

1 PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED
2 CLOSURE OF ROBERT H. LAWRENCE ELEMENTARY
3 SCHOOL and RELOCATION OF BURNHAM ELEMENTARY
4 INCLUSIVE ACADEMY

ORIGINAL

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6 - - - - -
7
8 APRIL 29, 2013

9 5:30 P.M.

10 125 South Clark Street

11 Suite 1500

12 Chicago, Illinois
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14 - - - - -

15
16 HON. DANIEL J. KELLEY

17 HEARING OFFICER
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1 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Good evening,
2 ladies and gentlemen. My name is Daniel
3 Kelley. I'm an attorney licensed to practice
4 law in the State of Illinois, and I will be the
5 hearing officer in this matter for which we are
6 here this evening, and that is the public
7 hearing to consider the proposed closure of
8 Robert H. Lawrence Elementary School and the
9 relocation of Burnham Elementary Inclusive
10 Academy.

11 We will proceed pretty much in
12 the following order. The chief executive
13 officer of Chicago Public Schools will have an
14 opportunity to make a presentation. And
15 there's an attorney here from the Chief
16 Executive Office who will present the Chief
17 Executive Officer's proposal. She will make an
18 opening statement and submit evidence in
19 support of the proposal to be considered by the
20 hearing officer.

21 She may also introduce witnesses
22 who will present statements regarding the
23 proposal. And she may ask the witnesses
24 questions to clarify any statements that they

1 make.

2 And then there's also a public
3 participation portion of the hearing. And I'm
4 going to get into that in just a minute.

5 Before I go and talk about that,
6 we do have interpreters here, both Spanish
7 interpreter, a Spanish speaking interpreter,
8 and a sign interpreter, and to my left and to
9 my right, your right and left. If anybody
10 needs the assistance of the Spanish interpreter
11 or the sign interpreter, I will ask you to
12 congregate around that interpreter so that she
13 can interpret for everybody at one time. Okay?
14 So is anybody in need of either a Spanish
15 interpreter or sign interpreter? If so please
16 indicate to me by raising your hand. Let the
17 record reflect that no one has raised their
18 hand.

19 And the -- I'm going to ask
20 anybody who does speak and reads from a
21 prepared statement if they would be so kind to
22 leave the statement with the court reporter, so
23 that it can be marked as an exhibit and entered
24 into the record.

1 Of course everything that is
2 being said here today is being transcribed by
3 the court reporter. And I would ask everyone
4 to please speak up loudly and clearly, so that
5 she can hear and be able to accurately
6 transcribe and record the proceedings here.

7 As far as the public
8 participation, I will hear statements and
9 comments and receive documents or proposals
10 from the members of the public. They will be
11 accepted here at the table. And I will also,
12 as I said, accept and listen to and hear
13 comments, et cetera, from the public.

14 The rules provide that in order
15 to speak at the hearing, you have to have
16 checked in and indicate to the person you
17 checked with -- checked in with that you wish
18 to speak here this evening.

19 Generally speaking, the speakers
20 are limited to two minutes to present the
21 information that they wish to be considered,
22 and that's pretty much how we are going to
23 proceed this evening.

24 We do have a timekeeper over to

1 my right here who will indicate the amount of
2 time that you have left as you are speaking so
3 that you know how to properly allocate your
4 time. Okay.

5 So with that, we're going to go
6 ahead and get going. One thing before we do
7 get going, and I believe that comments, et
8 cetera, will be accepted by the CPS until 5:00
9 o'clock tomorrow evening.

10 If you wish to present some type
11 of documentation or proposal or anything like
12 that for me to consider in relation to this
13 hearing, please present it to the Chicago
14 Public Schools by 5:00 o'clock tomorrow in the
15 law department on seventh floor. I think it's
16 room 700

17 MS. HOGAN: Yes.

18 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Room 700 of this
19 building. So that will be until tomorrow at
20 5:00 o'clock, room 700 of this building.

21 It can also be submitted by
22 electronic mail. Okay.

23 So with that, we're going to go
24 ahead and get started. Okay. So I'm going to

1 call speakers in the order in which they
2 checked in, and we will move in that fashion
3 throughout. I'm going to first call Kathleen
4 Murray.

5 MS. HOGAN: Your Honor, I believe --

6 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Excuse me. I'm
7 ahead of myself. Excuse me, ladies and
8 gentlemen. Seeing that I broke up the
9 introduction into two parts, I sort of forgot
10 about the first part. We are ready to begin.
11 I'm going to ask the attorney on behalf of the
12 Chief Executive Office to proceed at this time.

13 MS. HOGAN: Thank you, your Honor. Good
14 evening, your Honor. My name is Linda Hogan,
15 H-O-G-A-N, I'm an attorney in the Chicago Board
16 of Education's law department.

17 I'm appearing before you today in
18 connection with the proposal of the Chief
19 Executive Officer, or CEO, of the Chicago
20 Public Schools, to close Robert H. Lawrence
21 Elementary School, or Lawrence, and welcome
22 returning students at the Burnham Elementary
23 Inclusive Academy, or Burnham.

24 If this proposal is approved,

1 Burnham will relocate from its present location
2 to the facility at 9928 South Crandon Avenue.

3 At this time, I would like to ask
4 that you admit into the record the CEO's
5 compiled Exhibit 1, a binder of documents
6 already tendered to you and being submitted for
7 your consideration in support of the proposal.

