

# Transcript of the Testimony of

**Date:** February 5, 2019

**Case:** PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED  
REASSIGNED BOUNDARY CHANGE OF OROZCO COMMUNITY  
ACADEMY AND COOPER DUAL LANGUAGE ACADEMY

**TOOMEY REPORTING**

312-853-0648

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PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE  
PROPOSED REASSIGNED BOUNDARY CHANGE OF OROZCO COMMUNITY  
ACADEMY AND COOPER DUAL LANGUAGE ACADEMY

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2019  
COMMENCING AT 5:00 P.M.  
42 WEST MADISON STREET, CHICAGO ILLINOIS

HONORABLE ROBERT V. BOHARIC  
HEARING OFFICER

**TOOMEY REPORTING**  
**312-853-0648**



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1 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Welcome, Everyone. And my  
2 name is Robert Boharic, and I'm a retired circuit court  
3 judge, and I'm pleased to be back once again with the  
4 Chicago Public Schools for a program to conduct one of  
5 these hearings.

6 And I had an opportunity to be presented with a  
7 lot of materials beforehand, which I have reviewed, and  
8 I'm glad to see you all here. I know it's kind of a  
9 difficult night as far as weather is concerned and maybe  
10 traffic conditions and so on, and so we'll try to be  
11 patient with everyone so everyone gets a chance to be  
12 heard.

13 And I know it's very important for the  
14 community, and I can see it's, you know, a very  
15 important thing. So there's nothing more important, I  
16 guess, for -- and I'm a parent, too, and so I've been  
17 through this, there's nothing more important than the  
18 education of our children for a parent.

19 So the fact that you're here tells me something  
20 about you; that you're trying to contribute and make  
21 sure that everything is going to go okay, and if the  
22 principal or assistant principal does anything wrong,  
23 you're right on top of them. So I'm sure he's not going  
24 to do anything wrong, but there you go, right, so? And

1 he's here, too. He was the first guy in the room, I  
2 think. So that tells you something about the staff at  
3 the school. So right on top of it.

4 So why don't we proceed, and let's go right  
5 ahead, okay?

6 MS. BRIZUELA: Good evening, your Honor. My name is  
7 Gabriela Brizuela, G-a-b-r-i-e-l-a B-r-i-z-u-e-l-a, and  
8 I'm an attorney in the Chicago Board of Education's Law  
9 Department.

10 I'm appearing before you today in connection  
11 with the proposal of the Chief Executive Officer or CEO  
12 of the Chicago Public Schools to reassign the boundaries  
13 of Orozco Community Academy and Cooper Dual Language  
14 Academy.

15 At this time I offer CEO's compiled Exhibit 1,  
16 a binder of documents already tendered to you and being  
17 submitted for your consideration in support of this  
18 proposal.

19 A copy of this binder is also available here in  
20 the boardroom on the podium to my right (indicating).  
21 The binder consists of documentary evidence and written  
22 statements demonstrating that the CEO's proposal  
23 complies with the requirements of the Illinois School  
24 Code and the CEO's Guidelines for School Actions.

1           Specifically, the written statements and  
2 documents demonstrate the following:

3           At Tab A, the binder includes notice letters to  
4 parents and guardians of students, school staff members  
5 and local school council members at Orozco and Cooper  
6 accompanied by draft transition plans. The notice  
7 letters and draft transition plans describe the basis of  
8 the proposal, explain how the proposal meets the  
9 criteria of the guidelines and identifies support for a  
10 transition.

11           Tab A also includes two affidavits; the first  
12 attesting to proper publication of the Draft Guidelines  
13 for School Actions on September 30th, 2018, a list of  
14 qualified independent hearing officers on October 31st,  
15 2018, and the Finalized Guidelines for School Actions  
16 following a 21-day public comment period as well as the  
17 proposals on December 1st, 2018, at least 30 calendar  
18 days before the first community meeting, and summaries  
19 from community meetings within five days after those  
20 meetings, and the second affidavit attests to the  
21 delivery of notice to elected officials, and, finally,  
22 Tab A includes the notice of the scheduled community  
23 meetings and hearings which were published in the  
24 Chicago Sun-Times newspaper.

1           At Tab B, the binder includes the Illinois  
2 School Code Provisions designating the powers of the  
3 Board in outlining the process for school actions. This  
4 tab also includes the Board's policy on the review and  
5 establishment of school attendance boundaries as well as  
6 the Board's School Quality Rating Policy.

