

Transcript of the Testimony of

Date: January 13, 2018

Case: The Proposed Closures of Hope, Harper, Robeson and
TEAM Englewood High School

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January 13, 2018

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COMMUNITY MEETING PRESENTATION

January 10, 2018
COMMENCING AT 6:00 P.M.

HELD AT KENNEDY-KING COLLEGE
6301 South Halsted Street
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

IN RE: The Proposed Closures of Hope, Harper, Robeson
and TEAM Englewood High School

The record of proceedings had in the meeting of
the above-entitled cause, taken before SHAHERA ALI,
C.S.R., and Notary Public, in and for the County of Cook
and State of Illinois, at 6301 South Halsted Street,
Chicago, Illinois, January 10, 2018, at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

MR. CHIP JOHNSON, Facilitator

DR. JULIOUS LAWSON, Network Chief and Deputy
Chief

MS. MEGAN HOUGARD, Chief

* * * * *

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1
2 MR. JOHNSON: Let's start our meeting so that we
3 have enough time to hear from you all. This is the most
4 important part of our meeting is to hear from our
5 community, and I don't want to forsake your time not to
6 hear your voices tonight.

7 We want to thank Kennedy-King for welcoming us
8 into this space.

9 [Off the record.]

10 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Good evening, everybody. My
11 name is Chip Johnson. I am the chief officer for family
12 and community engagement in education, and I am your
13 facilitator for tonight. I'm here with Megan Hougard
14 and our network chief and our deputy chief, Dr. Julious
15 Lawson, of Network 11 where Englewood resides. And we
16 are here today acting on behalf of our acting CEO,
17 Dr. Janet Jackson, to share some basic information and
18 then also to listen to you.

19 I also like to introduce some of our guests, and
20 I'll do that in a few minutes after this is over. Thank
21 you all.

22 As I mentioned, the purpose of this meeting is
23 to allow the CEO and the Board office to hear feedback
24 about this specific action and proposal tonight. I will

1 start by running through a brief introduction and
2 logistics and then next Chief Hougard will run through a
3 brief presentation providing information related to this
4 action.

5 After this, we will allot time remaining for
6 public comment. And the meeting will end promptly at
7 8:00 or depending on how we started a few minutes
8 behind. I'll probably extend with the same to be
9 respectful.

10 I will be facilitating the public comment
11 section. My colleague, Chief Hougard, will lead the
12 presentation because we want to make sure that you are
13 apprised of the information once again.

14 In addition, we have representatives from the
15 Office of Diverse Learners and Supports. Hope Shaw, are
16 you in the room? Please acknowledge yourself, Hope.

17 Okay. I would go through this again. D.
18 Haywood, Joann Shaw and Luis Rodriguez. Any
19 representative from students living in temporary living
20 situations. Luis Rodriguez is also here. And the
21 representatives from Student Outreach and Reengagement
22 Centers, (SOAR,) Sean Smith and Darren Boone.
23 Representatives from TAPP, Ernest Yarding and Tiffany
24 Taylor.

1 These representatives will be available for 30
2 minutes after this session and after the conclusion of
3 the community meeting to answer any questions that any
4 parents or community members may have specific to their
5 areas of expertise.

6 And please note that once you engage in those
7 conversations, those will not be formally recorded
8 tonight and will not be made on the record to present to
9 the public. Those will be private meetings between you
10 and that person.

11 The community meeting will take place over the
12 course of two hours. Our goal is to provide a brief
13 presentation on the proposed action followed by time for
14 public comment and if you do not have a chance to
15 comment tonight, you can please email your comments and
16 concerns to our website that is listed on the top,
17 transitions@cps.edu.

18 You can also submit written comments at the
19 registration desk where you came in tonight. A staff
20 member at the desk will provide note cards for written
21 comment if you have not yet received one.

22 For additional information, please reference the
23 transition plan regarding this school action at cps.edu,
24 as I said before, slash transitions and in addition,

1 meeting summaries, all of this will be recorded, meeting
2 summaries of each community meeting will be available
3 online at cps.edu/transitions within five days of the
4 meeting.

5 This meeting is part of a broader timeline
6 regarding a proposed action. As part of this process,
7 CPS began by publishing draft guidelines for school
8 actions on October 1st and then announcing proposed
9 school actions on December 1st.

10 This followed months of community engagement and
11 input. Following this announcement, CPS hosted two
12 community meetings and one public hearing. We will host
13 two community meetings. This is the first one and one
14 public hearing together, additional public feedback from
15 our community members.

16 After these meetings and the hearing, we will
17 review all of this input. And after this, Dr. Janet
18 Jackson may make a recommendation to the Board to vote
19 on the proposed action. Following a potential
20 recommendation, the Board will vote on whether or not to
21 approve the proposed action after the February Board of
22 Education meeting.

23 I want to remind you that we are here to hear
24 your voices tonight. We know that we are not all in

1 agreement. We know that we do not have all the same
2 perceptions or the same ideas and things like that, but
3 what we do need is to allow the Board of Education to
4 hear is who is saying what.

5 We have our court reporter, a stenographer, that
6 is here that is taking notes, public comments. She
7 needs to be able to hear what is being said. We have a
8 note taker here. Kevin is over here taking notes. All
9 of this is being recorded.

10 So I know that our emotions and things can get
11 in there. I have to -- I taught at John Hope for 12
12 years, but I do want to hear from everybody.
13 Everybody's voice is very important. So tonight in this
14 wonderful room that Kennedy-King has provided for us
15 tonight, I would like to ask that we be respectful of
16 each speaker; that we listen to them. Feel free to
17 voice your own concerns and your passion, but let's do
18 it in an area where we can all agree to disagree and be
19 able to hear the importance.

20 At this time, I'm going to pass it on to my
21 colleague, Chief Hougard, to run through a brief
22 presentation on the school actions.

23 Chief Hougard.

24 MS. HOUGARD: Good evening. Thank you all for

1 joining us. My deputy chief, Dr. Julious Lawson, will
2 be joining as well. We have been a part of this process
3 together over the past year. The proposal for the new
4 Englewood High School and the consolidation of the
5 current four schools began over a year ago in the CAC.

6 The Community Action Council led an extensive
7 process where they put forth a proposal for -- at the
8 time it was a \$75 million high school. It's now become
9 an investment of \$85 million. Once the proposal -- the
10 request for the proposal was submitted to Chicago Public
11 Schools, Chicago Public Schools in June acknowledged the
12 intent to request this new high school for Englewood.

13 This is probably the earliest time in the
14 history of school actions that CPS has acknowledged and
15 started engagement at that early time. The Steering
16 Committee was then formed once the proposal was made
17 public. And the Steering Committee has been tasked with
18 advising CPS on the best transition plan for the
19 existing four high schools, as well as programming and
20 aspects of the new high school.

21 And I do want to acknowledge we have many of the
22 CAC and Steering Committee members here in the audience,
23 as well as the principals of the Englewood high schools.
24 I want to thank you all for joining us, and I know we

1 also have teachers in the audience, and I really do want
2 to thank you all for joining us.

3 Once the proposal began discussion in the
4 Steering Committee, the Steering Committee had the
5 really challenging task of developing the draft
6 transition plan. The Steering Committee members took
7 this very seriously. These were really hard, thoughtful
8 conversations, not just around what should the new high
9 school offer but also what would the supports be for the
10 current Englewood students.

11 The proposals that we really discussed at the
12 table were, is it a possibility to do multi-year
13 phaseout? Would it be best to close at the end of one
14 year? What were really the current state of the four
15 Englewood high schools.

16 What happened after a series of additional
17 meetings, we visited all four Englewood high schools and
18 Steering Committee members spoke with students, talked
19 about the educational opportunities at the schools and
20 really thought hard about the impacts of declining
21 enrollment.

22 The declining enrollment at our four Englewood
23 high schools is -- and we'll talk about more about this
24 as well, but it really limits the opportunity within the

1 schools.

2 We brought this back to the Steering Committee
3 and at the end had a vote on two options. The option to
4 close the schools at the end of this year or to continue
5 over two years and close then. Ultimately the majority
6 vote of the Steering Committee was to close the schools
7 at the end of this school year.

8 So the declining enrollment as I discussed, it's
9 been drastic. In the last ten years our four schools
10 have gone down between 70 and 85 percent. We
11 currently -- Of all of the students who live in the
12 attendance boundaries for the Englewood high schools, 92
13 percent are choosing to travel outside of the community
14 for their high school options.

15 That really is the driving force behind the CAC
16 and the Steering Committee decision to request the
17 proposal of the new high school.

18 MR. LAWSON: Good evening. Should the Board approve
19 this proposal, the school is scheduled to open in the
20 fall of 2019 with the freshman class only. And this is
21 the first time in a really long time that this sort of
22 investment has been brought to the Englewood community.

23 As Megan talked about just a couple of moments
24 ago, this is a \$85 million investment which is long

1 overdue. The school will include brand new education
2 spaces. One is a school-based health clinic for the
3 broader community.

4 Sports facilities, of course, for the students
5 at the school, as well as the broader community, and it
6 would also include a partnership with Kennedy-King that
7 offers early college courses so students have the
8 opportunity to not only attend college while they're in
9 high school but really they can consider additional
10 post-secondary opportunities once they are complete to,
11 of course, make high school a more viable option, to
12 complete faster and cheaper cost.

13 MS. HOUGARD: As many as you know, when you are a
14 high school student, you are able to attend city college
15 classes at no cost. What the partnership with
16 Kennedy-King means is that our students will be able to
17 earn credits towards associate's degrees but also earn
18 certification.

19 So Kennedy-King has a wealth of career and
20 technical, we call it vocational, they call it
21 associate's of applied science. Those courses will be
22 offered while our students are in the proposed new high
23 school.

24 MR. LAWSON: So think about the investment that's

1 going to be brought to Englewood. The proposed closure
2 of the four high schools will include an 8.3 million
3 dollar investment over the next three and a half years
4 to support students involved in this transition. And in
5 thinking about supporting those students, the Steering
6 Committee discussed a number of options to begin in the
7 spring of 2018 beginning with workshops in high school
8 to help parents and students identify school of choice,
9 so rather than push students out to individual schools,
10 they will have the opportunity to choose which schools
11 that are of interest to them, and they will have that
12 support.

13 Individualized transition plans including
14 academic readiness and safety plans. So students will
15 have the opportunity to sit with coordinators of each of
16 their individual schools to really think around the
17 academic supports that will be offered once they are on
18 their way here in the transition.

19 Tutoring and academic supports will be provided
20 at each of the receiving schools for students involved
21 in the transition, and there will be increased
22 monitoring of the instructional quality to ensure that
23 students don't fall by the wayside as they transition
24 from their current schools to proposed schools.

