

BOARD OF EDUCATION

ORIGINAL

CITY OF CHICAGO

PUBLIC HEARING

TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED CO-LOCATION OF
MARY MAPES DODGE ELEMENTARY RENAISSANCE
ACADEMY WITH MORTON SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

Monday, April 29, 2013

commencing at 8:00 p.m.

HON. DONALD DEVLIN

HEARING OFFICER

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had in
the above-entitled matter at 125 South Clark
Street, Room 1550, Chicago, Illinois, commencing
at 8 o'clock p.m. HON. DONALD DEVLIN,
Presiding.

CPS STAFF PRESENT:

MS. WYNTER JACKSON - Attorney

MR. PATRICK PAYNE - Portfolio Planner

MS. PATRICIA TAYLOR - Chief Officer of
Facilities and Operations for Chicago
Public Schools

Reported By: Karen Fatigato, CSR

License No.: 084-004072

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E X H I B I T S

EXHIBITS

PAGE

CPS No. 1

9

Public No. 1

21

1 (Whereupon, the following
2 proceedings commenced at
3 8:02 p.m.)

4 HON. DEVLIN: Good evening, ladies and
5 gentlemen. This is a Chicago Public School's
6 public hearing to consider the proposed
7 co-location of Mary Mapes Dodge Elementary
8 Renaissance Academy with Morton School of
9 Excellence.

10 My name is Donald Devlin, I'm an
11 independent hearing officer. I'm not employed
12 by the school system or anybody associated with
13 the school system. I'm a licensed attorney,
14 which the State law says you have to be. It's
15 my job to receive the testimony here both from
16 these people, from the Chief Executive Officer's
17 office, and also the public, and then file a
18 report with the CEO in terms of my findings
19 here.

20 We have interpreters. We have a
21 hearing impaired interpreter and a Spanish
22 interpreter.

23 (Whereupon, the Spanish
24 interpreter spoke in Spanish.)

1 SPANISH INTERPRETER: If anybody comes
2 in at any point that needs Spanish interpreting,
3 let them know I'll be sitting over here.

4 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER: Same for
5 sign language.

6 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you.

7 The way this proceeds, we take the
8 testimony of the people from the CEO's office
9 first and then we'll proceed with the public
10 statements.

11 Ms. Jackson, do you wish to proceed?

12 MS. JACKSON: Thank you, your Honor.

13 Good evening, my name is Wynter
14 Jackson. For the record that's spelled
15 W-y-n-t-e-r, last name Jackson, J-a-c-k-s-o-n,
16 and I'm an attorney with the Chicago Board of
17 Education's LAW department. I'm appearing here
18 this evening today in connection with the
19 proposal of the Chief Executive Officer, or the
20 CEO, of the Chicago Public Schools to co-locate
21 Dodge Elementary School with Morton Elementary
22 School located at 341 (sic) North Troy Street.

23 At this time, your Honor, I
24 respectfully request that you admit into the

1 record the CEO's compiled Exhibit No. 1, which I
2 have already handed to you. It's a binder of
3 documents being submitted for your consideration
4 of a proposal and also a copy is immediately to
5 my left on the podium for public viewing. The
6 binder consists of evidence in the form of
7 documents and written statements demonstrating
8 that the CEO's proposal complies with the
9 requirements of the Illinois School Code and the
10 CEO's Guidelines for School Actions.

11 Specifically the written statements and
12 documents demonstrate the following:

13 At tab A you'll find that the binder
14 includes notice letters to the parents and
15 guardians of students, school staff members and
16 Local School Council members at Dodge Elementary
17 and Morton Elementary accompanied by draft
18 transition plans. The notice letters and draft
19 transition plan include:

20 1: A description for the basis of the
21 proposal.

22 2: Explain how the proposal meets the
23 criteria of the guidelines.

24 3: Identifies supports for students'

1 safety and security, academics, social and
2 emotional needs and specific supports for
3 students with disabilities, students in
4 temporary living situations and English language
5 learners.

6 4: Identify the students' option to
7 enroll in a higher performing school, provide
8 information on school -- choice of schools and
9 identify transportation.

10 Tab A also includes the notice of the
11 scheduled community meetings and hearing
12 published in the newspaper and affidavits
13 attesting to the delivery of notice to the Dodge
14 and Morton parents or guardians, school staff,
15 Local School Council members and elected
16 officials. Tab A includes an affidavit
17 attesting to the proper publication of:

18 1: The list of qualified independent
19 hearing officers and draft Guidelines for School
20 Actions before November 1st.

21 2: The finalized Guidelines for School
22 Actions following a 21-day public comment
23 period.

24 3: The proposals before March 31st and

1 at least 15 calendar days before the first
2 community meeting.

3 4: Summaries from community meetings
4 within five days after the meeting.

5 At tab B, your Honor, the binder
6 includes the Illinois School Code Provisions
7 designating the powers of the Board and
8 outlining the process for school actions. This
9 tab also includes the Board's policy on shared
10 facilities along with Chicago Public Schools
11 Space Utilization Standards and the CEO's
12 Guidelines for School Actions for the 2012
13 through 2013 school year. Finally, tab B
14 includes the CEO's procedures for public
15 hearings on proposed school closings.

16 And the final tab, tab C of the binder,
17 includes written evidence in support of the
18 CEO's proposal. It contains a transcript and
19 summaries from the two community meetings to
20 elicit public comment held at a location
21 convenient to the Dodge Elementary and Morton
22 Elementary school communities.

23 Tab C also includes the written
24 statement of Patrick Payne, the CEO's first

1 witness who you will hear from in a moment. And
2 Patricia Taylor, Chief Officer of Facilities and
3 Operations for the Chicago Public Schools, who
4 will speak regarding the 431 North Troy
5 facility.

6 At this time, your Honor, I request
7 that the CEO's compiled Exhibit No. 1 be
8 admitted into evidence.

9 HON. DEVLIN: The CEO's compiled
10 Exhibit No. 1 is admitted into evidence.

11 (Whereupon, CEO'S Exhibit
12 No. 1 was admitted into
13 evidence.)

14 MS. JACKSON: Thank you. And at this
15 time I would like to now introduce the CEO's
16 first witness, Patrick Payne, who will make a
17 statement in support of the proposal. And you
18 will find that for your reference at tab 20.

19 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you. Good evening,
20 Mr. Payne.

21 MR. PAYNE: Good evening, your Honor.
22 My name Patrick Payne, and I am a Portfolio
23 Planner for the Chicago Public Schools. I have
24 been in this position since March of 2012. As a

1 Portfolio Planner I manage strategic planning to
2 improve the utilization of CPS facilities.
3 Prior to becoming a Portfolio Planner I worked
4 as an analyst for Wells Fargo and a strategy
5 consultant. I have a Bachelor of Science from
6 Drake University and a Master's of Business
7 Administration from University of Chicago, Booth
8 School of Business.

9 I have been asked to appear at this
10 hearing today to convey to you, the parents and
11 the community, as well as the interested members
12 of the public in attendance, information
13 regarding the space utilization of the 431 North
14 Troy Street facility with respect to the
15 proposal to co-locate Dodge with Morton.

16 A co-location is when two schools share
17 space in the same building or on the same campus
18 but operate independently from each other.
19 According to the Chief Executive Officer's
20 guidelines for the 2012-2013 school year, the
21 CEO may propose a co-location of two schools
22 within the same facility if:

23 1: The combined projected enrollment
24 is within the facility's enrollment efficiency

1 range as defined by the CPS Space Utilization
2 Standards the.

3 And 2: The facility can support the
4 academic programming of both schools. I will
5 discuss the first factor while my colleague,
6 Patricia Taylor, will discuss the second factor.

7 Morton is currently located at 431
8 North Troy Street. Morton is an elementary
9 school that currently serves approximately 355
10 students in grades kindergarten through 8th
11 grade, including there prekindergarten program.

