discuss strategies for monitoring student progress throughout the year using assessment data.
- Seventh, the Network held a professional development session with the Chalmers assistant principal focused on developing a school plan to increase student attendance and monitoring student attendance rates.
- Eighth, the Network's Attendance Coordinator has provided support to the Chalmers administration to improve student attendance rates at the school by participating in monthly meetings with the school attendance clerks, making phone calls to the homes of truant students, and monitoring daily attendance information.

Despite the supports provided by the District in recent years, student academic growth at the school has not kept pace with District averages. For individual students and for the community, there is an urgent need for the performance of Chalmers to improve and to improve quickly. Accordingly, the CEO is recommending that Chalmers be turned around.

If the Board approves the proposed turnaround of Chalmers, students will not be displaced from the school. Instead, a new team of administrators, faculty and support personnel will be staffed at the school. You will hear testimony from Alice Henry next, who will explain the turnaround method and why the CEO believes it will result in better educational outcomes at Chalmers.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need to accelerate student achievement at Chalmers, and prior supports and interventions have not produced satisfactory results. The CEO believes that a turnaround will accelerate student achievement and provide Chalmers students with better educational opportunities.”

Alice Henry

Principal, Johnson Elementary School, AUSL

Ms. Henry's testimony was primarily for the edification of the Lewis school community, and did not bear on whether 5/34-8.3(d)(4), and the Board's Policies and Procedures applicable to the proposed reconstitution, were complied with. She testified in part as follows: "The CEO has asked me to appear at this hearing today to convey to you, and the Chalmers school community, as well as interested members of the public in attendance, information on the Academy of Urban School Leadership, otherwise known as AUSL.

By way of background, I have served in a number of capacities in education including teacher, assistant principal, and principal. I was the principal of Vivian E. Summers Preparatory School before becoming the principal of Johnson in 2009. I have a Bachelor's in Education from Northern Illinois University, and a Master's in Educational Organization and Leadership from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

AUSL is a non-profit agency that partners with CPS to manage schools, including Johnson Elementary. AUSL is a proven turnaround provider that has a great deal of experience improving student achievement at chronically underperforming Chicago Public Schools. AUSL manages 25 schools and 7 are "dual mission" CPS schools, which include training academies that equip teachers to work specifically in turnaround settings. The remaining 18 schools are turnarounds; 16 elementary schools and 2 high schools.

While the turnaround process is a multi-year journey, experience has shown that AUSL turnaround strategies create higher performing schools with accelerated student academic growth and other indicators of good schools. AUSL has transformed schools with disorderly school environments and persistently low student achievement into schools with positive school climates that are inviting and conducive to increasing student achievement and accelerating student academic growth.

The PowerPoint presentation currently being shown illustrates AUSL's multi-year success in implementing turnaround strategies. The first slide compares the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards before AUSL managed the school to the same schools' performance in the 2011-2012 year. As you can see, AUSL turnarounds have produced the following results:

- At my school, Johnson, only 42.1 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards on the ISAT before the turnaround. In year three, 65.7 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards.
- At Howe School of Excellence, only 42.8 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards on the ISAT before the turnaround. In year four, 70.2 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards.

- At Morton School, only 41 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards on the ISAT prior to the turnaround. At year four of the turnaround, 78.2 percent of the students were meeting or exceeding state standards.
- At Dulles School of Excellence, only 48.5 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards on the ISAT before the turnaround. In year three, 70.1 percent of students were meeting or exceeding state standards.

The second slide compares the schools' performance growth for the last 6 years to that of the District. As you can see, every year since 2007, AUSL's average yearly increase in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding on the ISAT has more than doubled the average yearly increase at CPS.

AUSL has developed a data driven framework that is the basis for its plan to improve academic performance outcomes at Chalmers, including:

1. First, the development of rigorous, transparent goals for schools, teams, and individuals, including a high expectations and no excuses climate and culture;
2. Second, the use of performance management systems with cycles of inquiry and data driven intervention;
3. Third, the inclusion of high-quality instruction through implementation of Common Core State Standards to ensure a rigorous instructional program that gives students the knowledge and skills needed to be college and career ready;
4. Fourth, efforts to recruit, retain, and motivate high-quality staff to meet the needs of the school community, including educators with the appropriate bilingual language skills and special education training;
5. Fifth, intervention and tutoring services for students who need extra support in reading and math;
6. Sixth, advanced data systems and aligned assessments that allow staff to identify students who need additional assistance early and give them the help they need to stay on track;
7. Seventh, after school programs to give students access to additional instruction time to further accelerate student achievement;
8. Eighth, professional development and coaching that give teachers the strategies and tools needed to address diverse needs of students in challenged urban environments; and
9. Finally, extensive curricular enhancements, including fine and performing arts and athletics, to round out the curriculum and extend the students' time at school learning.

AUSL's full school turnaround plan also includes improvements emphasizing students' social-emotional behavior, with:

- Effective attendance and discipline policies;
- Safe and orderly school and classroom environments;
- Focus on skills related to self-management, responsible decision making, empathy toward others, establishing positive interpersonal relationships, and determining positive goals; and
- Partnerships with outside agencies that provide additional supports to students and their families. ...

As you can see, AUSL's full school turnaround plan is designed to be a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning. If the Board approves this proposal, AUSL would welcome the opportunity to serve the Chalmers school community."