1 There will also be designated resources for
2 specific students. So for STLS students we have a SOAR
3 program who's here tonight to have discussion with
4 parents, if necessary, and ODLs has representatives as
5 well for Diverse Learners.

6 There will also be additional principal and
7 school-based support to help execute this work.
8 Beginning the summer of 2018, each of the students from
9 the four high schools will have the option -- well, not
10 the option but they will have the option to attend
11 summer academic programs for remediation, as well as
12 have the option to have paid summer jobs.

13 Students will have opportunities during the
14 summer to meet with individuals from their receiving
15 schools as well to, of course, develop relationships
16 prior to their arrival because we know that's a critical
17 piece in thinking around students success.

18 MS. HOUGARD: Everything that the Steering
19 Committee asked for, honestly is in the transition plan.
20 And the individualized supports for students, as well as
21 individualized planning was really a core piece of the
22 transition and planning. And the reason is we wanted to
23 ensure that all students have a choice in this process
24 and parents have a choice in the process. And that the

1 plan, all of the supports continue until the students
2 graduate.

3 MR. LAWSON: So as we engage in those very
4 challenging discussions, we talked about what we can do
5 to ensure that students were supported from the time
6 they transitioned through graduation and here is what we
7 heard. So students will be able to receive free CTA
8 cards from now for the next three years.

9 There will be staged CTA buses and there will
10 also be expansion of the safe passage program to ensure
11 safe travel to and from school. Students will receive
12 additional academic support, also social, emotional
13 support.

14 So social and emotional supports are for schools
15 that accept transitioning students. So, if there is a
16 large number of students that transition from one school
17 to a receiving school, there is a possibility that
18 positions will follow those students as well and we're
19 looking to identify individuals from their current
20 schools to possibly travel along with them.

21 MS. HOUGARD: I think before we really do want to
22 hear your voices, we're not going to spend a lot more
23 time talking about the proposal. I really want to drive
24 home the new Englewood High School is an open enrollment

1 neighborhood high school. This investment in the
2 Englewood community is really for the students and the
3 families of Englewood.

4 MR. LAWSON: With that, we like to bring back Chief
5 Chip Johnson to open up for public comment.

6 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much Chief Hougard and
7 Dr. Lawson. Before we get started on the public
8 comment, I want to just go over a few logistics for
9 everybody.

10 Prior to the public participation, we did offer
11 our elected officials an opportunity to speak. They
12 have said that they would not do it at this time, but we
13 do want to recognize our elected officials that are in
14 the room. State Senator Jacqueline Collins and Alderman
15 Rod Sawyer that are here in the front.

16 During the public participation, we are giving
17 each speaker two minutes to speak who have signed up to
18 share their thoughts. You will get a warning.
19 Laurie -- Stand up Laurie. She's right here in the
20 front. She has the signs that will give you the 30
21 second warning and then the stop sign.

22 If you have not finished your thought, we will
23 be respectful of that, okay, so it's not like we're
24 going to turn off your mic at that time, but we ask you

1 would be respectful of the two minutes that we've
2 allotted each speaker. Speakers must speak at the
3 podium. The microphones will be right here and when
4 your time is up, please don't take the mic with you, all
5 right.

6 Please remember that the purpose of this meeting
7 is to hear your voices. And for those that are in
8 attendance, there is a court reporter that is standing
9 right here capturing every remark that we are saying
10 over this microphone. And in order for her to capture
11 effectively, she must be able to hear.

12 In the interest of time, we will generally not
13 respond to any questions or comment. And please
14 remember that the court reporter can only capture your
15 remarks in this room if she can also hear.

16 The meeting is scheduled to end at 8:00 o'clock.
17 If there's time remaining after all elected officials
18 who may decide to speak or not and all of our speakers
19 have spoken, if there's time we will extend the time so
20 that we can hear you.

21 Participants must register to speak at the
22 table, and I hope you did that as you came in. Speakers
23 must register. If you want to speak again, you have to
24 go back and reregister.

1 Please remember, this is important, please start
2 your remarks with your name and organization if you are
3 affiliated with one so that the school can be a part of
4 the official record. And if you did not again have a
5 chance to comment or speak, you may do so at the
6 cps.edutransitions' website.

7 We're going to begin to call up the
8 participants. And the way I'm going to do it is that
9 we're going to do speakers one through five and then I'm
10 going to do six through ten and so forth so during that
11 time, we will be announcing those speakers to come up as
12 the concluding speaker has finished so that you all can
13 prepare to lineup and give your remarks.

14 And let me just say once again that we all are
15 very passionate about this. This touches my heart as
16 well after spending eight years -- I'm sorry, 12 years
17 at John Hope. It's a very passionate thing for
18 everybody but everybody has different opinions and in
19 order for us to be productive so that our Board of
20 Education can make a valuable and effective decision, we
21 need to hear it.

22 I'm just asking that even though you may have
23 the passion and emotion that will come out of this,
24 let's just please remain respectful. I would like to

1 acknowledge, though, we do have some wonderful students
2 in the room from our high schools. Students, where are
3 you. Raise your hands.

4 This is why we do this. This is why we do it
5 and so tonight we're going to hear your voices and it's
6 going to be a great opportunity to just hear the whole
7 comprehensive heart of our community in Englewood, a
8 great place.

9 Let's start with our speakers. Speakers one
10 through five, will you please come up to the microphone
11 if you have your card and we will begin our public
12 comment. If you have a name that is kind of creative or
13 colorful, please state your name and spell it for the
14 court reporter so she has an accurate spelling, okay.
15 Speaker one, come on up to the mic. Remember, she's
16 taking notes. And I hope my sound man, please boost the
17 sound up in the room for me so that everybody can hear
18 it effectively, okay. Thank you.

1
2 [Whereupon, the speakers begin
3 speaking.]

4 MS. COLLINS: Good evening. Renee Collins. Good
5 evening and thank you for allowing me to address you on
6 behalf of the children of Englewood. I would like to
7 first state clearly that I do not support closing four
8 high schools in Englewood or any school in Englewood.
9 But I do support a new school in Englewood because the
10 children of Englewood deserve a new school.

11 As an educator in Chicago and a resident of
12 Englewood, I feel there should be a voice for our
13 children. When we heard of the idea to build a new high
14 school in Englewood, we were excited and cautious.

15 We had a meeting with CPS at Robeson High School
16 this past summer and was reassured that the children of
17 the four closing high schools and the teachers would be
18 given a chance to learn and teach in the new high
19 school.

20 Now, we find out that the men that formed this
21 committee of 13 individuals in a secret meeting in
22 September at a location outside of Englewood at 47th and
23 State.

24 This committee subsequently had a meeting with

1 CPS and a vote was taken on closing the four high
2 schools in 2018. These individuals abstained from the
3 vote allowing for the closures to take place this June
4 2018.

5 These individuals are not parents of CPS
6 students. They are not chosen by the community to
7 represent us in a vote in which they do not take a
8 stand.

9 CAC disbanded in 2016 adding new members that
10 were not residents of Englewood. CAC suspended all
11 businesses in the summer of 2017 stating they did not
12 have bylaws in place. These CAC members asked for
13 videotape and proceeded to disrupt the meeting with
14 profanity-laced tirades.

15 These individuals showed no respect to the
16 children or parents of Englewood. These members changed
17 signs and sheets. Most of these members do not live in
18 Englewood and do not have children attending any CPS
19 school.

20 The CAC -- in 2011 states, it is clear that a
21 collaborative, authentic relationship between the
22 Chicago Public Schools --

23 [Audience Interruption

24 MR. JOHNSON: Finish your thought.

1 MS. COLLINS: It was clear that a collaborative,
2 authentic relationship between the Chicago Public School
3 and the community is imperative for our schools and
4 students to be successful, informed and intentional
5 input for community stakeholders on strategic
6 educational goals and action plans lead to responsible
7 and sustainable policies, practicing and engagements.

8 The vision of the greater Englewood CAC is to
9 inform the quality of education in our community
10 ensuring all youth have access to high, quality
11 educational programs and community resources enabling
12 successful transition to post-secondary career
13 development and changing future trajectories.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Let me just say this one
15 more time. We have over 50 speakers that are signed up
16 to speak, and we need to give everybody the equity that
17 they deserve. So I would love to have everybody speak
18 their thoughts continuously, but we need to keep it in a
19 framework so that we're able to hear from everybody.

20 Speaker two.

21 MR. PETTIES: My name is Cederral Petties. That's
22 C-e-d-e-r-r-a-l-l Petties, P-e-t-t-i-e-s. I'm the proud
23 principal of Earle Stem Academy located within the
24 Englewood community. There is a somber occasion when we

1 are thinking or talking in terms of displacing students
2 within our community But what we must do is, we must
3 think about what's in the best interest of our students.

4 So often I tell my staff that we're here, not
5 for our convenience, but we're here to service our
6 students. To provide them with what it is that they
7 need to be able to be successful in a very competitive
8 society.

9 So one of the things or two concepts come to
10 mind when I think about this whole situation. This
11 meeting that I had years ago at Westinghouse High School
12 where Dr. Janet Johnson was the principal at that time.
13 And I spoke, and I said what is it that we can do as a
14 district to leverage the political capital that we have
15 to form partnerships with the two and four year higher
16 learning institutions to provide our students with slots
17 at their school. This is that opportunity.

18 I heard President Lynch today at Kennedy-King
19 speak to our principals of Network 11 and talk about the
20 fantastic opportunities that are here at Kennedy-King
21 and that the new high school will have access through to
22 through their partnership. It's called dual enrollment.
23 That's where our students will have the opportunity to
24 gain or access college credit within the high school

1 context. That will come at no cost.

2 We have schools throughout Chicago that have
3 programs like that but not here in the Englewood
4 community. Another situation that comes to mind is the
5 trip that our district afforded us to visit High Tech
6 High School in San Diego. Tremendous high school.
7 That's what I see in this high school. This will
8 prepare our students to not only compete within the
9 community, not only with Chicago, State of Illinois but
10 locally. Thank you very much.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Next speaker.

12 ERICA BROWN: Hello, everybody. I'm a parent of
13 Micall Walls, stand up. William, stand up. Them are my
14 kids. I have another daughter. She's the oldest.
15 She's 19. She's in the Navy. My name is Erica Brown.
16 I have my kids. They attend Harper High School. I'm
17 against the new school. Yes, I am because it shouldn't
18 take them to go to a new school to get their education
19 so whatever is inside that building that they're in now
20 should get more inside that building.