12 Dodge is currently located at 2651 West
13 Washington Boulevard. Dodge is an elementary
14 school that serves approximately 433 students in
15 grades kindergarten through 8th grade, including
16 their prekindergarten program.

17 To understand the enrollment efficiency
18 range of a facility Chicago Public Schools
19 utilizes its Space Utilization Standards, which
20 are located in your binder at tab 1.

21 The enrollment efficiency range is plus
22 or minus 20 percent of the facility's ideal
23 enrollment. For elementary school buildings the
24 ideal enrollment is defined as the number of

1 allotted homerooms multiplied by 30. The number
2 of allotted homerooms is approximately 76
3 percent of the total classrooms available.

4 A typical elementary school building
5 has a total of 39 classrooms, therefore, the
6 number of allotted homerooms, approximately 76
7 percent of 39, is 30. Multiplying 30 by 30
8 equals the ideal enrollment number of 900.
9 Finally, the enrollment efficiency range is plus
10 or minus 20 percent of 900, which is 720 to
11 1,080.

12 There are 34 total classrooms within
13 the 431 North Troy Street facility,
14 approximately 76 percent of 34 is 26, the number
15 of allotted homerooms. Twenty-six multiplied by
16 30 yields the ideal enrollment of the facility,
17 which is 780. As such the enrollment efficiency
18 range of the 431 North Troy Street facility is
19 624 to 936 students.

20 The enrollment of Dodge is currently
21 433. Combining this number with the number of
22 students at Morton will result in 788 students
23 attending the school at the 431 North Troy
24 Street facility. Further, the projected

1 enrollment of Dodge for the 2013-2014 school
2 year is 431, and the projected enrollment for
3 Morton for the next year is 376. The
4 combination of these two numbers is 807, within
5 the enrollment efficiency range of the building.
6 Thus, there is enough space within the facility
7 for both schools.

8 To accommodate the enrollment of both
9 schools approximately 17 classrooms would be
10 assigned to Dodge, approximately 15 classrooms
11 would be assigned to Morton and approximately
12 two classrooms will be shared by both schools.

13 The number of classroom assigned at
14 Dodge, 17 plus the shared use of two, is more
15 than sufficient to accommodate its enrollment
16 going forward, and the number of classrooms
17 assigned to Morton, 15 plus the shared use of
18 two, is also more than sufficient to accommodate
19 its enrollment going forward.

20 You will next hear from my colleague,
21 Patricia Taylor, who will explain how the
22 facility can accommodate the needs of both
23 schools.

24 Thank you, your Honor. This concludes

1 my statement.

2 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you very much,
3 Mr. Payne.

4 MS. JACKSON: Your Honor, at this time
5 the CEO introduces Patricia Taylor. And you can
6 find her statement at tab 21.

7 HON. DEVLIN: Very well. Thank you.

8 MS. TAYLOR: Good evening, your Honor.

9 HON. DEVLIN: Good evening, Ms. Taylor.

10 MS. TAYLOR: My name is Patricia Taylor
11 and my title is Chief Officer of Facilities and
12 Operations for Chicago Public Schools. I have
13 been in this position for four years. In this
14 role I am responsible for the maintenance and
15 renovation of existing facilities and the
16 construction of new facilities which provides me
17 with the knowledge of CPS facilities and how the
18 facility supports the academic programming of a
19 school.

20 The Chief Executive Officer, or CEO,
21 has asked me to appear before you today at this
22 hearing to convey to you and to the parents,
23 staff members, Local School Council members, as
24 well as interested members of the public in

1 attendance, information relevant to the proposal
2 to relocate -- to co-locate Morton Elementary
3 and Dodge Elementary.

4 As stated in the Board's 2005 Shared
5 Facility Policy, which is included in your
6 exhibit binder at tab 12, CPS believes that it
7 is in the best interest of the students and
8 communities to identify buildings that are not
9 being utilized at their full capacity and to
10 improve the use of these facilities. One
11 potential way to accomplish this is to transform
12 an underutilized building from a single school
13 facility to a shared facility by bringing one or
14 more additional schools into the building. You
15 have already heard from my colleague, Patrick
16 Payne, who has explained that the 431 North Troy
17 facility is not being utilized to its full
18 capacity. I will now speak about how the 431
19 North Troy facility can support the academic
20 programming of both Morton Elementary and Dodge
21 Elementary.

22 Morton Elementary is located in
23 Chicago's northwest side at 431 North Troy
24 Street. A copy of this slide presentation that

1 is being shown is located in your binder at tab
2 22. The facility was originally constructed in
3 1964. The current main entrance to the facility
4 is on Troy Street. Staff and visitor parking
5 are located along Troy Street and at the south
6 side of the facility. The site also includes a
7 playground and grassy outdoor area directly to
8 the east of the building.

9 The facility is made up of two distinct
10 but connected components: One four-story
11 structure on the north side of the site that
12 houses the majority of the classrooms, the main
13 office and the library, and a one-story
14 structure to the south that contains the
15 prekindergarten classrooms, lunchroom, gymnasium
16 and the auditorium. There are two art/science
17 labs on the first floor in one-story structure
18 and two on the second floor of the four-story
19 structure. Additionally, there is a computer
20 lab on both the second and third floors of this
21 larger structure.

22 The 431 North Troy facility has
23 sufficient space to accommodate the needs of
24 both Morton Elementary and Dodge Elementary for

1 academic courses, lunch, physical education,
2 administrative offices and other programming.
3 If this proposal is approved, a specific
4 memorandum of understanding or MOU to allocate
5 space between the two schools will be drafted in
6 accordance with the Board's 2005 Shared Facility
7 Policy. At this time I will outline our
8 recommendation as to how these two schools can
9 allocate the space to ensure that the needs of
10 both schools are met. Our recommendation for
11 the allocation of space can be seen in the next
12 four slides. You will see that, as the legend
13 shows, proposed Morton Elementary space is in
14 light brown, proposed Dodge Elementary space is
15 in blue and shared space shown in red.

16 I understand that Morton Elementary
17 needs a total of 15 classrooms and that Dodge
18 Elementary needs a total of 17 classrooms. To
19 fulfill this need Morton Elementary could use
20 two classrooms and an administrative space on
21 the first floor, three classrooms, including one
22 science lab on the second floor, and ten
23 classrooms on the third floor. To fulfill
24 Dodge's need Dodge Elementary could use one

1 classroom and one administrative space on the
2 first floor, six -- do you want to go back to
3 the first floor? Six classrooms, including one
4 science/art lab on the second floor, and ten
5 classrooms on the fourth floor. Two remaining
6 science/art labs on the first floor will be
7 shared between the two schools.

8 Both schools will need administrative
9 space. The two schools could split the cluster
10 of approximately 12 administrative spaces on the
11 first floor of the main building to use for main
12 office administrative purposes.

13 Both schools need to maintain separate
14 school identities while still sharing certain
15 common areas, so we have identified separate
16 entrances to the facility. Morton Elementary
17 could continue to use their existing main
18 entrance. Dodge Elementary could then use the
19 entrance located on the north side of the
20 building.

21 Lastly, vertical mobility will also be
22 controlled from floor to floor. Morton
23 Elementary could use the stairway located next
24 to their proposed main office space, while Dodge

1 Elementary could use the stairway located at
2 their proposed main entrance.

3 To meet other needs of these two
4 schools, we propose that the two schools share
5 the library, lunchroom, gymnasium and
6 auditorium. Additionally, the two schools could
7 share use of exterior playground and grassy
8 field to the east. The specific details of how
9 these facilities will be used and scheduled
10 between schools will be defined during the MOU
11 process.

12 If this proposal is approved, CPS will
13 work with both schools to develop the MOU
14 confirming all dedicated and shared spaces and
15 scheduling use of each space.

