

Transcript of the Testimony of

Date: January 30, 2018

Case: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED
CLOSURE OF WILLIAM RAINE HARPER HIGH SCHOOL, HOPE
COLLEGE PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL, PAUL ROBESON
HIGH SCHOOL AND TEAM ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY
ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL

January 30, 2018

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CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
January 30th, 2018
Commencing at 5:30 p.m.

HELD AT CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
42 West Madison Street
Chicago, Illinois

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE
PROPOSED CLOSURE OF WILLIAM RAINE
HARPER HIGH SCHOOL, HOPE COLLEGE
PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL, PAUL ROBESON
HIGH SCHOOL and TEAM ENGLEWOOD
COMMUNITY ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL.

The record of proceedings had in the
meeting of the above-entitled cause, taken
before MAUREEN WOODMAN, C.S.R., and Notary
Public, in and for the County of Cook and State
of Illinois, at 42 West Madison Street,
Chicago, Illinois, January 30th, 2018, at 5:30
p.m.

1 PRESENT:

2 HONORABLE PHILIP L. BRONSTEIN,
3 Hearing Officer;

4 MS. HASTI ANDERSON,
5 Chicago Public Schools Legal Staff;

6 MS. MEGAN HOUGARD,
7 Chief of Network 11;

8 MR. JAMES DISPENSA,
9 Director of Demographic Analysis and
10 Planning.
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1 MS. ANDERSON: Good evening, everyone.

2 We're going to get started.

3 We have some interpreters here
4 for your assistance they will make an
5 announcement, and then we'll have the hearing
6 officer come out to get the hearing started.
7 Thank you.

8 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Good evening.
9 My name is Philip Bronstein. I've been
10 selected by the CEO to serve as independent
11 hearing officer in the matter of closure of
12 Harper, Hope, Robeson and TEAM High Schools.

13 I understand that in addition to
14 concerned citizens, we also have present this
15 evening Alderman Roderick Sawyer, Alderman
16 David Moore, and principal of Harper High
17 School, Leonetta Sanders. Welcome.

18 The purpose of this hearing is to
19 allow me to receive public comment from
20 concerned citizens, including representatives
21 of Local School Council representatives of the
22 Chicago Public School, parents, students,
23 principals, faculty and staff, and members of
24 the public concerning the CEO's proposal.

1 I will review documents to
2 ascertain notice is compliant with pertinent
3 statutes and CEO guidelines.

4 The record will reflect that this
5 hearing is scheduled to commence at 5:30 on
6 January 30th, 2018, and you'll note, I think
7 there is a clock here somewhere, that we're
8 starting a little late.

9 Be assured to the extent that we
10 have additional speakers, I think we're about
11 25 minutes late, so we will conclude at 8:25.
12 I want to afford every individual who wishes to
13 address the subject to be able to do so.

14 The hearing will conclude at
15 around 8:25. But you should be aware that the
16 record will remain open until 5:00 o'clock
17 tomorrow evening, that's January 31st at 5:00
18 o'clock.

19 If you have written remarks you
20 wish to tender, please do so.

21 There's a place downstairs, first
22 floor, for public comment.

23 I think you've also been
24 furnished or will be furnished with an e-mail

1 address that you can send those written
2 comments to.

3 All written material, documents,
4 public comments will be considered in the
5 preparation of a summary report that's issued
6 to the CEO no later than February 7th.

7 The CEO will include this report
8 in any recommendations submitted to the Board.
9 It is my understanding that the matter of the
10 proposed closure of Harper, Hope, Robeson and
11 TEAM High Schools will be before the Board at
12 its regularly scheduled meeting on February
13 28th.

14 To ensure there is an accurate
15 stenographic record today, it's vital that
16 attendees remain quiet with the exception, of
17 course, with the person designated to speak.

18 Only those registered to speak
19 will be permitted to do so.

20 Now, when your name is called,
21 kindly come up. By and large the order will
22 be, except for elected officials and
23 principals, in the order which you've signed
24 up. That's the order in which you will be

1 called.

2 Please proceed to the lectern and
3 make your remarks. You will see that there is
4 a timer. When the timer is yellow, that means
5 that your time is growing short. Obviously red
6 your two minutes are up.

7 I'll try to accord you some
8 degree of liberality so you can finish your
9 remark or finish your thought.

10 But, please, be respectful of
11 other speakers, they also want their time. So
12 stay pretty close to your two minutes.

13 The first to present this evening
14 will be the Chicago Public Schools. That will
15 be done through their law department.

16 This presentation doesn't invite
17 questions, it is an information presentation.
18 And then I'll call -- individuals will be
19 called to -- who have signed up will be called
20 to speak and give public comment.

21 With that, turn this over to the
22 law department.

23 MS. ANDERSON: Good evening, your Honor.
24 My name is Hasti Anderson, H-A-S-T-I,

1 A-N-D-E-R-S-O-N. I am an attorney with the
2 Chicago Board of Education's Law Department.
3 I'm appearing before you today in connection
4 with the proposal of the Chief Executive
5 Officer, or CEO, of the Chicago Public Schools
6 to close William Rainey Harper High School,
7 referred to as Harper, Hope College Preparatory
8 High School, referred to as Hope, Paul Robeson
9 High School, referred to as Robeson, and TEAM
10 Englewood Community Academy High School,
11 referred to as TEAM or TEAM Englewood.

12 At this time, I offer CEO
13 compiled Exhibit 1, a binder of documents
14 already tendered to you and being submitted for
15 your consideration in support of the proposal.

16 A copy of this binder is also
17 available here in the board room on the podium
18 to my right for public viewing.

19 The binder consists of
20 documentary evidence and written statements
21 demonstrating that the CEO's proposal complies
22 with the requirements of the Illinois School
23 Code and the CEO's guidelines for school
24 actions.

1 Specifically, the written
2 statements and documents demonstrate the
3 following: At tab A, the binder includes
4 notice letters to the parents and guardians of
5 students, school staff members, and Local
6 School Council members of Harper, Hope, Robeson
7 and TEAM accompanied by draft transition plans.

8 The notice letters and draft
9 transition plans first describe the basis of
10 the proposal. Second, explain how the proposal
11 meets the criteria of the guidelines. And
12 third, identifies supports for the transition.

13 Tab A also includes two
14 affidavits. The first attesting the delivery
15 of notice to the Harper, Hope, Robeson and TEAM
16 parents or guardians, school staff, Local
17 School Council members and elected officials.

18 The second affidavit attests to
19 the proper publication of first draft
20 guidelines for school actions on October 1st.

21 Second, the list of qualified
22 independent hearing officers before November
23 1st.

24 Third, the finalized guidelines

1 for school actions following a 21-day public
2 comment period.

3 Fourth, the proposals before
4 December 1st and that leaves 30 calendar days
5 before the first community meeting.

6 And fifth, summaries from
7 community meetings within five days after the
8 meeting.

9 Finally, tab A includes the
10 notice of the scheduled community meetings and
11 hearing published in the Chicago Sun-Times
12 newspaper.

13 At tab B, the binder includes the
14 Illinois School Code provisions designating the
15 powers of the Board and outlining the process
16 for school actions.

17 This tab also includes the
18 Board's policy on the review and establishment
19 of school attendance boundaries.

20 Also at tab B are the Chicago
21 Public School space utilization standards and
22 the CEO's guidelines for school actions for the
23 2017-2018 school year.

24 Finally, Tab B includes the

1 procedures for public hearing on proposed
2 school closings.

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

6 Tab C contains the transcripts
7 and summaries from the two community meetings
8 to elicit public comment held at a location
9 convenient to the Harper, Hope, Robeson and
10 TEAM school communities.

11 Tab C also includes two written
12 statements, the first is of Megan Hougard,
13 introducing action and providing support of the
14 proposal.

15 The second written statement is
16 of James Dispensa providing additional
17 information relevant to space utilization.

18 Tab C additionally includes two
19 data review analyses, a letter issued by the
20 Englewood Community Action council, notes from
21 Englewood Community Leadership Steering
22 Committee meeting, a map of the proposed
23 Englewood attendance boundaries, and a report
24 on the impact on the racial composition and

1 stability resulting from the action.

2 Your Honor, I'd also like to note
3 that we have -- at CPS have an e-mail box open
4 for public comment until 5:00 p.m. tomorrow
5 evening. That e-mail address is
6 transitions@CPS.edu.

7 At this time, I request the CEO's
8 compiled Exhibit 1 be admitted into the record

9 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: It's received.

10 (WHEREUPON, CEO Exhibit
11 No. 1 was admitted into
12 evidence.)

13 MS. ANDERSON: Thank, your Honor.

14 I would now like to call the
15 CEO's first representative, Megan Hougard, who
16 will make a statement. It is located in the
17 binder in tab C-19.

18 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you. You
19 may proceed.

20 MS. HOUGARD: Good evening, your Honor. My
21 name is Megan Hougard. M-E-G-A-N.

22 H-O-U-G-A-R-D. And I am the Network Chief for
23 Chicago Public Schools Network 11.

24 Chicago Public Schools are

1 divided into networks, managed by chiefs who
2 provide support and oversight for the schools
3 assigned to them on behalf of the CEO.

4 William Rainey Harper High
5 School, Hope College Preparatory High School,
6 Paul Robeson High School and TEAM Englewood
7 Community Academy High School are within
8 Network 11, and I am responsible for the
9 support and oversight of these schools on
10 behalf of the CEO.

11 I have been in this position
12 since October of 2015.

13 By way of background, I have been
14 with Chicago Public Schools for 12 years as a
15 teacher and administrator.

16 For the last seven years, I have
17 had executive level responsibility for multiple
18 schools.

19 In October of 2015, after serving
20 as the deputy chief of Southwest Side High
21 School Network and Network 11, I became the
22 Chief of Schools for Network 11.

23 In this role, I supervise and
24 provide strategic guidance for 39 schools in

1 the areas of instructional practices in the
2 classroom and professional development for the
3 teaching staff and school administration.

4 I have a bachelor's degree from
5 the University of Michigan, a master's degree
6 in education leadership from National Louis
7 University, and a master's degree in curriculum
8 and instruction from University of New Orleans.

9 I am here today because after
10 careful consideration, the CEO has made the
11 difficult decision to propose the closure of
12 Harper, Hope, Robeson, and TEAM at the end of
13 this school year.