21 My child want to be a mortician. My daughter
22 want to go to Navy. My son want to go to Navy. They
23 also attend Harper High School. They stay there until
24 7:00 o'clock. When I say 7:00 o'clock, my kids ain't

1 never stayed at school that long. They have open gym.
2 They on volleyball, basketball. My kids -- especially
3 my son. That's the most person I'm worried about my son
4 because too much stuff going on out here. He spend most
5 of his time at the school.

6 She had a mentor. He had a mentor. They call
7 Harper High School their second family. They're doing
8 drama. They also going downtown now to be an actor.
9 And like when I was a kid, we used to go to the plays.
10 That's what they're going to be doing if they be
11 accepted. I have faith and y'all know y'all going to do
12 it. But William Rainey helped to establish both
13 University of Chicago and Bradley University. The
14 (inaudible) of both institution.

15 Why would y'all try to take them out of this
16 man's building when he took time out to make this
17 building help for our kids. If he was here to see this
18 day of what y'all trying to do, he would be devastated
19 because what he did for us seem like a waste of his
20 time.

21 If I truly believe Harper should be closed,
22 trust and believe, I wouldn't be standing on my feet
23 fighting for this school. Can William Rainey Harper
24 High School get more funds in our schools? Can we have

1 more teachers? Can the kids in this neighborhood attend
2 Harper because they are in the school district? Can our
3 special education students get more funds like the other
4 kids do?

5 [Audience Interruption]

6 MS. BROWN: We can have more kids in our school if
7 they stop saying it's closed. My kids can't even really
8 focus right because this school is trying to close up.
9 I really feel William Rainey High School should stay
10 open. Y'all trying to close Harper. That's a huge
11 mistake.

12 Our vision for William Rainey High School to
13 help our school students stay on a path (inaudible.) No
14 children should be left behind, and I feel my child will
15 be left behind because -- They feel Harper is their home
16 school. Not because it's neighborhood.

17 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you so much.

18 MS. BROWN: My baby travel. Our kids would know
19 Spanish, French like we had and many more things. We
20 have safe passage. Our kids would get a (inaudible)
21 degree. Our kids would have (inaudible) education.
22 Don't deny our peoples. Please don't.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Next speaker.

24 MR. ARTIS: Good evening. My name is Antonio Artis.

1 I currently work as the Englewood area director for the
2 Union League Boys & Girls Club.

3 I'd like to start by saying that we all are here
4 because we all have one thing at least in common and
5 that's the love of our kids and our school in this
6 Englewood community. That's the number one thing.

7 I have a passion for Englewood. I am for the
8 new school. Robeson High School when it was built, it
9 was my last year of high school when I was going --
10 attending high school. And the idea of a new school
11 coming and I can be a part of it, was so exciting for me
12 and my peers that it inspired us. And I want to say
13 that if we stop looking at the school was closing and
14 this new school opening as shutting out our kids,
15 instead of looking at it as being a beacon of hope and
16 something to strive for excellence with, then we're
17 going to be stuck.

18 We need to make some changes. We closed some
19 elementary schools. We closed in Englewood and now our
20 elementary schools are thriving. We have Stem programs.
21 We have extra support from outside partners, such as the
22 Union League which I represent.

23 There are so many positive things that come.
24 And everyone here has a strong stake in what's

1 happening. But we must look toward the future. We must
2 understand that our kids in the elementary level are
3 being prepared to step into this new school and be
4 prepared to succeed in this new school and prepare to
5 perform and compete on a worldwide range.

6 If we decide that we really want to do what's
7 best -- and everyone in their heart, believe that
8 they're doing what's best. But if we really sit down
9 and try to work on the solution, that we can come out
10 with the best solution. But please, please, do not
11 forget our kids and how much we love our kids at all
12 levels.

13 I have to stop. Thank you.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

15 Will speakers six through ten please lineup.
16 Thank you.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is
18 (inaudible.) I teach seventh grade human geography at
19 Lindblom Math & Science Academy, a couple of blocks
20 away. I (inaudible) because I know sometimes CPS
21 doesn't take teachers and community reps seriously at
22 these meetings.

23 I do want to throw out that before I did this, I
24 was a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago which I

1 have some decent chops when it comes to social,
2 scientific analysis. But enough about that. I actually
3 want to jump back into my seventh grade class.

4 In human geography, we spend a lot of time
5 thinking about the relationship between human beings and
6 their environments. Specifically, we think about the
7 way in which the physical infracture, sometimes the lack
8 of physical infracture in an environment can have a
9 profound effect on the people who live there. Not just
10 the people but the social relationships that form
11 between those people's present opportunities and
12 possibilities that are available to those people.

13 Right now we're working on a final project for a
14 semester where students are identifying needs in their
15 communities, and they're coming up with investments and
16 modifications that can make communities to meet those
17 needs. My students are very receptive. They think very
18 systematically about the problems.

19 They very quickly came to the conclusion that if
20 you want to help a community meet its needs, first of
21 all, you need the community's involvement, and you need
22 leadership from the community. But a prerequisite to
23 having that community involvement and that community
24 leadership is that people in the community need to know

1 each other.

2 They need to have relationships with each other
3 so that they can develop a common analysis of what their
4 problems are, and they can develop a common plan and
5 they have the relationships and the commitments to each
6 other to see that plan through.

7 There are very few institutions in neighborhoods
8 on the south side that build these sorts of
9 relationships between community members like
10 neighborhood schools.

11 By eliminating all of the neighborhood schools
12 in Englewood, you eliminate the institutions that forge
13 these relationships. You tear apart the social fabric
14 of a neighborhood that is already struggling. It not
15 only eliminates the power to solve these challenges, it
16 just destroys relationships. Englewood cannot afford to
17 not have a neighborhood high school until the fall of
18 2019.

19 To close, I want to go to something Dr. Jackson
20 said. She said the current situation in these schools,
21 the lack of funding, the lack of classes and resources
22 is inhumane. It's inhumane to keep students in schools
23 like this. I agree with her. But the problem is she is
24 leaving out the fact that this inhumane situation was

1 created by decisions that CPS made.

2 [Audience Interruption]

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And kicking students out of
4 Englewood, this is an inhumane solution to an already
5 inhumane problem. You can't solve an inhumane problem
6 with more inhumanity.

7 The main solution is to fund these schools and
8 make them quality schools, okay.

9 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

10 Our next speaker, please. Thank you.

11 MR. FORD: My name is Edward Ford. I'm sorry. Good
12 evening, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Edward Ford.
13 I come today -- I didn't know I was going to speak until
14 I had an opportunity to kind of say my little peace,
15 too. I come here today. I am legally blind. I don't
16 like people to judge me on that because I want them to
17 judge me about who I am, you know what I'm saying.

18 With that being said, my job is to take care of
19 two boys that I have. A fifth grader and a fourth
20 grader. Now, when I started learning about what school
21 for them to attend, CPS school from day care -- I'm in
22 the Englewood community. They was going to this day
23 care on 74th and Green. And I was like, what schools
24 are my kids going to go to, because I'm born and raised

1 in Englewood.

2 I went to the penitentiary from Englewood. I
3 want to say Englewood way back there, and I come back to
4 Englewood because I was a liability and now I'm an
5 asset, trying to be an asset to the Englewood community.
6 So I was trying to figure out, how am I going to have my
7 boys be an asset to the Englewood community, but I
8 didn't find no school. The first school I went to was
9 Holmes on 55th and Morgan.

10 Yes, sir. Yes, sir. But I just wanted to let
11 y'all know, I got a fifth grader and a fourth grader.
12 When I started to learn about these schools, I just sat
13 down and what I saw -- when I went to Earle School on
14 61st and Hermitage, like I said, I'm completely blind.
15 It was 61st and Hermitage. It wasn't there no more.
16 It's on 62nd and Hoyne. And when they were trying to
17 shut these schools down, no politicians was saving these
18 schools.

19 Englewood is Urban College Prep. It used to be
20 Englewood. We from Englewood. I went to (inaudible) --
21 at Johnson College Prep and it used to be Walter Reed.
22 My cousin and them went there. I remember that. And no
23 politicians that's speaking up for these failing
24 schools, these failing high school for our kids is not

1 speaking up but they want to speak up now when it's time
2 for their elections to come. So we got to --

3 [Audience Interruption]

4 MR. FORD: These people that are supposed to
5 represent us, we asked them to represent us that's
6 coming to these corners and talking about they don't
7 want our kids to succeed. They don't want our kids to
8 succeed. I want my kids to succeed.

9 (Inaudible.) My kid go there. It's a 2017
10 National Blue Ribbon School. Everybody go to that
11 school now. Didn't nobody know where that school was.
12 First school in south side, all black, all black.

13 (Inaudible.) I love Harper, Robeson, Englewood. I love
14 all that. But I definitely in support of our kids
15 getting their 1955, Brown vs. the Board of Education
16 because I want them to have any opportunity they want in
17 life. That's what my boys would like.

18 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker.

20 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Hello. My name is Ashley Rodriguez.
21 I am a current student at Harper High School. I'm here
22 today because y'all shouldn't be closing up our schools.
23 Y'all got \$85 million to put into a new school, y'all
24 should be putting that into our schools --

1 [Audience Interruption

2 MS. FORD: If y'all putting more academics into
3 these schools, then that's going to have more kids
4 coming to our school. Y'all shouldn't have to build
5 another school for schools to come to. We need more
6 money for our schools because -- Look. Okay. Example.
7 I came into Harper with all Fs and now Harper has me on
8 the right track to graduate this year with As, Bs and
9 Cs.

10 [Audience Interruption

11 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Harper is helping me to get the
12 education I need. Harper is my second family. And if
13 it wasn't for Harper, I don't know where I would be
14 right now and that's the honest to God truth.

15 Harper has helped me through everything I have
16 ever been -- have ever dealt in these last three years I
17 have been at Harper.

18 I don't know why y'all want to shut down these
19 schools in Englewood because y'all are hurting a lot of
20 people. Y'all ain't losing no sleep. These parents are
21 losing sleep. They worrying about where their kids are
22 going to go. They worrying about --

23 [Audience Interruption

24 MS. RODRIGUEZ: (Inaudible.) What's the best school

1 for their kids and (inaudible) after the community they
2 were raised and born in. Y'all shouldn't be doing that.
3 Y'all be thinking about how that's going to impact us.

4 Y'all should be listening to what we want. We
5 don't want to leave our school. We want to stay in that
6 school. They didn't build that school (inaudible) to
7 close it down and turn it into something different and
8 to put a new schools. Y'all got \$85 million. Put that
9 money into the schools that y'all already got. Don't
10 let them put us in another school.