7           Also, at Tab B -- at Tab B are the Chicago  
8 Public Schools' Space Utilization Standards and the  
9 CEO's Guidelines for School Actions for the 2018-2019  
10 school year. Finally, Tab B includes the CEO's  
11 Procedures for Public Hearings on Proposed School  
12 Reassignment Boundary.

13           At Tab C the binder includes written evidence  
14 in support of the CEO's proposal. Tab C contains the  
15 transcripts and summaries from the two community  
16 meetings to elicit public comment held at locations  
17 convenient to the Orozco School and Cooper School  
18 communities. Tab C also includes two written  
19 statements. The first is of Network Chief Minerva  
20 Garcia-Sanchez introducing the action and providing  
21 support of -- for the proposal. The second written  
22 statement is James Dispensa providing additional  
23 information relevant to space utilization.

24           At this time, your Honor, I request that the

1 CEO's compiled Exhibit 1 be admitted into the record.

2 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: It's received.

3 (Exhibit 1 admitted.)

4 MS. BRIZUELA: Thank you.

5 I would like to now ask permission to call the  
6 CEO's first representative chief Minerva Garcia-Sanchez,  
7 who will make a statement in support of the proposal.  
8 This statement is located in your binder at Tab C-19.

9 MS. GARCIA-SANCHEZ: Hello.

10 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Good evening.

11 MS. GARCIA-SANCHEZ: Good evening.

12 Good evening, your Honor. My name is  
13 Minerva Garcia-Sanchez, and I am the Network Chief for  
14 Chicago Public Schools Network 7.

15 Chicago Public Schools are divided into  
16 Networks managed by Chiefs who provide support and  
17 oversight for the schools assigned to them on behalf of  
18 the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Orozco Community  
19 Academy School (Orozco) and Cooper Dual Language Academy  
20 (Cooper) are within Network 7, and I am responsible for  
21 the support and oversight of these schools on behalf of  
22 the Chief Executive Officer. I have been in this  
23 position since 2015.

24 By way of background, I have been with

1 Chicago Public Schools for 25 years as a teacher and  
2 administrator. For the last six years, I have had an  
3 executive level responsibility over multiple schools.  
4 In July of 2015, after serving as a Deputy Chief for  
5 Networks 8 and 10, I became the Chief of Schools for  
6 Network 7. In this role I supervise and provide  
7 strategic guidance for 18 schools in the areas of  
8 instructional practices in the classroom and  
9 professional development for the teaching staff. I have  
10 a master's degree in general administration from  
11 Chicago State University, and I am currently completing  
12 a doctoral degree in urban education at the University  
13 of Illinois-Chicago.

14 I am here today because the CEO is proposing a  
15 reassignment boundary change for Orozco School and  
16 Cooper. On October 19th, 2018, the Local School Council  
17 of Cooper, with the support of their school community,  
18 elected officials and the Orozco School community,  
19 requested that Orozco's sixth, seventh and eighth grade  
20 boundary be reassigned to Cooper gradually over time.

21 Under this proposal, Orozco's boundary would be  
22 reassigned to allow Cooper to phase in Grades Sixth  
23 through Eighth and offer sixth grade for School Year  
24 2019-2020, seventh grade by School Year 2020-21 and

1 eighth grade by School Year '21-22. Upon completion of  
2 the boundary reassignment in School Year 2021-22, Cooper  
3 will be a K to eight neighborhood school, while Orozco  
4 School will be able to offer additional seats for  
5 families in their bilingual gifted program for students  
6 who are bilingual and/or heritage speakers.

7           The Cooper and Orozco Local School Councils  
8 have expressed that this proposal would provide students  
9 a quality education and the academic continuity they  
10 need for a successful high school transition. Letters  
11 in support of this proposal from the members of the  
12 Cooper and Orozco Local School Councils are located in  
13 your binder at Tabs 21 and 22.

14           This proposal is also supported by  
15 Congressman Jesus "Chuy" Garcia. While serving as  
16 Cook County Commissioner for the Seventh District,  
17 Congressman Garcia formalized his support for the  
18 reassignment boundary change of Orozco and Cooper in a  
19 letter dated October 18th, 2018. Congressman Garcia's  
20 letter is located in your binder at Tab 23.

