

PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED CLOSURE
OF HERBERT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL and RELOCATION of
ROBERT NATHANIEL DETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

APRIL 30, 2013

5:30 P.M.

125 South Clark Street

Suite 1500

Chicago, Illinois

ORIGINAL

HON. DENNIS BURKE

HEARING OFFICER

CPS STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Susan O'Keefe, attorney, Chicago
Board of Education's Law Department;

Mr. Ben Felton, Portfolio Planner for the
Chicago Public Schools;

Ms. Shonda Huery, Chief of Schools for the
Chicago Public Schools, Fullerton
Elementary Network.

CHICAGO BOARD OF EDUCATION
7013 MAY -1 PM 12:05
LAW DEPARTMENT

1 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Good evening,
2 everyone. I'd like to get started. My name is
3 Judge Dennis Burke. I'm a retired judge of the
4 Circuit Court of Cook County. And I am the
5 independent hearing officer tonight for the
6 closure of Herbert Elementary and relocation of
7 Dett Elementary.

8 You're dealing with me tonight.
9 I always like to know who I'm dealing with, so
10 let me tell you a little bit about my
11 background.

12 I was in private practice as an
13 attorney for over 23 years. And I was
14 fortunate enough to be appointed to the bench
15 of the Circuit Court of Cook County. I spent
16 four and a half years in child protection at
17 1100 South Hamilton. My geographical area
18 included Cabrini Green, Robert Taylor Homes,
19 those areas until they were torn down. Then I
20 was successful to go down to the law division
21 down here in the Daley Center, and I spent
22 about ten years there doing trials and bench
23 trials, jury trials. Very knowledgeable about
24 proceedings and hearings.

1 Tonight we're going to start with
2 the assistant counsel for Chicago Board.
3 They're going to make about a 20-minute
4 presentation. Then I'm going to invite the
5 public participation. I hope people have
6 signed up. And I -- tonight you'll learn I
7 deal with you with great respect. I respect
8 your positions. I'm here to listen to you, and
9 I'm here to run an efficient meeting. We only
10 have two hours, so I'd like to get everybody
11 that signed up to be heard tonight. So there's
12 usually a two-minute window that you have. I'm
13 going to ask that you abide by that so we can
14 have everybody talk. I don't make up the time.
15 So I have to abide by that. So we're going to
16 start now.

17 By the way, if you have any
18 written documentation, you can hand it in
19 tonight. The court reporter will mark it. It
20 will be part of my file.

21 If you don't have it with you
22 tonight, you have until 5:00 o'clock tomorrow
23 to get it to the law department and they will
24 get it over to me. So you still have time for

1 any documentation. You'll have until 5:00
2 o'clock. I wanted to make sure everybody knew
3 that.

4 I'm going to ask Ms. O'Keefe to
5 please start.

6 MS. O'KEEFE: Thank you, your Honor. Good
7 evening, your Honor. My name is Susan O'Keefe.
8 I'm an attorney with the Chicago Board of
9 Education's Law Department.

10 I'm appearing before you today in
11 connection with the proposal of the Chief
12 Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools
13 to close Victor Herbert Elementary School, or
14 Herbert, and welcome returning students at the
15 Nathaniel Dett Elementary School or Dett.

16 If this proposal is approved,
17 Dett will relocate from its present location to
18 the facility at 2131 West Monroe Street where
19 Herbert is currently located.

20 At this time, I would like
21 permission to approach and tender to you the
22 CEO's compiled Exhibit 1, a binder of documents
23 being submitted for your consideration in
24 support of the proposal.

1 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: You may approach.
2 Thank you.

3 MS. O'KEEFE: Before asking that it be
4 introduced into evidence, I want to tell you
5 what that binder consists of.

6 I also want to let you know that
7 there is a binder available for public viewing
8 located on the podium. We have another one.
9 Actually, let me get that.

10 Your Honor, the binder consists
11 of documentary evidence and written statements
12 demonstrating that the CEO's proposal complies
13 with the requirements of the Illinois School
14 Code and the CEO's guidelines for school
15 actions. Specifically the binder includes the
16 following: At tab A, your Honor, you will find
17 in the binder it includes notice letters to the
18 parents and guardians of students, school staff
19 members and Local School Council members at
20 both Dett and Herbert, accompanied by a draft
21 transition plan. The notice letters and draft
22 transition plan they describe the basis of the
23 proposal, they explain how the proposal meets
24 the criteria of the guidelines, they identify

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

7 Finally, these plans identify the
8 students' option to enroll in a
9 higher-performing school. They provide
10 information on choice of schools and identify
11 transportation where practicable.

12 Also included in this tab A are
13 the newspaper publication and the affidavits
14 attesting the delivery of notice by mail,
15 personal delivery, and electronic mail.

16 The notice letters and draft
17 transition plans were sent to elected officials
18 by electronic mail.

19 Tab A also includes an affidavit
20 and a supplemental affidavit attesting to
21 proper publication of the draft guidelines for
22 school actions, the finalized guidelines for
23 school actions, the list of qualified
24 independent hearing officers, the proposal and

1 a correct draft transition plan, the summary
2 from the April 9th community meeting, which was
3 posted on or before April 14th, and a summary
4 of the April 12th community meeting, which was
5 posted on or before April 17th.

6 At tab B, the binder includes the
7 Illinois School Code provisions designating the
8 powers of the Board and outlining the process
9 for school actions.

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

16 Included in tab B, as well, are
17 Chicago Public School's space utilization
18 standards and the CEO's guidelines for school
19 actions for the 2012/2013 school year.

20 Finally, tab B includes the CEO's
21 procedures for public hearings on proposed
22 school closings.

23 Now tab C is the last tab, and it
24 includes the written evidence in support of the

1 CEO's proposal.

2 Specifically, tab C contains the
3 transcripts from the two community meetings
4 that elicited public comment, which were held
5 in location convenient to the Herbert and Dett
6 communities.

7 And summaries from those two
8 community meetings.

9 Tab C also includes the written
10 statement of Ben Felton, his accompanying
11 presentation demonstrating Herbert's
12 underutilization, and the space available at
13 the 2131 West Monroe Street facility for both
14 Herbert and Dett students without exceeding its
15 enrollment efficiency range.

16 Tab C also includes a map of the
17 proposed attendance area boundary change.

18 Finally, tab C includes the
19 written statement of Shonda Huery and her
20 accompanying documents which demonstrate Dett's
21 status as a higher-performing school, and
22 outlines the supports that we offer to students
23 as they transition.

24 At this time, your Honor, I

1 request the CEO's Exhibit 1 be admitted into
2 the record,

3 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Any objection? No
4 objection, it will be admitted.

5 MS. O'KEEFE: Your Honor, I would now like
6 to introduce the CEO's representative, Ben
7 Felton, who will make a statement in support of
8 the proposal. His statement is located in the
9 binder at tab 21.

10 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Sir, could you
11 please state your name and spell your name for
12 the court reporter.

13 MR. FELTON: Yes, your Honor. My name is
14 Ben, B-E-N. F-E-L-T-O-N. Ben Felton.

15 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you.

16 MR. FELTON: Good evening, your Honor.

17 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Good evening.

18 MR. FELTON: My name is Ben Felton and I
19 am a portfolio planner for the Chicago Public
20 Schools. I've been in this position since July
21 of 2012.

22 As a portfolio planner, I manage
23 the strategic planning to improve the efficient
24 utilization of CPS facilities.

1 Prior to becoming a portfolio
2 planner, I worked as teacher at CPS.

3 I have then joined the Tennessee
4 Department of Education where I focused on
5 teacher and principal recruitment and
6 contributed to the development of the
7 department's five-year strategic plan.

8 I have a bachelor of science from
9 Vanderbilt University.

10 I've been asked to appear at this
11 hearing today to convey to you, the parents,
12 and the community, as well as interested
13 members of the public in attendance information
14 regarding the space utilization of the Herbert
15 facility with respect to the proposal to close
16 Herbert.

17 According to the Chief Executive
18 Officer's guidelines for the 2012/2013 school
19 year, the CEO may propose to close a school if
20 it is underutilized based on CPS space
21 utilization standards and student enrollment
22 numbers recorded on the 20th attendance day for
23 the 2012/2013 school year.

24 The CEO may only propose a

1 closure if the impacted students have the
2 option to enroll in a higher-performing school,
3 and the resulting space utilization after the
4 closure will not exceed the facility's
5 enrollment efficiency range as defined by the
6 CPS space utilization standards.

7 I will discuss the details
8 regarding the space utilization of this
9 proposal and my colleague, Shonda Huery, will
10 discuss the performance of the welcoming school
11 and highlight the supports being offered in the
12 draft transition plan.

13 Herbert is currently located at
14 2131 West Monroe Street. Herbert is an
15 elementary school that as of the 20th day of
16 attendance for the 2012/2013 school year serves
17 355 students in pre-kindergarten and
18 kindergarten through eighth grades.

19 To understand the enrollment
20 efficiency range of a facility, Chicago Public
21 School utilizes its space utilization standards
22 which are located in your binder at tab 15.

23 The enrollment efficiency range
24 of a facility is plus or minus 20 percent of

1 the facility's ideal enrollment.

2 For elementary school buildings,
3 the ideal enrollment is defined as the number
4 of allotted homerooms multiplied by 30.

5 The number of allotted homeroom
6 classrooms is approximately 76 to 77 percent of
7 the total classrooms available.

8 As an elementary school's
9 enrollment increases above the efficiency
10 range, a school may be considered overcrowded
11 as programming options are reduced or
12 compromised.

13 As an elementary school's
14 enrollment decreases below the efficiency
15 range, a school may be considered
16 underutilized, as classrooms are unused or
17 poorly programmed, making the use of the
18 limited resources less effective.

19 A typical elementary school
20 building has a total of 39 classrooms.
21 Therefore, the number of allotted homerooms,
22 approximately 76 to 77 percent of 39, is 30
23 classrooms. Multiplying 30 classrooms by 30
24 equals the ideal enrollment number of 900.

1 Finally, the enrollment
2 efficiency range is plus or minus 20 percent of
3 900 which is between 720 and 1080.

4 If a school in this typical
5 elementary school building had an enrollment
6 below 720, it would be considered
7 underutilized.

8 Alternatively, if the school's
9 enrollment was above 1080, it would be
10 considered overcrowded.

11 There are 36 classrooms within
12 the facility.

13 Approximately 76 to 77 percent of
14 this number is 27, the number of allotted
15 homerooms.

16 This number multiplied by 30
17 yields the ideal enrollment of the facility
18 which is 810.

19 As such, the enrollment
20 efficiency range of the Herbert facility is
21 between 648 and 972 students.

22 As I stated, the enrollment of
23 Herbert as of the 20th day of attendance for
24 the 2012/2013 school year is 355. This number

1 is below the enrollment efficiency range and
2 thus the school is underutilized.

3 The CEO has proposed that the
4 students from Herbert be welcomed by Robert
5 Nathaniel Dett Elementary School. Dett will be
6 relocated from its present location to the
7 current Herbert facility at 2131 West Monroe
8 Street.

9 If this proposal is approved by
10 the Board of Education for the City of Chicago,
11 the resulting space utilization will not exceed
12 the 2131 West Monroe Street facility's
13 enrollment efficiency range as defined by the
14 CPS space utilization standards.

15 As I previously explained, the
16 enrollment efficiency range of the 2131 West
17 Monroe Street facility is between 648 and 972
18 students. Dett currently has 202 students
19 enrolled.

20 The combined enrollment from
21 Herbert and Dett is 557, which does not exceed
22 the enrollment efficiency range of the 2131
23 West Monroe Street facility.

24 To fully explain the enrollment

1 trend associated with these schools, I'd like
2 to direct your attention to the screen.

3 Projected is a slide that shows
4 the enrollment trend of Herbert and Dett, green
5 hashed lines showing the enrollment efficiency
6 range of the 2131 West Monroe Street facility,
7 and the circle representing the combined
8 projected enrollment for the 2013/2014 school
9 year.

10 Herbert's current enrollment of
11 355 and Dett's current enrollment of 202
12 students combines a total of 557 students.

13 Further, the projected enrollment
14 of Herbert for the 2013/2014 school year is
15 352, and the projecting enrollment for Dett for
16 next year 207 for a total of 559, which also
17 does not exceed the 2131 West Monroe Street
18 facility's enrollment efficiency range.

19 Thus, there's enough space within
20 the 2131 West Monroe Street facility for
21 students from Herbert and students from Dett.

22 If Herbert is closed, the CEO is
23 also proposing that Herbert's attendance area
24 east of Western Avenue be reassigned to Dett,

1 and that Herbert's attendance area west of
2 Western Avenue be reassigned to Willa Cather
3 Elementary School at the end of the current
4 school year.

5 Additionally, if Herbert is
6 closed, the CEO is also proposing Dett's
7 attendance area west of Western Avenue be
8 reassigned to Cather at the end of the current
9 school year. A map showing the proposed
10 boundary changes is located in your binder at
11 tab 24, and copies of this map were made
12 available tonight at the registration desk.

13 In proposing this boundary
14 change, several factors were considered as
15 outlined in the review and establishment of
16 school attendance boundary policies, including,
17 but not limited to, the capacity of these
18 schools, geographic barriers, travel time,
19 distance traveled, and program considerations.

20 Notwithstanding this proposed
21 boundary change, I want to reiterate that all
22 students enrolled currently at Herbert will be
23 assigned to Dett at the 2131 West Monroe Street
24 facility should the Board approve this

1 proposal.

2 You'll next hear from my
3 colleague, Shonda Huery, who will discuss the
4 performance of Dett and highlight the proposed
5 transition efforts.

6 Thank you, your Honor, that
7 concludes my statement

8 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you,
9 Mr. Felton.

10 MS. O'KEEFE: Your Honor, before I ask Ms.
11 Huery to come up. I want to correct something
12 I stated. Mr. Felton's statement is located at
13 22, not 21. So tab C-22. And the graphic is
14 23 and the map is at 24, all in tab C.

15 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you very
16 much.

17 MS. O'KEEFE: Your Honor, we would now
18 like to call the CEO's second representative,
19 Shonda Huery, who will make a statement in
20 support of this proposal as well.

21 And Ms. Huery's statement is
22 located at tab 25. Again in tab C. C-25.

23 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you.

24 Could you also state your name

1 and spell it for the court reporter, please.

2 MS. HUERY: Good evening. My name is
3 Shonda Huery. S-H-O-N-D-A. H-U-E-R-Y.

4 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you.

5 MS. HUERY: I am chief of schools for the
6 Chicago Public Schools Fullerton Elementary
7 Network.

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

13 Dett is within the Fullerton
14 Elementary Network, and I am responsible for
15 the support and oversight of Dett on behalf of
16 the CEO.

17 I have been the chief of the
18 Fullerton network since 2011.

19 By way of background, over the
20 past 16 years I have worked in a number of
21 capacities within public education, including
22 junior high school teacher, assistant
23 principal, and as a principal at a school that
24 I opened in Memphis. I've also served as

1 assistant chief academic officer and academic
2 superintendent for elementary schools of the
3 Boston public schools before becoming the
4 Fullerton Network Chief in 2011.

5 I hold bachelor's degree from
6 Howard University, and master's from Trinity, a
7 master's of education and doctorate of
8 education from Harvard University.

9 As you've already heard, Herbert
10 fits the criteria of the Chief Executive
11 Officer's guidelines for school actions because
12 it is underutilized based on CPS space
13 utilization standards and student enrollment
14 numbers recorded on the 20th attendance day for
15 the 2012/2013 school year.

16 If this proposal is approved,
17 Herbert's students will be welcomed by Dett and
18 Dett will relocate to the current Herbert
19 facility located at 2131 West Monroe Street.

20 The facility at 2131 West Monroe
21 Street has enough space for Herbert and Dett
22 students, and the resulting combined enrollment
23 will not exceed the facility's enrollment
24 efficiency range.

1 When Herbert students are
2 welcomed by the Dett administration, staff and
3 students, they will be attending a
4 higher-performing school based on the CEO's
5 guidelines for school actions.

6 One way that the CEO's guidelines
7 for school actions define a higher-performing
8 school is if the school received a higher level
9 on the performance policy for the 2011/2012
10 school year.

11 Under the CPS performance policy
12 located in your binder at tab 13, each school
13 receives an annual rating based on its
14 performance on a variety of student outcome
15 measures, including standardized test scores
16 and student attendance.

17 District-wide, schools designated
18 level one are the highest performing, and
19 schools designated level three are the lowest
20 performing.

21 Herbert received a level three
22 rating for the 2011/2012 school year, while
23 Dett received a level two rating.

24 The performance policy reports

1 reflecting these levels are included in the
2 binder of documents that you have received at
3 tab 26.

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

10 If this proposal is approved,
11 students will receive additional supports at
12 Herbert during the remainder of this school
13 year and at Dett next year, and the network
14 will provide assistance to ease the transition
15 process as much as possible.