8 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: It will be so
9 admitted.

10 MS. HOGAN: Thank you. A copy of this
11 binder is also available here in board chambers
12 on the podium for public viewing.

13 The binder consists of
14 documentary evidence and written statements
15 demonstrating that the CEO's proposal complies
16 with the requirements of the Illinois School
17 Code and the CEO's guidelines for school
18 actions.

19 Specifically, the written
20 statements and documents demonstrate the
21 following: At tab A the binder includes notice
22 letters to the parents and guardians of
23 students, school staff members, and Local
24 School Council members at Lawrence and Burnham,

1 accompanied by draft transition plans. The
2 notice letters and draft transition plan, one,
3 describe the basis of the proposal; two,
4 explain how the proposal meets the criteria of
5 the guideline; three, identifies supports for
6 student safety and security, academics, social
7 and emotional needs, and specific supports for
8 students with disabilities, students in
9 temporary living situations and English
10 language learners; and four, identify the
11 students' option to enroll in a
12 higher-performing school, provide information
13 on choice of schools, and identify
14 transportation where practicable.

15 Tab A also includes the notice of
16 the scheduled community meetings and hearings
17 published in the newspaper and affidavits
18 attesting to the delivery of notice to the
19 Lawrence and Burnham parents or guardians,
20 school staff, Local School Council members, and
21 elected officials.

22 Finally, tab A includes an
23 affidavit attesting to proper publication of,
24 one, the list sensory of qualified independent

1 hearing officers and draft guidelines for
2 school actions before November 1st; two, the
3 finalized guidelines for school actions
4 following a 21-day public comment period;
5 three, the proposals before March 31st and at
6 least 15 calendar days before the first
7 community meeting; and four, summaries of
8 community meetings within five days after the
9 meeting.

10 At tab B, the binder includes the
11 Illinois School Code provisions designating the
12 powers of the board and outlining the process
13 for school actions.

14 This tab also includes the
15 Board's policy on school performance,
16 remediation and probation for the 2011/2012
17 school year, and the policy on the review and
18 establishment of school attendance boundaries.

19 Also at tab B are the Chicago
20 Public Schools space utilization standards and
21 the CEO's guidelines for school actions for the
22 2012/2013 school year.

23 Finally, tab B includes the CEO's
24 procedures for public hearings on proposed

1 school closings.

2 At tab C, the binder includes
3 written evidence in support of the CEO's
4 proposal.

5 Tab C contains the transcripts
6 and summaries from the two community meetings
7 to elicit public comment held at a location
8 convenient to the Lawrence and Burnham school
9 communities.

10 Tab C also includes the written
11 statement of Ashley Richardson, the
12 accompanying presentation demonstrating
13 Lawrence's underutilization and the space
14 available at the 9928 South Crandon Avenue
15 facility for students from Lawrence and Burnham
16 without exceeding its enrollment efficiency
17 range, and a map of the proposed attendance
18 area boundary change.

19 Finally, tab C includes the
20 written statement of Harrison Peters and
21 accompanying documents demonstrating Burnham's
22 status as a higher-performing school and
23 outlining supports that will be offered to
24 students as they transition.

1 At this time, I request that the
2 CEO's compiled Exhibit 1 be admitted into the
3 record. Your Honor already admitted it

4 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Correct.

5 MS. HOGAN: Your Honor, I would like now
6 to ask permission to call a the CEO's first
7 representative, Ashley Richardson, who will
8 make a statement in support of the proposal,
9 and this statement is located in the binder at
10 tab 21.

11 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: You may do so.

12 You may proceed when you're
13 ready.

14 MS. RICHARDSON: Good evening. My name is
15 Ashley Richardson. A-S-H-L-E-Y.
16 R-I-C-H-A-R-D-S-O-N. And I am a portfolio
17 planner for the Chicago Public Schools. I have
18 been in this position since June of 2012.

19 As a portfolio planner, I manage
20 strategic planning to improve the efficient
21 utilization of CPS facilities.

22 Prior to joining CPS, I worked as
23 an analyst and manager at Kraft Foods before
24 obtaining my master's of education in education

1 policy and management at the Harvard Graduate
2 School of Education.

3 I have been asked to appear at
4 this hearing today to convey to you, the
5 parents of the community, as well as interested
6 members of the public in attendance information
7 regarding the space utilization of the Lawrence
8 facility with respect to the proposal to close
9 Lawrence.

10 According to the Chief Executive
11 Officer's guidelines for the 2012/2013 school
12 year, the CEO may propose to close a school
13 that is underutilized based on CPS space
14 utilization standards and student enrollment
15 numbers recorded on the 20th day of attendance
16 for the 2012/2013 school year.

17 The CEO may only propose a
18 closure if the impacted students have the
19 option to enroll in a higher performing school,
20 and the resulting space utilization after the
21 closure will not exceed the facility's
22 enrollment efficiency range as defined by the
23 CPS space utilization standards.

24 I will discuss the details

1 regarding the space utilization of this
2 proposal while my colleague Harrison Peters
3 will discuss the performance of the welcoming
4 school and highlight the supports being offered
5 in the draft transition plan.

6 Lawrence is located at 9928 South
7 Crandon Avenue. Lawrence is an elementary
8 school that as of the 20th day of attendance
9 for the 2012/2013 school year served 398
10 students in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten
11 through eighth grades.