16 If this co-share proposal is approved,
17 the Department of Operations will propose the
18 following facility improvements to the 431 North
19 Troy facility for the benefit of all Morton and
20 Dodge Elementary students and staff:

21 Provide signage identifying the newly
22 allocated locations of each school.

23 Split parking lot into two, equally
24 sized sections for the two schools, with

1 corresponding signage.

2 Provide technology enhancements to
3 ensure that the safety of students and staff as
4 needed.

5 Provide window AC units for all
6 classrooms.

7 Provide new, separated telecom/intercom
8 system for the incoming Dodge School.

9 Provide American with Disabilities
10 accessibility upgrades in accordance with ADA
11 Titles I and II compliance requirements.

12 The Department of Operations
13 anticipates that these improvements would cost
14 approximately \$1.6 million.

15 To conclude, these two schools can fit
16 within the 431 North Troy facility, and if this
17 co-location is approved by the Board, CPS will
18 work to develop a memorandum of understanding
19 that outlines all dedicated and shared spaces.

20 Thank you, your Honor. This concludes
21 my statement.

22 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you, Ms. Taylor.

23 MS. JACKSON: Your Honor, this
24 concludes the presentation in support of the

1 CEO's proposal. If you have any questions we'll
2 be happy to take those.

3 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you very much.

4 We're going to proceed now to the
5 public comment portion of the hearing. The
6 first person to speak -- by the way, when you
7 came in you signed in down stairs and you were
8 placed on the list and you were asked whether or
9 not you wish to speak or not, and this list was
10 provided to me and I'm going to call the names
11 in the order that they appear on this list in
12 terms of the people who wish to speak.

13 The first person is Mr. Robert Fioretti
14 who is the Alderman in this area. Mr. Fioretti.

15 ALDERMAN FIORETTI: We do have copies
16 of the testimony.

17 (Whereupon, Public Exhibit
18 No. 1 was admitted into
19 evidence.)

20 ALDERMAN FIORETTI: Before I begin my
21 written remark testimony I was trying to look
22 for the copy of Foreign Affairs magazine I think
23 in December of 2010 that I have. And they
24 talked about Dodge in the magazine. And they

1 talked about a lot of other improvements. They
2 talked about -- and I didn't find the magazine
3 so I'm recalling as much as I can from memory.

4 But why does Dodge stand out? Because
5 the ninth Secretary of Education who sits in the
6 16th position of succession from the President
7 of the United States was appointed at Dodge
8 right before the President took office. And
9 Arne Duncan is the ninth Secretary of Education,
10 and it's a long line since 1969 when the
11 department was created under Jimmy Carter. And
12 I think it's significant in terms of the history
13 and what it meant for the community there to see
14 an appointment to the cabinet of the President
15 of the United States.

16 That being said, I do believe that
17 relocating Dodge would be a mistake. And thank
18 you Mr. -- your Honor for letting me address it,
19 counsel for the CPS and the two members from the
20 Board of Education. Relocating Dodge would be a
21 mistake. Dodge has a bright -- has been a
22 bright light of high performance in a needy Near
23 West Side neighborhood. The neighborhood needs
24 Dodge to remain open in its current location.

1 Dodge and Morton were not on the initial closing
2 list so no initial hearings took place to allow
3 CPS to gather information about this proposed
4 consolidation of Dodge and Morton. CPS is
5 proposing to combine these schools and all
6 administrators. This is not the way that CPS is
7 treating other schools which are not run by
8 AUSL, a preferred charter operator. The record
9 and CPS's own criteria cannot support the
10 consolidation being proposed here.

11 CPS is severely limiting its ability to
12 serve students in the Rockwell CHA area. CPS is
13 proposing to close Calhoun North, a neighborhood
14 school that serves the Rockwell CHA area, and
15 Dodge, a city-wide school that also serves many
16 students in the area. The Rockwell CHA mixed
17 income redevelopment has new housing that
18 currently has 300 children in the Calhoun North
19 attendance boundary and the Dodge area and
20 within 18 months an additional 76 units will be
21 added. There are plans for additional phases to
22 be built in the near future and additional new
23 housing has been built around Dodge. CPS is
24 proposing to close four grammar schools adjacent

1 to Dodge and the Rockwell area, Calhoun North,
2 Dodge, Dett and King. By closing Dodge and the
3 rest of the schools, CPS will be severely
4 limiting its ability to serve the students who
5 live in the area and who will be moving into
6 this area.

7 CHA has demolished many of the social
8 service buildings in the area around Dodge. The
9 Head Start building that was at Western and
10 Adams demolished to accommodate the Jesse White
11 facility that was ultimately located elsewhere
12 and Marcy Newberry, among others. Dodge now
13 provides many of those services. In a recent
14 survey conducted by CHA, the number one request
15 of Rockwell residents was to have additional
16 safe, indoor recreation facilities and programs.
17 Dodge is helping to provide these services to
18 the community. CPS needs to support the
19 Rockwell redevelopment rather than undermining
20 it by closing Dodge and these other schools that
21 serve the area.

22 Dodge has quality programs and
23 performance. Dodge has achieved major increases
24 in test scores over the last few years. Dodge

1 has been operating by AUSL for years and has
2 served as a training school for many of the AUSL
3 teachers. Dodge is a safe haven in this
4 community for students and families and Dodge
5 has a strong community supporting this school.
6 These are key elements that the University of
7 Chicago Consortium on Chicago school research
8 has identified as the basis of a strong school.
9 By closing Dodge CPS would eliminate this highly
10 successful school and there is no way to
11 determine whether this school community would be
12 maintained or improved by moving to Morton.

13 CPS is not proposing to bus children to
14 Morton. The route from Dodge to Morton is
15 tortuous, under viaducts and past much
16 industrial buildings, into a completely
17 different neighborhood that is more than a mile
18 from many of the Dodge students crossing
19 multiple gang lines. CPS has no specific safety
20 plan in the record and has provided me with no
21 plan. CPS is not proposing to provide any bus
22 service to protect the Dodge children and bus
23 service would not protect the families going to
24 and from Morton. This closure is irresponsible

1 and there is no basis to explore these
2 students -- to expose these students and their
3 families to this danger. If families are
4 unwilling to send their children into the Morton
5 area, then Morton can never become a strong
6 community center that Dodge is for the
7 neighborhood.

8 I would also like to point out that
9 under the Safe Passage program that we've heard
10 so much about, when Ruben Ivy was killed right
11 outside of Crane he and his parents -- his
12 mother lived right across from Dodge on the
13 Warren side of the street. Attendance rates
14 fell off dramatically. He was killed I think on
15 a Thursday or a Wednesday of March, the next
16 week there was still school, the attendance fell
17 into the 30 percent. The following week was
18 springtime, with pastors, with the principal,
19 with community leaders and with parents and I
20 personally knocked on 167 doors to get their
21 kids back. We created Operation Safe Passage.
22 It wasn't done for money as we see so often that
23 CPS likes to do right now, but it was done for
24 the passion of the kids to make sure they have a

1 good education.

2 But at the end of the day or the
3 beginning of the day we had a minimum of ten
4 police cars and we had a minimum of ten
5 afterwards after school to get those kids back
6 to the various areas. We also had a helicopter
7 not once but twice a week probably flying over
8 the routes that we had for Safe Passage. I am
9 concerned about the safety of our children as we
10 cross multiple gang lines. Just down the
11 road -- in fact, one of the schools that was
12 always touted for excellence, Urban Prep, which
13 is Urban Prep West, which is on the other side
14 of Taylor Street a ways from where we are now,
15 but we've had multiple issues of gang jostling
16 with the kids going to school.

17 At Suder right in -- another city-wide
18 school, we've had numerous lockouts because of
19 gang violence or shootings outside. I really
20 doubt whether CPS can maintain the safety of our
21 kids here as they go to a new school.