21           As former Cook County Commissioner, over the  
22 last eight years, Congressman Garcia collaborated with  
23 the Orozco and Cooper school communities to organize  
24 workshops that have been instrumental in equipping the

1 Pilsen community with valuable information and resources  
2 within Cook County. Congressman Garcia's letter  
3 explains that the proposed reassignment boundary change  
4 is part of the Pilsen Specialization Initiative, an  
5 initiative crafted by schools, community organizations  
6 and school district leaders to address these issues of  
7 equity around programming and educational opportunities.  
8 This initiative is also a proactive approach to address  
9 enrollment decline in Pilsen schools and to create  
10 opportunities for residents to access additional quality  
11 programming.

12           Congressman Garcia is in full support of the  
13 proposed reassignment boundary change and believes that  
14 it would address the ever-changing needs of the  
15 community and create future opportunities for many.

16           Moreover, this proposal is also supported by  
17 Illinois State Representative Theresa Mah.  
18 Representative Mah formalized her support for the  
19 reassignment boundary change of Orozco and Cooper in a  
20 letter dated October 18th, 2018. Representative Mah's  
21 letter is located in your binder at Tab 24.

22           In her letter Rep Mah states that she has  
23 collaborated with both schools in her capacity as an  
24 elected official over the last two years.

1 Like Congressman Garcia, she also is in full  
2 support of the proposed reassignment boundary change and  
3 believes that it would address the ever-changing needs  
4 of the community and create future opportunities for  
5 residents.

6 Finally, this proposal is also supported by  
7 several community-based organizations, including the  
8 Chicago Commons, the Resurrection Project, the  
9 Pilsen Neighbors Community Council, the Chicago Mariachi  
10 Project and the Frida Kahlo Community Organization.  
11 These organizations formalized their support for the  
12 reassignment boundary change in letters dated  
13 December 2018. These letters are located in your binder  
14 at Tabs 25 through 29.

15 In conclusion, this proposal is consistent with  
16 the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School  
17 Actions because it is a proposal requested by parent or  
18 community members via the process to request proposals  
19 outlined in the Guidelines.

20 Furthermore, the resulting space utilization  
21 after reassigned -- after the reassignment boundary  
22 change will not exceed either school's enrollment  
23 efficiency range as defined by the CPS' Space  
24 Utilization Standards.

1           You will next hear from my colleague  
2 James Dispensa, who will provide information regarding  
3 the resulting space utilization with respect to the  
4 proposal.

5           Thank you, your Honor. This concludes my  
6 statement.

7           HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Thank you. Thank you very  
8 much.

9           MR. DISPENSA: Good evening, your Honor.

10          HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: How are you doing, sir?

11          MR. DISPENSA: Good. Thank you.

12          HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Good.

13          MS. BRIZUELA: Your Honor, I would now like to ask  
14 permission to call the CEO's next representative  
15 Mr. James Dispensa, who will make a statement in support  
16 of the proposal. This statement is located in the  
17 binder at Tab C-20.

18          HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Thank you.

19          MR. DISPENSA: Your Honor, my name is  
20 James Dispensa, and I am the Director of Demographic  
21 Analysis and Planning for the Chicago Public Schools.  
22 My responsibilities include undertaking school  
23 demographic studies, enrollment projections and the  
24 monitoring of space utilization of the public school

1 facilities throughout Chicago. I have been in this  
2 position since October of 2004.

3 The CEO has asked me to appear at this hearing  
4 today to convey to you, the parents, staff and school  
5 community of Peter Cooper Dual Language Academy or  
6 Cooper and Orozco Community Academy or Orozco, as well  
7 as interested members of the public in attendance,  
8 information relevant to the proposal to reassign the  
9 attendance boundaries of Cooper and Orozco.

10 The CEO may propose a reassignment boundary  
11 change that results in the reassignment of current  
12 students from one school to one or more other schools  
13 only if the school(s) principals, parents or community  
14 members have requested that a reassignment boundary  
15 change proposal be considered and the resulting space  
16 utilization after the reassignment boundary change will  
17 not exceed any affected school's enrollment efficiency  
18 range as defined by CPS' Space Utilization Standards and  
19 Methodology.

20 This proposal is consistent with the CEO's  
21 Guidelines for School Actions for reassignment boundary  
22 changes because it is a proposal formally requested by  
23 the members of the Cooper and Orozco communities.  
24 Specifically, we have heard the request for this

1 proposal from the Local School Council members at both  
2 schools.