W.T. Harris

LSC, Alumni

Mr. Harris spoke for 13 minutes and presented the Lewis School proposal to be turned around using the SLI model, rather than the AUSL model.² He stated: "We, the members of Thomas Chalmers School Local School Council, wish to thank you for this opportunity to be heard on the matter of CEO's recommended action to turn around Thomas Chalmers School to the Board of Education of the City of Chicago. Please know that, all that what we present today is what we, the elected Local School Council at Thomas Chalmers School, believe is in the best interest of the children in attendance at Thomas Chalmers School. We fought long, hard and most professionally to keep Chalmers open under the public debate around space utilization. Chalmers' administration filed an appeal to the Board published utilization rate but never received a response, in Exhibit A. Nonetheless, we participated in two community forums and presented to CPS representatives data which supported our position that the Board-published utilization rate was inaccurate. ...

Following our presentation in the two public forums of -- on initial school action based on space utilization, we were visited by members of the Space Utilization Commission. We did not hear anything more on the matter until Thursday, March 21st, 2013, where we were informed that, although Chalmers had been removed from the proposed school closure list, we had been recommended by the CEO to the Board to be turned around -- to be a turnaround school. Our entire school community was completely befuddled by this recommendation. We are aware that agents of the CPS CEO are tasked to present data in comparison [sic] and span of school years inclusive of data from the prior administration with the intent to demonstrate chronic academic failure on the part of current faculty, staff and administration of Thomas Chalmers School over a number of school years. We are here to present quantitative and qualitative -- qualitative evidence on the contrary and in support of the current faculty, staff and administration who have operated for two complete school years.

² Mr. Harris' testimony, and the exhibits referenced therein, tracked the written materials submitted as School Exhibit #2. Accordingly, that submission will not be described in any further detail herein.

In July of 2010, we extended a four-year principal performance contract to our current instructional leader, Exhibit C. His principal candidate profile summary score rate him among the best in CPS, Exhibit D. Since his inception, we have had three different aerial [sic] network chiefs and three different CPS CEO's and three varying measures of student achievement; ISAT, Scantron and now NWEA. Each newly appointed Chief/CEO has had different priority goals and hence measures of student achievement.

Year 1, 2010 through 2011, Dr. Jennifer Cheatham, AIO Area 9, whose singular priority goal was reading achievement and the adoption of the Common Core State Standards. That year we realized a 15 percent point -- a 15 percent point improvement in the percent of children meeting/exceeding ISAT Reading Standards. This improvement represented the highest gain in reading achievement in Area 9, Exhibit E.

Year 2, 2011 through 2012, we were aligned with Ms. Annette Gurley, Chief of School Austin-North Lawndale Network, whose priorities were more global in perspective. That year one of many priority goals was science achievement. That year, in addition to being the only Early Adopter of the Common Core State Standards school in Austin-North Lawndale Network, we realized a 32.2 percent increase in the percent of students meeting/exceeding ISAT science standards. This improvement represented the highest gain in science achievements in the Austin-North 9 Lawndale Network, Exhibit F, ... 2011 through 2012.

Year 3, 2012 through 2013, this current school year, we now have Austin-North Lawndale Interim Chief of School Chandra James. Although her independent priorities are not clear, the most recent achievement data available to CPS and Austin-North Lawndale is the middle of the year NWEA data. This data reflects of 64.8 percent of Chalmers' students meeting/exceeding their middle of the year growth targets. ... This places Chalmers amongst the best in our ability to take children from wherever they are academically and move them forward in Austin-North Lawndale Network, Exhibit G.

We realize we must continue to improve upon our student performance compared to national norms, and we are committed to doing just that. Through ongoing weekend professional development and partnership with the University of Chicago, DePaul University and Loyola University, the -- the aforementioned accomplishments are evidence of the fact that, when priorities are set, we not only meet, we are capable of exceeding them with the neighborhood students we are enrolling.

Presently, we are four performance points away from becoming a Level 2 school. This places us in the best position in attaining that status among the five sister schools the CEO has recommended for the same action, Exhibit H. Other measures of improvement under the current faculty, staff and administrations are as follow:

- A. Our students' attendance rate is 96.6 percent compared to CPS 94.3 percent, Exhibit 1.
- B. Our teacher attendance rate is 97.6 percent compared to CPS 95.7 percent.

C. Our enrollment has risen from 240 in the fall 2010 to 260 in the fall of 2011 to nearly 390 present, representative of the 43 percent increase in student enrollment from 2011 to 2012.

D. The result of the My Voice, My School Survey revealed that we were ... strong or very strong in each measured area. The survey result indicated that we are well-organized for improvement, Exhibit J. We have been a welcoming school as evidenced by the drastic increase in our enrollment and our ability to make increment increases in performance metrics. Many families have returned to Thomas Chalmers Schools from other nearby schools including schools managed by AUSL.

Because this school community has been vocal and collaborative, part of the improvements that have taken place since the arrival of the current administration, over the past two years, we have established a solid foundation in achievement, attendance, enrollment, climate, culture and community partnership upon which the acceleration of our improvement initiatives and outlines are a continuous improvement work plan, Exhibit K.

Whereas the CEO's recommendation to turn around Thomas Chalmers School under the management of AUSL is concerned, notwithstanding data prior to the installation and current administration, the empirical evidence we have presented is in fact reflective of a turnaround. The CEO has the wherewithal to recommend a turnaround action in any given school year. It is our position -- It is our position that we be afforded more time with current faculty, staff and administration to build upon the foundation which has already been established. ...

In conclusion, of 30 schools in the Austin-North Lawndale Network, 17 schools experienced a loss in the composite percentage of students meeting or exceeding ISAT standards, 13 Austin-North Lawndale Schools experienced gains. Thomas Chalmers School experienced gains in both the percent of students who met and percentage -- and the percent of students who exceeded ISAT standards, Exhibit O. Nonetheless, we get it, we must accelerate the closure of the achievement gap between Chalmers, the Austin-North Lawndale network and the district. Considering where the school has come from post fall 2010 under the current faculty staff and administration, much of the heavy lifting has already been accomplished. The data we have presented is representative of a foundation of achievement upon which we are prepared to catapult further achievement initiatives. If allowed to continue to the work that we have begun, we clearly understand that going forward we must work with a great sense of urgency. This proposed turnaround action may be re-imposed upon Thomas Chalmers School at the direction of the CEO at any time.