22 I also would like to say on the next
23 point that Dodge is located in a superior
24 facility. Dodge has a superior facility,

1 handicapped accessible with a great playground
2 and a much larger number of classrooms than
3 Morton. The stated reason for the closures have
4 been that CPS wants to consolidate students in
5 superior facilities. In this case this is not
6 what CPS is proposing. If CPS wants to
7 consolidate schools, Dodge is not the
8 facility -- Dodge is not a facility that should
9 be closed. The Dodge supporters have testified
10 that there will not be enough room from students
11 from both schools to fit into the Morton
12 facility. This is enough to stop the proposed
13 closing of Dodge. Morton has a much smaller
14 facility than Dodge and its playground and green
15 spaces are inferior to the facilities at Dodge.
16 CPS should be giving up the great -- CPS would
17 be giving up a great resource if it closes
18 Dodge.

19 I should also like to point out that
20 yesterday as I drove around Dodge, and I do that
21 every week anyway, but my staff and I went
22 around Dodge, we put in numerous safety features
23 in and around and on the streets there because
24 it's on Washington and Warren to calm the

1 traffic. We don't need speed cameras because we
2 put in stop signs. We put in speed humps all
3 the way across. And it's worked effectively,
4 we've repaved all the streets. The playground
5 out there is truly an exceptional one that I've
6 seen in terms of the quality of playgrounds that
7 CPS has or maintains.

8 The Dodge area needs safe, indoor
9 recreation options. Over four years ago the
10 Chicago Park District closed the fieldhouse at
11 Touhy Herbert Park, the one park facility
12 serving the area nearest to Dodge. Closing
13 Dodge would remove one of the key facilities
14 that takes place -- that takes the place of
15 facilities that have not been provided by the
16 Chicago Park District in the area. I have asked
17 schools in the Dodge area to cooperate in
18 supporting this need for recreational schools,
19 like after school programs open to the community
20 and open gym. This is still in the process and
21 Chicago Park District has not yet given -- or
22 taken any steps to replace Touhy Herbert. CPS
23 needs to maintain Dodge to continue to serve
24 this growing and needy neighborhood.

1 I would also like to say, your Honor,
2 that as we look around the area that if you came
3 out to the area we've had a number of
4 foreclosures in the area but a lot of those have
5 been taken down. We've had buildings across the
6 street right from Dodge that have now been
7 restored that people are living in. I think
8 from a land planning point of view -- and a
9 couple of years ago I visited maybe 400 schools
10 in the City of Chicago, probably 350, and I saw
11 what closed schools can do to communities in and
12 around. We have a new development kitty-corner
13 which was going to be condo minimums, however,
14 because of the market crash it's a high-end
15 rental in the area. I think closure of this
16 school that is ending up boarding up will have a
17 deleterious effect on the surrounding values of
18 the community and also on the mindset of the
19 people in and around that community. We fought
20 very hard in the last few years to maintain
21 everything from the viaduct all the way down to
22 California on both sides of the street, and we
23 put a lot of improvements across the board.

24 Finally, you know, the process here is

1 procedurally flawed. Dodge was not on the
2 initial closing list, so CPS had no information
3 from the Dodge community when they decided to
4 relocate this school. CPS does not provide the
5 public with the testimony or records submitted
6 to this hearing ahead of time. This means that
7 no one was allowed to respond to the CPS
8 arguments in favor of relocation. CPS has
9 provided no opportunity for cross examination of
10 its witnesses and no rebuttal.

11 And I know our long history, you know,
12 just so it's clear I did try a case a long time
13 ago when you were on the bench so everybody
14 knows but, you know, this does become a kangaroo
15 court procedure and provides no adequate record
16 for a decision to combine these schools. I
17 would ask that you take Dodge off the closure
18 list. Thank you very much.

19 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you very much,
20 Alderman. Thank you for being here. I tried to
21 clean all the kangaroos out of my courtroom.

22 ALDERMAN FIORETTI: I know that, your
23 Honor.

24 HON. DEVLIN: Those pesky little

1 things.

2 We're going to proceed now with the
3 balance of the public hearing. And generally
4 speaking each person should come up here,
5 identify themselves, spell their first and last
6 names and tell what their affiliation is, for
7 instance, like a parent, student, former
8 teacher, something like that just so we know who
9 you are.

10 This person sitting next to me is the
11 timekeeper, and initially we're going to impose
12 a two-minute time limit, that's the way -- this
13 is my fourth hearing, every hearing we've had a
14 two-minute time limit. I know Alderman Fioretti
15 had more than two minutes, but he's the Alderman
16 who speaks for everyone in his ward and I wanted
17 to give him the courtesy of being able to speak
18 for all his constituents and let the Board know
19 what his feelings were and what his
20 constituents' feelings were.

21 But we're going to go with a two-minute
22 time limit. We're going to run through this in
23 the order of the people who signed up and then
24 if we have some time leftover I might ask if

1 anyone who did sign up wants to say -- have
2 another minute, I'll do that, but I want to get
3 through this first two minutes first.

4 Understanding something too in that the
5 record of this hearing is open until 5 o'clock
6 tomorrow afternoon. So you can submit
7 information to the Board up until 5 o'clock
8 tomorrow afternoon if you feel you didn't get
9 enough of a hearing here.

10 The first person is Natasha Taylor.
11 Natasha Taylor, right off the bat, you get to
12 follow the Alderman, you get a tough job.

13 MS. NICHOLAS: I think he was reading
14 my notes.

15 HON. DEVLIN: Ms. Taylor, if you could
16 spell your first name just for the record.

17 MS. NICHOLAS: Sure. Natasha,
18 N-a-t-a-s-h-a.

19 HON. DEVLIN: T-a-y-l-o-r.

20 MS. NICHOLAS: And that's Nicholas,
21 N-i-c-h-o-l-e-s. Don't tell my husband I
22 haven't changed my last name.

23 HON. DEVLIN: Could you spell that once
24 more?

1 MS. NICHOLES: N-i-c-h-o-l-e-s. It's
2 okay, he knows.

3 HON. DEVLIN: I won't say anything if
4 you don't.

5 All right, Nicholes, Ms. Natasha
6 Nicholes, go ahead, ma'am.

7 MS. NICHOLES: I first want to say that
8 the two people that presented, Mr. Payne and
9 Ms. Taylor, you did a very good job of telling
10 us why Morton is awesome and convincing us why
11 we should go to Morton. What you did not do a
12 very good job of is convincing me why we should
13 leave Dodge.

14 Right off the bat you told us that we
15 have more students, and we were told about the
16 technology enhancements, the window AC units,
17 the telecom systems and the ADA upgrades. Dodge
18 is already ADA compliant, we have a ramp up
19 front that was put in several years ago. And
20 we're pretty good on technology. I think when
21 you have iPads in every single classroom and a
22 computer lab that will fit every single child
23 when they come through for classes and
24 everything, we're doing okay on that.

1 Window AC units, I believe we asked for
2 those during the strike, and I'm not sure why
3 we're getting them when we go to another school.
4 It's kind of counterproductive to me. And the
5 telecom system, I believe that everybody in
6 Dodge gets the out calls and the announcements
7 quite well. I'm pretty sure.

8 What I'm concerned about is you're
9 saying that we're going to have shared space in
10 the form of a library, a gymnasium. I didn't
11 hear art room. I also want to know where our PE
12 teacher is going to go, where our librarian is
13 going to go that we worked hard to get in the
14 ten years that I've been a parent at Dodge. I
15 was there the very first day that it opened as a
16 turnaround in 2003, and I don't plan to be
17 leaving that structure.

18 You also told us about entrances and
19 exits. I think the entrance that Dodge students
20 have right now is a perfect entrance for them.
21 Trying to guide 700 students on the first day
22 into one building at -- under the guides of
23 having two schools is going to be absolutely
24 maddening. We're kicked out for a reason during

1 the first week of school and now you're making
2 sure that we're going to be kicked out for that
3 entire month until they get everything settled.