12 To understand the enrollment
13 efficiency range of a facility, Chicago Public
14 Schools utilizes its space utilization
15 standards which are located in your binder at
16 tab 14.

17 The enrollment efficiency range
18 is plus or minus 20 percent of the facility's
19 ideal enrollment.

20 For elementary school buildings,
21 the ideal enrollment is defined as the number
22 of allotted homerooms multiplied by 30.

23 The number of allotted homerooms
24 is approximately 76 to 77 percent of the total

1 classrooms available.

2 As an elementary school's
3 enrollment increases above the efficiency
4 range, a school may be considered overcrowded
5 as programming options are reduced or
6 compromised.

7 As an elementary school's
8 enrollment decreases below the efficiency
9 range, a school may be considered underutilized
10 as classrooms are unused or poorly programmed,
11 making the use of limited resources less
12 effective.

13 A typical elementary school
14 building has a total of 39 classrooms;
15 therefore, the number of allotted homerooms,
16 approximately 76 to 77 percent of 39 is 30
17 classrooms. Multiplying 30 classrooms by 30,
18 equals the ideal enrollment of 900.

19 Finally, the enrollment
20 efficiency range is plus or minus 20 percent of
21 900 which is 720 to 1,080.

22 If a school in this typical
23 elementary school building had an enrollment
24 below 720, it would be considered

1 underutilized.

2 Alternatively, if the school's
3 enrollment were above 1,080, it would be
4 overcrowded.

5 There are 37.5 total classrooms
6 within the Lawrence facility.

7 Please note the 0.5 indicates the
8 presence of one or more small classrooms.

9 Approximately 76 to 77 percent of
10 37.5 is 28, the number of allotted homerooms.

11 28 multiplied by 30 yields the
12 ideal enrollment of the facility which is 840.

13 As such, the enrollment
14 efficiency range of the Lawrence facility is
15 between 672 and 1,008 students.

16 As I stated, the enrollment of
17 Lawrence as of the 20th day of attendance for
18 the 2012/2013 school year was 398. This number
19 is below the enrollment efficiency range and
20 thus the school is underutilized.

21 The CEO has proposed that
22 students from Lawrence be welcomed by Burnham
23 Elementary Inclusive Academy.

24 Burnham will be relocated from

1 its present location to the current Lawrence
2 facility at 9928 South Crandon Avenue.

3 If this proposal is approved by
4 the Board of Education for the Chicago, the
5 resulting space utilization will not exceed the
6 9928 South Crandon facility's enrollment
7 efficiency range as defined by the CPS space
8 utilization standards.

9 To fully explain the enrollment
10 trend associated with these schools, I would
11 like to direct your attention to the screen.
12 Projected is a slide also located at tab 22 in
13 the binder which shows the enrollment trends of
14 Lawrence and Burnham. Green hashed lines
15 showing the enrollment efficiency range of the
16 9928 South Crandon Avenue facility. And a
17 circle representing the combined projected
18 enrollment for 2013/2014.

19 Lawrence's current enrollment of
20 398 students and Burnham's current enrollment
21 of 268 students combines to a total of 666
22 students which is below the enrollment
23 efficiency range of the 9928 South Crandon
24 Avenue facility.

1 Further, the projected enrollment
2 of Lawrence for the 2013/2014 school year is
3 387 and the projected enrollment for Burnham is
4 274; for a total of 661 students, which is also
5 below the 9928 South Crandon Avenue facility's
6 enrollment efficiency range.

7 Thus, there is enough space
8 within the facility for students from Lawrence
9 and students from Burnham..

10 If Lawrence is closed, the CEO is
11 also proposing that Lawrence's attendance area
12 be reassigned to Burnham, proposed to be
13 relocated to 9928 South Crandon Avenue at the
14 end of the current school year. A map showing
15 the proposed boundary change is located in your
16 binder at tab 23. And copies of this map were
17 made available tonight at the registration
18 desk.

19 In proposing this boundary
20 change, several factors were considered as
21 outlined in the review and establishment of
22 school attendance boundaries policy, including,
23 but not limited to, the capacity of the 9928
24 South Crandon facility, geographic barriers,

1 travel time, distance traveled, and program
2 considerations.

3 I would also like to note that
4 CPS will provide transportation in the form of
5 shuttle buses for all returning Burnham
6 students who are reassigned to the new Burnham
7 location. The shuttle bus will provide
8 transportation to and from the two school
9 locations until all current Burnham students
10 graduate.

11 You will next hear from my
12 colleague Harrison Peters who will discuss the
13 performance of Burnham and highlight the
14 proposed transition efforts.

15 Thank you, your Honor. This
16 concludes my statement.

17 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you very
18 much.

19 MS. HOGAN: Your Honor, I would like to
20 ask permission to call the CEO's next
21 representative, Harrison Peters, who will make
22 a statement in support of the proposal. This
23 statement is located in the binder at tab 24.

24 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: You may do so.

1 You may proceed whenever you're ready,
2 Mr. Peters.

3 MR. PETERS: Thank you. Good evening,
4 your Honor. My name is Harrison Peters.
5 H-A-R-R-I-S-O-N. P-E-T-E-R-S.

6 I am the Chief of Schools for
7 Chicago Public School's Lake Calumet Elementary
8 Network and Far South Side High School Network.