11 [Audience Interruption]

12 MS. RODRIGUEZ: We ain't got time to be playing
13 games at the different schools and leaving one school
14 and going into another school. That's just wrong. Who
15 got time for that? Who want to stand in a different
16 school registering their child? Show me a raise of
17 hands. Who want to register their child into a
18 different school that they already registered their
19 child in? Exactly, nobody. So they shouldn't be doing
20 this. But my time is up so thank y'all.

21 MR. JOHNSON: Our next speaker for our graduating
22 seniors. Our next speaker.

23 MS. PRUITT: Good evening and Happy New Year. My
24 name is Coretta, C-o-r-e-t-t-a, J. Pruitt. I go by CJ.

1 I come this evening to give a little bit of history
2 about my family, the Richardson family, that was one of
3 the first African American families that bought a house
4 here in Englewood, 1429 West 71st Street, the Richardson
5 family in 1964.

6 In 1966, my father's youngest brother, who is
7 now since deceased, graduated from Harper in 1966. I
8 come this evening wearing the hat of a Chicago public
9 school parent, the hat of a member of the Englewood
10 Community Action Council, the hat of a member of the
11 Steering Leadership Committee, and the hat of a parent
12 educator from Metropolitan Family Services.

13 But the biggest hat that I wear on a daily
14 basis, 365 days a year, 24/7 hours a day is that of a
15 mother of six children, who are the products of Oglesby
16 Elementary, Murray Language Academy, Beasley Academic
17 Center, (inaudible) International School of Chicago,
18 Polk Classical, Hyde Park High School, Jones College
19 Preparatory, Kenwood Academic Center, and there are some
20 others that I'm missing.

21 But trust and believe, it was not a easy
22 decision for the Steering Leadership Community and the
23 Englewood Community Action Council to make a decision of
24 closing these four schools, whether it happened at the

1 end of this year or the end of next school year. It
2 had to -- A decision had to be made. And decisions,
3 we make them every single day. They're not easy.

4 However, I believe that, yes, my children, our
5 children are the future. As the song by Whitney Houston
6 once sang, I believe the children are our future. With
7 that being said, we are raising the next leaders of
8 doctors, teachers, meteorologists, actuarial
9 scientists, astronauts, and what I received my degree
10 in, computer science.

11 Therefore, a decision had to be made because
12 when you go to these schools of Hope, Harper, Robeson
13 and Team and you see sometimes, they don't have basic
14 general science. They don't have math. But yet they
15 want to aspire to be an astronaut. We need to give them
16 a brighter future.

17 Okay. Therefore, our children need
18 opportunities like Sarah E. Goode that has a partnership
19 with Daley, Ashburn, Wrightwood Community, Walter Payton
20 downtown and Lindblom Technical which is a selective
21 enrollment school. Thank you.

22 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

23 Next speaker. Speakers 11 through 15, please
24 begin to lineup. Speakers 11 through 15.

1 MR. STEWART: My name is Dewayne Stewart. I'm from
2 Harper High School, graduated in '94. I didn't prepare
3 anything. It's a great proposal. I would love to have
4 any additional to my neighborhood, Englewood. I'm proud
5 of guys from Englewood. I have been in Englewood all of
6 my life.

7 Some of the reasons -- I read some of the stuff
8 that was written on some of the pamphlets given out. I
9 jot down a few things. Some of the reasons the students
10 are leaving and enrolling in other schools is a
11 combination of other factors as far as crime, lack of
12 resources in the neighborhood. That's the reasons
13 they're going to other places in other neighborhoods and
14 signing up.

15 To the committee, addition doesn't always have
16 to be attributable subtraction. The proposal sounds
17 great but we all know a plan is just a thought process
18 and that's just execute thoroughly. I'm not against the
19 proposal. I think it's a great looking school in my
20 hood, but I do disagree with the idea of closing any
21 school. We have enough vacant lots Englewood as it is.

22 [Audience Interruption]

23 MR. STEWART: And we have empty buildings. Let's
24 not kill. Let's build, not kill, the great institution

1 that made me who I am and many other great individuals
2 that came out of Englewood and has produced some great,
3 great people. I'm proud of my school. I'm proud of my
4 neighborhood. Let's not continue to tear down. Let's
5 build up. Let's build up these buildings and let's
6 build them up with one another. Thank you.

7 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

8 Next speaker, please.

9 MR. JOHNSON: Good evening, everyone. Those of you
10 that don't know me, my name is Kenneth Johnson. I am
11 the district commander of the Seventh District Englewood
12 Chicago Police Department.

13 My role and purpose in coming here tonight is to
14 stand with the community to let you know that whatever
15 decision you make here, we here in the Seventh District
16 Chicago Police Department, stand firm and ready to make
17 whatever changes we need to make in order to make this
18 work.

19 We are all here united for a common purpose,
20 which is the welfare, the benefit and uplifting of our
21 most pressure resource in this community which is our
22 children. Whatever plans are made, we will adapt, we
23 will assist, and we will provide the service that we
24 have throughout the past year and a half here in

1 Englewood since I have been here that has, in my
2 opinion, changed the dynamic of how we exist here in
3 this community.

4 No longer are the police separate, have a
5 separate role from the community. We are one. We all
6 live here, work here. I have two roles in this
7 community, as a district commander of several hundred
8 police officers in the Englewood District and also as a
9 parent of a student here in Englewood community.

10 If I didn't believe in this community, believe
11 in the people that live here, raise their children here,
12 I wouldn't even have my own child over here. But that's
13 how much faith and trust and belief I have in this
14 community.

15 So, please, whatever you do here, whatever
16 decisions are made, know that we stand with you, we
17 support you, and we are there to provide what we're
18 supposed to do as Chicago police officers to provide
19 service and protect the community. Thank you.

20 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Commander Johnson.

21 Next speaker, please.

22 MR. BROWN: Good evening. I'm Aaron Brown. I'm the
23 assistant principal at Parker Community Academy. Part
24 of my role at Parker is to identify students that need

1 support and provide supports for those students. And I
2 know that some of our students are faced with a lot of
3 social, emotional challenges, a lot of academic
4 challenges, and a lot of attendance challenges. So one
5 of the things we do is provide opportunities for them so
6 that they can be successful. And I'm here to say Parker
7 is a Level 1 school because of the support --

8 [Audience Interruption

9 MR. BROWN: Because of the support of the community,
10 because of the support of the parents and the students
11 and the teachers inside the building to make this all
12 possible. Parker is also a safe school. The number of
13 suspensions, the number of violent crimes is down
14 considerably so I believe that the main thing here is to
15 think about the opportunities that the students can
16 have. Advanced mathematics courses. French classes.
17 They have an opportunity of classes in order to be
18 competitive.

19 My students have to be competitive, too, at the
20 same time when they graduate eighth grade. I have to
21 provide the community with a finished product of an
22 excellent student.

23 In order to do that, we're going to have to have
24 a lot of opportunities for them to succeed. Thank you.

1 MR. JOHNSON: Next speaker, please.

2 MS. PIERCE: Good evening. My name is Sandra
3 Pierce. I represent John Hope College Prep and also
4 Harper High School. I have raised four sons in the hard
5 of West Englewood so I know exactly what's going on.
6 I've also lived here 45 years.

7 My heart is the young men. I just want to
8 address what they said. They're going to provide bus
9 cards. That's not sufficient. We have gang territories
10 in our neighborhoods. Our students need to be bussed
11 safely to and from their schools.

12 If they're expected to go all the way to Gage
13 Park, all the way to Phillips High School, that is not
14 sufficient. If they can bus kids to -- all the way to
15 Lindblom from Roseland and other areas of the school,
16 they need to set aside monies to make sure our kids
17 safely get to and from that school.

18 Bus cards are not sufficient. Expanding safe
19 passage, that is not enough. These are young men and
20 young women you're talking about, 14 to 18 year olds.
21 Their lives are in danger as it is walking to school, so
22 you're talking about bussing them outside of their areas
23 to other schools. That is not sufficient.

24 I'm concerned about the safety and welfare, the

1 very lives of our young men and women if they are going
2 to be leaving out of Englewood to go to other schools.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

5 Next speaker, please.

6 MR. HALL: Good evening. My name is Curly Hall. I
7 am a resident of Englewood. I'm for the new school and
8 the reason why is because Englewood have four Stem
9 schools, grammar schools, four. That's the most in the
10 City of Chicago.

11 Why should we punish our children who is getting
12 this higher education, to graduate out of eighth grade
13 to go to these schools that we say keep open where the
14 education is not being taught there. We're punishing
15 them.

16 Why not raise up a new school where there is
17 programs that our kids, that our children, can elevate
18 and continue to elevate in their education and maybe
19 they can be a representative, a president, a governor
20 from the Englewood community. That's very important. I
21 know a lot -- I feel for the children that have to leave
22 their home. But there is not -- The program is not
23 there for y'all. They're not --

24 Harper High School house 1400 students. There's

1 only probably maybe a hundred so that means the program
2 is not going to be -- the funding is not going to be
3 there. We talk about the Board of Education. The Board
4 of Education is not running our children from these
5 schools. Let's try to find out that.

6 I know Harper High School was one of the
7 top-rated basketball programs. Also, Englewood was
8 also. What happened? What happened?

9 [Audience Interruption]

10 MR. HALL: I'm with you.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Let's remember the public comment,
12 please. Thank you.

13 MR. HALL: I'm with you, young sister. I'm saying,
14 why continue to be in a school, and they are not giving
15 you anything. But they are going to put all the
16 programs in that new school. I guarantee you that.
17 That's all I can say. Thank you.

18 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

19 Next speaker, please.

20 [Audience Interruption]

21 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. The next voice will be our
22 next speaker, please. Thank you.

23 [Audience Interruption]

24 MR. JOHNSON: Excuse me.

1 [Audience Interruption

2 MR. JOHNSON: Excuse me, young lady. We'll wait.
3 We'll wait. As I said at the beginning of this meeting,
4 everybody is being very passionate about their side, but
5 we need to hear everybody respectfully. Can we listen
6 to our next speaker, please.

7 Speakers are 16 through 20, please lineup.

8 MS. BIGGS: My name is Jenny Biggs. I'm a CPS
9 parent. I'm also a communications director of Raise
10 Your Hand for Illinois Public Education. We're a city
11 wide parents' organization. Raise Your Hand stands with
12 the students, parents, communities and educators of
13 Harper, Hope, Robeson and Team Englewood High Schools in
14 opposing this plan to close the only neighborhood high
15 schools in Englewood leaving no neighborhood high school
16 for an entire school year.

17 This plan leaves out all current students of
18 these schools and the prospective current eighth graders
19 who would have chosen a neighborhood high school option
20 in Englewood.