16 CPS has developed a plan
17 dedicating additional resources to address any
18 safety concerns and to fulfill students'
19 academics, social/emotional and other
20 individual needs.

21 The draft transition plan
22 explaining these additional resources was sent
23 to all families affected by this proposal and
24 is located in your binder at tab A.

1 CPS will public final transition
2 plans if the Board approves this proposal,
3 which will incorporate feedback from community
4 meetings, this hearing and additional input
5 received.

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

13 If this proposal is approved, OSS
14 will take the following steps.

15 First, OSS will review and update
16 school safety audits, security personnel
17 allocations, and school safety technology
18 systems to make enhancements as appropriate.

19 Second, OSS will be available to
20 address specific safety concerns raised by
21 students and staff.

22 Third, OSS will provide safe
23 passage supports for students and staff
24 traveling to and from school.

1 Safe passage workers wear
2 identifiable vests and stand on designated
3 street corners to monitor students' safety
4 during their travel to school in the morning
5 and home in the afternoon.

6 Prior to the start of the
7 2013/2014 school year, OSS will work with the
8 Dett administration and the community to
9 designate specific intersections for safe
10 passage supports.

11 Additionally, students will
12 receive academic supports as they transition,
13 including the following: First, a principal
14 transition coordinator, or PTC, will be
15 assigned to help the principal of Herbert
16 maintain academic rigor for the remainder of
17 the school year and ensure a smooth transition
18 to Dett. PTCs are former principals or other
19 administrators with significant experience who
20 will be a resource for the administration and
21 ensure continuity of support for faculty and
22 students.

23 Second, the Dett administration
24 will receive comprehensive student-specific

1 data on all transitioning students to allow
2 staff to proactively identify individual
3 student's needs and prepare to meet those
4 needs.

5 Third, the network team will be
6 available to assist with transition activities
7 to welcome families and students affected by
8 this action. All those affected by this
9 proposal should feel free and are encouraged to
10 contact the network office at any time for
11 additional supports.

12 Fourth, principals will receive
13 discretionary resources to provide direct
14 academic supports to students. For example,
15 these funds may be used to provide an
16 instructional coach, teacher leader, or to
17 obtain an academic tutoring position or
18 programs for students in reading and math. I
19 will support the principal as they consider how
20 to use these resources and approve their
21 selections once decisions are made.

22 Students will also receive social
23 and emotional supports to help them adjust to a
24 new school environment, including the

1 following: First, CPS will help school staff
2 members facilitate intervention groups or peace
3 circles to aimed in helping students work
4 through concerns associated with the
5 transition.

6 Second, CPS will help staff
7 members implement restorative practices, such
8 as peer circles and peer juries, to encourage
9 peer-to-peer problem solving and resolution.

10 Third, groups of students in need
11 of more individualized attention will be
12 provided with access to highly structured
13 interventions.

14 Fourth, to foster an environment
15 that is both supportive and inclusive for all
16 students, CPS will provide resources to the
17 Dett leadership to implement culture-building
18 activities, such as staff luncheons and team
19 and trust-building activities. Resources will
20 also be provided to sponsor activities such as
21 school visits for families, coffee chats with
22 the principals, picnics, field trips or parent
23 meetings to help transitioning families get to
24 know their new school.

1 Finally, additional transition
2 supports will be provided to ensure that
3 Herbert students who have unique needs or
4 circumstances are adequately supported in this
5 transition, including students with diverse
6 learning needs, students in temporary living
7 situations, English language learners and early
8 childhood participants.

9 These additional supports are
10 described in more detail in the draft
11 transition plan located in your binder at tab
12 A. For example, students in temporary living
13 situations affected by this action will receive
14 support from an additional transition support
15 counselor dedicated to assist with transition
16 needs. Moreover, the CPS office of students in
17 temporary living situations will continue to
18 support -- continue the supports currently
19 provided to students in temporary living
20 situations as they transition to a new school,
21 including free school meals, enrollment support
22 and school supplies as needed.

23 In conclusion, Herbert is
24 underutilized. The combined enrollment of

1 Herbert and Dett students at the 2131 West
2 Monroe Street facility will not exceed the
3 facility's enrollment efficiency range, and
4 Dett is a higher-performing school.

5 The CEO believes that this
6 proposed school closure will help the district
7 better serve all students and is prepared to
8 assist students with additional supports as
9 they transition.

10 Thank you for your time and your
11 attention. This concludes my statement.

12 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you very
13 much.

14 MS. O'KEEFE: Your Honor, this concludes
15 the presentation in support of the CEO's
16 proposal.

17 If you have any questions during
18 the course of the evening, we will be available
19 to answer them.

20 Thank you for your time and
21 attention.

22 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: I have no
23 questions. Your reports were fully explained
24 to me and they're in the binders. So thank you

1 very much.

2 We will now open it up for public
3 participation. Ms. O'Keefe.

4 MS. O'KEEFE: That's correct.

5 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you. Folks,
6 I have a list here that's been typed, and on
7 this list it has speaking yes or no. If you
8 thought you were speaking tonight and I don't
9 call your name, please raise your hand. I want
10 to make sure that the list is correct. I know
11 I make a mistake every once in a while. I
12 don't want to miss anyone. If you don't hear
13 your name, please make sure you raise your
14 hand.

15 First person is your fine
16 Alderman Fioretti, Robert Fioretti.

17 I should disclose to you the
18 alderman and I have been friends for many
19 years. I have great respect for him and the
20 job he does. But I'm here as an officer to
21 hear him as an alderman and to hear his talk
22 tonight and discussions.

23 Alderman, I think I have the
24 discretion to waive the two-minute limitation

1 for you. I know you do not waste words, so I'm
2 not afraid to do that.

3 ALDERMAN FIORETTI: Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: You're welcome.

5 ALDERMAN FIORETTI: Counsel for the Board
6 and members of the Board. Unfortunately I have
7 to leave right after my presentation. I do
8 have another meeting. And Leslie Graff from my
9 staff will be here during the course of this
10 hearing today.

11 I believe combining Herbert and
12 Dett would be a mistake.

13 Herbert has been -- long been a
14 bright line for care for families and students
15 in the needy near west side neighborhood.
16 Almost 30 percent of the students in Herbert
17 are special education students and they need
18 special care.

19 It is very difficult for them to
20 be subjected to changed circumstances.

21 CPS is proposing to combine
22 Herbert and Dett under the Dett administration,
23 and I have not seen any detailed plan of how
24 this proposal is to be done.

1 The key consideration here is
2 protection of children and families affected by
3 this proposed consolidation.

4 CPS is severely limiting its
5 ability to serve students in the Rockwell CHA
6 area.

7 CPS is proposing to close
8 Herbert, the neighborhood school that serves
9 some of the students living in the Rockwell CHA
10 development.

11 The Rockwell CHA mixed income
12 redevelopment has new housing that currently
13 has 300 children. And within 18 months, an
14 additional 76 units will be added. There are
15 plans for additional phases to be built in the
16 near future and additional new housing has been
17 built around Herbert.

18 CPS is proposing to close four
19 grammar school buildings in and adjacent to
20 Herbert and the Rockwell area: Calhoun North,
21 Dodge, Dett and King.

22 By closing these buildings and
23 combining Dett and Herbert, CPS would be
24 severely limiting its ability to serve the

1 students who live in the area and who will be
2 moving into the area.

3 CHA has demolished many of the
4 social service buildings in the area around
5 Herbert: The Head Start building that was at
6 Western and Adams (demolished to accommodate
7 the Jesse White facility that was ultimately
8 located elsewhere) and Marcy Newberry, among
9 others.

10 Herbert and Dett now provide many
11 of these services. In a recent survey
12 conducted by CHA, the number one request of
13 Rockwell residents was to have additional safe
14 indoor recreational facilities and programs.

15 Dett is helping to provide these
16 services in this community.

17 By combining Dett and Herbert,
18 CPS is eliminating an important resource for
19 the community.

20 CPS needs to support the Rockwell
21 redevelopment, rather than undermining it by
22 closing Herbert and these other schools that
23 serve the area.

24 Herbert has supported its special

1 population.

2 As parents have testified in the
3 hearings, Herbert has worked well and supported
4 its special education students and families.
5 By closing Herbert, CPS will eliminate this
6 highly successful school. And there's no way
7 to determine whether this school community
8 would be maintained or improved by combining it
9 with Dett.

10 CPS is not proposing to bus
11 children to Herbert. The route from Dett to
12 Herbert extends the boundaries of the Dett area
13 and will require many students to travel
14 farther to school each day. This will require
15 a safe passage plan, because students will be
16 crossing multiple gang boundaries. CPS has no
17 specific safety plan in the record. And has
18 not provided me or the families affected by
19 this consolidation with any safety plans.

20 CPS is not providing -- is not
21 proposing to provide any bus service to protect
22 the Dett children.

23 It is unreasonable for CPS to ask
24 the Board and the community to support the

1 school closings when there is no specific plan
2 for the protection of all of the children and
3 families affected by this proposal.

4 I would like to just go off the
5 record for a moment and talk about the concerns
6 of operation safe passage. On the record but
7 off my remarks.

8 In March of '08 I believe it was,
9 Rubin Ivy was shot and killed outside of Crane
10 High School. The following week, the
11 attendance dropped down into the low 30s, mid
12 30s percent. Following week was a week off, it
13 was spring break. And we organized with the
14 principal, with police, with parents and
15 community leaders the operation safe passage.
16 I personally knocked on and talked to 167
17 parents' doors to get the kids back to school.

18 That following week and after
19 that we had a substantial jump in attendance.
20 But it was all with the help of about ten
21 police cars that guided, ten police cars in the
22 morning, ten police cars in the afternoon.

23 We also had a helicopter that
24 went overhead from time to time. These

1 multiple gang lines are nothing to laugh at.
2 Crossing Madison here is a serious problem, and
3 we go into a serious -- different
4 neighborhoods.

5 On Sunday I had a staff meeting,
6 and we drove around the affected both schools.
7 And you could see where gang lines start, where
8 gang lines end.

9 We tried very hard to keep
10 improvements in the community, in and around
11 the schools, infrastructure, new lights that
12 help security, new streets, new curbs,
13 sidewalks, but sometimes as much as that can
14 help bring residents and bring commercial
15 activity, it's just not enough.

16 And I am concerned about the
17 safety of our students.

18 When CPS can't even get a single
19 bus that they claim that was on order to the
20 south side to bring kids from one school to
21 play a baseball game in the -- and it wasn't in
22 the Roseland neighborhood, it was taking down
23 the Dan Ryan, getting off at 111th and going
24 under that expressway and getting across from

1 Palmer Park and go to Gwendolyn Brooks, and
2 they don't have the bus ready. And we lead to
3 this fuhrer we saw in the newspapers. I'm
4 worried they can't do anything right in terms
5 of the safety and protection of our children.
6 And I don't mean it in such a demeaning way,
7 but we're talking about a single bus to get to
8 two high-performing schools for an athletic
9 event on a campus that's several acres, because
10 I know that school. I went -- I attended high
11 school in that building at Gwendolyn Brooks.

12 Going back on the record, or
13 going back on the prepared remarks. The
14 Herbert Dett area needs safe indoor recreation
15 options.

16 Over four years ago the Chicago
17 Park District closed the field house in Touhy
18 Herbert Park, the one park facility serving the
19 area near rest to Herbert. Closing the Dett
20 school building would remove one of the key
21 facilities that takes the place of facilities
22 that have not been provided by the Chicago Park
23 District in this area.

24 I've asked the schools in the

1 Dett and Herbert area to cooperate in
2 supporting this need for recreation facilities,
3 like after-school programs open to the
4 community and open gym.

5 This is still in the process, and
6 the Chicago Park District has not yet taken any
7 steps to replace Touhy Herbert.

8 CPS needs to maintain Dett to
9 continue to serve this growing and needy
10 neighborhood.

11 If CPS plans to sell Dett, then
12 CPS needs to work with the community to plan
13 for the use of the Dett buildings as a park,
14 field house or some other community use.

15 Well -- and finally, this
16 procedure is -- this process is procedurally
17 flawed.

18 CPS has not provided anyone with
19 the testimony submitted in support of this
20 closing until this hearing.

21 CPS has not allowed any rebuttal
22 to the testimony presented today.

23 CPS has provided no adequate
24 opportunity for cross-examination of its

1 witnesses and no rebuttal.

2 Despite the fact that I have the
3 utmost respect for you, your Honor, this is in
4 a sense a kangaroo court procedure. It
5 provides no adequate record or for a decision
6 to close Herbert.

7 I'm urging you and urging the
8 Board to revise its procedures and to provide
9 -- and to provide a basis for the decision that
10 is reasonable and fair.

11 I would with accordingly ask for
12 this -- these two schools to be taken off the
13 closure list. Thank you.

14 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you very
15 much, Alderman.

16 MS. O'KEEFE: Your Honor, could we have
17 the court reporter mark the Exhibit No. 1.

18 (WHEREUPON, said
19 document was marked as
20 Public Exhibit No. 1 for
21 Identification.)

22 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Our next speaker
23 will be Denise Gillespie, the principal.

24 MS. GILLESPIE: Good afternoon, everyone.

1 I'll be reading. Please allow me to present to
2 you an overview of improvements that has taken
3 place at Herbert School in the last five years.

4 We tested off probation in
5 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.

6 Herbert School students have
7 taken first place in nationwide competitions as
8 well as local school contests.

9 We have been awarded the Loul
10 Dang preschool science lab, which we use to
11 give our younger students a chance to explore
12 and discover.

13 We have expanded our library
14 which is becoming a true media center. And
15 plans are in the works to become automated by
16 2014.

17 We have implemented the middle
18 school model which aids in transitioning our
19 students into high school and ensuring their
20 future success.

21 We have involved parents as our
22 partners in their child's educational
23 experience in creating a core group of parents
24 as you can see committed to working

1 side-by-side with the teachers.

2 Every year for the past four
3 years we have written proposals and granted --
4 and have been granted funding for our
5 after-school programs.

6 The slogan, one value one sound,
7 has come to life as Herbert School staff and
8 administration continue to do what is best for
9 the children even in these changing and
10 challenging times.

11 I'm going to read to you some
12 statistics. First, we're going to start with
13 the growth from 2006/2007, which is when I
14 became principal to, 2011/2012.

15 For students who took ISAT, third
16 through eighth grade, 2006/2007, we were at
17 10.6. 2011/2012 we were at 18.5. Math,
18 2006/'7, 12.4. 2011/'12, 17.5. Reading, 11.6,
19 2006/'7. 2011/'12, 16.5.

20 Science, 13.3, 2006/'7. Science
21 2011/'12, 17.0. Composite 12.1, 2006/'7.
22 Composite '11/'12, 17.5.

23 I also want to share with you our
24 explore scores. And we are going to compare

1 those with our school as well as with national.

2 In English, we scored 15.5. On
3 national was 15.2.

4 In mathematics we scored 16.6.
5 National was 15.9.

6 In reading we scored 15.3.
7 National 15.0.

8 In science we scored 17.1.
9 National 16.8.

10 In composite, our local composite
11 was 16.3. National 15.9.

12 So basically just to let you
13 know, when we did the Explore World per our
14 school, this is what we did. 2006/'7 we were
15 at 11.3. 2011/12, 15.5. Math, 11.50 2006/'7,
16 2011/'12, 16.6. Reading, 12.6 2006/'7, and
17 reading in 2011/'12, 15.3. Science, 2006/'7,
18 14.2. 2011/12, 17.1. The composite again 12.5
19 for 2006/'7. And 2011/'12, 16.3.

20 We have worked very hard at our
21 school to be the best that we can be. And we
22 celebrate that with our A team. With all the
23 parents who are here, the para-professionals.

24 We have a large special ed

1 population which you've heard. And all the
2 students in our school are -- they're growing,
3 they're developing.

4 Our students when they finish
5 Herbert Elementary School, go to some of the
6 best high schools in the city, bar none.

7 So we celebrate that and we want
8 to thank you for this opportunity for us to
9 give you this information.

10 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you, Ms.
11 Gillespie.

12 Next I'd like to hear from Father
13 Yaeger

14 FATHER YAEGER: Before you start running
15 the clock, I just want to observe that the
16 two-minute time frame for a clergyman is almost
17 as bad as a two-minute time frame for a
18 politician. So I will attempt to confine my
19 remarks to the time available.

20 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you.

21 FATHER YAEGER: I'm father Tim Yaeger. I
22 am the priest in charge at St. Andrews
23 Episcopal Church, 48th North Hoyne, which is
24 three blocks from Herbert and about six blocks

1 from Dett. These are our neighborhood schools.

2 I'm speaking in opposition to the
3 proposal by which Herbert will be closed and
4 Dett would be moved.

5 What I want the Board to
6 understand -- and I listened to the
7 presentation of the CEO's representatives here,
8 and I heard a lot of numbers. And I heard
9 phrases about how the students from Herbert
10 will be welcomed by the Dett community in the
11 building that it's being moved into and so
12 forth.