We pray that this Hearing Officer holds the current faculty, staff, administration accountable for the work they have accomplished, not penalizing them for work prior to the fall 2010 under former administration and allow this current faculty, staff and administration more time to demonstrate it -- its ability to do work requisite in closing the achievement gaps by saying no to the recommend turn -- turnaround action.

Respectfully submitted, the Members of the Thomas Chalmers Local School Council this second day of May 2013.”

TyJuan Cratic

Staff Assistant, Ald. Jason Ervin, 28th Ward

Mr. Cratic testified on behalf of Alderman Ervin as follows: “Alderman Irving of the 28th Ward is concerned about the reconstitution of Chalmers School. He's concerned because he has reviewed data which notes the improvement of Chalmers in scores -- in the state score standards in mathematics and in reading. Since 2001, Chalmers has improved by 31.7 points in reading and 39.9 points in mathematics. The lack of progress that AUSL has shown at schools in the Austin Lawndale -- Austin-North Lawndale Network is very concerning to the Alderman, and he stands in support of not only the students but the parents and the faculty at Chalmers and also with Dr. Kent Nolen, who has made great improvement and progress during his time at Chalmers.

If Chalmers is reconstituted, based on the data he has reviewed and the data even presented here, he feels it would not receive the adequate support which students do deserve. Alderman Irving stands in opposition of the reconstitution of Chalmers School.”

Kimberly Jones

Parent

Prior to Dr. Nolen and the current school administration, her son was a poor student and discipline problem. Now he brings home books and reads. He behaves himself, and his grades have improved. Her daughter loves her teachers and can read at age 6. She opposes reconstitution as proposed.

Kenya Bernard

Parent

Prior to Dr. Nolen and the current school administration, her son was a poor student, but now he has A's and B's. The staff is her son's second family. Breaking up this family would be wrong to the students.

David Wolfe

LSC Member

He submitted School Exhibit #3, and stated: “I have a book here from Thomas Chalmers School. It's approximately 80 letters from the students and approximately a thousand signatures from community stakeholders, both petitioning that no action be imposed on Chalmers School.”

Student 1

8th Grade

AUSL is not what is best for the school or community. The school has been showing improvement. There is love and joy in the school, which opens minds and makes students want to learn. Attendance rates have improved under the current school administration. The are close to becoming a Level 2 school. “We've been ready and prepared for the ISAT from the beginning of the year due to after school tutoring and reading and in math.

This has been very beneficial to us as you can see over the past two years. Reading and ISAT scores have grown from low 40 percent to above 50 percent while math scores have grown from low 40 percent to above 50 percent. In science we also went from low 28 percent to 59 percent. We are four points away from becoming a Level 2 school. And in the beginning of the 2010 school year, we held about 240 students in our loving home, and that number has increased to 390 students. We do have the skills and experience to stay open for our community and experience to stay open for our students. Our progress and recorded success has proven a turnaround over the past two years.”

Student 2

8th Grade

She values things about herself that were embedded in her by her teachers, most importantly she values learning and her education. They have taught her the critical educational and disciplinary rules she needs. She admires the Principal and Assistant Principal.

Student 3

6th Grade

Since Dr. Nolen arrived, students have achieved in math and science. Students being sent to Pope and Bethune should be sent to Chalmers. Drug dealers and gangs were on the corner before Dr. Nolen and the new teachers arrived at Chalmers, but they challenged them so they left. Chalmers is a family and improving, so do not replace the school's staff.

Robert Moreschi

Math Teacher

He read the following statement: “For the past 13 years, I have worked in Chicago as a middle school math teacher with 15 different principals in five different schools, all of which would be considered a Level 2 -- Level 3 schools. Never have I had an administration that would last more than two consecutive years. Nor have I encountered administration that was completely dedicated to the school, involved in the development of the curriculum, focused on the culture and success of the overall school, the happiness of the faculty and staff and the overall development of the students until I came to Chalmers.

The spokesman for the District that provided evidence to why Chalmers should be a turnaround school stated that the students' attendance was 96.6 percent only after the 2011 school year. This increase in attendance is directly in correlation with the change of the school's administration and new faculty hires.

Prior to the administration, students were learning math via computer programs rather than highly qualified math teachers. This was based on a revolving door of unqualified and inadequate math teachers. Upon taking this assignment, I had to break down the learning walls built by the previous administration. Students in math were not -- are now accountable for their work and are learning how to learn mathematics. The mean for the current eighth grade students, last year's seventh graders, on the Fall NWEA Math exam was 226, six points needed to meet the goal of 232 by the end of last -- of the end of this

year. The mean remained the same during the winter of -- winter NWEA based on the curriculum map and the timing of the delivery of the material.

Students are now accountable for their learning of math. They are creating video podcasts of their work and demonstrating their knowledge of mathematics by working on the website I created mathmoreschi.com, where they are able to receive immediately feedback. Ms. James stated that, on seven different occasions, we had Common Core related training sessions and/or direct ways to deliver the Common Core Standards at school. As a teacher in charge of the math curriculum for the math middle school, I would have loved to have been in those sessions and/or demonstrations. Since I've only missed one day in the time that I've been at Chalmers, it is hard for me to figure out when these sessions occurred.

In conclusion, with the positive additions to the school staff, the dedication of our administration and the foundation that has been built in both math and reading within the past two years, a turnaround would force Chalmers to break down -- break new ground and demolish the momentum that we currently have installed in the students."