21 What kind of message is CPS sending to the
22 families of Englewood? This is the appearance of a
23 push-out plan, not a plan that value students and
24 families and the educational process.

1 We have met parents, elected LSC members, from
2 Englewood schools and say they had zero voice in the
3 process of these closings and some did not know that
4 there was a one-year gap with no neighborhood high
5 school.

6 CPS needs to pause this school action. Bogan
7 and Phillips are five to six miles away from Harper High
8 School. The current elected Board of Education
9 president, Frank Clark, in 2013 didn't allow closings of
10 high schools because he said it was too dangerous. We
11 understand that CPS has a number of schools --

12 [Audience Interruption]

13 MR. BIGGS: (Inaudible.) CPS --

14 [Audience Interruption]

15 MS. BIGGS: (Inaudible) planning enrollment and by
16 not investing in neighborhood high schools. I'm a CPS
17 parent, and I go to every board meeting. With our
18 robust, authentic community engagement process, it
19 creates a real comprehensive city wide facility plan,
20 CPS should put a hold on closing and opening schools.
21 Thank you.

22 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

23 Next speaker, please. Our next speaker.

24 MR. ROISTER: My name is Dewayne Roister, and I'm

1 from the West Englewood community. I have been there
2 for 40 years.

3 [Audience Interruption

4 MR. JOHNSON: Excuse me, excuse me. We can't hear.

5 MR. ROISTER: The same thing that up north schools
6 have, the state of the art schools. I'm not saying that
7 Harper needed to be gone. Yes, they did need to be gone
8 because you got to look at the statistics of about how
9 many students in Harper and how many students that that
10 school holds, you know.

11 You got to think about the different things that
12 they have, educational programs that they have that
13 Harper is not holding. And the school teachers that's
14 up in there. You have -- Statistically, you have 160
15 students. Harper holds at least 1200 students in the
16 that building. (Inaudible.) You understand what I'm
17 saying? Your kids deserve better. It does. We deserve
18 the same state of art facilities as any other schools.
19 Just because we are in West Englewood don't mean
20 anything, you know what I'm saying. Give your kids a
21 chance.

22 MR. JOHNSON: Next speaker, please.

23 [Audience Interruption

24 MR. JOHNSON: Let's go with the next speaker,

1 please.

2 [Audience Interruption

3 MR. JOHNSON: We will handle this accordingly.
4 Again, we want to have the respect in the room as much
5 as we can.

6 [Audience Interruption

7 MR. JOHNSON: Let's resume so we can continue the
8 meeting, please.

9 [Audience Interruption

10 MR. JOHNSON: We need everybody to have a seat as we
11 bring this back under control.

12 [Audience Interruption

13 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Let's see if we can come
14 to order so we can convene this meeting.

15 Our next speaker, please.

16 MR. VAEAHREN: My name is Chris Vaeahren,
17 V-a-e-a-h-r-e-n. I'm president of Chicago Access, a
18 union for charter teachers in Chicago, and I'm here to
19 speak on behalf of members at Urban Prep Englewood. The
20 educators there have been shocked at this declining
21 enrollment and this disinvestment in neighborhood
22 schools in Englewood, and we oppose the closing of
23 district schools, as well as any schools.

24 When CPS closes a school, they fail the

1 community. They fail the students (inaudible.)

2 [Audience Interruption]

3 MR. VAEAHREN: Give them a bus card and sit on a bus
4 for an hour in rush hour traffic twice a day, that's not
5 an educational experience. The students in eighth
6 grade, where are they going to go to high school? They
7 fail the students coming to the school. They fail the
8 students in the school. I also --

9 [Audience Interruption]

10 MR. VAEAHREN: I teach in an alternative school.
11 (Inaudible.) It's in Little Village, but I can tell
12 you, from the last round of closings, I had lots of
13 students who came from these schools and I'd say, hey,
14 what school did you come from? And they would say the
15 name of their school, and they would say, well, my
16 school got closed. Why did it get close? Because we're
17 bad kids, right.

18 And the students take that personally. There's
19 no amount of me telling them, look, no, it's not your
20 fault your school got closed. It has nothing to do with
21 you. They take that internally. They feel that they're
22 the failure when, in fact, it's CPS is the failure.

23 By opening and closing schools is not a way to
24 support schools. We need to support all of the schools

1 we have. Students needs to have a community school
2 (inaudible) democracy where parents get to come together
3 and get to know each other and find out what issues are
4 in the community, hold their elected representatives
5 responsible.

6 And I guess I'll just close by saying like --
7 There is a great poem someone told me recently. Choice,
8 right, CPS's mantra is choice. Choice is democracy for
9 people without power, right. What we need is we need
10 investment in our communities, investment in Englewood.
11 The young lady spoke very well. They should spend \$21
12 million in each of these four schools and put the
13 programs in there that the kids deserve. So, please,
14 don't close the schools.

15 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you speaker.

16 Next speaker, please.

17 MR. SILLS: Good afternoon. My name is Donald
18 Sills, Sr. I'm the owner of the People's Choice
19 Groceries at 5647 South Princeton. I have been there
20 since 1979. I moved into the area in 1949. I have had
21 the pleasure of serving many of your people's children
22 and most of you probably know me. My store is near the
23 Sherwood School. I have been there, as I said, for many
24 years, and I've raised a lot of your kids or assisted in

1 raising them.

2 I want to say that I'm happy to see something
3 good coming to Englewood, and we do need a new high
4 school. And we do need the state of art. And we do
5 need our people gainfully employed as a result of this.
6 I'm talking about the people in Englewood.

7 I have seen the Dan Ryan built and when it was
8 being dynamited and everybody was coming here from
9 someone else being employed and working. I saw very few
10 of my neighbors employed. And I hope, I sincerely hope,
11 to see some positive changes coming where people have an
12 opportunity to improve their lives and work and earn a
13 decent living and not be at the bottom of everything.
14 First one hired -- The last one hired and the first one
15 fired.

16 I have been some of everything since I have
17 been -- I'm 91 years old. I made 91 the 1st of January.
18 I have been a paperboy. I have been a good husband. My
19 wife says so. I have two children, both of them are
20 professors. I've done some of everything. I've sold
21 papers. I have been a -- I've been some of everything.

22 I'm retired as a fire chief. I was the chief of
23 (inaudible) Station. I had 40 firefighters, six
24 captains and two assistant chiefs. And now I'm a

1 grocery man. I have been a grocery man since 1979 at
2 the People's Choice Groceries.

3 And I have had a great time, and I'm still
4 having a good time. I'm still having a good time
5 dealing with your kids, messing with them and correcting
6 them in English and so forth. I'll tell them all the
7 time, a teacher can't do what I do. I'll beat the hell
8 out of you if you don't act right, and I'll put you out.

9 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

10 MR. SILLS: Thank you so much. And if I'm out of
11 order is because my hearing is awful. Thank you.

12 MR. JOHNSON: We have to honor a legacy. That's
13 Englewood's legacy right there. Thank you very much.

14 Our next speaker.

15 MR. SMITH: My name is Andre Smith. I remember when
16 we lived on 71st and Normal, and we used to walk up
17 under the viaduct and I used to go to Yale. And then
18 later on I got a little older and I went to Gopers. But
19 that's not why I'm here.

20 In 1864, my great grandmother, Carrie Williams,
21 she was the first colored person in West Virginia to
22 file a lawsuit against the Board of Ed for equal rights.
23 And I stand here today and say that we still do not have
24 equal rights.

1 I do not support another school being closed in
2 the City of Chicago. Second of all, during the
3 Powerpoint presentation you showed us that you're going
4 to put 8.3 million dollars and some of that money is
5 going to go for social, emotional support which tells us
6 that there is going to be some issues.

7 My question to you is, that stands on the back
8 of my grandmother, my question to you is, have you not
9 seen the news with the Blair Hope story? When our kids
10 leave out of the community, what happens to them? Maybe
11 you don't know because you don't live here. But when
12 you got \$85 million you can put into each and every one
13 of them schools that you want closed and our kids --

14 [Audience Interruption]

15 MR. SMITH: Now close them. Now close them. Close
16 them. How in the hell can you protect our children when
17 you can't even control this crowd.

18 [Audience Interruption]

19 MR. JOHNSON: Next speaker, please.

20 MR. SMITH: My name is Darrell Smith. Remember that
21 name, Darrell Smith. I'm a 48 year resident of
22 Englewood. I'm a 1987 graduate of Harper High School.

23 [Audience Interruption]

24 MR. SMITH: I'm the spokesperson for the Englewood

1 Political Task Force. The strongest, political and
2 social economic organization in the city.

3 Now to business. Mr. Smith that went before me,
4 it must be a reason why both of our names are Smith
5 because he echoed a lot of the things that I wanted to
6 say.

7 You're talking about 85 million with a M, \$85
8 million to go into one beautiful school. That's
9 wonderful. But if you take 20 million and put in each
10 one of those four schools, you still got \$5 million to
11 do something else with.

12 So what I'm saying to you is, if you want the
13 kids to come to the schools, if you want their
14 enrollment to rise in these schools, you have to make
15 the schools attractive to these children.

16 If the school is not attractive, the children
17 are not going to go there.

18 [Audience Interruption]

19 MR. SMITH: Y'all not going to do me like that.
20 You're not going to do me like that. That's for real.
21 You're not going to do me like that. Thank you. As I
22 was saying before I was rudely interrupted.

23 [Audience Interruption]

24 MR. SMITH: You put your money into the schools that

1 are existing. You make the schools attractive to the
2 children. Like this young lady that stood up earlier
3 and spoke so eloquently about how she came to the school
4 with straight Fs and now she's on the honor roll. You
5 put the money into the schools that are in existence.
6 Stop closing our schools.

7 They say it takes a village. They say it takes
8 a village. When are we going to get tired of the
9 backdoor deals being made without a person from the
10 village being enrolled. We have to stop it now. Like I
11 said, my name is Darrell Smith. My name is Darrell
12 Smith. Remember my name. You will be hearing a lot
13 more in the future. Thank you.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Our next speaker, please.

15 [Audience Interruption]

16 MR. JOHNSON: Our next speaker, please.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello. Can I get everyone's
18 attention for a minute.

19 [Audience Interruption]

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If anyone remember four years
21 ago -- if anyone who remember four years ago, we had a
22 meeting about closing schools. And you remember --

23 [Audience Interruption]

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hey, did I disrespect you

1 when you were talking so let me speak. If you don't
2 like what I'm saying, that's you. But I didn't
3 disrespect you while you were up there talking. But if
4 anyone know, four years ago we had issues with them
5 closing schools. And if anyone remember, the Board of
6 Education had paid protesters at that meeting.