14 Over the past ten years, Harper,
15 Hope, Robeson, and TEAM have each experienced
16 between a 70 to 90 percent decline in
17 enrollment, with current enrollment between
18 just 90 and 135 students spanning grades 9
19 through 12 at each school. More than 90
20 percent of students who currently reside in
21 Englewood choose to attend high schools outside
22 of Englewood.

23 A chart outlining the decline in
24 enrollment and how many students from the

1 attendance area boundary choose the school can
2 be found in the CEO's exhibit binder at tab
3 C-21.

4 As a result of the
5 under-enrollment, the schools are facing both
6 funding and programming concerns.

7 Since CPS schools receive funding
8 based on how many students are enrolled,
9 student-based budgeting or SBB, Harper, Hope,
10 Robeson and TEAM are unable to adequately fund
11 their programs.

12 As a result, CPS has had to
13 provide supplemental funding, which other
14 schools do not receive, in order to ensure
15 students receive the basic course and resources
16 necessary to graduate.

17 Additionally, despite this
18 supplemental funding, these schools'
19 under-enrollment still present challenges in
20 providing students with a well-rounded
21 educational experience that includes core
22 educational programs, as well as a diverse
23 selection of electives and extracurricular
24 activities needed to develop and foster their

1 potential.

2 CPS needed to address this
3 extreme under-enrollment and engaged community
4 stakeholders to promulgate a plan.

5 Since this issue spanned multiple
6 schools, CPS engaged the Englewood Community
7 Action Council, or CAC, to discuss the concerns
8 of under-enrollment and sustainability of the
9 Englewood high schools.

10 By way of background, the
11 Englewood CAC has existed since 2010 and was
12 created to solicit community input on various
13 educational issues affecting its community.

14 The Englewood CAC is comprised of
15 43 parents, community representatives, and
16 Local School Council members across the
17 Englewood community who are directly involved
18 in developing a strategic plan for educational
19 success within their community.

20 Specifically, CAC members work to
21 inform parents and community members about the
22 performance and utilization of schools, engaged
23 community stakeholders in developing strategies
24 to improve schools, connect the school

1 community with local resources, and provide
2 guidance in developing and recommending a
3 community vision for a cradle-to-college and
4 career pipeline to the CEO.

5 As the Englewood CAC addressed
6 these concerns, the group independently
7 recommended that CPS create a state-of-the-art
8 neighborhood high school in Englewood and
9 consolidate the existing schools to provide
10 students with a high-quality neighborhood
11 school option so that students do not have to
12 travel outside the area to attend a quality
13 school.

14 The Englewood CAC's request for a
15 new high school can be found in the CEO's
16 exhibit binder at tab C-22.

17 This request ultimately
18 culminated in CPS' June 2017 decision to invest
19 in a new, state-of-the-art neighborhood high
20 school in Englewood which is now valued to be
21 an \$85 million investment.

22 Following the Englewood CAC's
23 recommendation, CPS formed a Community
24 Leadership Steering Committee comprised of

1 community leaders, educators, parents, and
2 members of CAC's Local School Councils, and
3 Parent Advisory Councils in Englewood and West
4 Englewood to work through the details of the
5 proposal.

6 Specifically, the Steering
7 Committee was tasked with developing
8 recommendations for CPS on the plans for the
9 current students at Harper, Hope, Robeson and
10 TEAM, as well as plans for the proposed new
11 neighborhood high school.

12 While not a voting member of the
13 Steering Committee, I facilitate all Steering
14 Committee meetings and provide subject matter
15 expertise with regards to academic programming.

16 The Steering Committee met in
17 September, October, and November of 2017 to
18 develop their recommendations.

19 Network 11 Deputy Chief Julious
20 Lawson and CPS Family and Community Engagement
21 Manager Mirlene Dossous also attended Steering
22 Committee meetings as non-voting members. And
23 CPS Chief of Safety and Security, Jadine Chou,
24 provided the committee with subject matter

1 expertise.

2 Furthermore, in addition to their
3 own meetings, the committee toured the schools
4 where members spoke with current students
5 regarding their educational experiences.

6 The Steering Committee considered
7 multiple options, including closure and
8 multi-year phase-outs of these four high
9 schools.

10 On November 2, 2017, the Steering
11 Committee meet and voted on options, including
12 closure, at the end of the current 2017/2018
13 school year and closure at the end of the
14 2018/2019 school year.

15 The majority of the Steering
16 Committee voted to close the four high schools
17 with six voting to close at the end of the
18 2017/2018 school year, two voting to close the
19 high schools at the end of the 2018/2019 school
20 year.

21 The Steering Committee also
22 requested that CPS provide comprehensive and
23 individualized support to transition current
24 students to other higher-performing high

1 schools that match their needs.

2 The Steering Committee's meeting
3 notes from the November 2017 meeting can be
4 found in the CEO'S exhibit binder at tab C-23.

5 With this vote, the Steering
6 Committee recognized the steady decline in
7 enrollment at each of the four high schools,
8 the need to maximize resources, and the desire
9 of the community to ensure a robust transition
10 plan was in place.

11 Further, the Steering Committee
12 voted to close these four schools because
13 alternative options, such as a phase-out, would
14 result in a further decline in enrollment and
15 impact students' educational experiences and
16 opportunity.

17 In response, CPS developed a
18 draft transition plan to ensure the Steering
19 Committee's recommendations would be
20 implemented to address the support of all of
21 our students' needs.

22 The draft transition plan can be
23 found at tab A-1 and covers various topics,
24 including safety and security and supports for

1 social and emotional learning and students in
2 temporary living situations.

3 The CEO's recommendation further
4 aligns with the Steering Committee's desire to
5 provide the highest-quality educational
6 opportunities for the students at Harper, Hope,
7 Robeson and TEAM.

8 We firmly believe the
9 recommendation made today, while difficult,
10 best accomplishes what is in the best interest
11 of students and their families.

12 My staff in Network 11 and I will
13 continue to work with our families to ensure
14 each student is successfully transitioned to a
15 school that is chosen by the student and parent
16 that meets their individual needs and will help
17 ensure their future success.

18 Additionally, in response to the
19 community's request, and if the Board approves
20 these closures, students from Harper, Hope,
21 Robeson and TEAM will receive individualized
22 support and planning in order to transfer to
23 higher-performing schools, rather than being
24 automatically assigned to a new school.

1 Students and parents will have
2 one-on-one planning meetings scheduled to
3 review higher-performing school options and
4 decide their school of choice.

5 A chart detailing some of the
6 higher-performing options can be found at tab
7 C-24. This chart outlines the district and
8 charter schools that are most attended by
9 Englewood students and how they have performed
10 on the district's school quality rating policy.

11 To ensure student success, CPS
12 has set aside \$8.3 million over the next three
13 and a half years to support this transition.

14 Schools that will welcome
15 students from these four schools will also have
16 plans in place to provide additional supports
17 for the students.

18 Funds will be provided to schools
19 that welcome students from these four schools
20 starting in fall of 2018 through the 2020/21
21 school year.

22 This proposal meets the chief
23 executive officer's guidelines for school
24 actions because the request for closure was

1 made by community members via the process
2 outlined within the guidelines.

3 In addition, to ensure successful
4 transition, the Network 11 staff will work with
5 the school leadership at each of the four
6 schools, as well as the school's students to
7 support students through this transition
8 should the Board approve the closure.

9 The CPS Office of Safety and
10 Security and Office of Social and Emotional
11 Learning will help review each school's safety
12 and security plan and will work closely with
13 school-based transition coordinators, the
14 Student Outreach and Re-Engagement, or SOAR,
15 team, and families to individually discuss
16 safety supports and ensure student has an
17 individualized plan to get to and from school
18 safely once they transition.

19 Additionally, the principals at
20 each of the four high schools have made
21 themselves available to parents, staff members
22 and students until the end of the school to
23 discuss any transition concerns.

24 I would like to note that

1 beginning in the summer of 2017, the network
2 has worked individually with the community,
3 schools, staff, parents and students to
4 formulate a plan in the event that these four
5 schools close.

6 Two community events were held
7 during the summer of 2017 to gather further
8 community input, and student panels were
9 conducted at Harper, Hope, Robeson, and TEAM.

10 Teachers and staff have also
11 participated in the numerous community and CAC
12 meetings, as well as various formal and
13 informal teacher and staff meetings, including
14 dedicated meetings at each of the four schools
15 in June 2017.

16 Two rounds of office hours were
17 held between July and August 2017 with parents
18 and students. Each student's family received a
19 letter and phone calls and was invited to
20 office hours to discuss individual student
21 needs and planning.

22 Network 11 staff and the SOAR
23 team reviewed transcripts with parents and
24 students and discussed various enrollment

1 options for students.

2 In addition, following the CEO's
3 formal announcement of the proposed action on
4 December 1st, 2017, five dedicated parent
5 meetings were held in December 2017 through
6 January 2018, with parents receiving invitation
7 via letter and phone calls.

8 In response, teachers, staff,
9 students and families provided feedback on
10 supports needed for potential transitions.

11 CPS will continue to use this
12 feedback to modify and adapt the draft
13 transition plan to ensure student success.

14 In conclusion, the CEO's proposal
15 meets the guidelines for school action. My
16 network staff and I will work diligently with
17 each individual student to present them with
18 high-performing options to better prepare them
19 for future success.

20 Thank you, your Honor, for your
21 time and attention. This concludes my
22 statement.

23 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.
24 Hougard.

1 MS. ANDERSON: I would like to call THE
2 CEO'S next representative, James Dispensa, who
3 will make a statement in support of the
4 proposal. The statement is located in the
5 binder at tab C-20.

6 MR. DISPENSA: Good evening, your Honor.
7 My name is James Dispensa, D-I-S-P-E-N-S-A, and
8 I am the Director School Demographic Analysis
9 and Planning for the Chicago Public Schools.

10 My responsibilities include
11 undertaking school demographic studies,
12 enrollment projections and the monitoring of
13 space utilization of the public school
14 facilities throughout Chicago.