Louis Lane

Parent, Alumni, Teacher

Mr. Lane stated: "At Chalmers we do not exclude any students from the educational process. We are an inclusive school who accepts students from around the Chicagoland area. ... When other schools exclude students, we openly receive these students with open arms. These students come to us from different educational levels and needs. We service them all.

Most of our students are dealing with homelessness, parents who are unemployed or underemployed, poverty, incarcerated parents who are affected by adish -- parents who are affected by addictions, mental illness and disabilities. This is just a snapshot of why some of our students are rejected from selective enrollment schools, charter schools and turnaround schools.

It is no secret that, when these students are rejected, they still must be educated. We, Educators at Chalmers, rise to this challenge daily. These students come to us feeling rejected and looked down upon, and we accept them and service them. These students know that we at Chalmers respect and generally care for them and respond beautifully. They have an attendance record of at least 96 percent. When a student feels wanted, loved, they perform better. We are a core set of teachers who teach, not kick students out because of behavior problems.

Teachers cannot fully demonstrate the ability to teach when students before them are already running full sprint towards the proverbial college and career finish line. When teachers can service an under-performing student to a level whereby they begin to feel as if they have a brighter future, then you see the benefit and full worth of a teacher.

This is what we do at Chalmers. We accept these students, nurture these students and ultimately grow these students, not discard them.

Our data reflects how we have grown these students. We have been on the under-performing school list for six years. I've been employed at Chalmers for four. During the last two years, we have demonstrated growth, despite students' everyday difficulties, so much growth that, during the 2012 ISAT, Chalmers School was just four points away from being removed off the under-performing schools list. This is in spite of having an above-average class size. This is in spite of having students with physical and emotional limitations. According to the data retrieved by the website iirc.niu.edu, Chalmers has made steady improvements for the last two years.

The last two years should be the data reviewed as we have been under a new administration in as many years. Our school climate has changed. Our student and teachers are more focused, data-driven and results oriented. During the last administration of the ISAT, our growth as a school grew by 1.4 percent according to ISBE. The sub-region had a decline of 6.3 percent. The district grew by .9 percent. The state grew by1 percent.”

Tertia Holloman

Teacher

She picked up the school's presentation where Mr. Lane concluded, and stated: “Our school climate has changed. Our students and teachers are more focused, data-driven and, as a result of that, more oriented. During the last administration of the ISAT, our growth as a school grew by 1.4 percent according to ISBE. The sub-region had a decline of 6.3 percent. The district grew by .9 percent. The state grew by 0.1 percent. See Appendix A. The growth of our school outpaced our counterparts in comparison to the proposed turnaround school AUSL. Our school growth outpaced seven of their 14 schools. See Appendix B.

When looking at our data, it should also be noted that our growth is steady. We did not show any unexplainable big jumps in growth due to political pressures. We grew our students and teachers through carefully scaffolding educational lessons and by carefully bringing a scalpel to bad educational habits.

As Chief Transformation Officer Todd Babbitz said, It takes time to turn around a school. In comparison to AUSL's, Chalmers is taking that time. As an educator, I would worry when a student can go from having an average of 46 on the test to having an average of 85 on the test without substantial proof as to how it was accomplished. Take this worry. Compound it by 14 schools in two -- a two-year period for each school, Appendix C,

Chalmers' growth has increased due to the hard work and dedication of the administration, teachers, students and staff, and we continue to do so when given the opportunity. If you are to be judged, let us be judged on the last two years, not the last six years. We've been under new administration, and we are being judged on what happened under the previous administration. ...

There's been an increase enrollment in Chalmers within this past 2012-2013 school year. In the primary department alone, we have had two teachers. One come in October of 2012. One also coming in March of 2013. So, evidently, we are on the right track and on

the road to success. So we've already been turned around. You can see improvement. It's just that I believe and we all believe that somebody wants the corner on Roosevelt and California.”

Christine Decatus

School Counselor

“I would like to submit for your consideration the fact that our school was determined in 2012 to be well organized for improvement by the My Voice, My School Survey, developed by the University of Chicago. ... That outcome is due to the much improved climate of Chalmers since Dr. Nolen became our principal in 2010.

When I started at Chalmers in 2009, the previous principal wouldn't let me counsel or provide a curriculum or instructional support to classroom teachers. She made me monitor the lunchroom all day. That changed with Dr. Nolen. He gave me his blessing to implement evidence debates, counseling groups such as anger coping and SEABIT'S on my own and with the partnership of other community agencies like Youth Guid -- Youth Guidance and the psychologist of Mount Sinai. Therefore, we care about the social-emotional needs of our students and actively develop them through direct instruction of coping skills, interpersonal skills while reassuring them with hope and optimism. Moreover, we care about our students' academic growth as much. We have a great response to intervention plan driven by data and differentiated instruction.

Last year, in an effort to make our students more college and career ready, we aggressively prepared them for the ACT Explore Test, a predictor of how well students will do on the ACT Test in high school, and the data showed that they grew from the low teens to mid-20's. Speaking of high school, one of my responsibilities is to have all the students eligible for the selective enrollment test apply, and next year we will be sending a student to Westinghouse High School.

Keeping in mind that Dr. Nolen became principal in 2010, our ISAT gains in 2011 and 2012 are comparable to the ISAT gains of AUSL schools in our area like Bethune, we are so close presently, we have 17 of the 21 points needed to go from a Level 3 to a Level 2, I'm confident that, if you allow us to remain and continue our work, our upward trains will increase and continue.”

Deborah Pope

CTU

“I have noted a pattern, and I've been to five out of six of the turnaround hearings now, and I have noted a pattern. In many of these cases, we have new principals who have been there no more than two years, in some cases one year, and who've shown dramatic improvement, who have staff, who have parents, who have students testifying about how their schools are changing and growing and developing. And then we have an extremely politically connected organization that takes a million dollars per turnaround per year, and they are saying that they can do better than these people who know and love and care about the children. They're saying that they can do better than the new leaderships, who you have heard extraordinarily devoted testimony from.