7 [Audience Interruption

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So let's get it straight.
9 Let's get it straight. Did I disrespect you when you
10 were talking? That's what I'm talking about.

11 [Audience Interruption

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Paid protesters back there.
13 I'm ain't scared of none of you. (Inaudible

14 [Audience Interruption

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me. Can I finish
16 speaking? Can I finish speaking?

17 [Audience Interruption

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can I finish speaking?

19 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you all very much. We will
20 continue.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let's get a clear
22 understanding. Excuse me.

23 [Audience Interruption

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Now, CPS say they want to

1 close the failed schools and then they want to open up
2 this beautiful school. But yet they are not letting
3 kids who are going to be sophomore this year. The
4 bottom line is, this is not about closing schools. This
5 is about moving you out. And those paid protesters
6 think they are going to get a job at that new school
7 (inaudible.)

8 The bottom line is, we need to get together
9 and --

10 [Audience Interruption]

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me. Excuse me. The
12 bottom line is, does anyone know CPS saying that they
13 are broke. But everyone knew that CPS saying they are
14 broke. So why don't you tell me where you come up with
15 \$85 million, and you don't even have enough money for
16 the special education kids.

17 Where is the money for the special education
18 kids at? They say they have \$85 million. Where did you
19 get it from if you don't have money? The bottom line
20 is, we need to get together and file a lawsuit on the
21 state and federal level. And when election time come,
22 we need to get together and vote these black aldermen
23 out of here who is not standing up for us. They come
24 here today --

1 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker. Thank you very
2 much.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

4 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much, speaker. Can we
5 move to the next speaker, please. Let's move to the
6 next speaker.

7 Before the speaker comes -- We got the next one?

8 [Audience Interruption

9 MR. JOHNSON: Before the next speaker comes, we are
10 still asking for your respect in here. Everybody needs
11 to hear. But most importantly -- May I have your
12 attention.

13 [Audience Interruption

14 MR. JOHNSON: May I have your attention, please.
15 Our court reporter needs to hear the voices. These are
16 documented statements that Chicago Board of Education
17 needs to be aware of, and we need you all to be
18 respectful for it.

19 We need you to be respectful and listen to our
20 next speakers.

21 [Audience Interruption

22 MR. JOHNSON: Those that are holding cards 21
23 through 25, please lineup. Those cards holding 21
24 through 25.

1 MS. POLK: Good evening, brothers and sisters,
2 community members. My name is Debbie Polk. I'm a
3 retired teacher from Gage Park High School. I taught
4 there for many years. I believe in neighborhood high
5 schools. But I will tell you, the problem is not
6 building a beautiful new school. All children deserve
7 quality schools, beautiful schools.

8 The problem is you've been starving these
9 schools for years. You have been depriving these
10 schools of the resources that they need for years. And
11 you have been making those schools into schools that you
12 wanted to close. It's part of the gentrification plan
13 for the neighborhood.

14 [Audience Interruption]

15 MS. POLK: To say you're building a beautiful new
16 school for the children in here, well, these children
17 aren't going to be able to go there. That school isn't
18 going to be open and ready. You are being dishonest. I
19 stand for -- I've been an educator of 20 plus years.

20 On behalf of the kids of the south side, the
21 kids of the west side, the kids of the north side, all
22 children deserve a good school. This isn't about a
23 beautiful new building. This is about treating the
24 children who are there now with the dignity, respect and

1 giving them the resources that they need.

2 [Audience Interruption

3 MS. POLK: The reason that those schools have gone
4 down in population is because you are fed charter
5 schools. You have told lies and deceit to get kids into
6 charter school. And, furthermore, you have starved
7 these schools of resources, cut the number of courses
8 offered, cut the school teams and all that stuff.
9 You put the money where it belongs and the students will
10 follow.

11 Stop playing games with our kids' lives. Thank
12 you.

13 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

14 Next speaker, please.

15 [Audience Interruption

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello, everybody. I have a
17 child that go to Harper School as well. At the end of
18 the day, I support them if they tear down but build
19 something for us. We are not here to let them come over
20 here to build what they want to build. We got a
21 decision to make for them to build. Let's build housing
22 for the people that's down here that don't have nowhere
23 to go. Let's build for the --

24 [Audience Interruption

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.) If they have to
2 tear it down, tear it down. Tear it down. (Inaudible.)

3 [Audience Interruption

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We got decisions, too. Let
5 them tear it down.

6 [Audience Interruption

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're right. But you got to
8 rebuild. Let them build what we want so I'll support
9 them to tear it down. They got better schools for our
10 kids. Let them tear them down. (Inaudible.) I'm
11 supporting them to tear it down.

12 MR. JOHNSON: Our next speaker, please.

13 [Audience Interruption

14 MS. CLARK: Good evening, everyone. Hello. My name
15 is Erica Clark. I'm with a parent group called Parents
16 For Teachers, and I have had two children who graduated
17 from CPS. And I just have to say, CPS would never ever
18 think of treating the families of my children's school
19 the way they're treating the families in Englewood. And
20 I want everyone -- I just want to put in perspective.

21 [Audience Interruption

22 MS. CLARK: Everyone, just listen for a second.
23 What they're proposing to do -- Imagine that you lived
24 in Niles. Imagine you lived in Niles or Arlington

1 Heights or Chicago Heights. These are suburbs that are
2 roughly the same size as Englewood.

3 Now, imagine if they went into those towns and
4 said, we're going to close every single neighborhood
5 high school in this town. Would the residents stand for
6 that? Would the parents stand for that? Would our
7 elected officials stand for that? No. There will be
8 hell to pay. So I think we have to keep that in
9 perspective. That's what they're proposing to do here.
10 Close every single high school in a neighborhood roughly
11 the size of many Chicago suburbs. It's wrong.

12 We're here to stand with the families and the
13 students and the teachers who are fighting to keep their
14 schools open.

15 And I just want to respond to the last speaker.
16 Why do you have to tear something down to build
17 something up? This is what they do time and time again.
18 They pit us against each other. This is not about a new
19 school. This is about tearing down schools that are
20 loved by the students, the families, and the people in
21 those communities, and it's just wrong. Let's work
22 together to demand what all the students in Englewood
23 deserve. Let's put them --

24 [Audience Interruption]

1 MS. CLARK: And if they think they got a (inaudible)
2 to build a new school, God love them. Let them go do
3 that. But you don't have to tear down schools. You
4 don't have to put children's lives at risk in order to
5 get something good for the community.

6 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Ms. Clark.

7 MS. CLARK: I just want to make one more point. In
8 2013, they did not close high schools because they said
9 it was too dangerous.

10 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much, Ms. Clark.

11 MS. CLARK: I have one question for the community.
12 Is your community any safer in 2018?

13 MR. JOHNSON: Our next speaker, please.

14 MR. NASH: Good evening. Well, my name is Demetrius
15 Nash. I'm the young man that walked, literally walked,
16 from Chicago to the White House about gun violence.
17 Now, we're sitting here talking about schools but what
18 we're really talking about is lives.

19 For our kids to go to other schools, it's
20 dangerous. We have to have a better plan. We don't
21 have vocational skills. We don't have these things that
22 will help our community. I'm great with the new school,
23 but I'm also concerned about these kids that their lives
24 it's about to affect. We are a gang town. While y'all

1 act like we're not and people sitting in these academic
2 offices and act like they don't understand that when you
3 close schools, take projects and do things like that,
4 you're putting the citizens in danger.

5 We are talking about lives. Y'all sitting here
6 arguing about schools. Some of y'all kids that's
7 talking about their school is going to get hurt. They
8 are going to get killed. That's period. Y'all can talk
9 all y'all want to talk. No matter the police, no matter
10 of safe passages is going to be in these high schools
11 with these kids when they got to fight.

12 They don't even know how to communicate good.
13 They don't know how to, you know, have proper --

14 [Audience Interruption]

15 MR. NASH: Conflict revenue. Thank you. So when
16 you're looking at this, you're saying new schools but
17 these kids are going to get killed. Six hundred fifty
18 people plus was killed this year. Seven hundred and
19 sixty-two were murdered.

20 So, you know, it needs to be a better plan. We
21 need to bring vocational. We need our community centers
22 for our kids. And we're talking about lives while we're
23 arguing about schools.

24 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

1 Next speaker, please.

2 MS. CLARK: How y'all doing. My name is Alyia
3 Clark, and I'm a community activist in Englewood in
4 Chicago period. I'm just listening to -- I'm just
5 listening to everybody's perspective. Nobody is really
6 talking about the educators what make the school bad.
7 It's not so much the building that needs to be invested
8 in. It's the teachers as well.

9 You have to get properly educated teachers so
10 that the kids can actually learn something. It's not
11 about investing \$85 million into one building when you
12 can bring that money up -- not just into the schools but
13 into the community as well because at the end of the
14 day, everybody is not going to be successful in that
15 school. They're just not.

16 It doesn't matter what type of programs you put
17 in there. You have to train these kids, and you have to
18 leave them where they are right now. Not moving them
19 into a new schools with all these promises. Everybody
20 is so for the new school. So when the new school come
21 in 2019 and it fails then what? Then what?

22 Now, y'all going to depend on one school to
23 occupy -- Y'all going to depend on one school to house
24 four schools worth of kids and y'all think that's going

1 to be safe. How is that going to be safe? That's not
2 going to be safe? That's going to be stupid.

3 When they close down those schools, y'all got to
4 understand --

5 [Audience Interruption

6 MS. CLARK: Excuse me. Excuse me. When they're
7 closing down these schools, they're building projects.
8 They're bunching a whole lot of people on top of each
9 other that's not going to get along. It's not about
10 what gang they in. It's about the gang that the people
11 come to pick them up in.

12 So you have to take all of that into
13 consideration when you do this. You also have to be
14 willing to accept responsibility for the crime rise
15 because you will have that bloodshed on your hands when
16 you close down these schools and force these kids into a
17 community that they're not comfortable with.

18 MR. JOHNSON: Our next speaker, please. Could we
19 have 21 through 25, please. Speakers 21 through 25
20 lineup. I'm sorry, 26 through 30.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm 28. Okay. Here's the
22 deal. I understand everybody is passionate about what
23 they have to say, and you should be. I'm a product of
24 this community. I went from a foot solider to a

1 general, Black Gangster Disciples, jail, the whole nine
2 yards.

3 Luckily a lot of the stuff that I did I was able
4 to get expunged. I have a master's from DePaul. I'm in
5 the field now working with our average kids.