15 I have been in this position
16 since October of 2004.

17 The chief executive officer, or
18 CEO, has asked me to appear at this hearing
19 today to convey to you, the parents, staff, and
20 school communities of Harper, Hope, Robeson and
21 TEAM High Schools, as well as interested member
22 of the public in attendance, information
23 relevant to the proposal to close these four
24 high schools.

1 Pursuant to the CEO's guidelines
2 for school actions, the CEO may propose a
3 closure if the action is requested by the
4 school's principal, parents or community
5 members, and the resulting space utilization
6 will not exceed the facility's enrollment
7 efficiency range as defined by the CPS' space
8 utilization standards.

9 This proposal is consistent with
10 the CEO's guidelines, because, as I will detail
11 for you, the resulting space utilization after
12 consolidation will not exceed the enrollment
13 efficiency range as defined by CPS' space
14 utilization standards.

15 Current enrollment for the four
16 high schools are as follows: Harper, currently
17 located the 6520 South Wood Street, serves
18 approximately 134 students in grades 9 through
19 12.

20 Hope, currently located at 5515
21 South Lowe Avenue, serves approximately 95
22 students in grades 9 through 12.

23 TEAM, currently located at 6201
24 South Stewart Avenue, serves approximately 92

1 students in grades 9 through 12.

2 And Robeson, currently located at
3 6835 South Normal Boulevard, serves
4 approximately 128 students in grades 9 through
5 12.

6 If the Board approves this
7 proposal, the District will provide
8 individualized transition supports to enrolled
9 students.

10 Among these supports for students
11 will be an individualized school transfer
12 request and assignment process.

13 Each student will have an
14 opportunity to meet with the transition team to
15 discuss their individual needs and school
16 options.

17 Each student will also be
18 provided a list of approximately 20 high
19 schools closest to their home, and students
20 will rank these preferences and District staff
21 will match each student's transfer preference
22 to their highest-ranked school with available
23 capacity.

24 In addition to this

1 individualized support, all returning high
2 school students from Harper, Hope, Robeson and
3 TEAM will be geographically assigned to one of
4 four existing high schools: Gage Park High
5 School, Phillips High School, Chicago
6 Vocational High School, and Bogan High School.

7 A map of the proposed attendance
8 boundary changes is included in your binder at
9 tab C-25.

10 Each of these four high schools
11 has sufficient capacity to accommodate the
12 number of students who may choose to transfer
13 there.

14 To understand the enrollment
15 efficiency range of a facility, CPS uses its
16 space utilization standards, which is located
17 in your binder at tab B-12.

18 CPS provides an enrollment
19 efficiency range for high schools based
20 primarily upon the total number of
21 instructional classrooms available in the
22 facility.

23 There are 46 total classrooms
24 within the Gage Park facility.

1 The ideal capacity of this
2 facility is 1,104 students, and any enrollment
3 within the efficiency range of 773-1,214 would
4 be considered efficient.

5 Today, the enrollment at Gage
6 Park is 328, which means there is sufficient
7 capacity to accommodate between approximately
8 450-850 additional students.

9 There are 82.5 total classrooms
10 within the Phillips facility. The ideal
11 capacity of this facility is 1,980 students,
12 and any enrollment within its efficiency range
13 of 1,386-2,178 would be considered efficient.

14 Today, the enrollment at Phillips
15 is 634, which means there are sufficient
16 capacity to accommodate between approximately
17 750-1,500 additional students.

18 There are 111.5 total classrooms
19 within the Chicago vocational facility. The
20 ideal capacity of this facility is 2,676
21 students. And any enrollment within the
22 efficiency range of 1,873-2,943 would be
23 considered efficient.

24 Today the enrollment at Chicago

1 Vocational is 880, which means there is
2 sufficient capacity to accommodate between
3 approximately 1,000 to 2000 additional
4 students.

5 There are 61.5 total classrooms
6 within the Bogan facility. The ideal capacity
7 here is 1,476 students, and any enrollment
8 within that its efficiency range of 1,033-1,623
9 students would be considered efficient.

10 Today the enrollment at Bogan is
11 781, which means there is sufficient capacity
12 here to accommodate between approximately 250
13 and 800 additional students.

14 Furthermore, the proposed
15 closings will have no significant impact on the
16 racial composition and stability of these
17 schools.

18 In terms of racial composition
19 and stability, the option of maintaining the
20 status quo offers neither an advantage nor
21 disadvantage over the option of closing these
22 schools.

23 While other alternatives were
24 examined, no alternatives affected the

1 resulting racial ethnic distribution of
2 students.

3 Thank you, your Honor. This
4 concludes my statement

5 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you,
6 Mr. Dispensa.

7 MS. ANDERSON: This concludes the
8 presentation in support of the CEO's proposal.

9 If you have any questions, we
10 will be available to answer them.

11 Thank you for your time and
12 attention.

13 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.
14 Anderson.

15 We'll now open the hearing to
16 public comment.

17 MR. CRAIG: Will Mrs. Darlene O'Banner,
18 Renee Howell-Collins, and Patricia Elliott
19 please line up.

20 MS. O'BANNER: Hi, your Honor. How are you
21 doing? I did submit my statement. My name is
22 Darlene O'Banner. O, apostrophe, B-A-N-N-E-R.

23 I'm a resident of Englewood for
24 48 years. I attended Luke O'Toole Elementary

1 School and went on to attend Gage Park High
2 School.

3 I'm not going to prolong
4 anything, but I do support the proposals that
5 CPS has out there for the closure of the four
6 high schools.

7 I do serve on the Steering
8 Committee for the new high school. I'm on LSC,
9 and the PAC chairperson at Earl Elementary.
10 And I do understand the utilization of closing
11 the schools, because I was involved in closing
12 the schools in 2012. And, again, I do support
13 that proposal of CPS.

14 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.
15 O'Banner. Next speaker, please.

16 MS. HOWELL-COLLINS: Good evening, sir.
17 Thank you for allowing me to speak.

18 I would like to address the
19 ill-conceived plan of disinvestment into the
20 four Englewood high schools.

21 Closing four high schools in one
22 year is equivalent to killing the heart, soul,
23 mind and body of 40 percent of the teenagers in
24 the Englewood community.

1 Ten percent would drop out. Ten
2 percent will not be able to compete
3 academically. Ten percent will have
4 disciplinary issues because they are the new
5 kid at the school. And ten percent will die on
6 their way to or from the outside school.

7 The children of Englewood deserve
8 a new high school, like the dreamers deserved
9 all the UNO schools built in their
10 neighborhoods.

11 Closing four high schools in one
12 year is unprecedented.

13 Your indifference to community
14 concern is well documented with the hand-picked
15 Steering Committee. Not one person on that
16 committee has a child in any of the four high
17 schools proposed to close.

18 The community you chose abstained
19 from the first vote on closing all four of
20 these schools because they have no children it
21 will affect.

22 The Steering Committee is not
23 representative of the Englewood community or
24 the children and parents of Englewood High

1 School.

2 The Steering Committee should be
3 absolved immediately. The community should
4 choose their representative.

5 Closing TEAM Englewood and
6 Robeson will be beneficial to the new high
7 school, but none of these children will be
8 allowed to attend the new high school.

9 Instead of closing Harper, expand
10 it to a college-bound school offering
11 unconventional learning, late class, evening
12 class, plumbing, construction, culinary or
13 performing arts school inside that building
14 with the high school.

15 Hope High School should merge
16 with ACE Technical Charter School on 55th and
17 State or Gage Park High School.

18 None of these schools should have
19 incoming freshman class for 2018/2019 until
20 remodel.

21 Graduate the class of 2018 and
22 2019.

23 This leaves only the class of
24 2020 to be transferred to another school.

1 We are also asking for the
2 incoming freshman class at the new high school
3 to consist of 75 percent of children from
4 Englewood and Englewood --

5 MR. CRAIG: Ma'am, your time is up.

6 MS. HOWELL-COLLINS: Renee Howell-Collins.
7 R-E-N-E-E. H-O-W-E-L-L, hyphen, C-O-L-L-I-N-S.
8 Thank you, sir. Have a great evening.

9 MR. CRAIG: Edward Ford and Dori Collins
10 please line up to speak.

11 MS. ELLIOTT: Hello. Thank you. Hello.
12 My name is Patricia Elliott. I'm a parent of
13 Englewood community. And I attend (inaudible)
14 until they closed. At the time that
15 TEAM -- TEAM Englewood, my -- my -- the way I'm
16 looking at it, if you all transfer these kids
17 to another high school, how will you all feel
18 if the gangs, anybody tried to mess with these
19 kids trying to get to a new location?

20 And I feel that y'all shouldn't
21 close TEAM, Harper, Hope or Robeson.

22 I feel that as a parent, that
23 that is wrong for the Chicago -- the
24 (inaudible) of education.

1 When it close, this is four high
2 schools. My son will be graduating in June
3 from TEAM Englewood. That is wrong for y'all
4 to do these kids like this. And they need an
5 education. Y'all not looking at the kids'
6 future. So what is your plan to do for the
7 kids that coming behind --

8 MR. CRAIG: Your time is up. Please
9 conclude.

10 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: You can
11 conclude your remark, Ms. Elliott, please.

12 MS. ELLITT: What would y'all do after the
13 kids graduating after 2018 graduate? What is
14 your plan for 2019 graduates if y'all close
15 these four schools? And I need an answer about
16 these four schools. And that's wrong.

17 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.
18 Elliott.

19 MR. FORD: Good evening, your Honor. My
20 name is Elward Ford. E-L-W-A-R-D. Last name
21 Ford, F-O-R-D. Born and raised in the
22 Englewood community. Went to eight different
23 schools in eight different years to graduate.
24 That's how my life span was in Englewood

1 community. Didn't get a chance to go to
2 Robeson, Harper, Englewood. Didn't know
3 nothing about TEAM. And Hope. But my brothers
4 went there. My cousins went there. Other
5 family members went to those schools.

6 Yes, I'm very much outraged with
7 CPS talking about closing four schools at one
8 time.

9 But they made a response to those
10 outrage, and what I mean by that, they -- not
11 only they said they going to close four schools
12 in one time, they say we going to open one that
13 going to be state-of-the-art school that's
14 better than those four schools.

15 And what I mean by that, no
16 longer that these children can say that when I
17 go to this high school, these gangs going to do
18 something to me, because they got different
19 gangs in these schools, and I'm scared to go to
20 school.