9 Chicago Public Schools are
10 divided up into in networks. Network offices
11 are run by a chief and provides support and
12 oversight for the schools assigned to them on
13 behalf of the CEO.

14 Burnham is within the Lake
15 Calumet Elementary Network.

16 I'm responsible for the support
17 and oversight of Burnham on behalf of the CEO.

18 I have been the chief of Burnham
19 since 2011.

20 By way of background, prior to
21 being appointed to my current role, I served as
22 chief area officer for area 24.

23 My experience in education
24 include teacher, dean, assistant principal and

1 principal, both at the middle and high school
2 levels.

3 I have spent my entire
4 educational career, since 1999, working in
5 large urban school districts, including public
6 school districts in Orlando, Florida, and
7 Charlotte, North Carolina.

8 I have a bachelor of science
9 degree in elementary education and a master's
10 degree in educational leadership.

11 I'm currently working on my
12 doctorate in organizational leadership.

13 As you have already heard,
14 Lawrence fits the criteria for the Chief
15 Executive Officer's guidelines for school
16 actions because it is underutilized, based on
17 CPS space utilization standards and student
18 enrollment numbers recorded on the 20th
19 attendance day for the 2012/2013 school year.

20 If this proposal is approved,
21 Lawrence students will be welcomed by Burnham
22 and Burnham will relocate to the current
23 Lawrence facility located at 9928 South Crandon
24 Avenue.

1 The facility at 9928 South
2 Crandon Avenue has enough space for Lawrence
3 and Burnham students, and the resulting
4 combined enrollment will not exceed the
5 facility's enrollment efficiency range.

6 When Lawrence students are
7 welcomed by the Burnham administration, staff
8 and students, they will be attending a school
9 that is higher performing based on the CEO's
10 guidelines for school actions.

11 One way that the CEO's guidelines
12 for school actions define a high-performing
13 school is if the school receives a higher level
14 on the performance policy for the 2011/2012
15 school year.

16 Under the CPS performance policy
17 located in your binder at tab 12, each school
18 receives an annual rating based on its
19 performance on a variety of student outcome
20 measures, including standardized test scores
21 and student attendance. District-wide, schools
22 designated level one are the highest performing
23 schools. Designated level three are the lowest
24 performing. Lawrence received a level three

1 rating for the 2011/2012 school years, while
2 Burnham received a level two rating.

3 The performance policy reports
4 reflecting these levels are included in the
5 binder of documents that you have received at
6 tab 25.

7 Please note that the performance
8 policy ratings from the 2011/2012 school year
9 appear under the 2012/2013 header on these
10 reports as these ratings are used to determine
11 each school's accountability status for the
12 2012/2013 school year.

13 If this proposal is approved,
14 students will receive additional supports at
15 Lawrence during the remainder of the
16 school -- this school year and at Burnham next
17 year, and the network will provide assistance
18 to ease the transition process as much as
19 possible.

20 CPS has developed a plan
21 dedicating additional resources to address any
22 safety concerns and to fulfill students'
23 academic, social and emotional and other
24 individual needs.

1 The draft transition plan
2 explaining these additional resources was sent
3 home to all families affected by this proposal
4 and is located in your binder at tab one.

5 CPS will publish final transition
6 plan if the Board approves this proposal which
7 will incorporate feedback from community
8 meetings, this hearing, and additional input
9 received.

10 The CPS Office of Safety and
11 Security, or OSS, has worked with the Chicago
12 Police Department, Department of Family and
13 Support Services, local community groups, faith
14 partners, elected officials and other sister
15 agencies to develop a plan for safe transition
16 of students.

17 If this proposal is approved, OSS
18 will take the following steps: First, OSS will
19 review and update school safety audits,
20 security personnel allocations, and school
21 safety technology systems to make school
22 enhancements as appropriate.

23 Second, OSS will be available to
24 address specific safety concerns raised by the

1 students and staff.

2 Third, OSS will provide safe
3 passage supports for students and staff
4 traveling to and from school.

5 Safe passage workers wear
6 identifiable vests and stand on designated
7 street corners to monitor students' safety
8 during their travel in the morning and home in
9 the afternoon.

10 Prior to the start of the
11 2013/2014 school year, OSS will work with
12 Burnham administration and the community to
13 designate specific intersections for safe
14 passage supports.

15 Additionally, students will
16 receive academic supports as they transition,
17 including the following: First, a principal
18 transition coordinator, or PTC, will be
19 designated to help the principal of Lawrence
20 maintain academic rigor for the remainder of
21 the school year and ensure a smooth transition
22 to Burnham. PTCs are former principals or
23 other administrators with significant
24 experience who will be a resource for the

1 administration and ensure continuity of support
2 for faculty and students.

3 Second, the Burnham
4 administration will receive comprehensive
5 student specific data on all transitioning
6 students to allow staff to proactively identify
7 individual student needs and prepare to meet
8 those needs.

9 Third, I will provide the dates
10 of which I'm available for office hours and
11 welcome family and students affected by this
12 action to discuss concerns and educational
13 options.

14 Fourth, principals will receive
15 discretionary resources to provide direct
16 academic supports to students.

17 For example, these funds may be
18 used to provide an instructional coach, teacher
19 leader, or to obtain an academic tutoring
20 position or program for students in reading and
21 math.

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

1 made.