6 The thing that worries me about a lot of this is
7 the fact that -- the violence. So now you have Vice,
8 you got GDs. You got people right now before the school
9 is built -- Some of these kids that are at these various
10 schools, they can't even go into the community now.
11 It's like, we ain't built no building. We haven't done
12 anything yet. They cannot go. And they're scared.
13 They like, mama, look. I'm not going. They leave out
14 of the house, and they are not going to go because they
15 are intimidated, and they should be. Because the way we
16 played it was, okay. Now you're over here. We're going
17 to get you, boy. It's nowhere to run.

18 So there's nothing wrong with a new school, but
19 we don't want to be counter-productive. So I'm just
20 saying, the psychological ramifications that goes on in
21 these kids' minds, they're going to be traumatized. So
22 that's like taking somebody out of this environment and
23 send them someplace overseas where they have never been
24 before and there you have it.

1 Now, I'm going to sum this up. I was a dean at
2 North Lawndale College Prep, the Englewood of the west
3 side. Now, one of the kids, a junior in high school,
4 said, Mr. Parker, do you know I have never been downtown
5 Chicago. So that means the only thing you know is
6 what's going on on the block in the neighborhood, and
7 he's regulated to two blocks. No further than that.

8 So as our sister said a little earlier, if this
9 is going to happen, if people made up their mind, this
10 is just a preliminary exercise so people can say what
11 they want to say, but we're still going to do what we
12 want to do. At least you can do is guarantee as much as
13 possible the safety factor.

14 It ain't going to be no buses going back and
15 forth. There has to be a school bus that's going to
16 take them there and bring them back home. Other than
17 that, we're going to go back up. Crime rate has been
18 going down some, but what's that going to do is going to
19 increase it. Thank you very much.

20 MR. JOHNSON: Our next speaker, please.

21 MR. HARRIS: Good evening. My name is Keith Harris.
22 I'm the president of the Englewood Political Task Force.
23 And up until tonight, I was a member of the new school
24 Steering Committee, but I'm officially resigning.

1 I haven't been to a meeting since maybe October
2 or November because the school (inaudible) is all
3 bullshit.

4 [Audience Interruption]

5 MR. HARRIS: This story got leaked last year around
6 November, December. I was laid up with a broken leg
7 from November to January, so I couldn't attend any of
8 the meetings. When I went to start going to some of
9 these meetings, we had questions that we asked the CPS
10 representative that didn't get answered until October.

11 They didn't represent -- They didn't accept
12 alternate plans even though they were given some. And
13 they've also been lying about community participation.
14 It's not been community participation. The whole --

15 [Audience Interruption]

16 MR. HARRIS: (Inaudible.) In fact, it's made up of
17 mostly people -- The leadership involved in the CAC is
18 made up of mostly people that were sent in by CPS and
19 the mayor to push this program.

20 We had community meetings back in February.
21 This is going into next February. And they're saying
22 they want to talk now after they've made the decision.

23 So, again, I'm resigning officially from the
24 Steering Committee and I'm asking all the people that's

1 residents of Englewood, not the stakeholder, not the CPS
2 people but the people that's residents to join me
3 because this proposal is disingenuous. It's not about
4 our kids. It's about the mayor getting re-elected.
5 It's about the --

6 [Audience Interruption

7 MR. HARRIS: (Inaudible.) It's the jobs. This
8 ain't got nothing to do with our kids. I went to
9 Robeson High School. I graduated in '84. I can't sit
10 by and let them wipe out my history. And by closing
11 these schools, they're wiping out our history.

12 I don't know of no other people in this city, in
13 this country that would just let somebody come into
14 their community and wipe out their history.

15 So we have been talking. We have been meeting.
16 It's been some behind-the-scene stuff, and we have been
17 telling them, and they ain't been listening. Y'all
18 don't have to listen no more. Y'all are going to start
19 to fulfill us. Y'all not going to move any school in
20 Englewood.

21 We are not against the new school being built.
22 Build it. Englewood needs a new school, but you're not
23 going to close these schools, and you're not going to
24 put these kids in danger. You can put \$30 million in

1 these schools and boost the enrollment. The kids are
2 not going there -- The parents are not sending their
3 students there -- their kids because it's not in
4 their --

5 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

6 MR. HARRIS: I'm not finished.

7 [Audience Interruption

8 MR. HARRIS: I'm not the brightest light going
9 through the box but \$30 million plus, an additional 15
10 to \$20 million to do some improvements on the school and
11 you still under \$85 million. So common sense just tell
12 me, 30 to \$50 million dollars is a more investment than
13 \$85 million, but y'all not listening to the people in
14 the Englewood. Y'all not listening to the students.
15 Y'all not listening to the parents, but y'all want to
16 say it's community participation.

17 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

18 MR. HARRIS: It's not and y'all not going to close
19 none of the schools. Y'all going to fail us if y'all
20 don't listen.

21 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

22 Next speaker. Speakers 31 and 35, please.

23 MR. JONES: I'm Timothy Jones. I have been in the
24 Englewood area 45 years or more. To make a long story

1 short, a day after Christmas, my parents left me a house
2 that burnt down to the ground.

3 I talked to my alderman, Lopez. No response.
4 I called his office several times. No response. What
5 are me and my family supposed to do. We don't have
6 nothing. We lost everything. But this is the thing.
7 In my neighborhood --

8 [Audience Interruption

9 MR. JONES: I got insurance, baby. You still ain't
10 listening. Why don't you sit down and listen. I lost
11 everything. I'm lost everything --

12 [Audience Interruption

13 MR. JONES: (Inaudible.) Every time I look around
14 on my block, I see a new Mexican on the block. So what
15 I'm trying to say is this here, Mr. Lopez, you got to
16 go.

17 MR. JOHNSON: The next speaker.

18 [Audience Interruption

19 MR. JOHNSON: Next speaker, please.

20 MS. WHITE: My name is Denies White. I'm a
21 Englewood resident. My grandchildren go to Englewood
22 schools. Except for the high school students, they go
23 to a school in another neighborhood.

24 My neighborhood school was Robeson, but I

1 couldn't send them there because they were Level 3 for
2 about 20 years. And now that they don't have that many
3 students and their classes are about what, five, six
4 kids, they moved up to a Level 2. So we can't blame the
5 kids for that but still I can't send my kids to a school
6 like that.

7 I would prefer them to go to a 21st Century
8 School so they can learn 21st Century careers. I mean,
9 that's what's best for them. As far as the schools
10 closing, I'm sorry the schools are closing. But over 90
11 percent of Englewood parents decided to send their kids
12 to schools outside of Englewood.

13 [Audience Interruption

14 MS. WHITE: And unfortunately 80 percent of y'all
15 got stuck.

16 [Audience Interruption

17 MS. WHITE: So unfortunately 80 percent of you got
18 stuck. I don't know why. I think it's a shame, and
19 it's not the kids' fault. But most of those kids I know
20 got stuck in those schools, and it shouldn't have
21 happened. They should have a better chance, too.

22 [Audience Interruption

23 MR. JOHNSON: Next speaker, please.

24 MS. BARNES: Good evening. My name is Nicole

1 Barnes, and I'm a lifelong resident here in Englewood.
2 I have two children that's a product of CPS and they go
3 to two schools here in Englewood.

4 I'm appalled about what I'm hearing. I don't
5 want to keep echoing what my brothers have been saying,
6 but it's the truth. Y'all got 80 million. That money
7 can be dispersed between the schools that is already
8 here to make them better. A new building is not going
9 to change the quality and education of our kids.

10 And, furthermore, my main issue is safety. We
11 got to quit playing we got this gun stuff under control.
12 Our kids are dying every day. Shootings are occurring
13 every day. So who's concerned about our kids.

14 I mean, nobody asked the CPS students how they
15 felt. They have a choice, and all you're going to do is
16 create a situation where kids are not going to come out
17 of their house. Their mamas are going to let them stay
18 at home and that is going to create the school imprison
19 pipeline that you guys are going to be responsible for.
20 Y'all going to be responsible for. It don't make sense.

21 I am totally against this school being closed.
22 We should not be having this conversation on the back
23 end. We should have had this conversation at the
24 beginning. And we know this is about politics. Stop

1 playing politics with our kids, okay. It's ridiculous.
2 It's hideous.

3 And you guys are going to suffer. I don't know
4 what type of money y'all getting.

5 [Audience Interruption]

6 MS. BARNES: (Inaudible.) The contracts that came
7 through and we are going to stop (inaudible) because the
8 schools will not be closed while I'm here. We're going
9 to stand in front of the building. What y'all going to
10 do? Knock us down. Y'all disrespectful. (inaudible)
11 It happened on our politicians' watch. So we're not
12 going to allow our schools to be closed. The blood of
13 our kids is going to be on y'all hands.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, speaker.

15 Our next speak, please. Thank you.

16 MS. KIMBROUGH: My name is LaToya Kimbrough. I'm
17 the in-house counsel for the Chicago Teachers Union, and
18 I'm also, in 2005, a graduate of Englewood High School.
19 My family still lives on 59th and Princeton. I'm very
20 much still involved in the community. And I remember in
21 2005 it was announced that our school was going to be
22 phased out through the Renaissance 2010 program.

23 It was called the worse performing school in the
24 U.S. I was against the school closing then, and I'm

1 against the closing now. I know I would not be the
2 person I am today if it was not for the education that I
3 got at Englewood, if it was not for those teachers who
4 cared about me at Englewood and after Englewood who have
5 followed me throughout my career. I know I would not be
6 standing here today, as the attorney, as the person, as
7 the mother that I am today without that.

8 Closing the school is not always the answer. We
9 need to put -- We're echoing everything that -- I'm
10 echoing everything everyone else said, but it's not
11 always the answer. I just want to address some of the
12 things that I heard while I was sitting in the audience.

13 I heard someone say, why would we hold on to
14 something -- something old. We need something new. I
15 have two things to say to that. One, new always doesn't
16 mean better. Two, if you don't know where you came
17 from, how do you know where you're going.

18 A couple of years ago we had our ten year high
19 school reunion, and we had to be in the parking lot. We
20 didn't have those teachers. We couldn't go back and
21 say, you know, Ms. so-and-so I remember you. We
22 couldn't do that. If it wasn't for Facebook, we
23 wouldn't be able to have our ten year class reunion and
24 that is just unheard of.

1 We should not keep allowing our schools to be
2 closed. We need investment in our community, not school
3 closing. Thank you very much.

4 MR. JOHNSON: Speakers 36 through 40, please come to
5 the wall and lineup. Speakers 36 through 40.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How y'all doing. I'm from
7 Englewood, right. And I didn't have nobody come up here
8 and basically say that they were from the neighborhood
9 and they helped tear the community down, only one.