21 I remember my brothers saying
22 that. I remember going to get my brothers from
23 school because the gangs in different areas.
24 This school won't bring that. I know it won't,

1 because it don't have that stigma of the old
2 Harper, the old Englewood, the old Robeson, the
3 old Hope, it won't have that stigma to that.

4 These kids going to this new
5 school with a new head on they shoulder, with
6 new education, with state-of-the-art, that they
7 can say when they go to college -- these
8 college get applications, they won't see Hope
9 on there no more, they won't see Harper there
10 no more. That mean they won't be denying no
11 more because they know these kids got great
12 education that coming from Englewood that
13 didn't exist in the first place.

14 That's all I got to say about
15 that. Thank you.

16 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you,
17 Mr. Ford.

18 MR. CRAIG: Ra Joy and Malcolm Elliott,
19 please line up.

20 MS. COLLINS: Good evening, your Honor. My
21 name is Dori Collins. D-O-R-I. C-O-L-L-I-N-S.
22 I'm a parent of a 2012 graduate. What I want
23 you to know about me, I'm a former educator,
24 licensed speech pathologist, so I worked with

1 diverse learners for over 15 years with the
2 school system.

3 During my son's tenure, I served
4 on both Local School Council and Parent
5 Advisory Council, kindergarten through 12th
6 grade. And post-graduation I have continued to
7 serve with schools to ensure that parents are
8 armed with the information that they need to be
9 strong advocates for their children.

10 I currently serve as a member of
11 the Englewood Community Action Council in which
12 we wrote the initial proposal to build the new
13 state-of-the-art high school, as well as we
14 made the recommendations for the closure of the
15 four existing high schools as mentioned
16 earlier.

17 One of the things that I've had
18 the opportunity to do as a member of the
19 Community Action Council is to serve on the
20 Steering Council, to even look further at the
21 data and continue to work to educate parents.

22 What I want you to know, your
23 Honor, is that the Englewood Community Council
24 did robust marketing with parents. We started

1 a recruitment plan and in-school opportunity to
2 meet with both parents at the local school
3 level council level, Parent Advisory Council
4 level since last January of 2017 through this
5 year, as well as we attended aldermanic
6 community nights to also communicate this
7 effort to the community.

8 And in addition to that, we
9 expanded our scope to speak with community
10 partners in Englewood community, as well as the
11 two councils that I serve on, I also serve as
12 co-champion for the Education and Youth Task
13 Force for TEAM Englewood. Just recently this
14 Saturday --

15 MR. CRAIG: Ma'am your time is up.

16 MS. COLLINS: I sat and met with teachers,
17 community members and parents, and I will tell
18 you that the students are very resilient about
19 their future and plans, and they're looking
20 forward to being motivated to move on and have
21 the opportunity to have a magnificent
22 educational experience with the new high
23 school.

24 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you, Ms.

1 Collins.

2 MR. ELLIOTT: Good evening. My name is
3 Malcolm Elliott, and I am senior at TEAM
4 Englewood.

5 I feel like y'all closing these
6 schools because these schools -- we feel like
7 we are family at these schools. And what y'all
8 doing to try and close these schools is just
9 wrong, because we got kids that left in the
10 community that -- in the community that goes to
11 schools like Lindblom or Hyde Park or something
12 like that. And it's not fair that they got to
13 go to schools like that because they live in a
14 community.

15 And right now since y'all want to
16 close TEAM Englewood, Harper, John Hope and
17 Robeson, y'all not doing -- well, y'all wrong
18 for that, because I know at my school, we treat
19 everybody like family. I know Harper does the
20 same.

21 And what y'all trying to do is
22 trying to send everybody to all these other
23 schools knowing what they -- don't know yet.
24 Like since, for example, and they going to the

1 wrong neighborhood and people asking them,
2 Where you from, and stuff like that. The kids
3 don't feel like that. The kids feel like I
4 want to go to my neighborhood school. I wish
5 the school was still open, besides y'all
6 sending all the kids to somewhere else.

7 And it's just wrong. And y'all
8 shouldn't do this.

9 Closing four schools, no, it's
10 not an option that you should close all these
11 schools.

12 At my school I know we have low
13 enrollment, that's because y'all making it seem
14 like TEAM Englewood is a bad school. TEAM
15 Englewood is not a bad school. It's really
16 not.

17 If you all make it seem like it
18 is a bad school, the kids not going to want to
19 come to the school. The kids not going to want
20 to go to John Hope. The kids don't want to go
21 to Robeson, the kids don't want to go to Harper
22 because they might feel since they closing, I
23 don't have to go to that school. But, no --

24 MR. CRAIG: Your time is up. Please

1 conclude.

2 MR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

3 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you,
4 Mr. Elliott.

5 MR. CRAIG: Jonathan Brooks, Lawrence
6 Wagner and Arell Miller, please line up to
7 speak.

8 MR. JOY: Good evening. My name is Ra Joy.
9 I'm a Chicagoan. I'm a candidate for
10 lieutenant governor. And I'm Chris Kennedy's
11 running mate in his campaign for governor.

12 I'm here tonight to stand in
13 solidarity with families impacted by proposed
14 school closures in Chicago.

15 Almost four years ago, Mayor Rahm
16 Emanuel put on a fuzzy sweater and filmed a
17 television commercial admitting that he doesn't
18 always listen and promising to do better.

19 Almost four weeks ago, after my
20 running mate gave voice to some obvious but
21 inconvenient truths about how racist policies
22 are forcing people of color out of the city,
23 Mayor Emanuel said, and I quote, "I welcome
24 ideas from everybody."

1 My question for the CPS Board and
2 for Mayor Emanuel is, Are you really listening?

3 Why is it always black and brown
4 families who are asked to sacrifice? Why is it
5 always black and brown communities that are
6 asked to do more with less? Thank you in the
7 back.

8 Why would we create a false
9 choice for families of high-school-age children
10 in Englewood that they have to move forward in
11 the near term without a public high school
12 option?

13 The parents, teachers,
14 principals, community leaders and most
15 importantly the students, like Malcolm, are the
16 ones who have the real solutions to these real
17 challenges.

18 We ask that you listen harder.
19 We ask that you have a truly collaborative
20 conversation with the community to stop the
21 destabilization of our neighborhoods and to
22 keep the doors of opportunity open for all of
23 Chicago students. Thank you.

24 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

1 MR. BROOKS: How you doing, your Honor? My
2 name is Pastor Jonathan Brooks. I'm a former
3 CPS educator in Englewood working at Harper
4 Elementary School, lifelong resident of
5 Englewood, current pastor of the Canaan
6 Community Church and parent of a CPS high
7 school student from Englewood.

8 I just have five things I'd like
9 to say. Acronym for the word Tired.
10 Ultimately one requires transparency. We want
11 to know what's the process for current
12 Englewood students to receive a high-quality
13 education in a safe and supportive school
14 climate.

15 The \$8.3 million over the next
16 year is nice, but how will Englewood parents be
17 assured that the funds are used in ways that
18 specifically support their displaced students?

19 Investment. Investment in
20 students, not buildings. The \$75 million being
21 allotted for the building of a new school
22 presently informs these students of the school
23 system's value of them. The numbers read for
24 populations of the schools they will be sent to

1 are low as well. Those numbers are indicative
2 of a bigger issue, which is a lack of
3 investment in all neighborhood schools in
4 Chicago.

5 We're looking for redirection of
6 resources to programs, creative curriculum,
7 arts programs, sports teams, rebranding
8 campaigns, transportation and other needs as
9 desired by parents, students and current school
10 staff, not just new buildings.

11 Erasure of history is an issue.
12 We must do everything possible to preserve the
13 history and important narratives of all schools
14 that have been closed.

15 I'm the nephew of a former
16 football coach at Englewood High School. I
17 propose CPS open a ecomuseum which houses
18 artifacts, sports memorabilia, notable alumni
19 and other important info for schools that are
20 being closed.

21 Lastly, destruction of all the
22 neighborhood high schools in Englewood is
23 unacceptable.

24 I propose continued conversation

1 with the students, parents, staff, politicians
2 and other leaders to decide which of the
3 schools should be saved, as well as a robust
4 plan of investment in the remaining school or
5 schools. Thank you.

6 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

7 MR. WAGNER: Good evening. I'm Lawrence
8 Wagner with the Law Project of the Chicago
9 Coalition for the Homeless.

10 For the last 20 years, we have
11 represented homeless students and parents,
12 including during the elementary school closings
13 in 2013.

14 The Chicago Coalition for the
15 Homeless opposes the closings of the four high
16 schools in Englewood, Harper, Hope, Robeson and
17 TEAM Englewood, due to the disproportionate
18 impact these closures will have on low-income
19 black and homeless students.

20 Across the Chicago school system,
21 4.7 of students experience homelessness.
22 Across the four closing Englewood high schools,
23 an average of 19 percent of the students
24 experience homelessness.

1 Homeless students face many
2 barriers due to enrollment, attendance and
3 success, and have a higher rate of school
4 mobility than other students.

5 School mobility causes academic
6 delays, disruption of peer and teacher
7 relationships and missed school days.

8 CPS' proposed school closures
9 will particularly add to the instability that
10 homeless students face.

11 CPS' goal is to close these four
12 schools and transition the students to other
13 higher-performing high schools that are a good
14 match for their needs.

15 But instead of higher-performing
16 high schools, students from the four closing
17 high schools will likely end up in one of the
18 four neighborhood high schools based on the
19 redrawn neighborhood school boundaries; these
20 schools are Bogan, Chicago Vocational, Gage
21 Park and Phillips. These schools do not rank
22 higher than Harper, Hope or Robeson. And this
23 is significant because in 2015, the Chicago
24 Consortium of School Research issued a report

1 on CPS school closures which found that only
2 students who attend substantially
3 higher-performing schools after school closings
4 have better academic outcomes.

5 Further, CPS does not plan to
6 dedicate sufficient time or resources to ensure
7 a smooth transition of Englewood students to
8 other schools.

9 The effects of CPS' lack of
10 planning will be felt by all students at the
11 four closing high schools, but it will be
12 harder felt by homeless students given the high
13 number of homeless students at the schools
14 proposed for closure and the unique challenges
15 these students face.