As a union representative, I can tell you that it's not every day that you hear the staff of a school extolling the kindness, compassion, educational wisdom and instructional leadership of their principals. And I think you should take serious note of this fact and the fact that it's not just here but with a couple of the other schools as well. And this is something that seems to be disregarded by the District here, and I'm extremely concerned about that. It seems to me that these decisions are not being made on behalf of these kids. These decisions are being made on behalf of politicians, on behalf of people who have connections. AUSL may be a nonprofit organization, but it's a nonprofit organization that gets a whole lot of the taxpayer money from the Board of Education. And I just think it's extremely important for you to take into account that a school is not just a building, a school is not just four walls; a school is a community of parents, teachers, students and administration.

You have heard about a school that is functioning and growing. Why would you want to disrupt the stability in these children's lives at a time when they need it greatly by turning Chalmers around?"

Jay Oesterreicher

Case Manager

He testified in pertinent part as follows: "I was at the school four years prior to becoming the case manager there as a mentor and a coach in a program called Fresh Start. Fresh Start was offered to, I believe, 15 schools in the Chicago Public Schools in lieu of being turned around or closed, and it was a mentorship program that the teachers and the faculty and administration at Chalmers selected and a program that lasted for four years. And prior to the administration that's currently at Chalmers, Chalmers was in trouble. The students had -- they had behavior issues, academic achievement issues and pretty much stagnated. Since the coming of this new administration, I've seen immense changes in the atmosphere, the climate, culture of the school, and as you can see statistics, there is a trend upwards in test scores."

In response to Ms. Henry's testimony regarding AUSL's success he stated: "[T]here are 25 schools in AUSL, and [for] 15 of those schools, the results of their first year to second year were not posted" He went on to state: "I think that one of the most important things about Chalmers is, again, the leadership. And we're already in the process of being turned around, and to start all over again would be very unfair to the children."

Valerie Leonard

Lawndale Alliance

Over the past 3 years, Chalmers increased in reading 15 percent, North Lawndale School's 11 percent, and citywide 8 percent. In math, Chalmers increased 48 percent, North Lawndale 12 percent, and the District is eight percent. There has been significant growth just over the past three years at Chalmers. The mobility rate for Chalmers is extremely high. For the City of Chicago, it is 18 percent, and for Chalmers it is 53.79 percent. That means in any given year, 47 percent of the students either have just come in or they have just left. In three years' time, depending on whether or not there is a core of students, the whole student body can turnover.

She stated: “[I]n terms of this being a predetermined solution -- conclusion, if you look at the capital budget for 2013, the C -- CPS has already outlined the eight schools that they want to turn around and gave you the -- the budget amount. So how can you name the schools that you want to turn around and the capital amount that's going to go to those schools a year before you even have this hearing?”

Farina Dorsey

Parent Volunteer

She does not understand how a government body of public officials can disregard the voice of the people. There are many parents, teachers and officials, both local and statewide, objecting to the CPS proposal. She does not think CPS should turnaround Chalmers using the AUSL model because of her ongoing negative experience with AUSL concerning her daughter.

Stephanie Boyd

Teacher

She spoke to the accomplishments in literacy that Thomas Chalmers Elementary School students have achieved under the current leadership of Dr. Kent Nolen and his staff, as follows: “Dr. Nolen was given the charge in 2010 to begin the process of leading and guiding the Thomas Chalmers School community out of the status of being an under-performing and underachieving school. Before Dr. Nolen took over as principal in the fall of 2010, the school was on the decline in the area of literacy. ...

Thomas Chalmers Elementary School in the spring of 2009 had 44.6 percent of their students meeting and exceeding on the ISAT in reading. In the spring of 2010, that number dropped to 42.5 percent of the students meeting and exceeding in reading. Today, according to the 2012 spring results of the ISAT, Chalmers Elementary School has 51.5 percent of its students meeting and exceeding state standards in reading. Dr. Nolen and the current teaching staff at Chalmers have been able to increase the student reading scores by almost ten percent in just two short years.

In the area of computerized adaptive testing, Chalmers students are showing tremendous gains in reading. This is our first year using the Northwestern Evaluation Association Online Assessments, which is better known as the NWEA test. Our students took their middle-of-the-year assessment in January, just shortly after returning back to school from winter break, and according to those results, Chalmers School ranked among the top ten schools in the Austin-North Lawndale Network for targets met in reading. Chalmers had almost 60 percent of its students to meet or exceed their targets in reading. Our percentage of students meeting or exceeding targets in reading on the NWEA surpassed the percentage of students meeting and exceeding targets at more than 20 other schools in the Austin-North Lawndale Network. Dr. Nolen and his current teaching staff are leading the students at Chalmers in the right direction concerning literacy.”

Wallace Wilbourn**Community Resident**

He spoke against using AUSL as the turnaround vehicle for Chalmers, stating in relevant part: “Research conducted by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research shows that schools strong in five essential areas, effective leaders, collaborative teachers, ambitious instruction, supportive environments and involved families are ten times more likely to improve student learning than schools weak in these areas.

In 2012 students and teachers in Chicago Public Schools participated in the CPS My Voice, My School Survey, which asked questions about their school's culture and climate. Of the AUSL schools that had sufficient data to be assessed, Sherman is not yet ready for improvement, taken over in 2006; Harvard is not yet organized for improvement, taken over in 2007; Dulles is not yet organized for improvement, taken over in 2010; Marquette is not yet organized for improvement, taken over in 2012; Bethune is moderately organized for improvement, taken over in 2009; Johnson is moderately organized for improvement, taken over in 2009; Deneen is partially organized for improvement, taken over in 2009; fuller is partially organized for improvement, taken over in 2012; Herzl is partially organized for improvement, taken over in 2012. ... Cassell is well-organized for improvement, and Morton is well-organized for improvement. Bradwell is also well-organized for improvement.