2 Students will also receive social
3 and emotional supports to help them adjust to a
4 new school environment, including the
5 following: First, CPS will help school staff
6 members facilitate intervention groups or peace
7 circles aimed at helping students work through
8 concerns associated with the transition.

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

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

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

23 Resources will also be provided
24 to sponsor activities such as school visits for

1 families, coffee chats with the principal,
2 picnics, field trips or parent meetings to help
3 transitioning families to get to know their new
4 school.

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

16 In conclusion, Lawrence is
17 underutilized.

18 The combined enrollment of
19 Lawrence and Burnham students at the 9928 South
20 Crandon Avenue facility will not exceed the
21 facility's enrollment efficiency range and
22 Burnham is a higher performing school.

23 CEO believes this proposed school
24 closure will help the district better serve all

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

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

5 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you very
6 much, sir.

7 MS. HOGAN: Your Honor, this concludes the
8 presentation in support of the CEO's proposal.

9 If you have any additional
10 questions, we will be available to answer them.
11 Thank you for your time and attention.

12 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: I have no
13 additional questions at this time.

14 MS. HOGAN: Thank you.

15 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Ladies and
16 gentlemen, that will conclude the Chief
17 Executive Officer's presentation.

18 At this time we will move into
19 the public participation portion of this
20 hearing.

21 And as I noted earlier, I'm going
22 to call the names of those who indicated they
23 wish to speak in the order in which they
24 checked in. And we will begin that at this

1 time.

2 First call Kathleen Murray.

3 MS. MURRAY: Good evening. I'm Kathleen
4 Murray with the Chicago Teachers Union. And my
5 first statement is the Chicago Teachers Union
6 is against all of these school actions.

7 We believe that no school should
8 be closed in Chicago. This closing is 54
9 schools, the largest closing in the nation.

10 This is a very serious matter
11 right now. Speaking on behalf of Lawrence
12 school, where you have 400, 398 students, with
13 Burnham with 200. What was the -- I have a
14 question that I know it's not going to be
15 answered, but the utilization rate of Burnham
16 School. I don't have that -- that was not
17 presented here tonight, what their utilization
18 rate in their facility was.

19 But we do believe that you're
20 going to take some schools off the list. We
21 don't want schools pitted against each other,
22 and that's obviously the case here with moving
23 Lawrence out of their own school, firing this
24 entire staff, having them have to reapply for a

1 job in their school house. Completely against
2 it.

3 But we do believe some schools
4 will be taken off the list.

5 In fact, that is what certain
6 people at CPS have told certain people at CTU.

7 If the Board did not take schools
8 off the list and did not listen to people this
9 time, because they haven't listened in the
10 past, after going through all these community
11 meetings and hearings, if not one school
12 changes and comes off the list, then that will
13 just validate our point that it is a rubber
14 stamp school board, and we do need an elected
15 school board.

16 So we do believe schools will be
17 taken off this list.

18 Again, since it's not a
19 democratic school board, that is the only way
20 you can prove to the people of Chicago who
21 already have little trust in the Chicago Public
22 Schools system and the Board, the only way you
23 can prove to us that you actually listened,
24 evaluated, and took the recommendations of

1 every hearing officer. Thank you.

2 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you very
3 much.

4 Carol President.

5 MS. PRESIDENT: Good afternoon. My name
6 is Carol President. I am teacher at Robert H.
7 Lawrence. I'm a second grade teacher and I
8 have been at Lawrence since 2000.

9 I'm speaking on behalf of the
10 children and the whole family situation that we
11 have built at Lawrence.

12 Lawrence School has gone through
13 five principals since I've been there. And I
14 have seen the changes in the children's
15 attitudes when a principal comes in for a term
16 and has to leave in the middle of the school
17 year. And it is just not fair for the
18 children.

19 The next thing I want to talk
20 about is the ISAT is supposed to be so
21 important in CPS' eyes. I think that CPS or
22 the Board, or whoever made those decisions,
23 should have waited until after the ISAT to
24 bring the news to the children that Burnham is

1 going to be coming in our school, because with
2 that, the children came in and right after
3 spring break -- right after spring break is
4 ISAT. They came with the attitude that
5 somebody else is going to come into our school
6 and all the teachers are leaving, and they are
7 upset, and so with that upset environment, they
8 can't concentrate and do the best of their
9 ability on the ISAT test. Then you would blame
10 the teachers and say we didn't do our best in
11 teaching. And we have to be evaluated based on
12 the children's scores. I don't think that was
13 fair.

14 I just think the children needed
15 at least time, you know, to tell them about
16 this after the ISAT. And the NWEA test as
17 well, because this week we are doing the NWEA
18 test, and that is based on our scores.

19 If our children do good, then
20 we're evaluated based on that.

21 The children come into the test
22 with all those thoughts about we're leaving.
23 Our family is being broken up. And this has
24 nothing to do with Burnham or Lawrence.

1 There's no friction with that. Thank you very
2 much.

3 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you very
4 much, ma'am.

5 Luisa Ali.

6 MS. ALI: Hi. I'm a kindergarten teacher
7 at Lawrence School. I wasn't going to say
8 anything, but it sounded like you were stacking
9 boxes in a room instead of children. How they
10 supposed to learn with 30 kids in a room? Are
11 we getting rid of the sitters? What are we
12 getting rid of? All the hands-on learning.
13 Not to sit at a desk with a pencil.