13 And I certainly hope that is the
14 case.

15 But I -- speaking from the point
16 of view of the community and trying to be
17 realistic, that first year is going to be
18 rough.

19 Members of my family who have
20 been in school murder situations, there is
21 conflict. Whose turf is this, whose school is
22 this.

23 If you proceed with this, the
24 Dett kids are going to have to cross that

1 boundary. And there is a boundary. Us adults
2 call it Madison Street. But on the street, it
3 has a different meaning. This is a
4 neighborhood with many challenges. I
5 volunteered to take this little parish. They
6 are not paying me. I volunteered with the
7 bishop to take this parish because I wanted to
8 help build up this community. A number of
9 challenges there.

10 We recently got a grant from the
11 dioceses of Chicago to create a children's
12 choir that will be available to all the
13 children in community. I met with the staff at
14 Herbert. And I'll meet with the staff at Dett.
15 I met with the principal at the magnet school,
16 Suder Magnet. We want to make it available
17 because you know there's not enough music and
18 arts in the Chicago Public Schools.

19 And we haven't had a grocery
20 store. We're just getting a grocery store.
21 And then we're getting this choir going and
22 getting the grocery store built and next thing
23 I hear they're closing the schools. And
24 they're going to bring the kids from Dett

1 across this boundary line. It's real.

2 Christmas morning, I'm parking my
3 go car and walking across the street to unlock
4 the church for Christmas morning mass. And
5 there's six guys on the corner selling drugs,
6 passing baggies through the window on Christmas
7 morning a half a block from my church. This is
8 what the kids are going to have to encounter as
9 they move across those streets. This is a
10 neighborhood that has one of the highest
11 unemployment rates in the United States, not
12 just Chicago, but the United States.

13 We're trying. Members of the
14 community, institution of the community,
15 working with these folks. I cherish the
16 relationships I have with the staff at Herbert.
17 I consider them partners in this effort that
18 we're trying to do in a small way to improve
19 the life of our children in that community.

20 But if this proposal goes
21 through, it will deal a wounding blow to those
22 efforts. And I ask the school board not adopt
23 this proposal. Keep them both open.

24 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you, Father.

1 Appreciate it.

2 I'm going to go down the list now
3 in the order that I have here, and the first
4 speaker from the list now will be Rosie
5 Clark-Scott.

6 MS. SCOTT: Thank you very much. My name
7 is Rosie Clark-Scott. I'm a teacher assistant
8 at Victor Herbert Elementary School for about
9 28 years now. So I know a lot of kids, a lot
10 of families, a lot of generations of families.
11 But I just want to read you this, and it simply
12 says that it doesn't add up.

13 Victor Herbert as of the 20th day
14 2012/2013 school year had 355 students.
15 Nathaniel Dett Elementary School as of the 20th
16 day of 2012/2013 had 205 students, yet Victor
17 Herbert School is a school that's losing its
18 identity because of underutilization. It
19 doesn't add up.

20 According to those numbers, Dett
21 is the school which is underutilized. Check
22 your scores from Explore and ISAT.

23 That is not about scores.
24 Underutilization is supposed to be the reason

1 for this.

2 It is supposed to be the cause of
3 the empty classrooms. At Herbert I counted the
4 empty classrooms that are not really empty.
5 The use of these classrooms, such as the
6 reading resource room, the math resource room,
7 the parent room, two computer labs, two science
8 labs. Like I previously stated, it doesn't add
9 up. The way I see it, there must be something
10 else that is going on to take Herbert's name
11 and make our students visitors in our own
12 building.

13 Most of the students at Herbert
14 have been here since preschool and plan on
15 graduating from Herbert.

16 Additionally, we have generations
17 upon generations of families, which have and do
18 attend Herbert.

19 It would be a shame to take a
20 staple in this community away.

21 I urge you to look further into
22 the proposed closing of Herbert School. As I
23 simply stating, it does not add up.

24 Herbert school already has

1 everything that's been promised to the families
2 by the CEO and the Board of Education. We have
3 computer labs, we have a science lab, we have a
4 library, we have air conditioning. Those were
5 the main things that Mayor Rahm Emanuel came on
6 TV and said we want to promise everybody a
7 quality education. We want to give them
8 computer labs and science labs. We already
9 have that.

10 I leave you with this final
11 question. Why have you proposed to close
12 Herbert?

13 We made national news. We made
14 USA news. A school, Chicago neighborhood
15 school fights for its school. I mean I pulled
16 it off the Web. My uncle saw it in
17 Mississippi. That's a different story.
18 Reverend Tim saw it in England.

19 But I mean it means something to
20 this community to have Herbert School open.
21 And I just -- I just think it would be a shame
22 to close the school.

23 I'm not trying to put down Dett
24 School or any other school. I'm talking on

1 behalf of Herbert School. I know what we do in
2 that building. All of a sudden they use one
3 year we slipped in science scores, not
4 everything else, science brought us down, and
5 to say our level was level three, that was
6 wrong.

7 I want to submit my -- I want to
8 submit my statement, and I want to submit the
9 letter that went out to our parents on report
10 card pickup night to say that they promised
11 their kids all of this stuff because they are a
12 better quality educational school. Which this
13 school, everything they promising is already an
14 at Herbert.

15 I want to submit this into the
16 record, and I also would like to submit the
17 article for the neighborhood fights for its
18 school into the record

19 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: That's fine. You
20 may step up and submit it to the court
21 reporter. This will be marked Public Exhibit
22 No. 2.

23 (WHEREUPON, said
24 document was marked as

Public Exhibit No. 2 for
Identification.)

Next we have Ms. Melissa
Martinelli.

MS. MARTINELLI: My name is Melissa. I'm
the early childhood special education teacher
at Herbert.

Herbert School is so much more
than a school. It is a family. It is where
everyone looks out for one another, from staff
to parents to students. There are no numbers
or mathematical equations which can explain
that. That is only something which can be seen
and felt from spending time in the school.

Victor Herbert does not have a
high rate of teacher turnover because the
teachers and staff at Herbert care about the
children and their education.

Consistency is something many of
the children and families we work with turn to
us for.

If Herbert is closed, we will not
be able to provide that.

We will not be able to provide

1 the consistency that's been there for 50 plus
2 years.

3 Like Rosie previously stated,
4 there are generations upon generations of
5 families at Herbert.

6 Additionally, I would like to add
7 some things that have already been said.

8 At Herbert our school currently
9 has a library which is full utilized, two
10 computer labs, an upper-grade lab, a primarily
11 lab which was donated to Herbert School through
12 our partnership with the Chicago Bulls. Two
13 science labs. We have a primary in upper grade
14 lab, as well as a preschool only lab which was
15 specifically designed for preschool-aged
16 children and is funded through a partnership
17 which we created through Rush University's
18 Science and Math Excellence Network.

19 The faculty and staff at Herbert
20 School know and have known how vital these
21 resources are for students and how much they
22 enhance a child's learning process, which is
23 why we as a staff took the initiative to find
24 the resources when they weren't available

1 through CPS. We went out and found these
2 resources and created these partnerships to
3 ensure that we have the right partnerships with
4 organizations to bring necessary programs for
5 our children.

6 I'd like to submit my letter as
7 well as -- in report card pickup for the third
8 quarter, we had a suggestion box from parents
9 and many of them filled out suggestions and
10 comment forms who weren't able to make it
11 tonight about the proposal plan to close, so I
12 would like to submit those as well.

13 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: You may approach
14 the court reporter.

15 (WHEREUPON, said
16 documents were marked as
17 Public Exhibit Nos. 3
18 and 4 for
19 Identification.)

20 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Next we have
21 Davlyn Jaimevadi.

22 MS. JAIMEVADI: Good evening, your Honor.
23 My name is Davlyn Jaimevadi. I will be reading
24 a statement from a dedicated parent on behalf

1 of Victor Herbert.

2 My son Alex has attended Head
3 Start Early Childhood Education program at
4 Victor Herbert School for the last two years.
5 For Alex and our family, it has been a
6 transformative experience.

7 Alex had previously been in a
8 traditional preschool which proved to be more
9 than he was ready for at that time.

10 After an evaluation at our
11 neighborhood school, the team at that school
12 determined he needed to be placed in an early
13 childhood special education program, and he was
14 assigned to a wonderfully warm and welcoming
15 classroom, room 106 at Herbert.

16 The classroom at Herbert proved
17 to be exactly what he needed, a small number of
18 children in a welcoming friendly environment,
19 but where he is also challenged to learn and
20 develop socially and emotionally.

21 The difference between the
22 four-year-old boy who two years ago had trouble
23 holding a pencil and staying on task and the
24 almost six-year-old boy today who can write

1 confidently and persist until the task is done
2 is truly amazing.

3 He has worked hard and we have
4 worked hard with him as a family.

5 But without a classroom where he
6 can blossom with confidence, he will not be
7 where he is today.

8 Next year he still -- he will
9 still need some support. But he will be ready
10 to primarily attend class in a general
11 education classroom.

12 Alex's teacher Ms. Melissa
13 Martinelli and teaching assistant Ms. Rosie
14 Clark-Scott have been invaluable contributors
15 to Alex's growth academically, socially and
16 emotionally.

17 I volunteer regularly in the
18 classroom and have gotten to see the classroom
19 dynamic firsthand. I could not ask for better
20 educators for my son.

21 Alex's current classroom is
22 exemplary, but I never forget it is part of a
23 larger school community.

24 Around 20 to 25 percent of the

1 students at Herbert are special education
2 students, and I have been so pleased to see
3 that not only Alex, but all of the special
4 education students are all treated with respect
5 and as equal members of the school community.

6 I hope wholeheartedly that the
7 students and staff at Victor Herbert will be
8 allowed to continue to foster the education and
9 development of students who learn differently
10 and need extra support.

11 And while education is the
12 foremost goal, I must point out that the
13 students and the staff at Victor Herbert School
14 are a family and speaking personally we could
15 not be prouder to be members of that family.

16 I also wanted to point out I'm
17 regular ed teacher, and I work closely with
18 106, as well as the rest of the staff that you
19 see here present.

20 And I think that as it was stated
21 before, we work as a family.

22 I think we can truly say that we
23 have love for one another as well as for the
24 students.

1 And I think that's an important
2 note that needs to be made. Because if
3 Herbert's staff is taken away, then the family
4 is broken. Thank you.

5 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you.

6 Next we have Ms. Lena Scott.

7 MS. SCOTT: Good evening. My name is Lena
8 Scott. I'm a teacher assistant. I've been
9 working at Herbert for about close to 29 years.
10 And I work with the special needs. I've been
11 working with them for 28 and a half years. And
12 when they first came there, they -- I'll never
13 forget, they didn't want the special needs kids
14 in the school and they were fighting against
15 it. And so Rosie Clark-Scott and myself and
16 one more parent decided, okay -- the principal
17 came to us and asked, what do you think? So we
18 said, why not. They are human. Let them in.
19 So we was the first ones -- three to get on
20 board to work with these kids. And they decide
21 to bring them, but no parent -- they didn't
22 understand their needs, so quite naturally they
23 was afraid.

24 So we got on board and we decide

1 we going to work with these students. We were
2 already volunteering in the school, because I
3 live in the neighborhood for 27 years. And as
4 a matter of fact, I'm still -- I moved a few
5 blocks, I'm still there. So I know the
6 neighborhood. It's home. And so we decided we
7 work with these special needs kids, along
8 with -- they brought in teachers and we been
9 working with these kids for 28 and a half
10 years. And they are family. I love them
11 dearly. And I hate to see the chain broken.
12 You know what I'm saying? I hate to see that
13 for them.

14 I done work with all kinds of
15 special needs kids. But I'm still there
16 working with them.

17 And I say if I leave Herbert, I'm
18 going to find somewhere to work with kids,
19 because I love kids.

20 And my son went there. I had
21 three grandchildren that go there. I have one
22 at north -- South Carolina State and I have one
23 in Mississippi, Valet (phonetic) College. And
24 the one in South Carolina, that he would be

1 graduating this year. And he came from Victor
2 Herbert School, an A student.

3 As a matter of fact, he came from
4 early childhood, and look where he at now. He
5 graduating.

6 So Herbert's a good school.
7 Please don't close. I ask you all not to close
8 Herbert. Thank you.

9 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you very
10 much.

11 Next we have Nichelle Marice
12 Williams.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She had to leave.

14 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Okay. Ms. Essie
15 Jones.

16 MS. JONES: Your Honor, I'd just like to
17 say that in the seven years I've been at
18 Herbert, I've seen some things that you can't
19 put on data charts. I've seen some things that
20 surpass standardized testing scores. Things
21 are happening at Herbert and I -- you can't put
22 them on a data sheet.

23 I see special ed students
24 enjoying success after they leave our building

1 and coming back to regale or celebrate with us
2 and saying to us, I think because of what
3 happened at Herbert is why I'm doing this,
4 because some of my friends aren't making it.
5 Some of my friends haven't made it.

6 I also think that -- well, I see
7 my colleagues and they're coming to work every
8 day after a lot of them feel like we're being
9 swept out the door, as if we haven't been
10 working hard, and we're working hard at
11 Herbert.

12 We're working hard. And all the
13 work that we're doing surpasses standardized
14 test scores.

15 I am proposing or making a
16 counterproposal that the Board either looks at
17 one or two scenarios. Scenario A, we stay
18 open, Dett stays open. And the resources that
19 they plan to put in there to support the one
20 building, they split.

21 The other scenario is, okay, I
22 get it, you're saying that we needed to all be
23 in one space, and even though you put us all in
24 there there's still room for 300 more so you

1 won't be surpassing whatever number it is,
2 whatever underutilization states.

3 Anyway, the thing is, if that
4 happens, then we can exist or coexist in the
5 same building, because this is done. It has
6 been done successfully where two schools have
7 remained with their staff and administrations
8 in the same building, coexisting successfully.
9 Thank you.

10 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you very
11 much.

12 Next we have Ms. Latanya
13 O'Conner.

14 MS. O'CONNER: Hello, my name is Latanya
15 O'Conner. I'm parent at Victor Herbert School.
16 I started off with these kids there. My son
17 Eric graduated, he is now 19. He had an IEP at
18 Herbert. He now attends Ohio State University.
19 I have two more left. One is graduating this
20 year and she got accepted to Institute of
21 Medical School just opened on Western. She has
22 3.5 (inaudible) testing from last year.

23 I have a young daughter that's in
24 second grade that has an IEP now. She

1 struggled with reading. She is in second
2 grade. Her teacher has been working with her
3 and she now can read, achieve, beginners and
4 she's now at above. She also has an IEP.

5 I'm here because I grew up -- I
6 was born in CHA in Henry Horner. I also after
7 Henry Horner closed our building we moved by
8 Victor Herbert. I'm coming because I'm used to
9 change because I had to move out of one place
10 into another.

11 My main focus is the safety of
12 the children. I used to work for CHA for the
13 home food program. I witnessed things and I
14 seen a lot of things that was not safe. I seen
15 people killed because of what side they come
16 from and what side they didn't come from on
17 Madison Street.

18 So my main concern is the safety
19 of the children. Are they guaranteed the
20 safety from the drug activity. Because it's
21 really bad over there. People have been killed
22 from -- if you live across Madison or if you
23 live down there by West Haven, kids have been
24 chased back, beat up.

1 So my main thing if they are
2 secure and guarantee safety for the parents and
3 also staff members I'm fine with it, but I very
4 so doubt it because they have been trying for
5 years. Years and years.

6 So my main thing is if they can
7 crack down on the drugs and the gangs and our
8 child safety. I guarantee they haven't,
9 because this has been going on for 40, 50
10 years.

11 I have seen grandmothers into it
12 with other grandmothers, fathers, mothers, from
13 where they live across Madison Street.

14 That's my main concern with the
15 closing and moving both of these schools is
16 both schools' safety. Because kids have
17 nothing to do with their uncles, their aunts,
18 their mothers and fathers. So thank you.

19 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you very
20 much.

21 Next we have Simone Jackson.

22 MS. JACKSON: Ho. How are you? I'm here
23 to say that I do not -- I'm here to say I do
24 not approve of the closing of Victor Herbert.

1 I come from 89th and Escanaba every morning to
2 bring my kids to school, to this school. And
3 the reason being because when I walk through
4 the door they say --

5 AUDIENDENCE: Hey, Mone.

6 MS. JACKSON: That's my nickname, Mone.
7 So when you get a greeting such as that. And
8 my children's grade -- I have a seventh grader.
9 She is on the A team. I have a four-year-old
10 that's in kindergarten, and she loves to come
11 to school. I don't have to pull her up to wake
12 her up in the morning. She is ready to come to
13 this school. I can't buy that.