16 For these and other reasons, the
17 Chicago Coalition for the Homeless opposes the
18 closing of four high schools in Englewood.

19 If CPS insists on closing these
20 schools, we urge that the CPS revise the draft
21 transition plans to include more substantial
22 support, staffing and time to help all
23 students, and homeless students in particular,
24 make a transition to substantially --

1 MR. CRAIG: Please conclude

2 MR. WAGNER: Also ask that CPS set aside
3 designated slots for all students, and homeless
4 students in particular, at other substantially
5 higher-performing schools. We must do better
6 for our students.

7 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

8 MR. CRAIG: Erica Clark and Pat Devine
9 Reed, please line up.

10 MR. MILLER: My name is Arell Miller. I'm
11 a Robeson alumni. I hear they are going to
12 tear down the school. My issue is, why they
13 don't build an annex.

14 When they built this school in
15 '77, I watched them tear down Wilson College.
16 I went to Parker, and we walked to class my
17 senior year to Robeson. They have ample land
18 they can use and have these other four schools
19 go to Robeson right now. The numbers that she
20 read off were no more than 500 people. That
21 school can fit 500 people.

22 They didn't look towards the
23 future when they built the school. Now you're
24 going to have a state-of-the-art school, and

1 cost \$78 million to build a school.

2 You don't need that. If you look
3 at the community, that's one reason why their
4 enrollment is low. I don't think anybody
5 noticed that.

6 And you bringing all these
7 schools, closing them, and now you going to
8 send them to Bogan, CVS, Gage Park. The
9 distance is just easier to keep them in the
10 neighborhood.

11 Most of the time, it's safety
12 that we worry about our children.

13 And that's important. One, if
14 you got \$8.4 million, you can bus the kids to
15 school. You got security to pay for security.
16 Put them back in they neighborhood.

17 One, most of the people who live
18 in the Robeson area, Harper area know each
19 other, because I know when I grew up, I know
20 the people that went to Harper. I don't
21 remember Hope and the other school.

22 You know, that's all they want to
23 do, be in the same neighborhood.

24 I have a lot of issues about

1 closing the school, on why they closing the
2 school. But, one, is the population. You got
3 500 kids you can put in one school and build
4 the other school state-of-the-art, because when
5 they built it in '77, they didn't think about
6 that. That's it.

7 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

8 MR. CRAIG: Did Jack McNeil make it to the
9 podium?

10 Erica Clark would be next.

11 MS. CLARK: Good evening, sir. My name is
12 Erica Clark. E-R-I-C-A. C-L-A-R-K. I am with
13 a group called Parents for Teachers. And we're
14 here to ask that you reject the plan to close
15 every single public high school in Englewood,
16 that's a community roughly the size of Niles or
17 Arlington Heights, because it violates state
18 law and CPS' only school action guidelines.

19 Now, the presentation you heard
20 from CPS was very amusing. Basically they're
21 saying enrollment declines, justifies building
22 a new high school. I mean that's absurd.

23 But set that aside. The
24 district's own guidelines say nothing about

1 enrollment or utilization for the school
2 actions this year. It's not a factor. So you
3 should disregard that.

4 What they do talk about is
5 wanting proposals that are community generated.

6 And if you go to the CPS website,
7 the school actions website, you will see a tab
8 that says Community-Generated Proposals. The
9 Englewood plan does not exist on that website.
10 It's not defined as a community-generated
11 proposal by CPS, because it wasn't generated by
12 the community, and the community, as you will
13 hear tonight, does not support it.

14 The second point, they talked
15 about the receiving schools. Again, the
16 guidelines say that students need to go to
17 schools that are higher performing.

18 The receiving schools they are
19 assigning kids to are not higher performing.
20 They are the same level as the closing schools.
21 Except for TEAM Englewood, which is a Level 3
22 school.

23 But the CPS plan has not found
24 any school to send TEAM Englewood students to,

1 let alone a higher-performing school. Why is
2 that?

3 And finally, the closures violate
4 the school code, because they are required to
5 have a transition plan that details how
6 students will be supported and how their safety
7 will be ensured.

8 Take a look at those transition
9 plans. They provide no specific details and
10 are basically empty promises by CPS.

11 They simply copied and pasted one
12 document into four, changed a few dates,
13 addresses and times, and passed this off as
14 something that is a value to families. It's
15 not.

16 MR. CRAIG: Please conclude.

17 MS. CLARK: Yes. The plan doesn't address
18 individual and unique needs of each school, and
19 this is the real problem, because CPS doesn't
20 see these children who are mostly low income
21 and black as unique individuals to be valued
22 and cherished and supported. That's why we're
23 all here. We're asking you to please, please
24 value and protect these students by rejecting

1 this unlawful and unjust plan.

2 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

3 MR. CRAIG: Drew Heiserman and Larry Dean,
4 please line up.

5 MS. DEVINE REED: Hello, your Honor. My
6 name is Patricia Devine Reed. D-E-V-I-N-E.
7 R-E-E-D. I'm a 40-year participant in the
8 Englewood community as an educator,
9 administrator, artist, resident, church member,
10 and I am here today to speak to the need for a
11 state-of-the-art school, but not necessarily a
12 new school building, not necessarily a new
13 location and certainly not the immediate
14 closure of four schools.

15 I'm a member of the Canann
16 Community Church which represents residents
17 from the community.

18 The current situation is the
19 result of 50 years of racism toward the
20 community. The investment has not been in our
21 youth, either at the elementary level or the
22 high school level, and that's why we have the
23 current situation. And the many-year-old 2020
24 Renaissance plan created the current situation

1 allowing charter schools and feeder schools,
2 not sending students into our current schools.

3 A state-of-the-art school could
4 be instituted in any of the four high schools.
5 These buildings are relatively new. They're
6 beautiful buildings. I don't know how many
7 people have seen them, but they're beautiful
8 buildings, and they could easily support a
9 high-quality education for our students without
10 closing the four high schools.

11 We have to think first, always
12 first, of our students. It is immoral to
13 create a situation where community for a year
14 or longer does not have high school education
15 for students. Thank you.

16 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

17 MR. DEAN: Hello. My name is Larry Dean,
18 and I'm an organizer with Black Youth Project
19 100.

20 And I just want you guys to know
21 and the Mayor Rahm Emanuel to know we are not
22 going to go down without a fight.

23 We believe in keeping these
24 schools open and keeping these schools

1 prosperous for young black students.

2 It is ridiculous that after
3 years -- after just a few years of school
4 closings, 50 school closings, the largest
5 school closings ever in history, that we are
6 back here again after the mayor promised not to
7 close any more schools. The schools that were
8 closed a few years ago were black and brown
9 schools. The schools that are being closed
10 today are black and brown schools. We are
11 going to fight to prove that there's people
12 that love and care about these black youth. It
13 is ridiculous that we're building a cop academy
14 worth \$95 million when we're closing four
15 schools.

16 We are here to demand that black
17 futures matter. And we will fight to maintain
18 these schools in this community.

19 I have sat in many meetings with
20 some of the youth behind me who have been
21 fighting to save their schools. They should be
22 worried about getting into college. They
23 should be worried about little stupid petty
24 stuff that kids worry about that in high school

1 do, but instead fighting just to get a basic
2 education.

3 You spent millions and millions
4 of dollars trying to like not have us together.
5 You displaced many people. You've not been
6 able to, like, bring these students something
7 that's viable so they can live a full and
8 fulfilling life. And we are going to fight for
9 them.

10 The Mayor Rahm Emanuel may not
11 care about these kids, but he does care about
12 his image in the media. We will make sure the
13 world knows, that the national media know, that
14 democratic party know what he is doing here in
15 Chicago, which is taking schools out of our
16 communities.

17 I've worked in schools before.
18 I know the potential that these students have,
19 and I really want them to be able to go to a
20 school in a neighborhood just like I had when I
21 was young.

22 I went to school in a
23 neighborhood. I went to a suburban school. I
24 didn't have to worry about things like cops at

1 my school at all times and being arrested or
2 being in gang warfare.

3 Now these kids will have even
4 higher priorities to do those kinds of things.

5 I need people to understand it is
6 important --

7 MR. CRAIG: Your time is up.

8 MR. DEAN: -- to provide support for these
9 students, because the fight will not end today.

10 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

11 MR. CRAIG: Will Clendenning and William
12 Finley please line up.

13 MR. HEISERMAN: My name is Drew Heiserman.
14 H-E-I-S-E-R-M-A-N. I taught at TEAM Englewood
15 for six years. This is my eighth year teaching
16 in the Englewood neighborhood. This is a
17 farce. This binder here, where is the tab that
18 says where -- like the Steering Committee, half
19 the Steering Committee has already resigned,
20 because this was a farce. Where is the tab
21 where they talk about Renaissance 2010 bringing
22 in new schools while defunding the old schools?
23 I don't see the tab here where like Network 11
24 sabotaged our school and the other three

1 schools are being closed. I don't see these
2 tabs here. I don't see where at the last
3 community meeting there were nearly 200 people
4 there in attendance and only two people spoke
5 in support of this measure, everybody else
6 spoke against it.

7 This is blatantly racist. And
8 the mayor has a black people problem. He is
9 not going to get elected again doing this kind
10 of nonsense. It is not going to work. It is
11 going to blow up in his face. He needs to
12 listen to the community. The community has
13 spoken. They said support our schools, support
14 our kids. This is not that. This is the
15 destruction of a neighborhood, and it's wrong
16 and racist and it's got to stop.

17 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

18 MS. CLENDENNIGN: Hi. Good evening. My
19 name is Joy Clendenning. J-O-Y.
20 C-L-E-N-D-E-N-N-I-N-G. This is my 16th year as
21 a CPS parent. I'm a former public school
22 teacher. I have a BA in history from Harvard
23 and master's in education policy from UIC. I'm
24 the managing director for Raise Your Hand for

1 Illinois Public Education, which is a parent
2 advocacy group which advocates for equitable
3 and adequate public education funding and
4 education policies which provide quality
5 education to all children.

6 Over the past eight years, we
7 have worked with parents, students and schools
8 regarding facilities and programs at their
9 schools all over Chicago. We've read and
10 analyzed the various criteria year after year,
11 various formula applied as well as legal code.

12 Our conclusion, without robust
13 authentic community engagement process that
14 creates a real comprehensive citywide
15 facilities plan, CPS should put a hold on
16 closing and opening schools.