14 I don't understand the numbers.
15 It's like -- I mean our classrooms are not that
16 big. But if you're going to put that many kids
17 on top of each other. Our children aren't used
18 to that. They need the space. They're below
19 level, as you've said, but putting more
20 children in a room with them, that's going to
21 help them to expand the room.

22 I'm not getting this whole
23 packing them all into a room together. That's
24 it.

1 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you very
2 much, ma'am.

3 Keshara Murph.

4 MS. MURPH: Hello. Hello, my name is
5 Keshara Murph. I'm a parent at Lawrence
6 Elementary and I have two children that attend
7 Lawrence.

8 I attended one of the meetings
9 that was held at Harlem High School, and I
10 mentioned that I was concerned how the children
11 from Burnham would interact with the children
12 from Lawrence. These children are human just
13 like us adults. They will have their good days
14 just as well their bad days.

15 I guess what I'm really concerned
16 about is what happens to our leaders and their
17 jobs once the transition is made in the fall.

18 Our leaders are our teachers at
19 Lawrence Elementary, and Ms. Coleman who
20 worked so hard over the years and cares so much
21 for the children. And the parents at Lawrence
22 Elementary. Thank you.

23 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you very
24 much, ma'am.

1 Rosalba Lopez Casanova.

2 MS. CASANOVA: Good evening, everyone. My
3 name is Rosalba Casanova. I'm the office
4 school clerk. I'll try to make it as brief as
5 possible.

6 But the impact that this
7 transition has had -- has taken on our
8 students, parents/community is tremendous. I
9 still don't think they have a clear
10 understanding of what's going on. I just have
11 one concern. All these resources that are
12 being expended to our incoming school year
13 children, why aren't they available or weren't
14 they available this year, the previous years.
15 Why is our enrollment, per se, so low? Because
16 we need help. We needed some of that resource.
17 Where is OSS now? Where are they? Why did we
18 wait until the transition took place? We could
19 have used your presence at our school more
20 often. And many other individuals who had the
21 capacity to assist us. We didn't have to wait
22 until the transition. We didn't. Many of our
23 parents, students, community, individuals who
24 need support as to what is really going on.

1 I'm there for your child. Don't worry about
2 your child walking across, I'll be there.

3 We have a security officer on one
4 door. We have six exits. We only have limited
5 security. We can't have a staff member at
6 every door. Why don't we get that resource?
7 At the end of the day, I have calls from
8 parents, we need help here and there. We only
9 have a limited number of staff. A limited.
10 Why aren't you there to help us now or weren't
11 you there? I sure hope that your promises, if
12 it goes through, are successful. I sure hope
13 you are there to help our children, because I
14 don't think you realize exactly what they're
15 experiencing. Thank you.

16 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY : Thank you very
17 much, ma'am.

18 Rebecca Gutierrez.

19 MS. GUTIERREZ: Good evening. My name is
20 Rebecca Gutierrez. I'm a teacher at Lawrence
21 Elementary School. This is my sixth year
22 there. And in the last seven years we have had
23 four administrators.

24 And since Ms. Coleman has taken

1 over, we have been doing quite well with our
2 data and moving up and moving forward.

3 Now, what I am angry about not
4 only is our -- not only are we seeing impact on
5 the students with all of this out there and not
6 everybody knowing what's going on, but I feel
7 really strongly of having everything seem like
8 it's a done deal. We're here. We're allowed
9 to come and speak, but what impact is it truly
10 having when Burnham's principal has already
11 been in our building. The transition team's
12 already been assigned.

13 So to us, we feel like it's
14 already a done deal. So what's the point of us
15 even saying anything and fighting for what we
16 want.

17 The other thing that I'm angry
18 about is the fact that it keeps getting brought
19 up that Burnham is a higher-performing school.
20 On paper, yes, they are. They're at an 80
21 percent. But over the last three years, our
22 students have been making gains. They've been
23 improving.

24 Burnham's principal has been

1 there for ten years. That's a decade. She
2 seen a class go from kindergarten, graduate to
3 eighth grade and then some. Where we've had an
4 administrator for three years and we're already
5 showing gains.

6 So I mean I understand
7 underutilization. But if you look at the
8 numbers, even if you put Burnham in there, if
9 it's based on what we were talking about or
10 what we heard earlier, it's still going to be
11 underutilized.

12 So I just feel like if it's a
13 matter of having both schools in one building,
14 then maybe it can be proposed that we keep
15 Lawrence and see how Lawrence does over the
16 next couple of years. And then have Burnham in
17 there as well and just have two separate
18 schools, because it has been done in the past.
19 And I just feel like we are pushed up against
20 the wall because we're the ones losing our
21 jobs.

22 Our students are the ones that
23 are losing out on stability.

24 They finally gained stability

1 over the last few years with a new
2 administrator and now it's being lost again.
3 Thank you very much

4 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you very
5 much.

6 Student 1.

7 STUDENT 1: My name is Student 1, and I
8 want to tell you what the problem is at
9 Lawrence, is that the parents are not helping
10 their children, and that's why the children are
11 not learning. And if the parents would be more
12 responsible and help the children, then
13 Lawrence would be a better school and the
14 children would learn. And because the teachers
15 at Lawrence are trying to help the students
16 learn, but if the parents are not helping the
17 students, they will never learn.

18 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you very
19 much.