14 I'm willing to get up and travel,
15 Judge. And I take two buses and I get there.

16 And I'm seeing with the
17 statistics and the degrees you have, just take
18 a walk across western. That's the expressway.
19 That is an expressway. And to have the
20 children from Dett to come up, that's just too
21 much. It's too much. Just take a walk
22 yourself. Park your car and walk it. And see
23 how you feel. And I guarantee, you will change
24 your proposal.

1 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you.

2 Next we have Sheila Rolling, Ms.
3 Rolling.

4 MS. ROLLING: Good afternoon, Judge. Let
5 me give you the realization of reconstitution,
6 underutilization or let's just say humiliation.

7 While the Board has chose to
8 close Herbert School, have they ever considered
9 the fact that the staff and Herbert has reached
10 out far beyond in ensuring students get a
11 quality education. The education that they
12 deserve.

13 We have formed relationships with
14 organizations such as the James Jordan
15 Foundation, which sponsors the A team program.
16 This is a program that offers money for college
17 students achieving straight As and Bs.

18 The money is put into an interest
19 bearing account and follows students throughout
20 their school years.

21 To show how hard we are working
22 at Herbert, this year we have four students who
23 wrote essays and won trips to Space Camp in
24 Huntsville, Alabama. This trip is all expenses

1 paid by the foundation and its donors.

2 Students who go to Space Camp
3 come back and share the knowledge they've
4 gained with other Herbert students. Surely
5 this experience will go a long way to address
6 the students' needs for better science scores.

7 We would like to be able to tell
8 students that we all care for them, including
9 the CPS CEO and our mayor, but they are saying
10 they are doing this to save money. Where is
11 the money coming from to pay for all these
12 people needed to make transitions and assist
13 schools in the closing procedures? Why are
14 millions of dollars funded into charter
15 schools? Why aren't we sharing in the
16 contributions made to education? Children
17 first. Well, we'll just have to wait and see.

18 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you, Ms.
19 Rolling.

20 Mark that as the next exhibit.

21 (WHEREUPON, said
22 document was marked as
23 Public Exhibit No. 5 for
24 Identification.)

1 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: We next have
2 student one.

3 STUDENT 1: My name is student one. I
4 don't want my school to close because we are
5 working on germination. We was planting bean
6 plants and our plants grow. We was thinking we
7 could take them home for Mother's Day. And we
8 learn math and reading. And after that we have
9 recess and lunch. Then after we rest. We do
10 math and we -- we after that, tomorrow, we come
11 up and do a book report and do our sight words.
12 And we go to our special. And we do... 0

13 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you. Very
14 nice job.

15 Next we have Otoria Lee from the
16 LSC.

17 MS. LEE: Hi, Judge. My name is Otoria
18 Lee. My son is STUDENT. He is in special ed
19 at Victor Herbert School. My son previously
20 attended Dett School. On the way to Dett, when
21 I was taking him to school. There was shooting
22 young mens on the corner selling drugs, like he
23 stated, and we had to run just for him to get
24 inside the school.

1 My one son attend Dett. He also
2 did not know how to read, did not know how to
3 write, did not know how to hold his pencil, did
4 not know how to tie his shoe. We stayed at
5 Dett for three months until I get him
6 transferred, got him transferred to Victor
7 Herbert.

8 Now, when he went to Victor
9 Herbert, he couldn't sit down, but the staff
10 members, the teachers in that classroom, worked
11 with my son. He can read, he can write, he can
12 do math, he can sit, he can tie his shoe, and
13 he can say about everything under the sun with
14 the help of staff members from Victor Herbert.

15 I think I learned a lot, too, how
16 to deal with him. At first it was like, what
17 I'm gonna to do. He not listening to me.
18 Uh-uh. He was emotional, he would withdraw.
19 Like a lot of people in the classroom, he did
20 not play with no other kids. He there, he
21 playing, where they help theyself (sic).

22 I think it's a safety issue, too.
23 They say it's safety -- they going to provide a
24 safety route to my school.

1 My concern is what is going to
2 happen when he is inside the school.

3 Because you got to keep in mind,
4 it different gangs. Kids are in gangs not when
5 they are in high school, it is when they in
6 grammar schools they in gangs. They already in
7 it. It is going to be fighting inside the
8 classroom. You can have a security guard,
9 that's good and great. My concern, no, he
10 going to need the police. You all going to
11 have to call the police from Crane to come
12 right back to that school when they come to
13 Dett.

14 I don't think my son will be
15 attending there. If they close Victor Herbert,
16 my son will not be attending Dett School.

17 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you, Ms.
18 Lee.

19 Next we have Ms. Meghan Carter.
20 I haven't skipped anybody yet, have I? Hi, Ms.
21 Carter.

22 MS. CARTER: Hello. My name is Meghan
23 Carter. M-E-G-H-A-N C-A-R-T-E-R. I'm an
24 attorney at LAF, Legal Assistance Foundation.

1 LAF provides free legal services to people with
2 disabilities, low-income people and seniors
3 across Cook County.

4 LAF represents many families in
5 the communities that are impacted by the school
6 closings and kids throughout the system with
7 special needs.

8 LAF opposes CPS' unprecedented
9 proposed closure of dozens of elementary
10 schools.

11 These closings place the burden
12 of a claimed budget deficit squarely on the
13 backs of Chicago poorest children.

14 These closings are affecting the
15 most disadvantaged children in Chicago.

16 LAF believes its contrary to law
17 and to CPS' own guidelines to close Herbert.
18 It's also unwise and unfair.

19 First, the only reliable data
20 established that closing schools causes
21 children harm, academically and otherwise.

22 CPS claimed budget deficit does
23 not justify this risk to vulnerable children.

24 Even if it were okay to harm kids

1 to cut costs, Chicago's own past school
2 closings and closings across the country show
3 that closing schools does not save money.

4 Second, the guidelines are
5 arbitrary as applied to Herbert, because the
6 space utilization standards ignore the high
7 percentage of special education children at
8 Herbert.

9 According to CPS' Web site,
10 that's 26 percent. That's far more than is
11 assumed in the standards.

12 These guidelines are not
13 rational. They rely on identifying schools as
14 underutilized under a standard that is vastly
15 over-inclusive.

16 This standard assumes all schools
17 have a certain percentage of general and
18 special education classrooms and ignores the
19 facts, meaning it ignores the actual
20 percentage.

21 If the actual percentage of
22 special education classrooms were counted, that
23 utilization number would be different for
24 Herbert.

1 The standards assume an ideal
2 class size of an arbitrary number, 30, which
3 does not correspond to the factual reality for
4 special education children who need and who are
5 entitled by law to have special -- to have
6 smaller classes.

7 Herbert students have a right to
8 be accurately counted, according to the real
9 capacity of their classrooms, not an arbitrary
10 inapplicable number.

11 CPS' space utilization formula is
12 literally counting kids with disabilities out.
13 It makes no sense. It hurts kids and violates
14 their rights. Thank you.

15 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Thank you, Ms.
16 Carter.

17 Next we have Mr. Martin Ritter.

18 MR. RITTER: My name is Martin Ritter.
19 I'm an organizer for the Chicago Teachers
20 Union.

21 Prior to that I was a high school
22 teacher at Marshall High school on the west
23 side, which is not far from where Herbert is.

24 So I've seen many of these

1 binders. I see no security plan. I see words
2 that say there will be a security plan. That's
3 not a security plan. So based on that merit
4 alone, you should judge this as not effective.

5 Second, I see no documents that
6 show a floor plan for how the new Herbert or
7 Dett facility will be used.

8 They say there will be proper
9 space allocations. We're talking about CPS.
10 Okay. The Board of Education has failed to
11 provide accurate space for clinicians,
12 counselors, social workers and the students
13 they serve for years. Why did we have to
14 demands in our new contract this past September
15 to have those things. All right.

16 So those two things in general
17 are not in here. That should be viewed as
18 this -- deny this. Okay. First all. All
19 right.

20 Next. We have a tendency to
21 believe what CPS says. Okay. But the public
22 does not.

23 The public overwhelmingly at
24 dozen and dozens of hearings across the winter

1 and spring said we do not support these ideas,
2 we do not support these plans. However, CEO
3 Barbara Byrd-Bennett said she heard that they
4 understood that they would have to close
5 schools. They attended hearings. I attended
6 hearings. I did not hear that argument from
7 the people. They said no. Okay.

8 Elected officials have supported
9 this school's position to stay open. And I do
10 not mean to disparage Dett. I'm sure they try
11 hard. But closing these -- Dett and moving it
12 to Herbert and calling it Dett is not a school
13 improvement plan. No data says that it is.
14 Okay.

15 These schools should remain where
16 they are, properly staffed and properly
17 resourced with small classroom sizes and proper
18 wraparound services.

19 Okay. We're going to -- in this
20 plan it says we're going to just moosh these
21 two schools together and see where the cards
22 lay. Those cards are children. They should
23 not have overcrowded classrooms.

24 I'll conclude in one second. All

1 right.

2 How come the ancillary rooms that
3 have music, art and special education and other
4 wraparound services are counted against Herbert
5 for utilization numbers, yet for schools in
6 other neighborhoods, more affluent
7 neighborhoods, that's called a well-rounded
8 school program.

9 We have a serious belief that CPS
10 is closing neighborhood schools to promote a
11 privatization agenda of opening more charter
12 schools.

13 Look on the near west side.
14 Historically over the last ten years that
15 they've torn down homes and torn down
16 buildings, they built more charter schools.
17 They're trying to move these people out of
18 their neighborhood by creating chaos in their
19 neighborhood schools.

20 I'll conclude in a second. All
21 right. Do your due diligence, sir. Walk from
22 Dett from the farthest north part of its
23 boundary to the farthest south part of
24 Herbert's boundary and judge for yourself if

1 it's a safety and security plan that's adequate
2 that you would send your kids through if your
3 kids were school-aged. Please do that. Please
4 vote no on this school consolidation plan. It
5 is unfair to children. It's unfair to this
6 community. Thank you.

7 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: I have a question
8 for you. I just want to make sure I
9 understand. I understand the arguments with
10 moving Dett to the Herbert site, mashing those
11 together. I understand all that. The question
12 I guess I have is a more specific one for the
13 people -- the wonderful people that came here
14 tonight to explain themselves. The people that
15 are in Herbert now will be going to the same
16 location, correct?

17 MR. RITTER: That's correct.

18 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Different name.

19 MR. RITTER: The children.

20 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: The children now.
21 And that would be in basically the same area
22 and neighborhood. So the children at Herbert
23 now would not be crossing Madison, the Dett
24 children would be crossing Madison. So the

1 safety really would be more with the Dett
2 children crossing that street Madison; is that
3 correct?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It would be not
5 only -- it would be for both, because we have
6 families that's different gangs, that's
7 different environments that don't get along.

8 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: That's what I'm
9 getting at. The Herbert children would be
10 going to the same location. It's just new
11 children coming from -- okay. I just wanted to
12 make sure.

13 MR. RITTER: Let me add, because this is
14 the first time a hearing officer ever asked
15 questions that I've been at which is great by
16 the way.

17 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: You had much
18 smarter hearing officers before.

19 MR. RITTER: They have an intimate
20 learning environment. You hear the wonderful
21 stories that these parents are telling about
22 the great teacher-to-student ratios and
23 resources they have at their school. We're
24 just going to take 300 or so kids from another

1 school and stick it on top. It's like -- it
2 doesn't work. I haven't seen it work.

3 CPS has tried it for years. This
4 is the status quo of school reform. They've
5 been doing this for years and it has not
6 brought out better academic outcomes.

7 In most of these consolidated
8 schools over the last five to ten years, there
9 has been decreases in academic success. CPS
10 closed four schools last year and lost over 700
11 kids. They don't know where they are. They've
12 admitted it to numerous news outlets that they
13 don't know where those kids are. So we're
14 going to close 53 this year. We're going to
15 lose thousands of kids. They know what they're
16 doing. They're sending staff for children
17 organizers in these neighborhoods, so believe
18 what these parents said, you don't have to go
19 to the school we tell you, they are going to
20 promote the charter school. That's a whole
21 other story. We just saw through the lines
22 there a little bit.

23 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Mr. Ritter, thank
24 you very much. Appreciate it.

1 Folks, ladies and gentlemen, I
2 believe that's everyone. Did I miss anyone?
3 Ms. O'Keefe, anything further?

4 MS. O'KEEFE: No. Thank you, your Honor.

5 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: That wraps it up?

6 MS. O'KEEFE: It does.

7 HEARING OFFICER BURKE: Folks, let me make
8 a personal observation if I can.

9 This is a very emotional issue
10 for you. But I must compliment you on your
11 professionalism, your concise, clear statements
12 of the facts here. It's emotional, but you put
13 that aside when you spoke here tonight. I
14 appreciate it as a hearing officer. The court
15 reporter appreciates the clear -- you kept your
16 voice up. Not once did I have to ask somebody
17 to speak up. The court reporter's the hardest
18 working person here in this room tonight. She
19 has to hear, take down everything. So mentally
20 she has to be a hundred percent. Physically
21 she's a hundred percent. I compliment you. I
22 never had to tell anybody keep their voice up.
23 And one person didn't speak in the microphone,
24 she was corrected by you all right away.

1 Folks, thank you very much. That
2 concludes this hearing.

3 I must submit a report. Follow
4 Illinois law, the guidelines. And it will be
5 submitted by Friday.

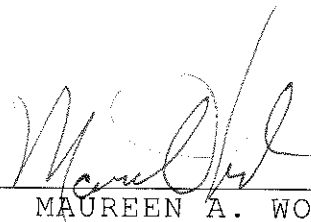
6 I will get a copy of the
7 transcript, so I don't miss anything. The
8 court reporter has told me that will be at my
9 doorstep tomorrow. So I will go over
10 everything.

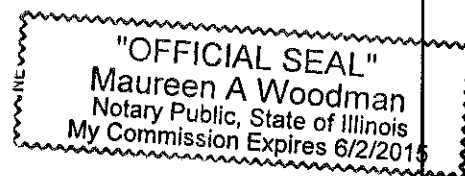
11 Ladies and gentlemen, thank you
12 very much for cooperation. I know you're proud
13 of your school. Have a nice evening.

14 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings
15 were adjourned at 7:10 p.m.)
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24

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





ROBERT W. FIORETTI
ALDERMAN - 2ND WARD

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COMMITTEE MEMBER

AVIATION

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CULTURAL AFFAIRS & RECREATION**

TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WAY

**ZONING, LANDMARKS &
BUILDING STANDARDS**

April 30, 2013

COMBINING HERBERT AND DETT WOULD BE A MISTAKE

Herbert has long been a bright light of care for families and students in a needy Near West Side neighborhood. Almost 30% of the students in Herbert are special education students, and they need special care. It is very difficult for them to be subjected to changed circumstances. CPS is proposing to combine Herbert and Dett, under the Dett administration, and I have not seen any detailed plan of how this is proposed to be done. The key consideration here is the protection of the students and families affected by this proposed consolidation.

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

CPS is proposing to close Herbert, the neighborhood school that serves some of the students living in the Rockwell CHA redevelopment area. The Rockwell CHA mixed income redevelopment has new housing that currently has 300 children, 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 in the area around Herbert. CPS is proposing to close four grammar school buildings in and adjacent to Herbert and the Rockwell area: Calhoun North, Dodge, Dett and King. By closing these buildings and combining Dett and Herbert, 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 Herbert: 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. Herbert and Dett now provide 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. Dett is helping to provide

Public EX- 1

these services to this community. By combining Dett and Herbert, CPS is eliminating an important resource for this community.

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

HERBERT HAS SUPPORTED ITS SPECIAL POPULATION

As many parents testified in the hearings, Herbert has worked well and supported its special education students and families. By closing Herbert, CPS would eliminate this highly successful school, and there is no way to determine whether this school community would be maintained or improved by combining it with Dett.

CPS IS NOT PROPOSING TO BUS CHILDREN TO HERBERT

The route from Dett to Herbert extends the boundaries of the Dett area and will require many students to travel much farther to school each day. This will require a safe passage plan, because students will be crossing multiple gang boundaries CPS has no specific safety plan in the record, and has not provided me or the families affected by this consolidation with any safety plan. CPS is not proposing to provide any bus service to protect the Dett children. It is unreasonable for CPS to ask the Board and the community to support this school closing when there is no specific plan for the protection of the all of the children and families affected by this proposal.

THE HERBERT/DETT 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 Herbert. Closing the Dett school building 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 Dett and Herbert 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 Dett to continue to serve this growing and needy neighborhood. If CPS plans to sell Dett, then CPS needs to work with the community to plan for the use of the Dett building, as a park field house or some other community use.

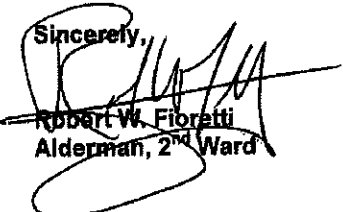
THIS PROCESS IS PROCEDURALLY FLAW

CPS has not provided anyone with the testimony submitted in support of this closing until this hearing. CPS does not allow any rebuttal to its testimony presented today. 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 close Herbert.