10 The Seventh District, I know them real well was
11 looking for me for certain things. I was 120 pounds, a
12 light-skinned little kid that was teased so you know
13 what I was doing. Just to say that.

14 But me, personally, I'm not going to say I agree
15 with you tearing all the schools down and just closing
16 them, and I just want you to think. If you go in
17 Bronzeville, and you got a greystone that's empty, do
18 you want that greystone that's in Bronzeville or do you
19 want that new school that's built up. You're going to
20 take that greystone and you're going to redo it and it's
21 going to be worth more.

22 Therefore, me, personally, I'm not going to say
23 just close the schools down because a lot of individuals
24 don't have morals no more. Don't keep their word. So

1 don't just tell me what these people are saying they're
2 going do and everybody hollering new school and all
3 that. I'm from Englewood so don't holler at me when I'm
4 speaking because I earned my respect in Englewood. I
5 earned my respect in Englewood and you know who -- Y'all
6 sitting over there. I'm Casper. You know why.

7 With that being said, I'm not going to say close
8 the schools up and force them (inaudible.) I'm not
9 going to say close them schools up, close them schools
10 up and send them somewhere else and put them in danger
11 because I talk to the youngsters all the time. They are
12 dropping out of school due to they can't go in this
13 neighborhood, man.

14 And I was one of the ones that went up to every
15 school. I went up to Harper, Englewood, Robeson because
16 we had to go up there 20, 30 deep because it was only
17 two or three of us, ten us at that school at the time so
18 we had to go up there and make sure the rest of the guys
19 was safe.

20 So if you from this hood, then you know how it
21 really go so don't be so quick to holler this or holler
22 that. You got to basically be on the fence on this
23 side. If they going to keep their word and build a new
24 school, then make sure that all of the kids and

1 everybody else got a good education coming but if
2 they're going to go in their and rebuild the old school
3 and give a good education to our kids, then do that.

4 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

5 Next speaker, please.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good evening. I'm Roselita
7 (inaudible) and I'm calling today because I want
8 everyone -- I came up here today and then I thought
9 about this. Young against old, dark against light,
10 educated against uneducated. We are family. This is
11 divisive. You are family. The people in the back, each
12 and everyone of you came here because you love children.
13 I'm going to stop. Don't let CPS do this. Don't let
14 them do it.

15 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

16 Next speaker.

17 MR. FULLER: My name is William Fuller. I am a
18 student at Harper High School. I feel like it's not
19 right that y'all trying to close our school down. This
20 is my freshman year, and I want to finish my whole four
21 years off at Harper. They want me like I was a family,
22 like my second family.

23 Whenever I need something, they always was there
24 to pick it up behind me. You feel me. By me just

1 walking to the bus stop like going to this new school,
2 it's not going to be right, because say I'm on the bus
3 stop just standing right there and this -- Say I'm on
4 the bus -- Say that I'm on the bus stop and by me being
5 on that bus stop, they ask me where I'm from. It's not
6 right. I should be able to go to my school and then be
7 safe and feel safe.

8 My principal, like, she's the best principal in
9 the whole world. She make me feel like -- You feel me.
10 My OG, she died when I was five months. And my
11 principal, like, she took me in like she was my OG. She
12 was like -- She taught me stuff that I didn't know when
13 I was a freshman.

14 They told me I was wasn't going to graduate from
15 eighth grade. But she told me like -- They told me I
16 wasn't going to be able to go to the school I wanted to
17 go to but Harper, they took me in. I was very grateful.
18 Thank you. To the Lord. Thank you.

19 MS. BROWN: I don't have a number. I came late, but
20 my name is Tina Brown, and I go to Harper High School.
21 I'm a senior. I have been going there for four years,
22 and it's not right that y'all trying to close our
23 school. I see a lady who I used to be with in seventh
24 grade. I was going to Goodlow High School. They

1 changed it to Earle and brought Earle kids over into our
2 building.

3 She was one of the ladies that was helping us
4 fight for the school not to close. Now, she's on the
5 opposite side. I see a lot of people from the Englewood
6 area backing this new school.

7 [Audience Interruption

8 MS. BROWN: I see a lot of people from the Englewood
9 area back there saying new school, new school, new
10 school. Do you have any kids in the the Englewood area?
11 How much are they paying y'all for y'all saying that.

12 [Audience Interruption

13 MS. BROWN: I see him. I see the whole lot -- who
14 used to be the principal at Harper. They are on the
15 opposite side. Everybody switched up. Y'all trying to
16 close our school. We're not going to let y'all. It's
17 going to be a fight and another fight and another fight.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

20 Next speaker.

21 MS. WELLS: Hello, everyone. My name is Mykeia
22 Wells. I'm a freshman and I go to Harper High School.
23 I just want to say that it's so crazy because we all
24 black -- We all black, African American, here and it's

1 crazy because we all the same color. We all should be
2 equal and y'all just going against us. For what?

3 I want to grow up to be -- No. I want to grow
4 up to have my own shop because I like to do hair. I
5 like to cook. I like to dance. I like to do a lot of
6 stuff, and it's crazy because y'all trying to take this
7 away from us and y'all just hearing rumors that -- Y'all
8 just hearing rumors that Harper is a bad school but
9 y'all never came to see how it really is.

10 Harper High School -- I ain't going to say the
11 best but it's a good school for kids to go to.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. I feel like that
13 parents put their kids in school that's equal to their
14 child academic rate. So why build a school that's in a
15 higher academic rate for students like us that have --
16 not low academic but we're equal with the school that
17 we're at.

18 Right or wrong, Hope has a school in it already.
19 Englewood also have a school in there. Robeson is where
20 the new school is going. What are you going to do with
21 Harper? Why not bring equal -- those students in or at
22 least let us all finish our four years out, the rest of
23 our years out. I'm a junior. My name is Jamaría, and I
24 go to Harper.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And I feel like that not only
2 our school should be saved, I feel like all the schools
3 should be saved. But if you can't save all of them and
4 it's only one school that's going to stay open, we will
5 welcome any school into our building. It's not like
6 you're going to push them out of our building.

7 You can't say that -- Well, they said they are
8 going to give us bus cards until these students that's
9 in these new schools go out. But why not get a school
10 bus or anything like that to bring students to a school
11 that's not closing. You're going to keep this school
12 open basically but nobody is in it.

13 What are you going to do with it? Those other
14 schools have things in it. What are you going to do
15 with Harper? It's going to be empty until somebody tear
16 it down, then we're going to have another empty lot and
17 that don't look good in our community either.

18 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

19 Our next speaker, please.

20 MR. FIORETTI: First of all, my name is Bob
21 Fioretti. I'm a former alderman on the west side of the
22 Second Ward before it was remapped up to the north side.
23 Why am I here because I'm mad as well that they're
24 closing the schools. I'm going to tell you that right

1 now.

2 I'm going to give you a perspective of what
3 happens because whatever we say here doesn't really
4 matter because it's already made up. I'm going to tell
5 you --

6 [Audience Interruption

7 MR. FIORETTI: I'm going to give you a perspective.
8 We had six schools in my ward to be closed. Six
9 schools. We had hearings on each school.

10 [Audience Interruption

11 MR. FIORETTI: (Inaudible) said keep the schools
12 open. What happened then, despite the fact that those
13 four schools will be --

14 [Audience Interruption

15 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Let's have a point of
16 order, please.

17 [Audience Interruption

18 MR. FIORETTI: I'm not here for that reason. Get it
19 out of your system. Just keep yelling. Get it out of
20 your system. Are you done?

21 [Audience Interruption

22 MR. JOHNSON: Let's have a point of order here,
23 please.

24 MR. JOHNSON: One minute.

1 MR. FIORETTI: Thirty seconds. Thank you. I have
2 to say --

3 [Audience Interruption

4 MR. FIORETTI: So it doesn't matter how we proceed,
5 the decision has already been made. What you need to do
6 is fight.

7 [Audience Interruption

8 MR. JOHNSON: Point of order.

9 [Audience Interruption

10 MR. FIORETTI: It's part of the gentrification
11 (inaudible.)

12 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

13 MR. FIORETTI: Save our schools.

14 [Audience Interruption

15 MR. JOHNSON: 36 through 40. Speakers 40 through
16 45, please.

17 Next speaker. We actually have room for two
18 more speakers, Ms. Harris. We got room for two more
19 speakers and that's it. This is number one. There will
20 be one more and that's it.

21 Go ahead, sir.

22 MR. WILLIS: Good evening. My name is Paul Willis.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Excuse me. The meeting is almost
24 over. Let's give our respect to one of our speakers,

1 please. Thank you.

2 MR. WILLIS: I want to thank everybody for coming
3 out tonight. I just want to say that on the south side
4 of Chicago -- I grew up on the south side. I'm a father
5 of a CPS student and I have become --

6 [Audience Interruption]

7 MR. WILLIS: We have a lot of students all across
8 the city, not just Englewood. We have a community of
9 100,000 strong. It's probably not a thousand people in
10 this room. The reality is is that some of families --

11 [Audience Interruption]

12 MR. WILLIS: And the schools that are being closed
13 is Oscar Brown, Jr., Gwendolyn Brooks, Carolyn Mosley
14 Braun --

15 [Audience Interruption]

16 MR. WILLIS: (Inaudible) James Meeks and Ron Smith
17 to name a few. It doesn't make a difference if you have
18 a new school if you have the same attitude. We need to
19 build up what we have and have something to fight for.
20 So if you want to --

21 [Audience Interruption]

22 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Our next
23 community meeting will be on January 17th from 6:00 to
24 8:00 o'clock p.m. at Hamilton Park, 513 West 77th

1 Street. Next Wednesday, January 17th, 6:00 to 8:00
2 o'clock p.m.

3 Thank you to all of your CPS officials, to all
4 of our elected officials, to all of our students, our
5 parents and community leaders. Please be respectful of
6 Kennedy-King.

7 Let's move out of Kennedy-King in a respectful
8 order, please. This is part of our community as well.
9 Treat the building with respect. Thank you very much.

10 [Whereupon, the meeting
11 concluded at 8:05 p.m.]

12 * * * * *

1
2 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
3) ss:
4 COUNTY OF COOK)
5

6 SHAHERA ALI, being first duly sworn, deposes
7 and says that she is a Certified Shorthand Reporter in
8 Cook County, Illinois;

9 That she reported in shorthand and thereafter
10 transcribed the foregoing;

11 That the within and foregoing transcript is
12 true, accurate and complete and contains all the
13 evidence which was received and the proceedings had upon
14 the within cause.

15 _____
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