I think it's interesting that all of the AUSL schools that are not yet organized for improvement are schools that they mentioned for more than five years. It doesn't make sense to turn over a school to AUSL, a school that is well-organized such as Chalmers, to an organization that is incapable of maintaining that standing.”

Sarvitte Graham**LSC Community Rep., Parent & Alumni**

She suggested that the data should be examined from the point that Dr. Nolen and his staff arrived at Chalmers looking forward, not back to 2005, which pre-dates his tenure. Three of her children who attended Chalmers have attended college. There are no gangs in the school, and Chalmers represents “a family outside my family” to her and others.

Summary of Documents Received**Documents Submitted By CPS**

The CEO, through the Law Department, submitted several documents to the hearing officer that were received and made a part of the record in this case. Those documents included: 1) Copies of the Notice Letters sent to the school community including the Principal, LSC, parents, and teachers and staff advising of the Public Hearing, and an affidavit regarding the same; 2) The Chicago Board of Education’s

School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 School Years; 3) The Chief Executive Officer's Procedures for Public Hearings on Reconstitutions; 4) A copy of the relevant statutory provisions; 5) Performance Policy Reports for Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School for 2009-13; 6) School Improvement Planning for Advancing Academic Achievement ("SIPAAA") for Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School, 2010-2012, Year 1 and accompanying Board Report, 10-1215-ED4 entitled "Approve the 2010-2012 School Improvement Plan for Schools on Probation and for Schools with School Improvement Status;" 7) SIPAAA for Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School, 2010-2012, Year 2, accompanying Board Report, 11-0824-ED2 entitled "Approve Updates to the 2010-2012 School Improvement Plan and Related Budgets for Schools on Probation and for Schools with School Improvement Status;" 8) The Continuous Improvement Work Plan 2012-2014, for Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School; and 9) The written testimony and related Power Point presentations of the CPS witnesses.

Documents Submitted In Opposition To Reconstitution

Following the hearing, submissions were made by those opposed to the Reconstitution of Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School, including: 1) Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School's proposal, as testified to primarily by W.T. Harris (School Exhibit #2); 2) School Exhibit #3 containing: a) multiple petitions signed by parents and community residents requesting that no action be taken on Chalmers and that a moratorium on opening additional Charter Schools in North Lawndale be imposed; b) multiple petitions that Chalmers remain open; c) multiple letters from students in support of the teachers and current administration at Chalmers; and d) a statement from a "core set of teachers" at Chalmers regarding their commitment to the students and

describing the academic progress at Chalmers;³ and, 3) An e-mail submission from Valerie Leonard of the Lawndale Alliance consisting of maps showing that AUSL will control every school in Douglas Park if the CPS Proposals are adopted by the Board, a letter to the newspaper editors entitled “Closing Schools in North Lawndale is Not Providing Better Alternatives,” and her public comments from the Hearing in opposition to the proposed AUSL Turnaround of Chalmers School.

STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

1. Proper notice of the Public Hearing was given as required by Illinois law, the Chicago Board of Education’s School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2012-2013 School Year, and the Chief Executive Officer’s Procedures for Public Hearings on Proposed Reconstitutions. The purpose of the Public Hearing was to give representatives of the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”), members of the local school council, parents, students, members of the school’s staff, the principal, representatives of the Chicago Teachers’ Union, and interested members of the public, an opportunity to comment on the CEO’s proposal to Reconstitute Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School.

2. On Thursday May 2, 2013, a public hearing was held at the Board of Education, 125 South Clark, Chicago, Illinois. Thus, in this case, the public hearing required to be conducted prior to reconstituting a school has taken place, and all of the other aspects of the applicable Board’s Policies have been fully complied with.

3. Under the statutory scheme contained in Section 5/34-8.3 (d) of the Illinois School Code, the CEO and the Chicago Board of Education are granted the authority to take certain corrective measures with respect to schools with academic

³ The public comments of Valerie Leonard of the Lawndale Alliance were also included in School Exhibit 3, and as noted, they were resubmitted post-hearing via e-mail.

deficiencies. One of those measures is placing schools on probation, which allows the CEO and the Board to take additional corrective actions intended to address and correct the school's academic deficiencies. Any school placed on probation is subject to several courses of action by the CEO, with the approval of the Board, after an opportunity for hearing. Section 5/34-8.3 (d) (4) specifically includes "Reconstitution of the attendance center and replacement and reassignment by the general superintendent of all employees of the attendance center" as an action available to the CEO in said cases.

4. Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School is located at 2745 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, Illinois.

5. If approved by the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, the following would occur as a result of the CEO's reconstitution proposal: All students currently enrolled at Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School would continue as students at the school; All staff including the faculty would be removed and replaced; Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School and its new administration and staff would be supported by the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL).

6. The Chicago Board of Education's School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2012-2013 School Year, is the CPS School Accountability Policy. Under this Policy, each school receives an annual rating based on its performance on a variety of student outcome measures, including standardized test scores and student attendance. This rating is based on a point system. Points are received for the school's current level of performance and improvement over time on standardized tests and attendance, as well as the growth of individual students from year-to-year on the state test. There are 14 separate metrics on which schools are evaluated, each worth up to three points, for a total of 42 available points. Elementary schools that receive less than 50% of

the total available points earn a rating of Level 3 and are placed on probation. CPS began using this structure for the Performance Policy in 2008. In each of the last five years Chalmers has been a Level 3 school. In the 2007-2008 school year, Chalmers received 35.7% of available points. In the 2008-2009 school year, it received 9.5% of available points. In the 2009-2010 school year, it received 28.6% of available points. In the 2010-2011 school year, it received 42.9% of available points. In the 2011-2012 school year, it received 40.5% of available points. Prior to five years ago, CPS still had a policy determining a school's accountability status. Chalmers has been on probation for the past six consecutive school years. Notices of Chalmers' Performance Policy status for the last five school years were sent to the Chalmers Principal.