I am urging the Board to revise its procedures and to provide a basis for its decisions that is fair and reasonable.

Sincerely,


Robert W. Fioretti
Alderman, 2nd Ward

U.S. News > A Chicago neighborhood fights for its school

A Chicago neighborhood fights for its school



by: LINDA SORRELL

april 11 2013

tags: school, education, national, Chicago

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CHICAGO - Linda Sorrell's family has lived in this Near West Side neighborhood for decades. Her son, grandchildren, and six cousins have all gone to Victor Herbert School.

Sorrell, like so many others in the community is dumbfounded why Herbert's students will lose their teachers and staff in the massive school

closure plan announced by Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

Sorrell joined a group of teachers, parents and students April 9 and walked the mile from the school to Whitney Young High School to appeal the decision at a hearing of the Board of Education. About 30 people testified against the move.

The action at Herbert is one of 61 school closures, mergers and turnarounds announced by CPS. It will be the largest number of school closures in U.S. history.

CPS announced in May, 2012 that it would open 60 new charter schools over five years.

"It's pretty clear what CPS is doing," said Alderman Bob Fioretti who greeted the marchers when they arrived at

the hearing. "This is about school privatization."

The 355 students at Herbert are being merged with 205 students at nearby Robert Nathaniel Dett School. Herbert's staff will be fired and replaced with the staff from Dett. They will have to reapply for their jobs.

"I don't understand why CPS is doing this," said Sorrell. "This is a huge disruption. These teachers are part of the community and know all the families. There is a lot of progress being made at this school."

Sorrell was walking with her seven year-old grandson Germaine and some of his classmates.

"I want it to be open so I can learn," said Germaine, looking up at his grandmother.

Herbert is located in a high poverty neighborhood in the Near West Side. Some 92 percent of students are African American and 93 percent come from low-income families.

Over 30 percent of the student body has special needs. The school has two classes for children with severe autism and an Early Childhood Special Education program that enrolls three to six year olds.

No one is sure what will happen to these programs.

Rosie Clark-Scott has been a teacher for 28 years. She works at Herbert and is a member of the Local School Council. Clark reiterated the merger and firing of the staff would be a big disruption for the children and community.

"We don't mind cohabitating. But what's the point of doing this. We have a library, computer and science lab," she said.

Noting that test scores are roughly the same between the schools, Clark questioned why the staff was being let go.

"Our staff is highly regarded. We have educated generations of families. When there is a problem, they look to us for guidance," said Scott.

CPS officials say the reason Herbert is being merged with Dett is because of underutilization. The school is built for 810 students. But the underutilization standard is based on 30-36 children per classroom.

Scott Hiley, a parishioner at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church just up the street from Herbert, contested CPS' claims that the school is underutilized.

"There are overcrowded classrooms at Victor Herbert. The solution isn't bigger classes, it's more teachers, smaller classes and more resources - the same things every student in Chicago deserves."

Saria Lofton is a nurse who works in Herbert and several other schools who is impressed with the children and

how those with special needs have been served.

"Is thirty kids in a classroom okay? Not really," said Loftén who described the school closing process as "cold." She said it's not going to be easy for special needs children to adjust to someone new.

"This is a school community that has been created over 30 years," she said.

Loftén also said school nurses have a heavy workload and are dealing with many health issues in the community including diabetes, asthma, allergies and mental health issues.

"We've developed a team approach to these issues with social workers and psychologists and have implemented a lot of new programs," said Loftén. "We have no idea what will happen."

Willie Williamson thinks he knows why closures are taking place on the Near West Side.

"Gentrification," emphatically says Williamson, who has taught for 14 years, including the last 3 at Victor Herbert. "We are in the shadow of the United Center (where the Chicago Bulls and Hawks play) and there are rumors of a massive expansion. Housing won't be for working families. The wealthy want this area."

The Herbert School community is determined to fight back. "Don't judge us on the number of people who have turned out today," Rosie Clark-Scott told CPS during the hearing, "We're burned out, tired, been to every meeting and we're still here fighting."

Photo: Scott Hiley/PW



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Legal

April 12, 2013
Ms. Rosie Clark-Scott
Teacher Assistant
28+ years of service at Herbert School

“It Doesn’t Add Up!”

Victor Herbert School: As of the 20th day of the 2012-2013 school year- **355 students**

William H. Dett School: As of the 20th day of the 2012-2013 school year- **205 students**

Yet, Herbert School is the school that is losing its identity because of *underutilization*. It doesn’t add up! According to those numbers, Dett is the school which is underutilized.

Check the scores from Explore and ISAT, but it is not about test scores... it is suppose to be because of empty classrooms. At Herbert, I counted the “empty” classrooms (not actually empty, used for other things such as: Reading Resource Room, Math Resource Room, Parent Room , 2 Computer Labs, 2 Science Labs. Like I previously stated, it doesn’t add up! The way I see it, is there must be something else going on to take the Herbert name, and make our students visitors in their own school building. Most of the students at Herbert have been here since pre-school and plan on graduating from Herbert. Additionally, we have had generations upon generations of families which have and do attend Herbert. It would be a shame to take a staple in the community away.

I urge you to look further into the proposed closing of Herbert School as it simply stated...

DOES NOT ADD UP! Herbert School already has everything which is being promised to families...

1. Computer Labs
2. Science Labs
3. Library
4. Air Conditioning

leave you with this final question: Why have you proposed to close a school which has it all?





Dear Parents and Guardians,

I'm the principal at Dett Elementary and I'm very excited to reach out to you today and introduce myself. Dett is in your community and located near your child's school, Herbert Elementary. Recently, CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett made a series of recommendations to close underutilized schools, including closing Herbert Elementary and relocating Dett Elementary to the Herbert building in order to redirect resources into higher performing schools like Dett.

These welcoming schools will serve as a new home to students whose underutilized schools have closed and will offer significant new investments to improve the quality of education for all students. Should the Chicago Board of Education approve the CEO's recommendations, our school will serve as your child's dedicated, higher-performing welcoming school this fall – and principals like me will welcome you and your child as members of our school community.

As a principal, I am really looking forward to the kinds of investments that all children in welcoming schools will have available this fall, including Dett:

- Safe Passage to provide children with safe routes to and from school every day
- All students in grades 3-8 will have access to iPads to enhance their learning
- A Pre-K program
- A science lab
- A library
- A playground
- An upgraded computer lab
- Air conditioning in every classroom

*This is what Herbert HAS!
It's not about scores
which is about the same!*

Bear in mind that some of the new school resources, which are included in the CEO's recommendation, are pending additional community feedback and a Chicago Board of Education vote on May 22.

And like all welcoming schools, we will offer students a variety of supports to ensure that they have access to high quality classroom academics, interventions for those struggling with literacy and math, counseling and social worker supports and a dedicated safety plan including new and upgraded technology such as alarms and entry screening equipment.

I know that this is a difficult time for you as a parent – sending a child to a new school is never easy. But the good news is that your child will attend school in the same building and will move into a higher performing school, which means a better, quality education for your child. I hope you will review and carefully consider the proposal put forward by CPS and all that we at Dett Elementary have to offer your child.

The continued input of parents and our school communities will be critical in the weeks ahead. I urge you to attend and participate in the upcoming Dett Elementary public hearing on Apr. 30 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at CPS Central Office at 125 S. Clark St.

Finally, I invite you to come to Dett Elementary and get to know our teachers and staff. Give us a call at (773) 534-7160 and arrange a time for a visit. I'd be happy to answer your questions. Should we have the opportunity to serve as a welcoming school to your child, I very much look forward to meeting you and having you join the Dett Elementary school community.

Sincerely,

Deborah P. Bonner, Ed.D
Principal, Robert Nathaniel Dett Elementary School

My name is Melissa Martinelli, I am the Early Childhood Special Education Teacher at Herbert School. Herbert School is so much more than a school, it is a family. It is a place where everyone looks out for one another from staff to parents to students. There are no numbers, or mathematical equations which can explain that. That is only something that can be seen and felt from spending time in the school.

Victor Herbert does not have a high rate of teacher turnover because the teachers and staff at Herbert care about the children and their education. Consistency is something many of the children and families we work with turn to us for. If Herbert is closed we will not be able to provide that.

Additionally, I would like to add, that Herbert Elementary School currently has

- ✓ A Library which is fully utilized.
- ✓ 2- Computer Labs:
 - Upper Grade Lab
 - Primary Grade Lab which was donated to Herbert School through a partnership with the Chicago Bulls Organization and Loul Dang
- ✓ 2-Science Labs:
 - Primary and Upper Grade Lab
 - Preschool Lab which has been specifically designed for preschool-aged children and is funded through a partnership with Rush University's Science and Math Excellence Network.

The Faculty and Staff at Herbert School know and have known how vital these resources are for students and enhance the learning process, which is why we as a staff, took the initiative to find resources and partnerships with other organizations to bring necessary programs to Herbert School.

Melissa Martinelli 4/30/2013

Pubel 3

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

Victor Herbert Elementary
School
2131 W. Monroe

Parent Letters/Comments

Victor Herbert Elementary School
2131 West Monroe
Chicago, IL 60618

On behalf of parents at Herbert Elementary School I am submitting
16 Comment/ Suggestion Forms, and 1 additional parent letter.
The comment forms were submitted by parents during the 3rd
Quarter Report Card Pick-up on April 17, 2013.

Written Statement of Annie Marie Yale in Support of Victor Herbert School

My son, Alex, has attended a Head Start Early Childhood Education program at Victor Herbert School for the last two years. For Alex and for our family it has been a transformative experience. Alex had previously been in a traditional preschool which proved to be more than he was ready for at that time. After an evaluation at our neighborhood school, the team at that school determined that he needed to be placed in an Early Childhood Special Education program, and he was assigned to wonderfully warm and welcoming classroom 106 at Herbert.

The classroom at Herbert proved to be exactly what he needed – a small number of children in a welcoming, friendly environment, but where he is also challenged to learn and to develop socially and emotionally. The difference between the four year old boy who two years ago had trouble holding a pencil and staying on task and the almost six year old boy today who can write confidently and persist until a task is done is truly amazing. He has worked hard, and we have worked hard with him as a family, but without a classroom where he could blossom with confidence he would not be where he is today. Next year, he will still need some support, but he will be ready to primarily attend class in a general education classroom!

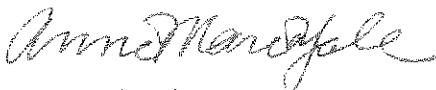
Alex's teacher, Ms. Melissa Martinelli, and the teaching assistant, Mrs. Rosie Clark-Scott, have been invaluable contributors to Alex's growth academically, socially and emotionally. I volunteer regularly in the classroom, and have gotten to see the classroom dynamic first hand. I could not ask for better educators for my son.

Alex's current classroom is exemplary, but I never forget that it is part of a larger school community. Around 20-25% of the students at Herbert are special education students, and I have been so pleased to see that not only Alex, but all of the special education students are all treated with respect and as equal members of the school community. I hope whole-heartedly that the students and staff at Victor Herbert will be allowed to continue to foster the education and development of students who learn differently and need extra support.

And while education is the foremost goal, I must point out that the students and the staff at Victor Herbert School are a family, and speaking personally, we could not be prouder to be members of the that family.

Thank you,

Sincerely,



Annie Marie Yale

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

No I don't approve this school (Victor Herbert) closing. This is the only school that I know who teaches all students weather they are mentally challenged or disabled. They always are intacted with the students and they take their time with each student to make sure that he/she understand the work.

Your Name (Optional): _____

Phone Number: (312) 498-2473

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I think it is going to be a mess

Your Name (Optional): Murdennia

Phone Number: _____

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I feel Herbert School is excellent
and should not closed to be reopened
under the school name of Dett's

Your Name (Optional):

Carmy Dett

Phone Number:

32-391-4007

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

4 of 16

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I Do Not Want the School to close

Your Name (Optional):

Vernice J. J. J.

Phone Number:

(973) 850 6150

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

5 of 16

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I don't think they should close because of other issue that it may cause like fighting and the other thing is what about the teachers they are good at what they do like teaching and to combine other student & Teachers can cause a major problem.

Your Name (Optional): _____

Phone Number: _____

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

These political pigs are only interested in putting more money in their and their friends pockets and gain capitalist control over the public school system. I personally squeeze the pigs. ^(INCLINER) Our school system should show our children how to think independently start their own businesses and be productive citizens not how to work for others and let society think for them.

Your Name (Optional):

Leonard Dandridge

Phone Number:

773-896-0794

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I'm outraged that Victor Herbert is closing because I believe it's a great school. My kids have been going here 8 years. I'm even sadder because not only will they be closing their name would be stolen by a smaller school. I think this decision needs to be re-evaluated now.

Your Name (Optional): _____

Phone Number: _____

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I Strongly suggest that you all keep Victor Herbert open. It's been in the community for over 50 years. My daughter has learned a lot. She has always loved being at this school. And you all should keep the same teacher.

Your Name (Optional): Courtney Howard

Phone Number: _____

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I don't think it would be a good idea because of the overcrowding of students and staff members could lose their jobs. I would like to see better disciplinary action of students if that is what Dett is bringing to this school.

Your Name (Optional): La'Viece Bailey Phone Number: (912) 869-1581

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

My comment is that I have a special need child. And he has made terrific progress if the school closes he will be lost and it won't be good for him.

Your Name (Optional): _____

Phone Number: _____

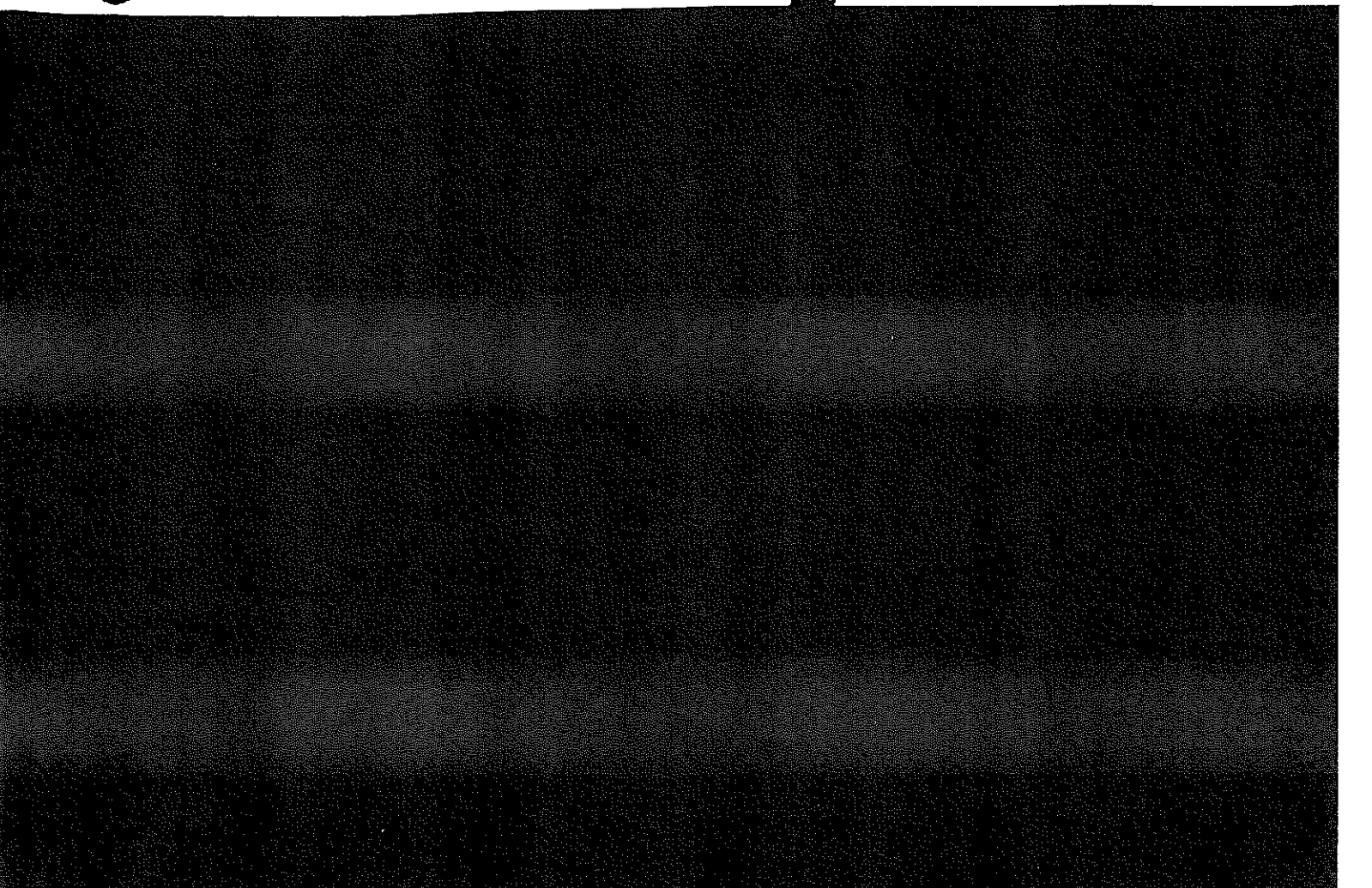
Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

Victor should not change into Dett
because it will be so many kids and
there might be on different grade levels
and they fight.