4 And now I have to go, but if we have
5 more time I will be back up.

6 HON. DEVLIN: As I said, once we've
7 gone through --

8 MS. NICHOLES: No problem.

9 HON. DEVLIN: -- the list I'm willing
10 to ask those if they want an additional minute
11 they may have it later on.

12 Okay. Now, there's a Shomari Nicholes.

13 MR. NICHOLES: Tag team.

14 HON. DEVLIN: Any relation?

15 MR. NICHOLES: Yeah, that's my wife.

16 HON. DEVLIN: That's your wife?

17 All right. Go ahead, Mr. Nicholes.

18 MR. NICHOLES: I'll give my name and
19 then if we could pause the time right after I
20 give my name.

21 HON. DEVLIN: Can you spell your first
22 name please.

23 MR. NICHOLES: My first name is
24 Shomari, S-h-o-m-a-r-i, last name

1 N-i-c-h-o-l-e-s. I am a parent of a Dodge
2 student.

3 If we could pause the time, if you
4 could put back up the PowerPoint of the
5 facility. If you can go to I think it's the
6 second one, the layout, if you could do that.

7 HON. DEVLIN: Is that what you wanted?

8 MR. NICHOLLES: Yes. Thank you.

9 So because we only have two minutes
10 I'll cut my stuff short. I appreciate the
11 Alderman for coming in and sharing the points I
12 was going to make about Arne Duncan and
13 President Obama and Mayor Rahm Emanuel at the
14 time he was chief of staff and Vice President
15 Joe Biden coming to Dodge, this shining pillar
16 of what CPS can do when they put a lot of
17 ingenuity and elbow grease into closing down a
18 facility and opening it back up under new
19 revitalization and all the beautiful things that
20 our teachers who are represented here and our
21 staff have been able to do in I don't know how
22 many years -- ten years that it's been reopened,
23 fantastic, bang-up job.

24 My problem though is that Morton will

1 keep their entrance, is that correct? I forgot
2 your name, I'm sorry.

3 MS. TAYLOR: Pat Taylor. Yes.

4 MR. NICHOLAS: Morton will keep the
5 main entrance with the signage. Dodge will then
6 have some opening on the north side of the
7 building, is that correct? I'm sorry.

8 MS. TAYLOR: Uh-huh.

9 MR. NICHOLAS: North side of the
10 building. So one entrance is the north side of
11 the building, which is not the main entrance.
12 Here's the problem. You're going to co-locate
13 the schools, both AUSL schools, both performing
14 actually pretty well. Morton I believe is
15 uptick and Dodge has been doing again the model
16 for AUSL, it's fantastic. As my wife stated you
17 gave us examples of why Morton is inefficient as
18 far as their capacity is concerned but not why
19 Dodge should be moved into that facility.

20 Getting back to my original point,
21 again Morton keeps the signage, they keep the
22 building, they keep their neighborhood
23 footprint. As the mayor -- excuse me, as the
24 Alderman pointed out having Dodge then relocate

1 to that facility you essentially kill Dodge.
2 You say, hey, we want you to go to this
3 facility, we're going to put you around back,
4 all right, and we're going to give you a little
5 bitty sign. And my wife pointed out you then
6 have to make it somehow responsible -- and have
7 the administrators responsible of somehow
8 getting all of these students in the door the
9 right way, into the facility and, you know, that
10 doesn't make sense. But what happens is if I am
11 a parent going to register my student, my child,
12 I'm going in the main entrance, and if I go in
13 the main entrance, guess where I'm not going?
14 Dodge.

15 So essentially they're going to die a
16 slow death for no other reason than to say,
17 well, on paper you can use a few more students
18 per classroom. Thank you.

19 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you, Mr. Nichols.

20 Okay. Student A, Student A, please
21 just -- you can just start talking.

22 STUDENT RW: Good evening, my name is
23 RW. I am a 5th grader at Dodge Renaissance
24 Academy. I came to Dodge as a 3rd grader and

1 have been on the honor roll every semester. The
2 teachers at Dodge challenge me and I work really
3 hard to meet their challenge. Coming to Dodge
4 was an all new experience for me from the school
5 I came from.

6 I do not hesitate to get up in the
7 morning to go to school to see all of my
8 friends. I do not want to be separated from
9 them or my teachers. I can truly say that Dodge
10 needs to stay open for the community and all the
11 students that have called Dodge a home from
12 home. We have become a Dodge family and we
13 shouldn't have to merge in with Morton located
14 at 431 North Troy. Dodge is located in a safe
15 area. It is more visible than Morton.

16 In comparison, Dodge is a safer place
17 for students to feel safe. We do not have to
18 worry crossing under El road tracks, passing
19 liquor stores or scrap companies where people
20 are hanging out in the morning.

21 As a student I can say that Dodge
22 teachers are the greatest. They teach us and
23 they also look after us. We have a library, an
24 art room, two computer labs, a science lab and

1 sports team. So why does our school have to
2 close? It's not right. Dodge should stay open.

3 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you very much.

4 The next person is Barbara Holmes
5 Ms. Holmes, could you spell your first and last
6 name?

7 MS. HOLMES: Yes, my first name is
8 spelled B-a-r-b-a-r-a, the last name Holmes is
9 H-o-l-m-e-s.

10 HON. DEVLIN: Ms. Holmes, could you
11 tell us what's your affiliation?

12 MS. HOLMES: My affiliation with Dodge
13 is I'm a former student, 1976. My children
14 actually graduated there that are in their 30s
15 now. I came back after graduating from college
16 and became a teacher at Dodge, that was one of
17 the first schools that I taught at. And now I
18 am a grandparent with grandchildren at Dodge.
19 So I have a long history with Dodge.

20 I just want to stand here and say that
21 it truly hurts me that -- to know that Dodge is
22 moving. To move Dodge is to close Dodge, that's
23 really the way that I look at it. I run a day
24 care in the area now and so I do a lot of

1 association with Dodge as far as preparing the
2 kids in my day care to go to Dodge. So I have a
3 relationship that stems longer than just knowing
4 people as associates, that is family.

5 It touches me truly to the core to know
6 that this school, Morton, I am affiliated with.
7 I live in the area. My dad has been in the same
8 home since 1953 and I moved away and came back
9 and actually bought a home next door to him. So
10 I stand here on behalf of the community as
11 teachers, as parents, to say that this school
12 Morton is a -- it sits in a location like a
13 boulevard I can truly say. If you're not
14 looking for the school you won't even know it's
15 there. And in no way do I see any kids from
16 Dodge now from the community being able to even
17 walk there. You have to have transportation to
18 get to the school. You have to go through
19 dangerous areas, dead-end areas, dark areas and
20 you don't have the community looking out for
21 kids. So there's no safe haven, no safe homes
22 that if they were in trouble where would they
23 go.

24 So I just stand here to say that I hope

1 that the decision is made to keep Dodge open,
2 keep our children safe and exhilarating at a
3 pace that is unbelievable. Thank you.

4 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you very much.

5 Okay. Student B. Student B. Miss,
6 you don't have to give your name, you can
7 just -- we have everything here, you can just
8 start, okay?

9 STUDENT KS: Hi, my name is KS -- hi,
10 my name is KS, and I'm an honor roll in 5th
11 grade at Dodge Renaissance Academy. I am also
12 here with everybody who supports Dodge. I am
13 also here to tell you why I believe Dodge should
14 not close down.

15 Transportation and safety: If we were
16 to move Morton -- if we were to move to Morton
17 how would kids and parents who don't have cars
18 get to school? Will transportation be provided?
19 Walking to Morton poses many dangers, such as,
20 train tracks, walking through different
21 neighborhoods that may have gangs and strangers
22 that could possibly hurt children. Dodge is the
23 common location of all the children from my
24 neighborhood. We all live around each other and

1 the school.