17 CPS shouldn't instead, as many
18 said tonight, use the resources dedicated for
19 displacement and invest them in existing
20 schools.

21 I'm honored and humbled to be
22 here with people here and in the overflow room
23 who are standing up for their schools.

24 We want to address the two

1 specific criteria which have also been raised
2 tonight, which are the criteria of proposal
3 which comes from the community, which clearly
4 this proposal does not meet that criteria.

5 And also, sir, you are, I think,
6 supposed to look out for the best interests of
7 the students. And clearly this proposal does
8 not meet the best interests of the students.

9 We stand with the students,
10 parents, communities, and educators of Harper
11 Hope, Robeson and TEAM Englewood High Schools
12 in opposing this plan to close all of the
13 neighborhood high schools in Englewood which
14 would leave no neighborhood high school for
15 next year in Englewood for the current students
16 and for the current eighth graders in that
17 neighborhood as well.

18 There's lots to say. You've
19 really heard from amazing speakers already.
20 And we do humbly ask you that the proposal,
21 since it does not meet this criteria, you have
22 this chance to make the right and just
23 recommendation, and we hope you will tell CPS
24 that this school action should not move

1 forward. Thank you very much.

2 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

3 MR. CRAIG: Will Traivon O'Neal and David
4 Brown please line up.

5 MR. FINLEY: Okay. My name is William
6 Finley. I am a freshman at Harper High School.
7 And these are my brothers and sisters.

8 Harper school should stay open
9 because we are a family. When you close down
10 Harper, you are not doing nothing but creating
11 another gang.

12 It was very hard for our
13 principal to tell us in tears that our school
14 is probably going to close. It's crazy that
15 you only came for our neighborhood schools.
16 Y'all say we have low enrollment, it is because
17 you don't want to fund our school.

18 We don't have -- we don't have
19 any extracurricular activities. We lack staff
20 and the proper learning tools. This was the
21 school I wanted to graduate from. You're
22 trying to make us catch the bus to some new
23 school far away.

24 As a young black male who would

1 be a new face in that community, they will be
2 watching us. There are different gangs in
3 different communities, and some of our brothers
4 and sisters can't go there, not because they
5 gang-bang, but because they already saw some of
6 our faces in the other community.

7 And you are saying that when the
8 new school built, none of the current students
9 can go there. What the point of a new school?
10 What are y'all going to do after three years
11 and the enrollment starts to drop? Y'all going
12 to build a new school again?

13 It's unreal that four high
14 schools are closing in the Englewood
15 neighborhood. It makes me feel targeted. It
16 is dispute all -- in dispute of all of this.
17 We've had several Gates scholars, professional
18 and people that have made a difference in the
19 community and coming out of Harper.

20 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

21 MR. BROWN: My name is David Brown. First
22 I want to say people from black communities are
23 harshly treated and are assumed to be dumb, but
24 that's not true.

1 We took a trip to the Lab School
2 that Rahm's kids go. We couldn't get in. We
3 couldn't use the bathroom. We couldn't get a
4 tour. We couldn't even apply.

5 Plus, instead of closing our
6 school, it is not hard to invest in a school.
7 It is really not.

8 If you really want us Englewood
9 kids to have a great education, you will be
10 more than welcome to invest in our school. But
11 you don't care, so you will keep on tearing
12 down schools, smallest to largest.

13 It's funny how you have people
14 who are harshly intimidated that they go pay
15 our biggest protestors out there to join their
16 side so they (inaudible) what they believe in.
17 What's worse than that is the people that
18 accept these payments because they think money
19 is more than what they believe in.

20 Also, at (inaudible) 10, people
21 keep on telling me, children, offer me a job
22 for this amount of money, and this amount of
23 money, and I'm just wondering, what are you so
24 intimidated of. Is it the way we talk? Is it

1 the way we walk. Are you just mad
2 because -- is just mad because we fight for
3 something that you didn't know we was going to
4 fight for? I know I hit hard sometimes, but
5 y'all starting to start a war you are not able
6 to finish, because we will burn every bridge
7 out there and in our school.

8 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: You can address
9 us without providing your names. It would be
10 fine as well.

11 MR. O'NEAL: I'm going to provide my name.

12 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: If you wish.

13 MR. O'NEAL: My name is Traivon O'Neal. I
14 attend Harper. It is not right to close down
15 every neighborhood school in Englewood
16 community and leave us only with the option of
17 going outside of our neighborhood or attending
18 a charter school. It is disrespectful to do
19 this.

20 My solution suddenly is to -- t
21 consolidate the schools. Harper is a great
22 building that has a functioning culinary -- a
23 culinary art kitchen and a program such -- and
24 such space that we could bring back many -- I'm

1 nervous. Vocational programs that make sense
2 for -- for the citizens of a community program,
3 such as carpentry or any other vocational
4 programs that will make our school attractive
5 to students.

6 Good things happen at Harper, and
7 good things will continue to happen if we use
8 the money the right way.

9 We have teachers that care. We
10 had Gates scholars and (inaudible). We
11 competed in monologue competitions, and we
12 could do so much more.

13 I do not believe that over 90
14 percent of students leave Englewood to go to
15 other schools. Some families may make this
16 choice, but everyone did not leave. They
17 are -- there are plenty of students who attend
18 right here in Englewood, but, unfortunately,
19 they are attending charter school.

20 Frankly, I have not heard a
21 charter school student --

22 MR. CRAIG: Your time is up.

23 MR. O'NEAL: Frankly, I have not heard a
24 charter school student tell me they are getting

1 any -- beyond the basic that are being offered
2 at these schools, public schools. They are
3 offering -- they are not offering special
4 classes, meaning help and ability. Do not
5 blame us when we cannot offer the basic. How
6 can we -- how can we -- did you cut my mic?
7 How can we keep -- how can we keep taking our
8 funding away from us because we have low
9 enrollment? This is -- you taking funding. We
10 cannot offer the kids that want -- kids do not
11 come, which mean you take more money and it
12 goes around and around.

13 We deserve a real chance. You
14 cannot starve us and then blame us for being
15 hungry. Thank you.

16 MR. CRAIG: Tina Brown and Bobbie Brown,
17 are you part of that group?

18 Tina, you are first. Bobbie
19 you're second.

20 MS. TINA BROWN: Hello. My name is Tina
21 Brown, and -- and I attended a city council
22 meeting where Rahm Emanuel was ignoring us, and
23 he wasn't really trying to hear what the people
24 had to say. So I went home and did a little

1 research.

2 Come to find out that on
3 September 18th, 1890, William Rainey Harper was
4 elected by the Board of Trustees as the first
5 president of the school that Rahm Emanuel kids
6 attend.

7 You chose to close down
8 Harper -- you choose to close down Harper when
9 (inaudible) could not protect us, the safety
10 plan cannot protect us, Ms. Hougard cannot
11 protect us, Chip Johnson cannot protect us.
12 The safety plan will not work while they have
13 to go into a new environment where they do not
14 know anyone and go to a new school where they
15 probably get bullied or mistreated because the
16 color of their skin.

17 The school that I attend is a
18 very good school. We is a family in the
19 school.

20 And I learned a new word in my
21 civics class, and it's autocratic. Autocratic
22 means a person being an individualized leader
23 that does not consult with the people before
24 making a decision.

1 This decision was made
2 without -- this decision was made without
3 consulting with any one of the people.

4 I can't remember the last time
5 that my mom or any other adult that I know
6 signed a survey or took a survey to agree to
7 close all high schools. Think about that?
8 Thank you.

9 MS. BOBBIE BROWN: Hi. My name is Bobbie
10 Brown. I'm here to -- on behalf of our
11 school -- all four of our schools about our
12 children, our babies. It might not be their
13 baby. They might look like their children,
14 they treat them as their children. These are
15 our babies, and we going to fight for our
16 babies. They had a meeting with us at Harper
17 High School about transitioning our children to
18 another school. They -- Network 11 told us
19 they had 1200 surveys of the community. I live
20 in that community. I can't recall doing a
21 survey.

22 They also said they talked to the
23 LSC chairperson. I can't recall talking to
24 them, because I'm the LSC chair.

1 Where did they get all this
2 information about the community? I want to
3 bring that out.

4 And it's kind of good that our
5 children was afflicted by this here, because
6 now they became unified. All four schools have
7 came together. They're standing in unity.
8 Where there was conflicts back then, there's no
9 conflicts. They have strategies of how to work
10 this here situation out, how to come on one
11 accord. Our children are becoming leaders.
12 The ones that would not speak up, they are
13 speaking up now. So the gift that was lying
14 dormant inside of them has been woken. We have
15 warriors, generals and leaders that's going to
16 be -- the next time they going to leave their
17 children. They will be over their children,
18 speaking for their kids. Going to have
19 doctors, lawyers. We might have a president in
20 the midst. Never exclude our children. These
21 are our babies. And it will be victorious.
22 And we will get the victory out of all of this.
23 And I thank you.

24 MR. CRAIG: Will Michael Buino and Rebecca

1 Martinez please come to the podium.

2 MR. BUINO: Good evening, your Honor. My
3 name is Michael Buino. M-I-C-H-A-E-L.

4 B-U-I-N-O. I'm in my fifth year as a teacher
5 at Harper High School, and I teach theater.

6 I heard a great deal of talk
7 about what some people believe to be happening
8 inside of our school. But I want to set the
9 record straight, that learning is happening
10 every day.

11 Principal Sanders brought me on
12 staff to build a theater program from the
13 ground up. In only four and a half years, our
14 program has become integral part of our
15 school's community, just like our outstanding
16 culinary arts and our JROTC programs.

17 My students and I have built one
18 of the most competitive theater programs in any
19 Chicago neighborhood high school.

20 Harper students regularly compete
21 against students from selective enrollment and
22 charter schools. And we are the only CPS
23 neighborhood high school to place finalists in
24 the citywide August Wilson Monologues

1 competition for the last four years.

2 Harper has had several south side
3 NAACP -- sorry. Harper has had several
4 medalists in the Chicago NAACP ACT-SO
5 competition for both theater and spoken word
6 poetry. Harper has had a student compete in
7 the national NAACP national competition.