7. ISAT performance is used as a part of the elementary school scoring in the CPS Performance Policy. Chalmers' 2011-2012 ISAT Meets or Exceeds Composite score, which is the combined result of the ISAT reading, mathematics, and science assessments, was 54%, compared to a geographic network average of 65.7% and a District average of 76.4%. In reading, the percent of Chalmers students meeting or exceeding state standards was 51.5%, compared to a geographic network average of 63% and a District average of 73.4%. In mathematics Chalmers' performance was 55.1%, compared to a geographic network average of 70.4% and a District average of 80.5%. In science Chalmers' performance was 59.2%, compared to a geographic network average of 59.1% and a District average of 72.9%.⁴

⁴ The term "geographic network" refers to the schools that are currently in the Austin-North Lawndale Elementary Network, as well as elementary schools located within the community, but managed independently, such as charter schools. The calculations used by CPS at the Public Hearing, and set forth herein, exclude full-site selective enrollment schools. The reason for using geographic network in this calculation was to show how Lewis is performing compared to all other schools within its community. The fact that Chalmers outperformed the Network in a metric, e.g., 2011-2012 ISAT Science, does not mean that the school is somehow ineligible to be Reconstituted. Moreover, the fact that there are other under-performing schools in the Network that are not being reconstituted at this time may seem unfair to the School Community, but nothing in the Illinois School Code requires CPS to take action on under-performing schools beginning with the lowest performing school in a Network first. Although I was impressed with the school's presentation, it is not the role of Hearing Officers to substitute their judgment for that of the CEO, who has the statutory authority to

8. Chalmers' performance over time on the metrics used in the Performance Policy demonstrates that the performance gap between Chalmers and other schools in the Network and across the District has been persistent over time. Chalmers' ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 6.1 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006, and 11.7 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' ISAT Composite Meets or Exceeds score was 21 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006, and 22.4 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

9. In addition to measuring the percentage of students meeting state standards, CPS also measures the percentage of students exceeding state standards. In 2011-2012 Chalmers' ISAT Composite Exceeds score was 4.2%, compared to a geographic network average of 9.8%, and a District average of 18.9%. Chalmers' Composite Exceeds score was 2.5 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006, and 5.6 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' Composite Exceeds score was 8.5 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006, and 14.7 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

10. Another measure on the Performance Policy is the percent of students exceeding state standards on the ISAT at the school's highest grade level. This allows CPS to see how well students are doing as they exit the school. In 2011-2012 Chalmers' ISAT Composite Exceeds score for its 8th graders was 0%, compared to a geographic network average of 9%, and a District average of 15.8%. Chalmers' 8th Grade Composite

decide the appropriate corrective measures that need to be taken to correct the deficiencies of under-performing schools on probation. See 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(d). The Hearing Officer's role is to summarize the evidence for the Board and, more importantly, to ensure that all applicable laws, Policies and Procedures have been complied with.

Exceeds score was 2.6 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006, and 9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' 8th Grade Composite Exceeds score was 8.5 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006, and 15.8 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

11. The performance gap between Chalmers and the District is consistent across subjects. Chalmers' ISAT Reading Meets or Exceeds score was 5.9 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006, and 11.5 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' Reading score was 19.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006, and 21.9 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

12. Chalmers' ISAT Mathematics Meets or Exceeds score was 8.1 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2005-2006, and 15.3 percentage points below the geographic network average in 2011-2012. Chalmers' Mathematics score was 23.4 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006, and 25.4 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

13. Chalmers' science scores fluctuated between 2006 and 2011, before showing a large improvement in 2012. Chalmers' ISAT Science Meets or Exceeds score was 0.4 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2005-2006, and was 0.1 percentage points above the geographic network average in 2011-2012.⁵ Chalmers' Science score was 19.1 percentage points below the District average in 2005-2006, and 13.7 percentage points below the District average in 2011-2012.

14. In addition to standardized test scores, the CPS Performance Policy

⁵ See *supra* note 4 at pages 39-40.

evaluates schools on attendance rate. The attendance rate for Lewis has been consistently lower than the District average. The attendance rate for Chalmers had been consistently lower than the District average until the 2011-2012 school year, when it was 96.7%, compared to a District average of 95.3%.

15. The Value-Added metric, which is a component of the Performance Policy, compares student academic growth on the ISAT at a school with the growth of similar students across the District. This is done through a regression methodology that controls for nine student-level factors, including grade level, prior performance on the ISAT, free or reduced lunch eligibility, race or ethnicity, mobility, participation in the Students in Temporary Living Situations program, Individualized Education Program (or IEP status), English Language Learner status, and gender. Controlling for these factors allows CPS to see how much impact the school had on its average student over the past year. Because CPS controls for prior performance, this metric allows CPS to identify schools with low test scores where growth is rapid, and schools with high test scores where growth is slow. The Value-Added metric is a standardized measure with a mean of zero. Standardization means that the score is reported in standard deviation units, which is a measure of how far away the school's score is from the District average. A positive number means that students at the school are growing at a faster pace than similar students in the District. A score near zero means that students at the school are growing at about the same pace as similar students in the District. And a negative score means that students at the school are growing at a slower pace than similar students in the District.