20 Michael Onofrio.

21 MR. ONOFRIO: Good evening. My name is
22 Michael Onofrio. I am the assistant principal
23 at Robert H. Lawrence.

24 I have been a proponent for more

1 than 20 years on schools that work, including
2 charters and turnarounds. And I believe with
3 all of the schools that I have been associated
4 with over that time, Lawrence is, in fact, a
5 school that works.

6 If you look at the most recent
7 NWEA data that we have, Lawrence has
8 outperformed every single school in the
9 network.

10 When you look at reading for
11 upper grade reading, sixth, seventh and eighth
12 grade reading scores outperformed Burnham and
13 outperformed every other network, every other
14 school in our network except for one. And I
15 say this to show that good things are
16 happening.

17 Last year's ISAT scores we had
18 gains in math, science and reading. We had
19 larger than average gains when you look at our
20 gains compared to the other schools in the
21 network.

22 So I guess my first point is, the
23 gains -- our students are, in fact, moving. We
24 are increasing and students are growing. And

1 now it seems like we're going to head back into
2 a place where the entire community is back
3 being unstable.

4 We've heard already from speakers
5 that have talked about how this community has
6 been unstable. Lots of different
7 administrators coming in. We have finally
8 reached a point at Lawrence where we have
9 consistent leadership. We have turned the
10 school around.

11 Ms. Coleman, the principal, has
12 turned Lawrence around. That is proven through
13 the gains that we have. And I think that it's
14 a shame that at this point we're going to throw
15 the kids and the community back into this cycle
16 of being unstable all over again after what has
17 been gained. Thank you.

18 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you very
19 much.

20 That is the entirety of the list
21 that I have been given as to individuals who
22 wish to speak this evening. So having reached
23 the end of that list, it is time to adjourn
24 this hearing. However, prior to doing so, I

1 just want to again inform everyone that you do
2 have an opportunity to present anything you
3 wish in writing to the CEO, and you can do that
4 by dropping that at the law department on the
5 seventh floor of this building. You can also
6 send it via electronic mail. Do you have the
7 e-mail address? I don't have it with me --

8 MS. HOGAN: I do. Your Honor. I would
9 also -- the e-mail address -- to I think is it
10 qualityschools@CPS.EDU.

11 Your Honor, I'd also like to
12 request the record be kept open for the
13 mandatory one hour from the start time.

14 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: I missed that
15 requirement. Okay. So we will remain open.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What was the e-mail
17 again?

18 MS. RICHARDSON: Qualityschools, all one
19 word, at CPS.EDU.

20 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Is one of those
21 capitalized letter?

22 MS. RICHARDSON: I don't think it matters.

23 MS. HOGAN: So we convened at 5:35.

24 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: So we will remain

1 open until 6:35.

2 And if anybody wishes to make a
3 comment, please feel free to do so.

4 MS. COLEMAN: Since you opened the floor
5 up.

6 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: I just ask you to
7 state your name.

8 MS. COLEMAN: My name is Diedre Coleman.
9 I am the principal of Robert H. Lawrence. You
10 know, just sitting here and listening to what
11 everyone has to say, listening to the
12 proposals, listening to the ideas that have
13 gone forth as to what can help our children
14 grow, what is needed, what we have done, what
15 we have not done, all of these facts that I've
16 been presented, still does not speak to what
17 the children have to live through. I think
18 that getting social helps and these people come
19 in and talk to them is such a temporary fix to
20 a problem that is so huge.

21 These children have been through
22 so many changes, so many ups and downs in their
23 academic careers. It is not their fault that
24 they've had poor leadership. It's not their

1 fault that they've had to go through the
2 changing of guards several times. It's not
3 their fault that teachers have come and gone.
4 It's not their fault. But what they do have
5 now is the ability and a family unit.

6 If we can't teach them anything,
7 we can teach them how to be sociable. How to
8 learn to live together. How to operate as a
9 family and function so that they will be more
10 prepared and agreeable with the academics and
11 the educational programs that we are putting in
12 place for these children and their lives.

13 It is sad -- it saddens my heart
14 to listen to the children tell me, Ms. Coleman,
15 they breaking up our family. It doesn't even
16 matter anymore.

17 And it's even harder on us to
18 keep the children focused.

19 I believe what my teacher was
20 trying to say that it came at such a horrible
21 time, when we all know that NWEA is very
22 important in stating the school's progress, the
23 fate of the school.

24 The announcement came right

1 before spring break, which NWEA administration
2 takes place in May. My children are off focus.
3 They are worried about their teachers. They
4 are worried about their principal.

5 Well, I'm grown. I'm an adult.
6 I can fend for myself. But I also have to fend
7 for them. They don't know how to fend for
8 themselves.

9 Now they have to take a test and
10 suffer through a time of uncertainty, a time
11 where their hearts are broke, where their
12 hearts are hurting, but we still expect them to
13 perform. For what?

14 We have people coming in and out
15 of our building. You know, what does that say
16 to the children? That, oh, Ms. Coleman, why
17 are they here? I tell them don't worry about
18 it, honey, just keep on going. They froze my
19 budgets.

20 I thought we didn't have minutes
21 because we have time.

22 They froze my budget. So now my
23 chief has another task on top of the task of
24 dealing with all of his schools to manage money

1 that you all think what I'm going to steal and
2 take away.