3 For background, at the elementary school level,  
4 LSC's are traditionally comprised of six parents, two  
5 community members, two teachers, one staff member and  
6 the school principal. The LSC is tasked with various  
7 duties, including approving how school funds and  
8 resources are allocated, developing and monitoring the  
9 annual School Improvement Plan and evaluating and  
10 selecting the school's principal.

11 The LSC's for Cooper and Orozco have stated  
12 that this proposal would provide students a quality  
13 education and the academic continuity they need for a  
14 successful high school transition. A copy of letters in  
15 support of this proposal from members of the Cooper and  
16 Orozco LSC's are located in your binder at Tabs 21 and  
17 22.

18 Now that you have heard about the request in  
19 support of the reassignment boundary change of Cooper  
20 and Orozco, I will talk about space utilization.

21 Cooper is currently located at 1624 West 19th  
22 Street and serves 418 students in grades kindergarten  
23 through five in addition to its Pre-K program. Orozco  
24 is currently located at 1940 West 18th Street, which is

1 approximately a half mile away from Cooper and serves --  
2 I think this is wrong -- about 550 students in grades  
3 kindergarten through --

4 543.

5 If the proposed reassignment boundary change is  
6 approved, Cooper would expand --

7 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: You wish to change the  
8 document, I take it?

9 MR. DISPENSA: Yes.

10 I'm going to ask, where it says 1,099 students,  
11 that you strike that, and we'll change it to 543.

12 Sorry about that.

13 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: The motion to do that is  
14 granted.

15 MR. DISPENSA: Thank you.

16 If the proposed reassignment boundary change is  
17 approved, Cooper would expand its grade offering from  
18 K through five currently to K through six in the  
19 upcoming 2019-20 school year and then K through seven in  
20 the 2020-21 school year and, finally, K through eight in  
21 the 2021-22 school year, while Orozco would cease  
22 offering sixth, seventh and eighth grades to the  
23 students residing within the Cooper boundary over that  
24 same period of time.

1           The expected decrease in Orozco's neighborhood  
2 student enrollment at Grades 6 through 8 will be  
3 counter-balanced in the coming years by the expected  
4 increase in Orozco's city-wide program. Today Orozco  
5 offers one classroom per grade to students residing  
6 city-wide at all grades K through eight. Beginning in  
7 the upcoming 2019-20 school year, Orozco will begin  
8 offering two incoming kindergarten classrooms to  
9 students residing city-wide and will continue doing so  
10 until two classrooms per grade are offered at all grades  
11 K through eight.

12           To understand the enrollment efficiency range  
13 of a facility, CPS utilizes its Space Utilization  
14 Standards and Methodology which is located in your  
15 binder at Tab 12. CPS provides an enrollment efficiency  
16 range for elementary schools based primarily upon the  
17 total number of instructional classrooms available in  
18 the facility.

19           There are 52 total classrooms within the two  
20 adjacent Cooper facilities. The adjusted ideal capacity  
21 of these facilities combined is 960 students, and any  
22 enrollment within the efficiency range of 864 through  
23 1,056 would be considered efficient.

24           The projected enrollment of Cooper in the

1 following three school years, should the Board approve  
2 this proposal, is approximately 456 and 496 and then  
3 534, all of which are below the efficiency range of its  
4 two facilities.

5 Furthermore, the proposed reassignment boundary  
6 changes will have no significant impact on the racial  
7 composition and stability of these schools. In terms of  
8 racial composition and stability, the option of  
9 maintaining the status quo offers neither an advantage,  
10 nor disadvantage over the option of reassigning the  
11 boundaries of these schools. While other alternatives  
12 were examined, no alternatives affected the resulting  
13 racial ethnic distribution of students.

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

16 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Thank you, sir.

17 MS. BRIZUELA: Your Honor, this concludes the  
18 presentation in support of the CEO's proposal. If you  
19 have any additional questions, we'll be available to  
20 answer them.

21 Thank you for your time and attention.

22 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Thank you.

23 Now we have an opportunity to hear from people  
24 that have signed up. So we have two names here, and the

1 first one is Mr. Hamed Flores.

2 MR. FLORES: Thank you, your Honor.

3 Good evening, your Honor. Good evening,  
4 Everyone. My name is Hamed Flores. I am the assistant  
5 principal at Cooper Dual Language Academy. I've been at  
6 Cooper for 14 years. I was a teacher first, and then I  
7 am the assistant principal for over -- for about three  
8 years.