Your Name (Optional): _____

Phone Number: 773-209-1591



Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

Since My Child has attended Victor
Herbert I see a lot of improvement
in his school work & behavior.
I feel its no need to close
the school.

Your Name (Optional):

Ann Green

Phone Number:

N/A

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

14 of 16

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I hope it doesn't go through and
that Herbert will remain open

Your Name (Optional): _____

Phone Number: _____

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

15 of 16

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I am very upset with this horrible situation! IT will only lead to problems w/ Herbert Children - being bothered by Dett Children! "This is not your school - this is our school!" only upsetting the children. Gang Wars - which happen in the Park with Gangs bothering Herbert Children - Shootings beatings will prevail. But no one cares because the children are Black! So now you come with more ~~radical~~ radical racial political "B.S." to upset every one.

Your Name (Optional):

Amad Serrell

Phone Number:

312.243.5399

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

15 of 11

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

I have mixed feelings about the situation because to my understanding, it is still unclear what the final decision would be. However, I think that if the 2 schools should emerge, at least leave special education alone and enhance security and programs here for the school/schools.

Your Name (Optional): _____

Phone Number: _____

Parent Comments/ Suggestion Form:

16 of 14

Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan to close Herbert School and relocate Dett School to Herbert's current location (2131 West Monroe).

Please leave both schools open, they both have good qualities but I as a parent would like to see Victor Herbert stay open in its or I leave Dett where it is

Your Name (Optional): Ms. Rene

Phone Number: _____

Let me give you the realization of reconstitution, underutilization, or let's just say HUMILIATION..

While the board had chosen to close VICTOR HERBERT SCHOOL, have they ever considered the fact that the staff at HERBERT has reached out far beyond in ensuring students get a QUALITY education. The education that they deserve. We have formed relationships with organizations such as the James Jordan Foundation which sponsors the A TEAM program. This is a program that offers money for college to students achieving straight A's or B's. The money is put in an interest-bearing account and follows students throughout their school years.

To show how hard we are working at HERBERT, this year we have 4 students who wrote essays and won trips to SPACE CAMP in HUNTSVILLE ALABAMA. This trip is all-expenses paid by the Foundation and its donors. Students who go to space camp come back and share the knowledge they've gained with other HERBERT SCHOOL students. Surely, this experience will go a long way to address the students need for better science scores.

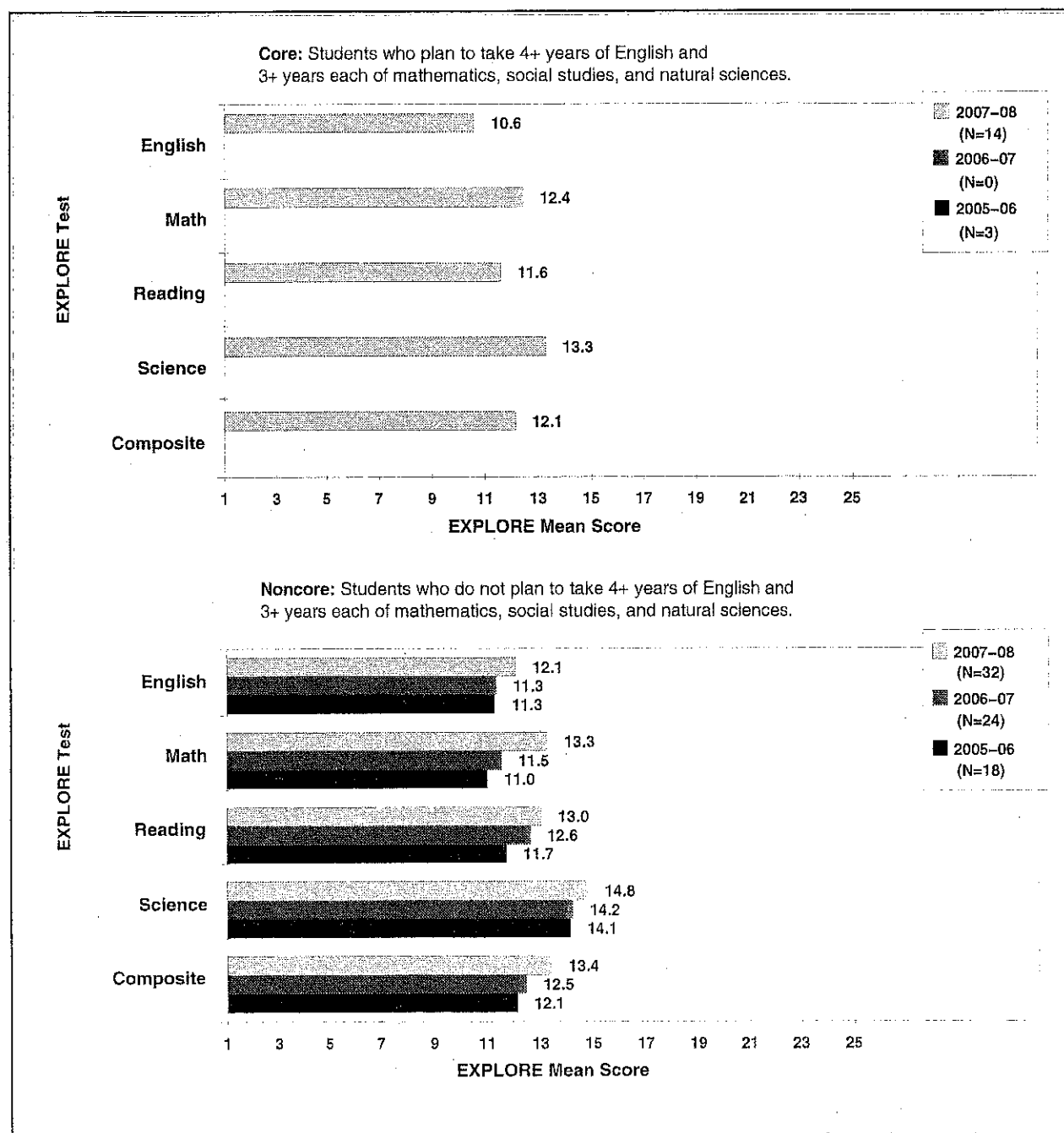
We would like to be able to tell students that we all care for them including the CPS CEO and our mayor but they say they are doing this to save money. Where is the money coming from to pay all these people needed to make transitions and assist schools in the closing procedure? Why are millions funneled into the charter schools? Why aren't we sharing in any contributions made to education? CHILDREN FIRST, well let's just wait and see!!!

Ms. Sheila Relling
Teacher Assistant
Victor Herbert School
4/30/13

Publi 5

Students who will
take 4+ yrs/3T in subje

	2006-07	2011-12
English	10.6	18.5
Math	12.4	17.5
Reading	11.6	16.5
Science	13.3	17.0
Composite	12.1	17.5

Chart 3. Are our students adequately preparing themselves to be successful?

Total students in report: 48

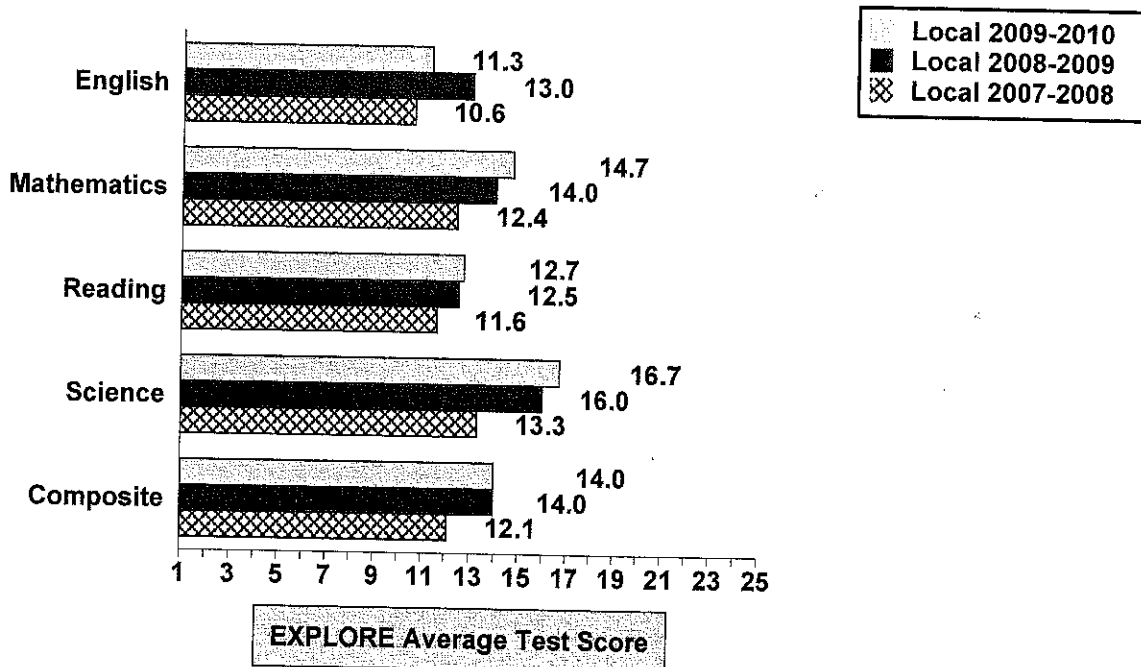
This chart shows the average performance of our students for the past three years by planned course work (core or noncore). Results are shown for groups of 5 or more students.

public #6
group

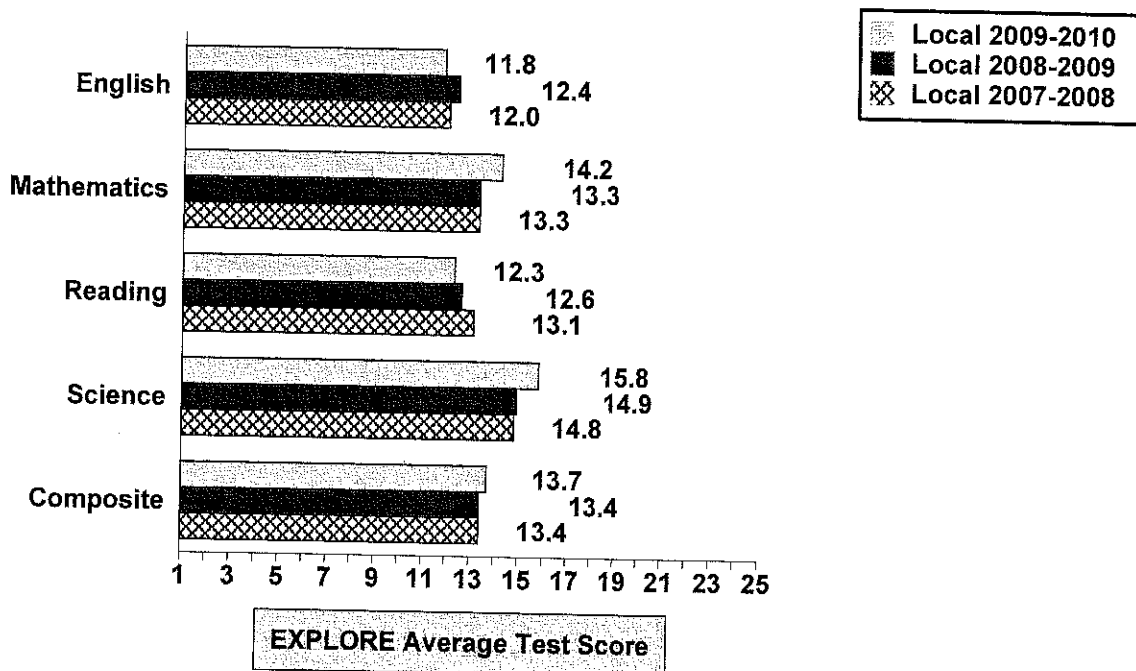
CHART 7: Are our students adequately preparing themselves to be successful?

EXPLORE

Core: Students who plan to take 4 or more years of English and 3 or more years each of mathematics, social studies and natural sciences.



Noncore: Students who do not plan to take 4 or more years of English and 3 or more years each of mathematics, social studies and natural sciences.

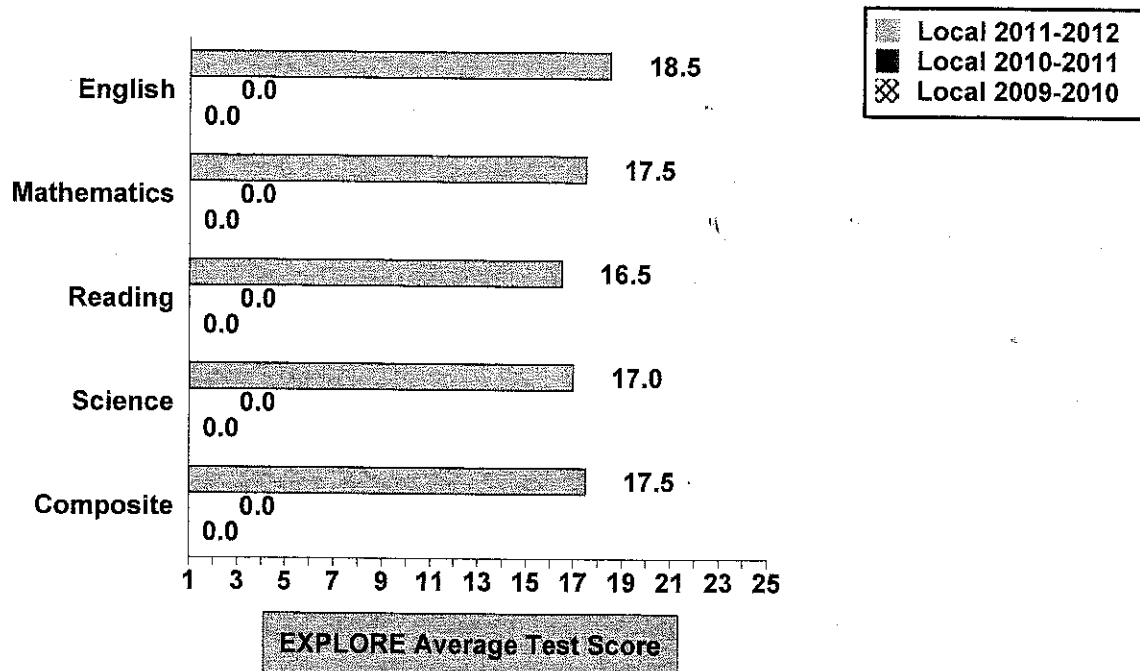


These charts show the average performance of our students for the past three years by planned course work (core or noncore).

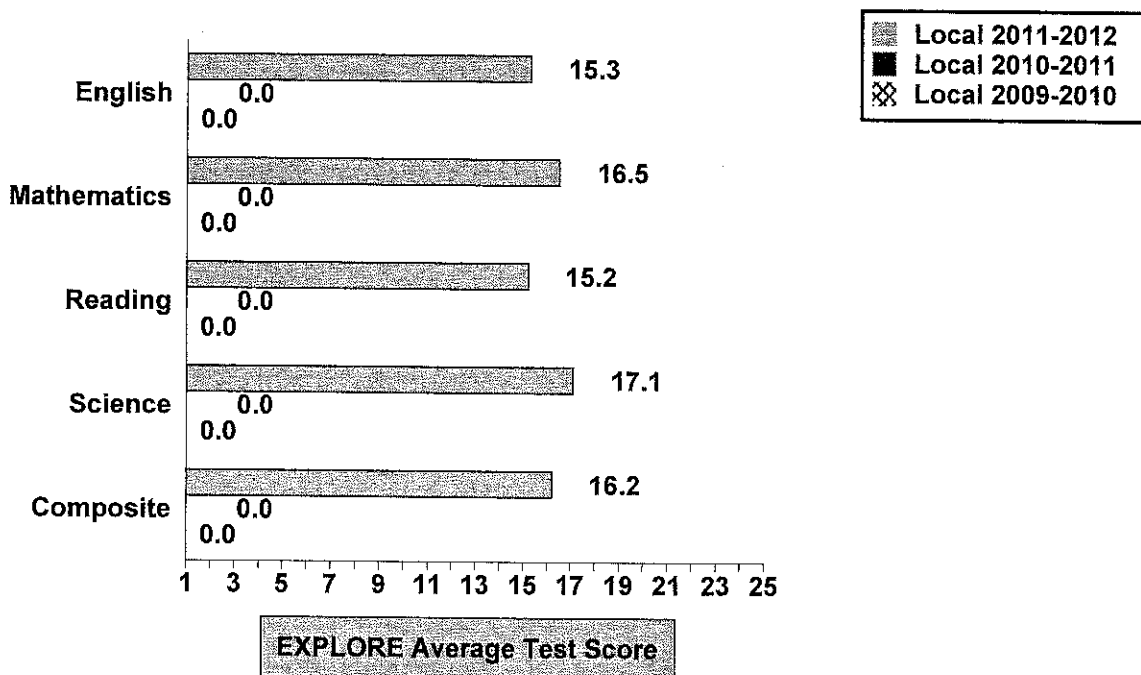
CHART 7: Are our students adequately preparing themselves to be successful?