8 Harper brings senior students to
9 the Illinois High School Theater Festival to
10 audition for colleges across the Midwest, and
11 so far they have received over \$300,000 in
12 scholarship offers.

13 I have two students from my
14 program currently studying at Eastern Illinois
15 University, another pair at Northeastern
16 Illinois University and a number of students at
17 the City Colleges of Chicago.

18 Through grants and partnerships,
19 we have raised \$150,000 in free programming for
20 my students to bring professional artists into
21 the classroom from Court Theatre, the Goodman
22 Theater and Chicago Dramatists. My students
23 have performed in the Hyde Park High School
24 Theater Festival for the past five years. We

1 just performed there again last Monday, an
2 original script written by our advanced honors
3 theater academy students.

4 Harper students see more
5 theatrical production in the school year than
6 any other school in the city.

7 I say this to the people who
8 would close our school. Before you kill this
9 program and further deprive the students of
10 Englewood enriched meaningful educational
11 opportunities, come to my classroom, see for
12 yourselves the thriving community of theater
13 artists my students have created and then tell
14 me Harper is not worth saving. Thank you.

15 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

16 MR. CRAIG: Bob Israel and McKana Austin,
17 please line up.

18 MS. MARTINEZ: My name is Rebecca Martinez.
19 I am with the Chicago Teachers Union. I'm also
20 here against the proposal that CPS and the
21 mayor are proposing to close four schools.

22 We know -- we've been through
23 this before. 2013, 50 schools closed. Prior
24 to that there's been multiple school actions in

1 mostly the south and west sides of the city.

2 The schools being designated for
3 closure today have already experienced a set of
4 school actions.

5 We had Harper High School turned
6 around some years ago. We had TEAM
7 Englewood -- TEAM Englewood used to be
8 Englewood High School before it got closed
9 down. Hope High School has a co-location with
10 the charter school. So there's -- these are
11 schools that have already experienced one after
12 another, one -- one of the CPS' failed
13 policies. Instead of CPS changing course and
14 doing something different and the mayor paying
15 attention to Englewood, they're doubling down
16 on failed policies that disproportionately
17 affect black and low-income students.

18 These failed policies -- and
19 these are the very students that CPS and
20 the -- the City should be prioritizing.

21 When is the Board going to change
22 direction? When is the mayor going to propose
23 a plan that lifts up black and Latino students
24 instead of bringing them down and invest in

1 communities for real?

2 We have a failed policy of
3 student-based budgeting that has in many ways
4 caused the deterioration of the schools by not
5 allowing principals and staff to have enough
6 funding to support their schools.

7 When are they going to support an
8 evidence-based model?

9 Instead of investing in closing
10 the school, why not support a plan for
11 sustainable community schools where there is
12 curriculum that is relevant, rigorous and
13 engaging; that there are supports, not an
14 emphasis on standardized tests, where there's
15 wraparound support for every child that CPS
16 supposedly says that every student will get
17 with the \$9 million that they have. When will
18 it be a student -- a school that can be student
19 centered? Transform parent and community
20 engagement and inclusive school leadership?

21 These are real solutions. If
22 there is a plan to be proposed, it should be
23 proposed to sustain these schools with enough
24 funding that students can get the education

1 that they deserve. Thank you.

2 MR. ISREAL: Good evening, ladies and
3 gentlemen. I'm a -- not so proud, but I'm a
4 proud Robeson graduate. I want to agree with
5 one of the speakers said about '97 -- '77, they
6 should have built a state-of-the-art school
7 then. That's a whole other subject.

8 I want to agree with another
9 commentator, speaker, said this is a farce.

10 I'm looking at you. You all know
11 this is a farce.

12 Ms. Hougard, with a math degree.
13 Mr. Dispensa, you got -- the lady back there
14 said you are very amusing. Very amusing. Good
15 late night comedy. I'm not sure where you guys
16 are from. But I got Ph.D. in the political
17 rhetoric you are pulling. 30 years in
18 Englewood. Gentrification is here. Starbucks,
19 Whole Foods. So you can run that game on
20 somebody else.

21 I saw it happen in Cabrini Green.
22 Talking about Whole Foods coming.

23 I just want to know have you guys
24 ever walked the neighborhood? Not drove by,

1 walked the neighborhood?

2 I heard from the mouth of babies,
3 I heard the word autocratic. I heard y'all had
4 had a steering autocratic committee that was
5 hand picked. That's interesting. With empty
6 promises. You know what I'm saying? I'm here
7 to speak to some of y'all who may have a human
8 spirit? You know what I'm saying? Do you
9 think this will happen, the lady, now in
10 Arlington Heights? No, but I was go to say
11 Lincoln Park, Beverly and Bridgeport. That
12 wouldn't happen, they close all the schools,
13 not one or two, all. Come on, man. Stop
14 playing. Ray Charles can see this, and he
15 blind and dead. You know what I'm saying?

16 I'm just happy to see the future
17 governor running mate was here and spoke on it.
18 He made me think about something when he said
19 mayor accused of strategic gentrification. If
20 this ain't strategic gentrification, I got a
21 bridge in Brooklyn I can sell you.

22 Anyway, only freshman going to be
23 allowed in 2019. You know that's a game. I
24 love to stir it up. And it is a done deal.

1 I go to all these planning
2 commission, and I go to all these board
3 meetings, it's already a done deal.

4 So keep playing them games with
5 somebody else.

6 MR. CRAIG: Will Latoya Kimbrough and
7 Shannon Bonner please line up.

8 MS. NANTON: Hi. My name is Erica Nanton.
9 I am co-chair of Illinois with the New Poor
10 People's Campaign, and I am here today for all
11 the amazing students that y'all heard speak,
12 TEAM Englewood, Robeson, Hope and Harper, that
13 they do not stand alone. That they do not
14 stand alone, and that there are over 20
15 organizations here in the City that stand with
16 them, and I stand --

17 MR. JOHNSON: Excuse me. We need to get
18 some order in this room.

19 MS. NANTON: And I stand here today on
20 behalf of them.

21 (Audience Interruption.)

22 And I stand here on behalf of 20
23 organizations that stand with all these
24 students. And I'm standing here today not just

1 with those organizations, but because of David,
2 because of McKenzie, because of Jakeel, because
3 of Natalie, because of the students, Jakia,
4 Miracle, these are the reasons why we stand
5 here today. These are the reasons why we speak
6 up today.

7 And with that, we are not just
8 saying what we don't want, which is the closure
9 of these schools, but we are here standing in
10 solidarity for what we do want, these students,
11 these parents and these teachers are very
12 capable of speaking and saying what they want,
13 and in these demands, we are demanding fully
14 funded, sustainable community schools. And we
15 are demanding TEAM Englewood, Hirsch, Hope,
16 Robeson, Harper, National Teachers Academy are
17 invested as sustainable community schools that
18 are fully service community schools, open from
19 the morning until 7:00 to 8:00 at night in the
20 evening with programs and wraparound services
21 and support to meet the needs of the community.

22 These are evidence-based
23 sustainable community improvement models that
24 drastically improve education and cities such

1 as Cincinnati, New York, Tulsa and Oklahoma.
2 This is possible here.

3 And one of the things that we
4 want to make sure that is very clear, is that
5 we understand that the money is there. We
6 understand that if a \$95 million dollar cop
7 academy can be opened, if \$8.3 million can be
8 used just to displace these students, then
9 there is money to provide fully funded,
10 sustainable community schools. Period.

11 And with that, we also want to
12 address the issue of saying that there are not
13 enough students, and that there's low
14 enrollment.

15 We have done our research now,
16 and we have actually conducted a survey to
17 determine a snapshot of the eighth graders
18 available, and we have 426 in Englewood and 253
19 in West Englewood. That is 679 students.

20 So we are not here to hear there
21 are not enough students to invest in fully
22 Englewood, including these students that sit
23 right here.

24 Thank you very much.

1 MR. ISREAL: For some strange reason, she
2 want me to state for the record. But I don't
3 mind. I want to be on the right side of
4 history.

5 My name a Bob Israel. Save Our
6 Community Coalition. You can Google me.

7 MS. BONNER: My name is Shannon Bonner.
8 S-H-A-N-N-O-N. Bonner, B-O-N-N-E-R. I'm a
9 teacher at TEAM Englewood High School. I'm
10 here as an advocate for the students of TEAM
11 Englewood. Our enrollment is low, and it is a
12 problem. But what is not a problem is that we
13 are a family. We love each other. We are a
14 community, and we learn at TEAM Englewood.

15 I'm here to ask that you do not
16 close TEAM Englewood High School. Our students
17 deserve an opportunity to have a thriving,
18 rewarding and thorough high school experience.

19 You have the ability and the
20 authority to give our current 9th through 11th
21 graders a chance to complete their high school
22 journey in Englewood.

23 We currently have outside
24 partners that help our students have their

1 well-rounded high school experience that we
2 fund, that we spend time with, and that we are
3 committed to; some of those programs are Rush
4 Hospital, BAM, Your-Up, Gear-Up, CRW, Urban
5 Alliance, Boys and Girls Club, Gardeneers,
6 BuildOn and others.

7 Enrollment is low at our school,
8 but I believe in my students. I see personally
9 and witness every day the resilience, their
10 hunger to learn, their discussions about life
11 and where they're going next. I love them, and
12 I only want the best for each and every one of
13 them.

14 Under current conditions, it is a
15 challenge to be a student and a teacher. Every
16 single day we try to find a way to make a
17 dollar out of 15 cents. And so we do the best
18 we can. We spend extra hours. We come in
19 early. We stay late. We make sure the
20 students have field trips. We have buses that
21 we aren't even able to order, because we don't
22 have funding for a true high school experience.
23 I personally have to buy the track uniforms for
24 our extracurricular activities.

1 Under current -- so we are
2 underfunded. Our students, as I talk to them
3 each day, they are scared for their safety.
4 They are scared to leave their current
5 neighborhoods. They are uncertain what's in
6 store for them. It has not been delivered
7 clearly. And they want to say what their
8 futures hold for them and not allow CPS to just
9 dictate to them what it is.

10 So as I close, I'm asking that
11 most of all that you remember that these
12 decisions are not just affecting buildings and
13 things, that these decisions are affecting
14 faces, bodies, real people, our students.