9 And, first of all, I would like to thank the  
10 Cooper parents that are here present to support this  
11 proposal.

12 I'm here to -- just to express my support for  
13 this proposal and also for the -- for the students who  
14 advocate for the students at Cooper School.

15 As I said, I've been part of the Cooper family  
16 for about 14 years, and throughout those years, I've  
17 seen, I think -- I've -- I've witnessed the growth in  
18 the progress of the students with solid and effective  
19 instructions, and I think that this proposal comes  
20 from -- from the -- from the parents, and I support that  
21 because they want to have their kids to stay in the  
22 school.

23 And I think that because they believe of what  
24 they have received in terms of the instruction at the --

1 in Cooper, and I think that it's something that is going  
2 to help the students academically and also socially and  
3 emotionally, so I fully support that, the proposal, on  
4 behalf of the parents and the students.

5 Thank you.

6 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Well, I heard a lot of  
7 good things in the packet that was sent out to me  
8 already about your school and the quality of education  
9 that the kids are getting at Cooper so you -- and also a  
10 lot of their comments that they want to keep it in the  
11 same place so the kids will have continuity.

12 MR. FLORES: Yes.

13 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Tell me, what do you think  
14 about that?

15 MR. FLORES: And we have the data that supports  
16 that, supports that effective instruction at Cooper, and  
17 we've been -- the last three years we've been at  
18 Level -- Level 1 plus, and this time we have Level 1,  
19 but we are maintaining our instruction, high-quality  
20 instruction at Cooper.

21 And in -- what we want is, we are kind of  
22 addressing now the socioemotional pleas in the education  
23 of the students, and staying -- having the students  
24 staying at Cooper is going to ensure that they are --

1 that they have this continuation of their education in  
2 addressing those socioemotional needs, and moving --  
3 having those students going to Orozco, it could be maybe  
4 a risk for those students who are not -- who are already  
5 accustomed to be part of the Cooper family, and we want  
6 them to stay for them to continue growing.

7 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay.

8 MR. FLORES: Thank you.

9 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Certainly understandable.

10 I didn't see anybody dissent from that at all  
11 in all the materials.

12 I know what it's like being a parent, too, you  
13 know, so, okay, let's see, especially when you start  
14 trying to drive them around to these different places,  
15 you know, or walk them around, you know. So it's not  
16 easy to do that, you know, especially on bad days in  
17 Chicago. Of course, we don't have any bad weather in  
18 Chicago so.

19 Let's see. So Alvaro Obregon.

20 MR. OBREGON: No, not speaking.

21 MS. GARCIA-SANCHEZ: Well, when you came in, you  
22 signed in.

23 MR. OBREGON: On the non-speaker.

24 MS. GARCIA-SANCHEZ: But you signed it as a speaker.

1 Do you want to say something?

2 MR. OBREGON: Sure.

3 MS. GARCIA-SANCHEZ: All right.

4 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: I just know you're going  
5 to have something to say.

6 MR. OBREGON: Well, then you just know me.

7 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: You're a familiar face in  
8 Chicago, you know, I don't know.

9 MR. OBREGON: A little bit.

10 Your Honor, thank you very much.

11 I -- I was not prepared to speak, but I'll say  
12 a few words because my history in the community and at  
13 both schools, actually, I'm an alum of Cooper Dual  
14 Language Academy back when it was just Cooper and Orozco  
15 when it was known as Cooper Upper Grade Center. So I go  
16 back to before it was named Orozco.

17 Also, I'm just a community resident, I still  
18 live in the same home that I moved to when I was a  
19 one-year-old so I've been able to be involved in the  
20 community, involved at the local school council level,  
21 and I've seen the changes taking place in the community.

22 I've been very supportive of all of the  
23 educational efforts that have been taking place with  
24 education task force and such, and I think our community

1 is at a point where we're really looking at solutions,  
2 right, as we look across the city.

3 And I'm very proud of seeing the parents that  
4 are here and involved community members. I think the --  
5 you know, all of the people who have come out in  
6 support, you know, speaks to the -- you know, it's a  
7 testament to the work that the community is doing.