EXPLORE

Core: Students who plan to take 4 or more years of English and 3 or more years each of mathematics, social studies, and natural sciences.



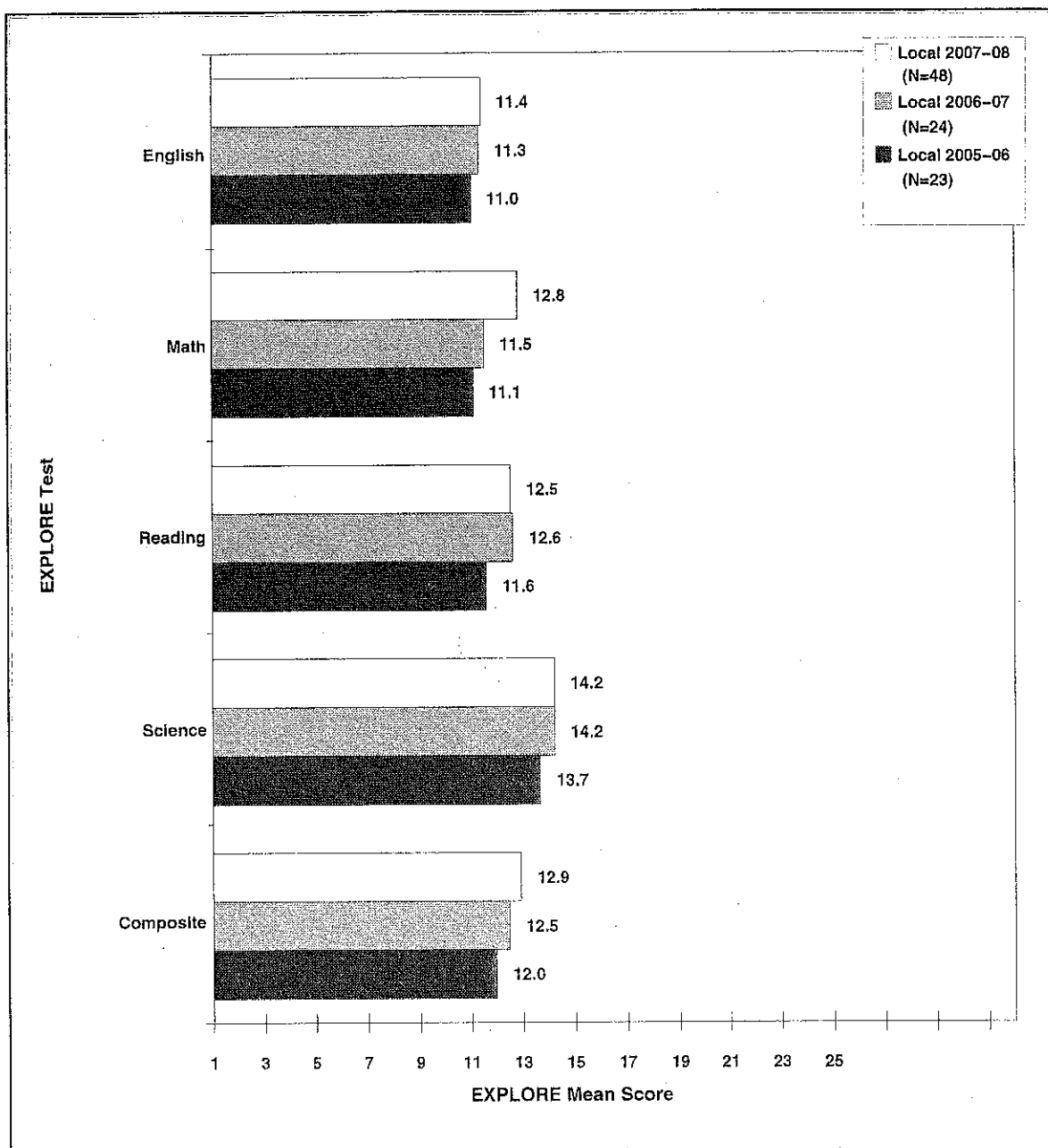
Noncore: Students who do not plan to take 4 or more years of English and 3 or more years each of mathematics, social studies, and natural sciences.



These charts show the average performance of our students for the past three years by planned coursework (core or noncore).

EXPLORE GROWTH

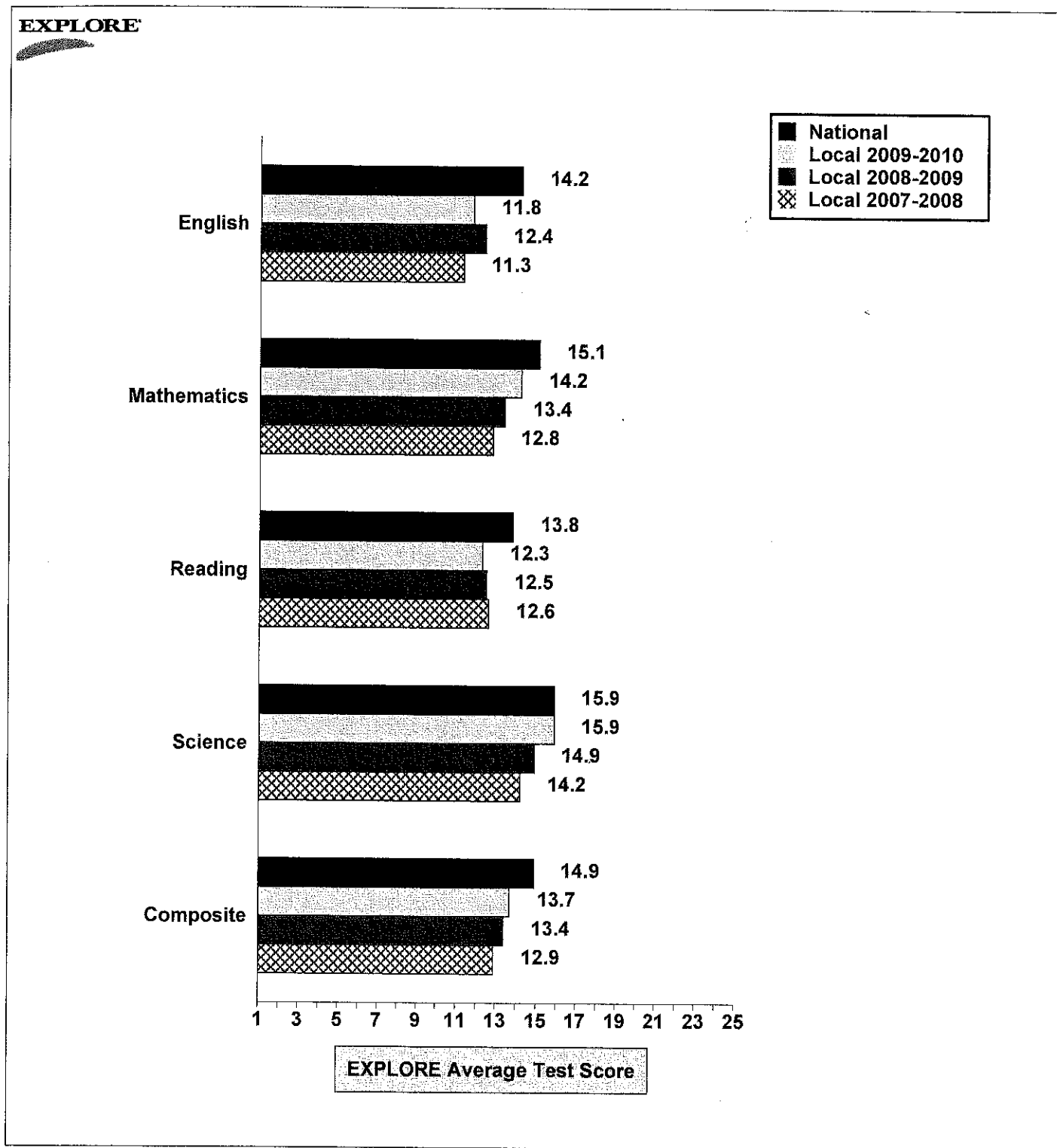
	2006-07	2011-12
English:	11.3	15.5
Math:	11.5	16.6
Reading:	17.4	15.3
Science:	14.2	17.1
Composite:	12.5	16.3

Chart 2. Is the academic achievement of our students improving?

Total students in report: 48

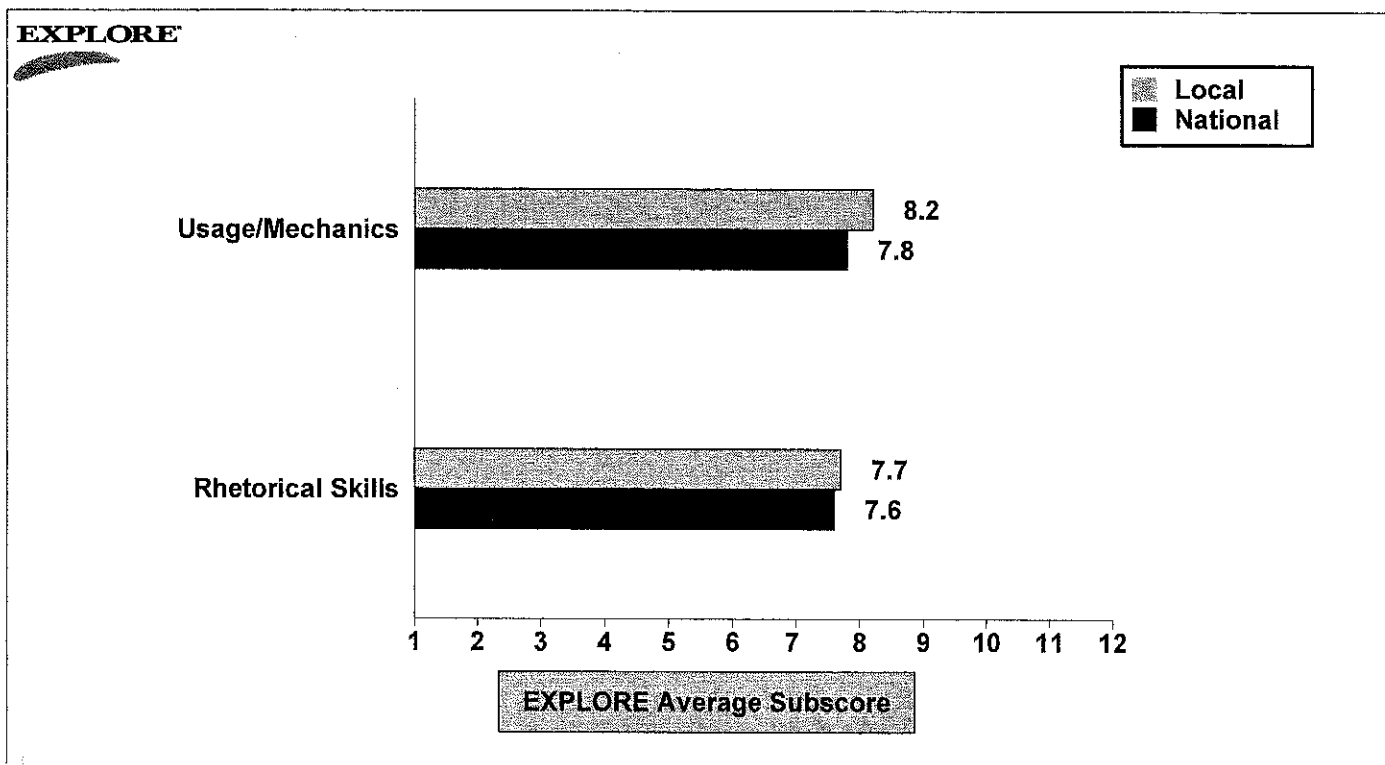
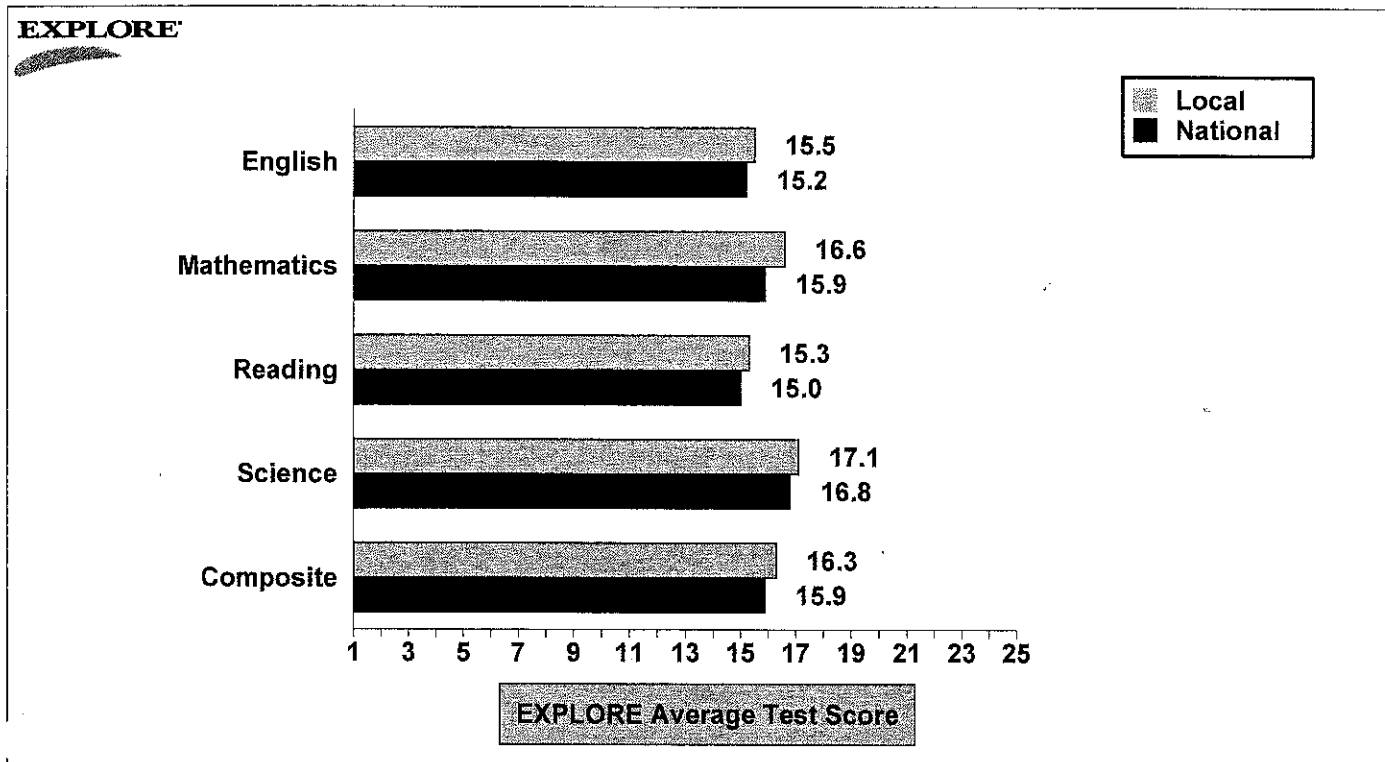
This chart shows the average performance of our students for the past three years. Results are shown for groups of 5 or more students.

CHART 6: Is the academic achievement of our students for the past three years improving compared to that of the national norm group?



This chart shows the average performance of our students for the past three years.