2 Memories: All my family members went
3 to Dodge and graduated. My grandmother, uncle,
4 aunties and my mom. I have attended Dodge since
5 kindergarten and I would love to graduate here
6 and go to high school.

7 I believe that together we can help and
8 fight -- help fight to keep my school Dodge
9 Renaissance Academy open. Thank you.

10 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you very much.

11 Felicia Carter. Ms. Carter, if you
12 could spell your first and last name for the
13 court reporter and tell us what your affiliation
14 is please.

15 MS. CARTER: Absolutely. Good evening,
16 my name is Felicia Carter, F-e-l-i-c-i-a,
17 C-a-r-t-e-r. I'm also a parent of a 5th grade
18 student at Dodge, and I'm also a former student
19 of Dodge from 1964 to 1974. Most of my family
20 has gone to Dodge, done well, excelled. And I'm
21 also a neighbor of a lot of the people from the
22 neighborhood that went to Dodge.

23 And my son, he is an autistic child at
24 Dodge. He's been there since 2005, and he's

1 been working with Ms. Pencek for the last seven
2 years. She's the social worker there. That's
3 really my main concern. He's formed such an
4 amazing bond with her. You know, she can talk
5 him down from the dark places that he sometimes
6 goes through. And my concern is that it's not
7 feasible for me and my family, especially if
8 transportation isn't provided. We are
9 one-income household so that would put like an
10 extra \$150 a month on our budget for a bus pass
11 for me to take him to school and his bus pass.
12 And the area, no, I don't like the area. The
13 school is like a dead-end. Coming down Franklin
14 there's traffic buses and cars zooming
15 everywhere.

16 And I also wanted to state before I run
17 out of time is now the deadline for us to be
18 able to move or to transfer our student to a
19 school of our choosing, and Willa Cather might
20 be nice, and I lived down the street from Willa
21 Cather for years, I chose not to send my son
22 there because I thought Dodge was a better
23 school, but the deadline for that was April 19th
24 but now -- to put in the transfers and

1 everything. But a definitive decision will not
2 be reached until May 22nd by CPS, I don't think
3 that's fair.

4 With the funding, 20, 25 years ago I
5 believe that's what the Illinois Lottery was put
6 in place for or maybe they pulled the wool over
7 our eyes because the Illinois Lottery system is
8 making so much money that was supposed to be
9 funded in the school. And I'm just a little
10 upset, and I know it's nobody's fault here, and
11 this is one of the reasons I have to leave now
12 because my husband and I share a bus pass, he
13 works midnights, I have to go back home, get it
14 to him. Thank you. I'm sorry. Thank you.

15 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you very much,
16 Ms. Carter.

17 Okay. As I said earlier we have some
18 time and I'm going to give those people who
19 signed up to speak and wish to have an
20 additional minute we can -- I will give them an
21 additional minute to kind of conclude and make
22 sure that they've said -- they've gotten out all
23 they want to get out.

24 So I'm going to go back down the list

1 here. Natasha Nicholes, you wanted to say --
2 anything else you'd like to add?

3 MS. NICHOLLES: One more minute.

4 HON. DEVLIN: One more minute.

5 MS. NICHOLLES: I want to let you all
6 know that that group of people sitting in the
7 second section are our teachers that I think
8 I've worked with extensively. They make fun of
9 me a lot because I often leave when they are. I
10 don't get there when they do because they're
11 crazy, they get there anywhere between 6 in the
12 morning and 7 in the morning and they're not
13 leaving until 7 o'clock in the morning. Their
14 dedication to our students is phenomenal. And
15 there are students here and I don't want them to
16 see Mrs. Nicholes cry, but it's phenomenal.

17 And the possibility that if our
18 students don't go over to Morton because the
19 parents don't want to take that extra mile and
20 three -- 1.3 miles to go there makes me feel
21 that we're not going to be able to take
22 fantastic teachers with us. So then, like my
23 husband stated, we're minimized to being Morton,
24 and there's nothing against Morton, and I want

1 it to go on record, we have nothing against
2 Morton, but Dodge is our family. My son is in
3 7th grade, they have been doing nothing but
4 talking about becoming 8th graders and being the
5 first graduating class that went from pre-K3 all
6 the way to 8th grade, therefore, culminating
7 this fantastic turnaround program that CPS
8 started, that you all had us as the background
9 for our great President of the United States,
10 Mr. Barack Husain Obama to come and appoint Arne
11 Duncan, who is the one who installed the AUSL
12 program and made us a turnaround school.

13 I remember going to high school and
14 waiting for the bus on Warren and passing Dodge
15 when it was closed down, it looked horrible, it
16 was an eyesore. We live in the neighborhood,
17 our son walks four blocks to school. Now, if he
18 is moved to or co-located to Morton he will have
19 to get up not only earlier, you're going to have
20 me worrying. I have three children -- is
21 anybody else talking? No, because they just
22 timed me out.

23 HON. DEVLIN: Just finish up what you
24 need to say.

1 MS. NICHOLES: I have three children, a
2 set of twins and a 4-year-old daughter, right
3 now Dodge allows me to work extensively in the
4 school with three children. I run the book
5 fair, I run the box out for education program, I
6 run the taffy apple sales. I am kind of a
7 shadow. Now, if we go to Morton I'm not sure
8 that I'm going to be able to pass security with
9 three little people behind me working as long as
10 I do. And, you know, it may sound selfish and
11 it is because we just got to the point where the
12 parent participation at Dodge is at a level that
13 is great and we're making strides, and you all
14 by CPS if you move us you're going to blow it
15 all to the sky and we're going to have to start
16 all over again and we're going to lose parent
17 morale and we're just going to lose so much that
18 we've put in for the last ten years. And I
19 would hate to see that happen and have my son go
20 through so much with losing a principal and
21 losing an assistant principal who couldn't stay
22 there because she wasn't being trained by the
23 principal and then have to go to high school
24 after that. So there's no sense of security in

1 the next two years is what you're proposing for
2 me and my family and I can't live with that.

3 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you very much.

4 MR. NICHOLAS: I will be brief
5 hopefully. The proposals on paper make sense,
6 I'm being honest, absolute sense. Run the
7 numbers, the numbers say X, then it's X. You
8 run the number of classrooms needed, and it says
9 Y, then it's Y. It's really simple, really easy
10 to put the numbers into an algorithm and it
11 spits out some data. The problem though is what
12 is efficient on paper is not practical in
13 practice and so -- is impossible in practice,
14 excuse me.

15 So what we're proposing is we're going
16 to share some facilities. I heard art and
17 science, does that mean computer lab or is that
18 like a science lab? Does that mean -- you know
19 what about the library, gymnasium, cafeteria,
20 what about the athletic programs, what happens
21 with those, do they share those? Are those
22 going to be separate? Is that it for me? Wow,
23 that's a quick minute. But these are the things
24 that don't go in when you're putting in the

1 numbers of 40 and 30 per classroom and that's
2 what it says. And, oh, this facility has enough
3 classrooms in it so you run the numbers, well,
4 you can split them in good, but it's not
5 practical because it doesn't make sense.

6 Number two, if I can, the only time you
7 would put two separate schools in one building
8 would be to give the parents in the community
9 some diversity. You know, I can pick option A
10 or option B. In this case option A and option B
11 are exactly the same. You're going to split the
12 administrative offices, which is one of the
13 white papers in one of the things said, you're
14 going to split the administrative offices,
15 change the entrances, Morton keeps their
16 signage, I already spoke about how that's a
17 problem, but it's the same thing. So if I'm
18 coming inside and I say, all right, CPS decided
19 they want to co-locate these schools, oh, okay,
20 what am I gaining in getting Dodge here?
21 Nothing. Okay. Well, what's the difference, is
22 there something different academically? No.
23 Are they going -- I mean, what then is the
24 benefit, why would I pick Dodge over Morton then

1 at that point? Again, it goes back to my
2 original point, you're killing Dodge by doing
3 this.