3 They are -- you know, my teachers
4 don't know when their jobs -- when they have
5 jobs. The budgets, the new site they budgeted,
6 all of these things don't take place until the
7 end of the month. The open enrollment period
8 for these teachers to find another job would
9 have ended by then. They don't know their
10 fate. How unfair is it to them who have been
11 busting their butts as stated in our school
12 progress because our students are growing
13 academically. How unfair is it to them that
14 they don't know what their fate is, but
15 how -- more unfair is it to my children that
16 they have to see people come in and measuring
17 for air conditions when we've been asking for
18 these things since I've been there. That we've
19 been asking to have the heat regulated so we
20 don't have to burn up my kindergartens to a
21 hundred degrees just to knock the chill off a
22 classroom, but now they're getting new
23 thermostats in all classrooms. Why? Because
24 of the invitation of a higher-performing school

1 that's not half the size of Lawrence Elementary
2 School.

3 It is very disrespectful. It is
4 very distasteful, the way that it is being
5 handled.

6 I thank you for this, that my
7 children do not have to cross the gang lines,
8 which was my major concern to get to another
9 school. That they will be safe in staying in
10 the place that has become a safe haven to them.
11 I'm grateful for that. I am grateful that
12 you're going to put dollars into my children.
13 I'm grateful for that as well. But what I
14 don't like is creating a sense of falsity
15 within our school community. If you're going
16 to do what you're going to do, don't send my
17 teachers through this, and then show them
18 something different with tons of quality review
19 teams and other teams that come through the
20 building to do things and to make all these
21 improvements that they weren't worth. It says
22 a whole lot. As far as the integrity of our
23 school system. And I am a company man. I
24 still have to work. I still have to have a

1 job. But I have to keep my head held high to
2 keep them uplifted. Keep them motivated to
3 continue.

4 I have to ask them to pretend
5 like none of this is taking place, none of this
6 is going on, so that my children can still
7 continue to get the best that we're able to
8 offer them.

9 Why is it that they weren't worth
10 the best before now?

11 Why couldn't we have the help and
12 the support before now?

13 Why do they have to take a school
14 that has a level-two performance rating. It
15 doesn't matter that our value-added has
16 increased. It doesn't matter what we're doing
17 and you can see a change in order for them to
18 get the best. What are we really saying about
19 the children in Jeffrey Manor community? That
20 it takes 268 more kids to our 400 -- I don't
21 want to misquote how many babies you have, that
22 it takes them to come before they will do
23 something for the greater whole? So are they
24 nothing compared to Burnham something. What

1 are we really saying to the community and to
2 the families at large? What are we really
3 saying?

4 We going to give to you now
5 because now we have better bodies that are
6 higher performing, their capacity and
7 structural -- intellectual capacity is more
8 than the children at Lawrence, so we're going
9 give you what you need to succeed.

10 I pray, I pray that this is not
11 the message that we're sending to the
12 community.

13 I pray that this is not
14 representative of what Chicago Public Schools
15 stands for, because I represent Chicago Public
16 Schools as one of the leaders who has gone
17 throughout the rigorous process, and went
18 through quite well to get where I am and have
19 helped. And I represent CPS. I represent what
20 stands before the community and the children
21 what they see. And what answer do I have to a
22 parent that says why are they doing it now?
23 Why are we getting upgrades?

24 So our kids' nose don't have to

1 bleed anymore now because they will be at a
2 higher-performing school. But it is okay for
3 their nose to bleed because of the climate
4 control issues that have been present in the
5 building for umpteen years. It is okay for
6 their nose to bleed because they are low
7 achieving.

8 God doesn't like ugly. And if
9 we're going do something, we need to be fair.
10 We need to be fair and realize that our
11 children are worth it, whether they're low
12 achieving, middle achieving, high performing,
13 over the top, off the charts, it doesn't
14 matter. They're our babies. Because I
15 understand that the same children will have to
16 be determine my fate one day.

17 I've told my chief, and he will
18 attest to it, that, you know, I am grateful
19 that my children will receive some things that
20 they will need. I can't argue with the plan in
21 that it may have a prosperous idea, but what it
22 hurts is that they weren't worth it before now.

23 So just the messages we're
24 sending. As a company man, let's just be

1 careful what we say to the parents and to the
2 communities that are already struggling.

3 Let's not make them think that
4 they're not worth it. They're only worth it
5 when we can bring better in. So better means
6 more. Just a question.

7 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: Thank you, ma'am.

8 (Recess.)

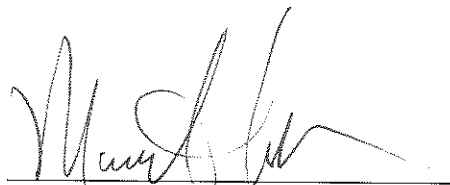
9 HEARING OFFICER KELLEY: It appears that
10 it's 6:35, and at this point we will adjourn
11 the meeting or the hearing. Thank you very
12 much.

13 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings
14 were adjourned at 6:35 p.m.)
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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)

4 MAUREEN A. WOODMAN, C.S.R., being first
5 duly sworn, says that she is a court reporter
6 doing business in the City of Chicago; that she
7 reported in shorthand the proceedings had at
8 the hearing of said cause; that the foregoing
9 is a true and correct transcript of her
10 shorthand notes, so taken as aforesaid, and
11 contains all the proceedings of said hearing.

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MAUREEN A. WOODMAN