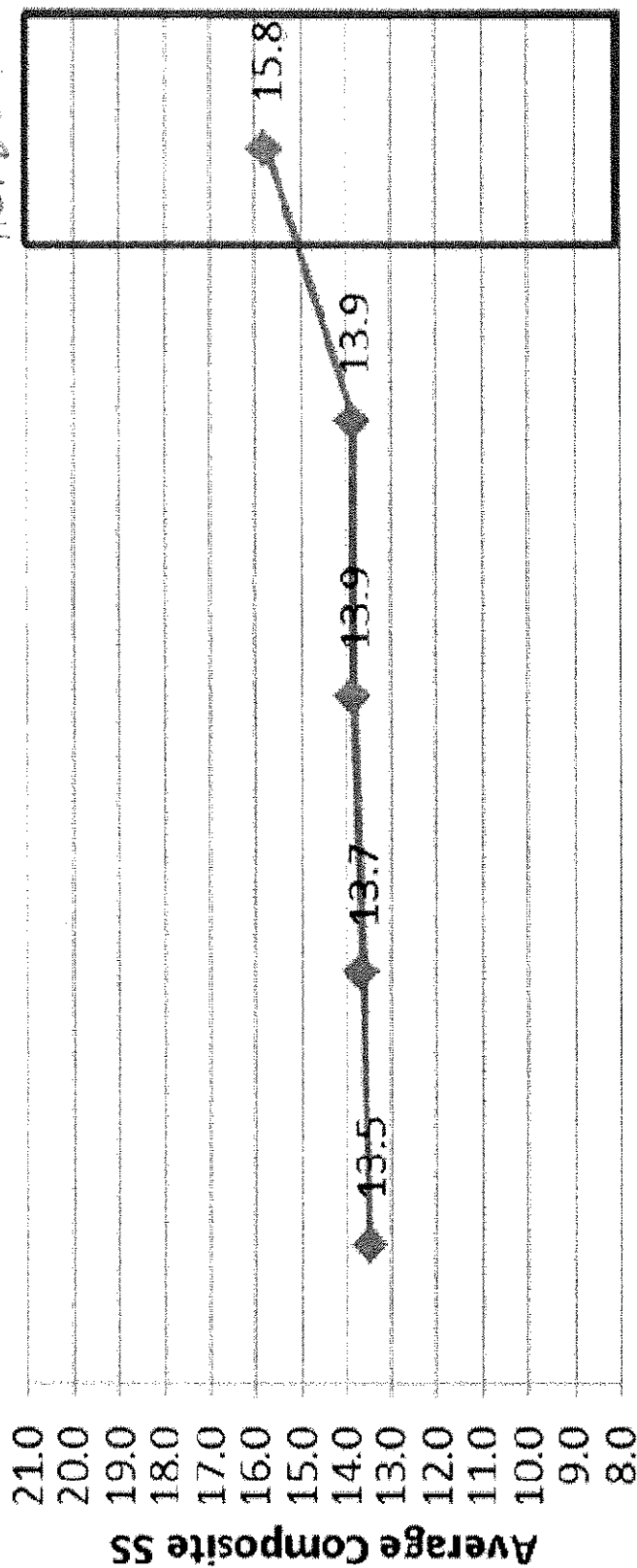
CHART 1: How does our students' performance compare with that of students in the national norm group?



These charts show how the average score performance of our students compares with that of students nationwide.

Fulton Network EXPLORE

Herbert 16.3



2012

2011

2010

2009

2008

School Year

TABLE 1a: How do the EXPLORE scores of our students compare with those of students nationally?

EXPLORE score	English			Mathematics			Reading			Science			Composite			EXPLORE score
	Local		Nat'l	Local		Nat'l	Local		Nat'l	Local		Nat'l	Local		Nat'l	
	Freq	CP*	CP*	Freq	CP*	CP*	Freq	CP*	CP*	Freq	CP*	CP*	Freq	CP*	CP*	
25	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	25
24	1	100	99	1	100	98	0	100	98	0	100	97	0	100	99	24
23	0	96	96	0	96	96	0	100	96	0	100	96	0	100	98	23
22	0	96	94	1	96	95	1	100	94	1	100	94	0	100	97	22
21	2	96	91	1	92	94	0	96	92	1	96	91	2	100	94	21
20	3	88	87	3	88	91	0	96	89	2	92	88	2	92	90	20
19	0	75	82	2	75	87	4	96	85	3	83	81	2	83	85	19
18	1	75	77	0	67	81	1	79	81	3	71	72	3	75	78	18
17	2	71	71	5	67	71	3	75	75	6	58	60	1	63	70	17
16	1	63	64	4	46	59	0	63	68	2	33	46	4	58	60	16
15	4	58	56	1	29	45	5	63	60	2	25	33	5	42	49	15
14	2	42	47	2	25	33	1	42	50	2	17	22	0	21	37	14
13	0	33	38	0	17	22	5	38	40	1	8	14	2	21	26	13
12	5	33	28	1	17	14	3	17	30	1	4	9	3	13	16	12
11	1	13	20	2	13	9	1	4	20	0	1	5	0	1	9	11
10	2	8	13	0	4	6	0	1	12	0	1	3	0	1	4	10
9	0	1	8	0	4	4	0	1	6	0	1	2	0	1	2	9
8	0	1	4	0	4	2	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	8
7	0	1	2	1	4	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	7
6	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	6
5	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	5
4	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	4
3	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	3
2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
Mean	15.5		15.2	16.6		15.9	15.3		15.0	17.1		16.8	16.3		15.9	Mean
S.D.	3.9		4.3	3.9		3.6	2.9		4.1	2.5		3.4	2.8		3.4	S.D.
Local percentage of students in national quartiles																
National quartile	% of local		Score range	% of local		Score range	% of local		Score range	% of local		Score range	% of local		Score range	National quartile
75-100%	29		18-25	33		18-25	25		18-25	29		19-25	38		18-25	75-100%
50-74%	29		15-17	38		16-17	38		14-17	38		17-18	21		16-17	50-74%
25-49%	29		12-14	13		14-15	33		12-13	17		15-16	29		13-15	25-49%
1-24%	13		1-11	17		1-13	4		1-11	17		1-14	13		1-12	1-24%

*CP = Cumulative percent of students at or below a score point

Note: National normative data are based on results for students who took all four academic tests within standard time limits as part of a national study conducted in Fall 2010. See the EXPLORE Technical Manual at www.act.org for information about the 2010 national norming sample.

The national median for the EXPLORE composite score is 16.

To: whom it may concern

From: Chiquita Body

Public
Group # 7

Re: The closing of Herbert Seal

To whom it may concern,

My name is Chaquita Body and I am the proud parent of Aubrey J. Harris. Due to recent events I feel the need to speak up regarding the future loss of certain staff members who I know are great assets to Victor Herbert Elementary and huge inspirations to the students. My child is in room 111 and her teachers are Miss Moon and Miss Hardin and since becoming their student she has become more excited about learning and going to school. I'm a full time/ overtime working single mom and because of this its very hard to find the time to help my daughter with not only school lessons but life's lessons, and I've had the opportunity of observing these two teachers take the time to instill both educational and real life value to their students. I can honestly say that I do not only trust these two with my child inside the school but outside as well. Aubrey comes home from school and still wants to play school and her exact words are "I'm Miss Moon and your Miss Hardin". Aubrey's only been in this school for 5 months and already these two teachers have made a serious impact on her life. We don't go a day without her saying their names in reference to something. I know that Aubrey's education is secure in the hands of these two administrators because they do more than what their job requires. I know its more than ABC's and 123's with these educators, its more than singing a few songs and providing snacks, there is actual love shown in not what they do but how they do it. There are students who embrace them with hugs coming and going because they know these women care about them inside and outside of that facility and I can honestly say I feel Aubrey and I are blessed to have them in our lives. I Strongly, Sincerely, and Wholeheartedly suggest that Miss Moon and Miss Hardin continue to be a part of your staff for many years to come because they are not only Superb educators, but they are the Love, Passion, and Care for education that a lot of schools are missing.

Concerned Parent
Chaquita Body

Tuesday, April 30, 2013
Victor Herbert School
Fallon Duckins, Parent/ Alumni

My name is Fallon Duckins, I am a parent of two boys who attend Herbert School, and I am also a graduate of Herbert School. Following Herbert I attended Crane High School, and from there went on to attend Northern Illinois University and Chicago State University. I have a degree in Criminal Justice. I feel I am one of many success stories who began their educational career at Herbert School.

My foundation was built at Herbert Elementary School, Herbert School is a school where children thrive and are taught to be life-long learners. I have entrusted Herbert's staff with my children because I believe in them, and the school. Children at Herbert are encouraged to be the best they can be. Herbert is more than a school, it is a family where staff members take the time to get to know students and their families. Students are provided educational support, social-emotional support, and behavioral supports. Victor Herbert has been a constant in the community for over 50 years. With the neighborhood changing over the years, community members count on the consistency that is provided by Herbert Elementary School.

How do I explain to my children (who are 5 and 9 years old), that next school year the teachers and staff who have been there for them will no longer be there? How do I explain to my children, that while it is not their fault everything they know about school is about to change as the face of the their school changes?

Hello, my name is Michael Armstrong. I am a 9-year old student from Victor Herbert Elementary School. I hope that you do not close my school. I have attended Herbert since I was four years old. Every year, I have had great teachers who challenged me to be the best student I can be. I have a brother in kindergarten and if Herbert closes, he will not get to be in the wonderful classrooms that I have been in.

I love doing math at Herbert. My teacher showed us about so many different types of triangles and angles. We did slopes in math and science. We always have to do extended response so we can extend our reading and math and to show others what we were thinking when we solved the problem. I can divide and multiply and do fractions. We write every day. My teacher told me that if you write

you will become an even better reader, because reading and writing are connected. If my school closes, how will I get a better education?

Herbert School is like a big happy family to me. We do so many things together like playing games during math and reading. We had a teachers against students basketball game. We take field trips all the time, for example we went to Legoland and we went to the museum to learn about fossils.

We also have the James Jordan Club after school. It is across the street from the school, and me and my friends walk to the club together. Every year they give us a winter party, Valentines party, and we have games like pool and ping pong to play when we get there. They have systems like Xboxes, Playstations,

and Wiis. They will help us with our homework if we need them to. If Herbert closes, then we will not be able to go the James Jordan Club every day.

So please don't close my school. I have been here since I was in Headstart and I want to graduate from 8th grade at Victor Herbert Elementary School.

Thank you!

Chicago Tribune

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POWERFUL COMMUNICATION
ON THE POWERFUL NETWORK.

Off-duty cop wounds suspect after witnessing shootout



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By Adam Sege
Tribune reporter

7:28 a.m. CDT, April 29, 2013

An off-duty Chicago police officer shot and wounded a gunman after witnessing a shootout that left a bystander injured, authorities said.

The officer saw the exchange of gunfire near the intersection of West Jackson Boulevard and South Leavitt Street around 10:15 p.m., according to Pat Camden, a spokesman for the Fraternal Order of Police. Investigators would later learn one of the bullets struck a man who happened to be nearby.

Four of the people involved in the shootout then jumped into a vehicle, and the off-duty officer began to follow it south on Leavitt, Camden said. Three blocks later, the suspects' vehicle became stopped in traffic at the intersection of South Oakley Street and West Van Buren Boulevard, where an Illinois State Police trooper was conducting a traffic stop, Camden said.

The Chicago police officer approached the vehicle and announced his office, Camden said.

"Two in the back seat are armed," Camden said, retelling the story hours later as he stood steps from where the car had been stopped in the Near West Side neighborhood.

RELATED

Near West Side

Feb. 28 - March 30, 2013

Out of 77, this area ranks

- 28th in violent crime
- 6th in property crime
- 32nd in quality-of-life crime

"One of the offenders in the back seat raises a .45 [caliber handgun] at the officer."

The officer opened fire, striking one of the occupants, Camden said. The vehicle sped away and the state trooper followed, Camden said.

Several blocks west, the vehicle pulled over in the 300 block of South Maplewood Avenue and three occupants fled on foot, Camden said. The remaining occupant, who had been shot in the neck, was found nearby and was taken to a hospital.

Police said the man was in serious condition and the bystander shot near Jackson and Leavitt was in good condition. Authorities have not released the ages of either person.

Officers found a .45-caliber handgun in the vehicle on Maplewood and were searching for the remaining occupants into Monday morning.

As officers continued to direct traffic around the three crime scenes, Camden praised the officer for taking action after seeing the gunfight while off-duty. "It shows Chicago police officers are working all the time," he said.

The police-involved shooting was the second of the day. Early Sunday morning, a man was shot by police after he allegedly pointed a shotgun toward officers through a window of his vehicle.

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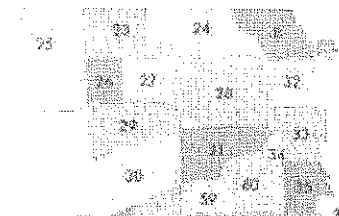
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Community leaders say many feel efforts are now pointless

April 25, 2013 | By Noreen S. Ahmed-Ullah, Chicago Tribune reporter

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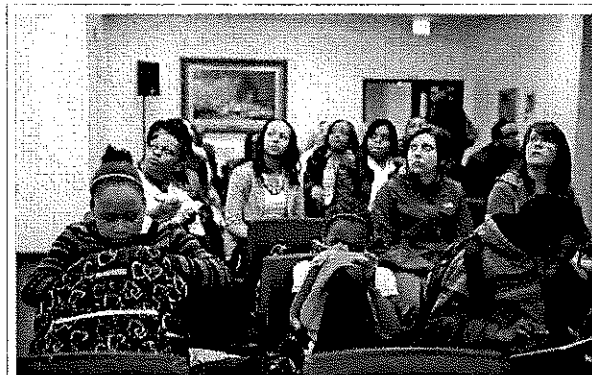
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After months of jam-packed hearings over Chicago's decision to shut down scores of schools, the final round of public meetings — the ones mandated by state law — has often been sparsely attended and overcast by an air of futility.

Community leaders say some people are simply burned out, while others feel their efforts are pointless after Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration decided to shut down 54 schools after months of protest and public engagement. Emanuel's comments implying that the time for negotiations is over have led many parents to believe there's little more they can do.



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"I think 20,000 people have gone through a rigorous series of hearings over 21/2 months and they're getting the message no one is listening," said Rene Heybach with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. "People feel the Board (of Education) will rubber-stamp this."

The latest set of meetings — a hearing before an independent officer and two community meetings for each school — is required under state law after the release of a final school closing list.

But last fall, schools chief Barbara Byrd-Bennett said she wanted that community input on the front end, before a final list was issued. She persuaded state lawmakers to extend the school closing announcement from December to March. Community meetings were held — first by Byrd-Bennett's Commission on School Utilization, then by the district itself. Those meetings drew large crowds of parents who crammed into churches and park fieldhouses to defend their schools.

CPS officials said those hearings helped them develop criteria for school closings and pare a list of underenrolled schools from 330 to 129 to eventually 53 elementary schools and one high school program now on the chopping block. Board members must vote on the final list May 22.

"We would've been so much better off if CPS had put out 60 or so schools back (in December)," said Rod Estvan, an education policy expert with the disability rights group Access Living. "We would've had the schools that were to be actually closed, and we would have had the time to look at each school in greater detail. Instead, the discussion focused on who was on the list and who was not."

CPS said officials have made significant outreach, with dates and locations of the meetings sent home to parents twice, along with letters and emails directing them to the district website where dates are listed.

But after the school closings list was released, the schedule of meetings was not prominently posted on the CPS website until four days before the community sessions began. A news release was not issued until three days before those community meetings began and one day before public hearings started at CPS headquarters downtown last week.

More than 20,000 people turned up to the 30 community venting sessions before the final list was released. But since April, only 6,687 people have attended the 124 CPS-led meetings held in neighborhoods. The public hearings by independent officers, who must make a recommendation to the Board of Education, have drawn only about 2,400 people to about 50 meetings downtown so far.

State Rep. Cynthia Soto, D-Chicago, who helped craft the 2011 law establishing the school-closing process, said people have called her to complain about not knowing in advance of the meetings.

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Before the final list, videos of the community meetings were posted on CPS' website. The district said a grant from the Walton Family Foundation, which supports charters, paid to record only the initial meetings through early March, and the district does not have the funds to continue recording the hearings.

CPS spokeswoman Becky Carroll said the list of schools considered for closure has been pared, and "so naturally you won't have as many people coming out." The district said it also hosted tele-town halls and met with various stakeholders.

"Both the level of engagement on the part of CPS and response from our school communities have been unprecedented," she said.

Some community members disagree.

"The community was never engaged," said Debra Hass, a Hyde Park resident fighting to save schools including Canter Middle School. "Many of these meetings have a silent panel of (district) people who don't have answers to the questions people are asking."

Opponents of school closings have found other ways to express concern. Some students boycotted state-mandated testing, saying scores are used to shut schools. The Chicago Teachers Union, which held a downtown rally March 27, plans three days of marches May 18-20.

This week, parents from Manierre Elementary in Old Town held a walk to show how students will have to cross busy Division Street to attend their new school, Jenner. They also said the two school communities have been at odds, with violence erupting between gangs.

"CPS' sports department has said these two schools can't play sports together," said Manierre parent Sherise McDaniel. "If it's too violent to play sports together, how then can it become magically safe during the summer so that all our kids can be together in the school?"

Some communities have not given up just yet.

Garvey Elementary in Washington Heights brought four buses full of parents, students and teachers to the hearing downtown this week.

"We're being extremely hopeful," said parent Tyisha Whitmore. "We knew the fight was going to be hard. We're just trying to let them know this school means a lot to the community, and that they'd be making the wrong choice by making Garvey part of the closures."

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