4 HON. DEVLIN: Okay. Thank you very
5 much, Mr. Nicholes.

6 MS. JONES: Can I speak?

7 HON. DEVLIN: Did you sign up ahead of
8 time?

9 MS. JONES: No, I didn't.

10 MS. PARKER: I didn't sign up either.

11 HON. DEVLIN: Just have a seat for a
12 second. I want to go back through the people
13 who have already spoken, give them another
14 chance because they did sign up, okay, and then
15 I'll see if I can address your needs as well,
16 okay?

17 Student A. Are you student A?

18 MS. HOLMES: Student B.

19 HON. DEVLIN: Student A, let's take
20 student A first. Do you want to say anything
21 more, ma'am? Remember just one minute, I'm
22 going to have to hold you to one minute because
23 we may have some other people here.

24 STUDENT RW: Some good memories that I

1 have at Dodge is meeting by best friend.

2 UNKNOWN STUDENT: At Dodge do all our
3 teachers come with us? Do we have to have our
4 own staff?

5 HON. DEVLIN: I can't necessarily
6 answer those questions, but there are people
7 here who can if you want to talk to them later
8 on, okay? All right. Thank you very much.

9 Barbara Holmes. Ms. Holmes.

10 MS. HOLMES: My granddaughter wants to
11 speak so she could have my minute.

12 HON. DEVLIN: And that's student B.
13 Okay, student B.

14 STUDENT KS: Okay. I know all these
15 people came to support Dodge, but I believe that
16 only one person could change you all minds to
17 support Dodge and save them. And I know that
18 you all think that we should -- that Morton and
19 Dodge should combine together in one school, but
20 I think that it's not going to be enough space
21 because we have more students than them and it's
22 just going to be crowded. And what happens if
23 the students don't get along?

24 HON. DEVLIN: Well, again, you can ask

1 these folks over here.

2 MS. HOLMES: Thank you.

3 HON. DEVLIN: Felicia Carter.

4 THE AUDIENCE: She left.

5 HON. DEVLIN: She left, okay.

6 Now, I had two people here who wanted
7 to say something, and I'll give each of you two
8 minutes, okay?

9 Now, ma'am, you with the Dodge shirt on
10 there, could you tell me -- spell your first and
11 last name.

12 MS. JONES: R as in red
13 e-e-s-h-e-m-a-h, and the last name is Jones.

14 HON. DEVLIN: Okay, R-e-e-s-h-e-m-a-h
15 Jones?

16 MS. JONES: That's correct.

17 HON. DEVLIN: Okay. And what is your
18 affiliation, ma'am, you're a parent?

19 MS. JONES: Yes, I'm a parent of five
20 children that attend Dodge.

21 HON. DEVLIN: Okay.

22 MS. JONES: And I'll be very brief. I
23 just want to say those teachers back there are
24 wonderful. Although some of them aren't here,

1 my heart goes out to each one of them and it
2 would tear me apart if they weren't there to
3 help me get my children the education that they
4 need.

5 At the same time, your transportation
6 is good, but you can keep it. Your safety route
7 is good, but you can keep it. You can keep your
8 main entrance and your north wing too. In the
9 process keep Dodge open. If it's not broken,
10 don't break it. Thanks.

11 HON. DEVLIN: Okay. If you can come up
12 here and if you could please spell your first
13 and last name.

14 MS. PARKER: M-a-r-e-n-a.

15 HON. DEVLIN: M-a-r-e-n-a. And what's
16 your last name?

17 MS. PARKER: Parker.

18 HON. DEVLIN: Parker?

19 MS. PARKER: Uh-huh.

20 HON. DEVLIN: Okay, go ahead.

21 MS. PARKER: I'm a former student at
22 Dodge, I graduated from there, went there since
23 I was in 5th grade. Now, I go to Lincoln Park
24 High School and like the teachers -- if it

1 wasn't for the teachers at Dodge I wouldn't be
2 where I'm at right now. At Lincoln Park High
3 School some of the teachers they just give you
4 work and like they teach it in a way that like
5 you got to catch on yourself. And like the
6 teachers at Dodge they broke it down and they
7 explained it in a way that you could understand
8 it. And like I was able to come before school
9 and after school to get help on any work that I
10 needed. They came before and after school.

11 And like the way like Dodge is set up
12 it's like they want you to succeed in life.
13 Like they set it up so like you can make it
14 somewhere and like if I would have never went
15 there I don't think like I would be in a
16 position that I'm in right now. Like the way
17 that Dodge is is like if you all go to Morton
18 you all basically combining two schools and like
19 it's only one teacher. So how is that one
20 teacher going to get around to about 40, 50
21 students? It's only one person for all them
22 kids, they're not going to understand -- I'm
23 pretty sure a lot of them not going to
24 understand because the teacher is not going to

1 have enough time to get around to every student
2 if they don't understand. That's all I got to
3 say.

4 HON. DEVLIN: Okay. Thank you very
5 much, ma'am.

6 Okay. I don't have anymore people on
7 the list here. What happens from here? Yes,
8 ma'am.

9 MS. BARNES: I want to speak.

10 HON. DEVLIN: All right. What's your
11 name, ma'am?

12 MS. BARNES: My name is Antoinette
13 Barnes.

14 HON. DEVLIN: Could you spell
15 Antoinette for me?

16 MS. BARNES: A-n-t-o-i-n-e-t-t-e, the
17 last name is B-a-r-n-e-s. I'm a parent, I'm a
18 teacher of Chicago Public Schools and I work for
19 the Chicago Teachers Union.

20 HON. DEVLIN: Yes, ma'am.

21 MS. BARNES: Eighty-nine percent of the
22 students affected by the planned school closings
23 that Rahm Emanuel has selected are people of
24 color, primarily black people. CPS has chosen

1 corporations over students and the Loop over
2 neighborhoods. The ill winds blowing through
3 the City of Chicago compromise our students'
4 safety, destroy communities, property values,
5 schools and teachers.

6 Amisha Patel of the Chicago Sun-Times
7 states that big banks were saved by public
8 school funds but many Chicago communities are
9 besieged by record high unemployment and
10 foreclosure rates. And now these banks are
11 coming for our children's schools. Rather than
12 to stand up to Wall Street and fight for the
13 communities and demand that banks renegotiate
14 the swap deals that cost some \$36 million in
15 interest, Rahm would rather balance the budget
16 on the backs of our students, our schools and
17 our communities and, thus, our teachers.

18 As a parent I say don't close our
19 schools, invest in our children's future. We
20 live in one of the greatest countries in the
21 world and we're still fighting in 2013 for
22 public education and to educate our students. I
23 say we need to work together for the betterment
24 of communities, students and teachers. And I am

1 so proud to be here today representing Chicago
2 Teachers Union and seeing our brothers and our
3 sisters, the students, the teachers, the
4 community come out today to fight to keep their
5 school open to let you know from their heart how
6 they feel about what's going on, the real
7 issues, financial hardships that will be created
8 based upon your decision to close Dodge. Dodge
9 is a school, but more importantly it is a
10 family. Keep Dodge open.

11 HON. DEVLIN: Thank you very much,
12 Ms. Barnes.

13 Let me kind of explain what happens
14 from here on in. From now until tomorrow at
15 5 o'clock the record is still open in this
16 matter, this hearing, to submit speeches, submit
17 whatever you want in favor of or against, in
18 this case, closing Dodge. After that I make out
19 a report, I make out a report that goes on up to
20 the CEO and the School Board and then they make
21 the final decision. I think it's May 22nd, is
22 that it?

23 MR. PAYNE: Yes.

24 HON. DEVLIN: May 22nd is the Board

1 meeting.

2 My report is just one small piece of
3 it. It's basically a factual report, I tell the
4 Board and the CEO what was said here tonight by
5 these folks and by you folks and Alderman
6 Fioretti and at that point they make a decision.