15 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

16 MR. CRAIG: Latoya Kimbrough. Will
17 LaShonda Sherman, Reverend Brooks, and Rashan
18 Baldwin please line up.

19 MS. SHERMAN: My name is LaShonda Sherman,
20 and I am speaking -- I currently just moved
21 back to Chicago from New York City. I was an
22 educator in New York and DC, where I saw
23 students with the same population that I grew
24 in. I'm actually a resident of Englewood. I

1 attended (inaudible) Magnet School which --

2 (Audience applauding.)

3 The school -- one thing that I
4 can say -- I didn't go to Englewood for high
5 school. I went to Whitney Young High School.
6 The one thing that I can say, I let down the
7 skepticism, and I did experience going to a
8 school outside of my community. But the one
9 thing, that school was substantially high
10 performing. The schools that you guys are
11 sending our kids to don't meet that curriculum.
12 There's a school right in our community,
13 Lindblom High School, which I live across the
14 street to, out of all the schools you talked
15 about, that was not an option for those kids.
16 And I feel that in order to make that student
17 better and give them the opportunities, they
18 need to be put into more rigorous schools.

19 Since I've been back, I've had a
20 niece and nephew, one attends Earle School in
21 Englewood, the other attends a school in Hyde
22 Park. I'm just looking at the homework
23 assignments that are given to these students.
24 Very different. The Earle student doesn't get

1 reading homework.

2 My issue with it is that instead
3 of closing the schools, I feel that CPS needs
4 to take an introspective look at what's
5 happening in each schools. Where is the
6 rubric. Where's the assessments, making sure
7 that each school is provided with the same
8 level of education?

9 Each student is provided with the
10 same level of education, because all students
11 can learn.

12 Because even if you open up this
13 new state-of-the-art school, if there's not
14 rubrics and measurement in play, then that
15 school will end up just like the schools that
16 you guys are closing.

17 So when will CPS do something to
18 make sure that every school and every child is
19 learning throughout the City, whether it's
20 state testing -- because I lived in New York,
21 and I saw how state testing worked. I worked
22 in a community like Harlem, where, to be
23 honest, they were the smartest kids that I ever
24 taught. But they were from the same

1 communities as these kids and as I was.

2 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you.

3 MR. BROOKS: Good evening. My name is
4 Kevin Andre Brooks. In 2014 I was assigned by
5 Bishop John Brian, the African Methodist
6 Episcopal Church, to Englewood to serve as a
7 pastor at one of the local churches there.
8 Upon my assignment, the history of African
9 Methodism, that we go into the community and
10 make an impact. My role as pastor in this
11 community, as well as spending 30 years in
12 public education as a teacher, principal,
13 administrator with certification in
14 administration, supervision, special education,
15 as well as even community development. I went
16 into Harper High School, I went into Robeson
17 High School, went into TEAM Englewood High
18 School, went into John Hope Franklin High
19 School. I immediately went to the community
20 and said to a number of the stakeholders that
21 we have a problem.

22 Of course I know this theme
23 across the country, when it comes to
24 gentrifying our neighborhoods, our schools are

1 the first things to collapse, and we understand
2 the prism school pipeline.

3 Consequently, I became a member
4 of the Englewood Action Council. I was elected
5 to the board as co-chair. And as a member of
6 the co-chair, we was really doing some great
7 work as we built an inclusive body to make sure
8 that the community had input. But what I
9 discovered and found out, as one of the
10 scholars here stated, who is also a member of
11 the great church, him and his mom made a
12 powerful point, that the plan is bogus.

13 I make an appeal that you reject
14 this proposal to close the high school as a
15 chair of the Englewood Community Action
16 Council, because as another scholar said, it's
17 autocratic.

18 And we live in a democracy, and
19 democracy is anchored on student and
20 participation by its citizens. And this
21 process did not allow that. That's
22 consequently why so many of the Steering
23 Committee members are not vested in the plan
24 anymore.

1 As an educator, there is this
2 thing we call backwards mapping. Backwards
3 mapping, you basically know what you want to
4 do. We've always felt like this strategy was a
5 political ploy to dangle a new high school, all
6 of us would love a new high school, new car.
7 We would love those things. There's a
8 fundamental issue, and that's to continue --

9 MR. CRAIG: Time is up.

10 MR. BROOKS: -- and value in the black
11 community. And we would no longer ask that
12 continue to occur, because all around the
13 country making appeals for elective school
14 board, and they can, indeed, have a represented
15 democracy that speaks to the issues of our
16 community and to our people. Thank you.

17 MR. CRAIG: Rashan Baldwin.

18 This concludes our public
19 speakers.

20 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you. At
21 this point in time, I think we'll recess
22 proceedings at least, I don't know, 20 minutes,
23 a half hour, until the regularly scheduled --
24 if somebody comes in, we'll certainly receive

1 additional public comment.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We been signed up
3 and they told us we couldn't sign up.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How you doing?

5 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Did you sign
6 up?

7 MR. PRESTON: I did. My name is Willie
8 Preston. And I just want to talk to these kids
9 and tell y'all that you have done everything
10 that you were supposed to do, and that you have
11 won on behalf of our neighborhood already. And
12 to the Board, you guys have decisions to make.
13 And I really don't fault y'all. You have been
14 appointed by one person, and that is the
15 problem.

16 We have to get to a point where
17 we have a democracy. And this little sister,
18 autocratic is the perfect term to use. You
19 have educated many of us and articulated
20 exactly what the issue is here. It is not
21 y'all's fault. You have been positioned to do
22 what Rahm Emanuel wants you to do.

23 Well, we all are here to stop
24 him. Rahm Emanuel is being stopped tonight.

1 And you guys will have to be changed over soon
2 enough, because you're going to fail, because
3 we're not going to allow y'all to close all
4 these schools, and we will burn any bridge and
5 do anything else that we have to.

6 There is a time to be
7 confrontational. Anybody who told you that
8 there is not time to be confrontational lied.
9 There is a time to be confrontational. We will
10 be confrontational. These our children, our
11 neighborhood, and we are going to fight for it,
12 and we are going to win. We are going to win.
13 Don't let anybody tell you.

14 I see some elected officials.
15 Don't let anybody tell you that the story is
16 over. That the day is done. That the war is
17 lost. It's not. We going to win. We already
18 won. Keep doing what you're doing. We going
19 to be there with you. I'm going to be with you
20 with a smile on my face, because we have
21 already overcome. We have won. We going to
22 win again. You understand?

23 And to the community that's
24 listening, again, we are not confrontational

1 with without reason. Y'all have a job to do.
2 We respect it. We are intelligent people, but
3 we also going to defend our house. We grew up
4 here. We live here. This is our neighborhood.
5 Our schools. I went to Robeson. We're going
6 to defend it and protest it.

7 I can tell you one thing, if our
8 house gets get closed, your house gets closed.

9 MR. GREER: My name is Jaymal Greer, and I
10 want to echo --

11 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: You signed in,
12 Mr. Greer?

13 MR. GREER: Yes, I did.

14 I want to echo some of what
15 Mr. Preston just said.

16 Now, you guys -- he said that you
17 guys got a job to do. And the problem is the
18 job under the current administration means that
19 you have to be a puppet. That you have to be a
20 puppet for this mayor. And I'm going to be
21 honest with you on that. And if that hurts
22 you, I hope it does, because how can you go
23 home and know that you can't even make the best
24 decision for these young people, because the

1 mayor's telling you what to do.

2 I would not want to be in a
3 position where I'm beholden to what the mayor's
4 telling me to do. This should be an
5 independent organization from the mayor's
6 office, and we should have elected school board
7 sitting up here.

8 If we look at the last election,
9 the last election numbers showed that the
10 majority of the City of Chicago wanted an
11 elected school board.

12 This mayor said no because he
13 wanted to put his own people in power to push
14 his own policies.

15 Let me tell you what, there is a
16 time to be confrontational and the time is now.
17 So we got to go in front of the mayor's house
18 like we did seven times, and we got to go in
19 front of every office in the City of Chicago to
20 make sure these schools don't get shut down,
21 then that's what we need to do.

22 These kids are our future, and we
23 need to invest in them. We need to invest in
24 them. Not a \$95 million. We just invested --

1 and some of you guys probably don't even know.
2 We got aldermen sitting here. We got Roderick
3 Sawyer and several other aldermen over here.
4 They voted to fund a \$95 million cop academy to
5 train police officers. That's what they did.
6 Instead of spending \$95 million to train police
7 officers who don't protect and serve the
8 community but the badge and kill our kids, we
9 should be investing in their futures, investing
10 in the books, investing in new books, investing
11 in new technology, investing in after-school
12 programs because our Rahm Emanuel don't think
13 we need after-school programs. Invest in our
14 arts, like one of these teachers says, because
15 Rahm Emanuel doesn't believe we should have
16 arts in the school. Things that these kids
17 need, so they can spend their time and express
18 their feelings.

19 So my main thing, and I'm going
20 to end with this, and I know, just as he said,
21 you got a job to do, which is to be a puppet.

22 Maybe you should go home and
23 actually figure out how you can deal with
24 yourself knowing that you're going to make a

1 bad decision because the mayor told you to do
2 so. Not the best decision for these young
3 doctors, lawyers, presidents, mayors, not these
4 mayors sitting right here. How can you
5 actually deal with yourself? Then maybe you
6 can come around and make the right decision and
7 tell the mayor he needs to go to hell, and he
8 is on his last year.

9 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Anybody else
10 signed up? We will recess the meeting. Thank
11 you.

12 (Recess.)

13 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: I'd like to
14 thank everybody for their patience.

15 Do we have any individuals who
16 have not heretofore spoken? Signed up to be
17 heard this evening?

18 MS. ANDERSON: There were no new speakers
19 signed up.

20 HEARING OFFICER BRONSTEIN: Thank you. I
21 want to thank everybody here today for their
22 attendance, for their thoughts, their remarks,
23 all of which will be taken into account by me
24 in authoring a report to the CEO and the Board

1 of Education.

2 Certainly was willing to extend
3 the time given we started a little bit late.
4 But since no other individuals have signed up
5 to be heard this evening, we're going to
6 adjourn this proceeding.

7 And, again, thank you for your
8 attendance today. Thank you.

9

10 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings
11 were adjourned at 8:00 p.m.)

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