16. Chalmers' reading value-added score was -2.3 in 2009-2010, 1.2 in 2010-2011, and -2.1 in 2011-2012. Its mathematics value-added score was 0.5 in 2009-2010,

-0.7 in 2010-2011, and -1.7 in 2011-2012. This means that, on average, students at Chalmers grew at a below-average pace in reading and mathematics in two of the last three years.

17. Chalmers has been on probation for six consecutive school years for failing to meet the CPS required standards for minimum student performance. This low performance has taken place at despite efforts by the District and Network to provide the school with assistance, strategies and training. Since Chalmers has been on probation, the District has provided oversight of its discretionary budget to ensure funds are allocated in line with the goals for improved student outcomes. Prior to this school year, this was done through the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement, or SIPAAA. The SIPAAA was created with input from data and several stakeholders to identify the key areas where the school needed improvement, plan interventions to support the school, and allocate funds accordingly. The Chief provided input in the creation of the SIPAAA, and the Board of Education also approved the SIPAAA.

18. The Network has provided additional support to Chalmers in an effort to correct academic deficiencies at the school. During the 2011-2012 school year, the Network assisted Chalmers in the following ways:

- First, the Network Instructional Support Leaders, or ISLs, visited Chalmers to provide coaching sessions for teachers on delivering instruction and implementing the Common Core State Standards.
- Second, the Network secured grant funding and coordinated partnerships for the Chalmers teachers with Loyola and DePaul Universities. Teacher leaders were offered six professional development sessions on middle school mathematics instruction, provided by DePaul, and four professional development sessions on middle school science instruction, provided by Loyola. Additionally, the Chalmers principal was provided with two professional development sessions on science instruction, provided by Loyola.
- Third, the Network offered monthly professional development sessions for principals and assistant principals focused on the District's set of principal competencies.

- Fourth, the Network facilitated performance management sessions with principals, including the principal of Chalmers, to analyze student data and discuss strategies for monitoring student progress throughout the year using assessment data.

Despite all of these supports, student academic growth at the school has not kept pace with CPS District averages.

19. Beginning this school year, the District began providing oversight of Chalmers' discretionary budget and goals for improved student outcomes through the Continuous Improvement Work Plan, or CIWP. The CIWP is a two-year strategic plan, created by a team of participants at the school level with support and guidance from the Network Chief. A CIWP team consists of 6 to 12 committed stakeholders, including parents, teachers, the principal, and other members of the school community such as Local School Council representatives. The CIWP team uses data and self-evaluation to set student performance goals, develops strategic priorities, identifies milestones and creates an action plan for each priority, and allocates funds in the budget to align with its goals and strategic priorities. The Network provided support to the Chalmers Instructional Leadership Team, or ILT, as they developed school goals for the CIWP and identified milestones for achieving these goals. Additionally, the Network School Improvement Coordinator reviewed the Chalmers CIWP and budget to ensure that allocations were aligned to goals for improving student achievement. The Board of Education also approved the CIWP. The Chalmers CIWP set the following strategic priorities and created an action plan for each:

- The first goal was to strengthen implementation of the Common Core State Standards in literacy and mathematics.
- The second goal was to ensure all teachers were differentiating instructional strategies.

- The third goal was to improve student science instruction to prepare students to meet the rigorous requirements of college and career readiness.
- The fourth goal was to facilitate a school climate and culture conducive to accelerated student achievement and college and career readiness.

20. The Network has provided additional support to Chalmers this school year in an effort to correct academic deficiencies in the following ways:

- First, the Network has offered monthly professional development sessions for principals and assistant principals focused on the District's set of principal competencies, including instructional practices and school culture.
- Second, the Network has provided 11 professional development sessions for teachers regarding implementation of the Common Core State Standards.
- Third, I have provided coaching to the Chalmers principal regarding teacher support and constructive feedback. I observed the principal as he held conferences with teachers and gave concrete feedback on how to coach teachers and discuss areas for growth.
- Fourth, Network ISLs have visited Chalmers seven times to provide coaching sessions for teachers on delivering instruction and implementing the Common Core State Standards.
- Fifth, the Network has provided quarterly professional development for the Chalmers Instructional Leadership Team regarding implementation of positive behavior supports for students.
- Sixth, I have led three performance management sessions with the principals in my Network, including the principal of Chalmers, to analyze student data and discuss strategies for monitoring student progress throughout the year using assessment data.
- Seventh, the Network held a professional development session with the Chalmers assistant principal focused on developing a school plan to increase student attendance and monitoring student attendance rates.
- Eighth, the Network's Attendance Coordinator has provided support to the Chalmers administration to improve student attendance rates at the school by participating in monthly meetings with the school attendance clerks, making phone calls to the homes of truant students, and monitoring daily attendance information.

Despite the supports provided by the District in recent years, student academic growth at the school according to the Performance Policy has not kept pace with District averages.

21. Illinois law, and all of the Chicago Public School Policies and Procedures applicable to the CEO's proposed action in this case have been complied with in their

entirety, specifically including, but not limited to 105 ILCS Section 5/34-8.3(d)(4) of the Illinois School Code, the School Performance Policy for the 2012-2013 school year, and the CEO's Procedures governing the Public Hearing.

Recommendation

The Hearing Officer hereby recommends that the Board approve the CEO's proposal to Reconstitute Thomas Chalmers Specialty Elementary School. Chalmers is eligible for reconstitution under the Illinois School Code, 105 ILCS Section 5/34-8.3(d)(4) because it has been on probation for at least one year and has failed to make adequate progress to correct its academic deficiencies.

FURTHER THE HEARING OFFICER SAYETH NOT.

Respectfully submitted,
Fredrick H. Bates/s/
Fredrick H. Bates
Hearing Officer

May 6, 2013