7 I want to thank all of you for coming
8 here this evening, and I want to wish you all
9 good luck in the future.

10 MS. JACKSON: Judge, can you tell them
11 the e-mail address to submit information?

12 HON. DEVLIN: I don't -- to the Board?

13 MS. JACKSON: By 5 o'clock tomorrow.

14 HON. DEVLIN: I don't have it. Do you
15 have that?

16 MS. JACKSON: Qualityschools at
17 cps.edu.

18 HON. DEVLIN: That's the e-mail address
19 to use, qualityschools.edu.

20 MS. JACKSON: At cps.edu. Or in person
21 on the 7th floor of this building.

22 THE AUDIENCE: Excuse me, what did she
23 say?

24 HON. DEVLIN: There's an e-mail

1 address, it's qualityschools@cps.edu. Is that
2 it?

3 MS. JACKSON: Yes.

4 HON. DEVLIN: Did I say that right?

5 MS. JACKSON: Yes.

6 HON. DEVLIN: Qualityschools@cps.edu,
7 that's where you can submit additional
8 submissions to the hearing up until 5 o'clock
9 tomorrow afternoon. Again -- yes, sir.

10 MR. NICHOLAS: The initial hearing, the
11 two that we had originally, are those going to
12 be taken into account?

13 HON. DEVLIN: Yes, I believe I have
14 them. Yes, those -- everything here -- this
15 packet plus my report, which has what they
16 testified to and what you folks said and what
17 Alderman Fioretti said, this and my report goes
18 to the Board and to the CEO.

19 Again, I want to thank all of you for
20 coming tonight, and I want to wish you the best
21 of luck in the future. Thank you very much.
22 It's now 9:16 and the hearing is adjourned.

23 (Whereupon, the proceedings
24 were adjourned.)

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)

2) SS:

3 COUNTY OF C O O K)

4

5 Karen Fatigato, being first duly sworn,

6 on oath says that she is a court reporter doing

7 business in the City of Chicago; and that she

8 reported in shorthand the proceedings of said

9 public hearing, and that the foregoing is a true

10 and correct transcript of her shorthand notes so

11 taken as aforesaid, and contains the proceedings

12 given at said public hearing.

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Karen Fatigato

Karen Fatigato, CSR

LIC. NO. 084-004072

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ORIGINAL

**HEARINGS-SCHOOL ACTIONS
2013-CHICAGO BOARD OF
EDUCATION**

DATE: APRIL 29TH, 2013

REPORTER: KAREN FATIGATO

DODGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*******EXHIBIT ONLY*******



ROBERT W. FIORETTI
ALDERMAN - 2ND WARD

PUBLIC SERVICE OFFICE
1319 SOUTH STATE STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605
TELEPHONE 312-263-9273

ROBERT W. FIORETTI

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
121 NORTH LASALLE STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602
TELEPHONE 312-744-6836

COMMITTEE MEMBER

AVIATION

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April 29, 2013

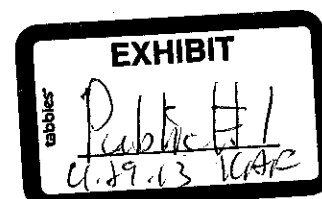
RELOCATING DODGE WOULD BE A MISTAKE

Dodge has long been a bright light of high performance in a needy Near West Side neighborhood. This neighborhood needs Dodge to remain open in its current location. Dodge and Morton were not on the initial closing list, so no initial hearings took place to allow CPS to gather information about this proposed consolidation of Dodge and Morton. CPS is proposing to combine these schools, and all administrators. This is not the way that CPS is treating other schools, which are not run by AUSL, a preferred charter operator. The record and CPS' own criteria cannot support the consolidation being proposed here.

**CPS IS SEVERELY LIMITING ITS ABILITY TO SERVE STUDENTS IN
THE ROCKWELL CHA AREA**

CPS is proposing to close Calhoun North, the neighborhood school that serves the Rockwell CHA redevelopment area, and Dodge, a city-wide school that also serves many students in this area. The Rockwell CHA mixed income redevelopment has new housing that currently has 300 children in the Calhoun North attendance boundary and the Dodge area, and within 18 months, an additional 76 units will be added. There are plans for additional phases to be built in the near future, and additional new housing has been built around Dodge. CPS is proposing to close four grammar schools adjacent to Dodge and the Rockwell area: Calhoun North, Dodge, Dett and King. By closing Dodge and the rest of these schools, CPS would be severely limiting its ability to serve the students who live in this area and who will be moving into this area.

CHA has demolished many of the social service buildings in the area around Dodge: the Head Start building that was at Western and Adams (demolished to accommodate the Jesse White facility that was ultimately located elsewhere) and Marcy Newberry, among others. Dodge now provides many of those services. In a recent survey conducted by CHA, the number one request of Rockwell residents was to have additional



safe, indoor recreation facilities and programs. Dodge is helping to provide these services to this community.

CPS needs to support the Rockwell redevelopment, rather than undermining it by closing Dodge and these other schools that serve the area.

DODGE HAS QUALITY PROGRAMS AND PERFORMANCE

Dodge has achieved major increases in test scores over the last few years. Dodge has been operated by AUSL for years, and has served as a training school for many of the AUSL teachers. Dodge is a safe haven in this community for students and families and Dodge has a strong community supporting this school. These are all key elements that the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research has identified as the basis of a strong school. By closing Dodge, CPS would eliminate this highly successful school, and there is no way to determine whether this school community would be maintained or improved by moving to Morton.

CPS IS NOT PROPOSING TO BUS CHILDREN TO MORTON

The route from Dodge to Morton is tortuous, under viaducts and past many industrial buildings, into a completely different neighborhood that is more than a mile for many of the Dodge students, crossing multiple gang boundaries. CPS has no specific safety plan in the record, and has provided me with no plan. CPS is not proposing to provide any bus service to protect the Dodge children, and bus service would not protect the families going to and from Morton. This closure is irresponsible and there is no basis to expose these students and families to this danger. If families are unwilling to send their children into the Morton area, then Morton can never become the strong community center that Dodge is for its neighborhood.

DODGE IS LOCATED IN A SUPERIOR FACILITY

Dodge has a superior facility, handicapped accessible with a great playground and a much larger number of classrooms than Morton. The stated reason for closure has been that CPS wants to consolidate students in the superior facilities. In this case, that is not what CPS is proposing. If CPS wants to consolidate schools, Dodge is not a facility that should be closed. The Dodge supporters have testified that there will not be enough room for the students from both schools to fit into the Morton facility. This is enough to stop the proposed closing of Dodge. Morton has a much smaller facility than Dodge, and its playground and green space are inferior to the facilities at Dodge. CPS would be giving up a great resource if it closes Dodge.

THE DODGE AREA NEEDS SAFE INDOOR RECREATION OPTIONS

Over four years ago, the Chicago Park District closed the field house in Touhy Herbert Park, the one park facility serving the area nearest to Dodge. Closing Dodge would remove one of the key facilities that takes the place of the facilities that have not been provided by the Chicago Park District in this area. I have asked schools in the

Dodge area to cooperate in supporting this need for recreation facilities, like afterschool programs open to the community and open gym. This is still in process and the Chicago Park District has not yet taken any steps to replace Touhy Herbert.

CPS needs to maintain Dodge to continue to serve this growing and needy neighborhood.

THIS PROCESS IS PROCEDURALLY FLAWED

Dodge was not on the initial closing list, so CPS had no information from the Dodge community when they decided to relocate this school. CPS does not provide the public with the testimony or record submitted in this hearing ahead of the hearing. This means that no one is allowed to respond to the CPS arguments in favor of relocation. CPS has provided no opportunity for cross-examination of its witnesses and no rebuttal. This is a Kangaroo court procedure, and provides no adequate record for a decision to combine these schools.

Sincerely,


Robert W. Fioretti
Alderman, 2nd Ward