8 And I recall a meeting back with -- it was with  
9 Arne Duncan, and I remember, you know, Secretary Duncan  
10 now, Former Secretary Duncan, sort of challenged us as a  
11 community, and he said, you should be planning for --  
12 for your community and not just waiting for others to  
13 plan for you.

14 And I think that really fit into -- into what  
15 our community has been doing, and as such, I think this  
16 is -- this proposal is a testament of that effort on  
17 behalf of the community.

18 So as a community member and as somebody who  
19 graduated from both schools and as somebody who runs a  
20 nonprofit as well, Chicago Mariachi Project, I am in  
21 full and complete support of -- with the proposal that  
22 is before you.

23 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. Thank you. Thank  
24 you very much for coming up and speaking.

1           It was very good. That's, you know, kind of  
2           inspiring testimony actually. So thank you very much.

3           Your name is on the thing though. She wasn't  
4           kidding you. It says -- Right on the top it says  
5           Speaker Registration List. You're there. I don't know,  
6           you know. You kind of had to do it, you know. I don't  
7           know, you know.

8           MR. OBREGON: It's a good thing I'm not shy.

9           HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. That's what you get  
10          for being a community activist, right, coming in and  
11          participating, you know? Sometimes you're not ready to  
12          participate, but they want you anyway, right? Well,  
13          that happened tonight.

14          Okay. Well, we appreciate greatly your  
15          participation.

16          Okay. So next we have Montserrat Hernandez.  
17          I know I'm mispronouncing.

18          MS. HERNANDEZ: It's okay. It happens all the time.  
19          It's Montserrat or Montsse for short.

20          HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay.

21          MS. HERNANDEZ: Good evening, Everybody. Thank you  
22          for having us today and for the opportunity to speak out  
23          on behalf of the proposal to -- for Cooper and for  
24          Orozco.

1 I am here today as an LSC parent rep for  
2 Cooper, and before becoming a parent at Cooper, I  
3 actually had the privilege of working for about ten  
4 years through the parent programming and also as an art  
5 teacher for the afterschool programs.

6 So I bumped into one of my students who is now  
7 in sixth grade at Orozco actually, and she's like,  
8 Ms. Montsse, is it true that they're going to move up  
9 the grades at Cooper? I'm like, yes. Can I go back  
10 next year? I miss my teachers, I miss my principal.  
11 I'm like, aren't you happy? I love my new school, but I  
12 really miss my teachers, and I miss the principal.

13 And that's something, I think, that is very  
14 common among a lot of the students who have left Cooper  
15 who wished there would have been upper grades for them  
16 to stay at.

17 And through the parent program, something that  
18 I heard very often was, you know, we really wish that  
19 our kids could stay at this school, and we really wish  
20 that, you know, they didn't have to go on somewhere  
21 else.

22 There is a sense of family at Cooper that I  
23 think just kind of invites the parents to become part of  
24 the school and the students to just fall in love with

1 everything about it, and now as a parent of a student at  
2 Cooper, it gives me great hope to think that she might  
3 be able to graduate from eighth grade from there. I  
4 would love it if she could stay there.

5 I don't live in the neighborhood, but I was  
6 very hopeful again when I applied to see if my daughter  
7 can go to Cooper because I know the teachers and I know  
8 their dedication, I know the staff, and I know how much  
9 they love working with the students. And then also I  
10 know the parents, and I know that the community that  
11 they have within themselves is very supporting of one  
12 another.

13 So to know that my daughter is part of that  
14 community, just it makes me feel very comfortable, it  
15 makes me feel at ease and it makes me feel very happy.

16 So, again, I'm just here to voice my support a  
17 hundred percent for this proposal, and I hope it comes  
18 through. It will make all of us very happy.

19 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. Well, thank you  
20 very much --

21 MS. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

22 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: -- for your comments.

23 Okay. Should we take a break here now, or --

24 MS. BRIZUELA: Yes.

1 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Is there anyone else in  
2 the room that is prepared to speak at this time?

3 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.

4 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. All right.

5 Probably I put my name in the one that says do  
6 not speak.

7 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Did that happen?

8 MR. MARTINEZ: I'm not sure.

9 But that's what the lady pointed out.

10 For members of the office, my name is  
11 Efrain Martinez. I am the proud principal of  
12 Orozco Academy in beautiful Pilsen.

13 With me is Chuy. She is my service animal, and  
14 she promises to behave very well during my speech.

15 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Well, does that include  
16 licking your hand?

17 MR. MARTINEZ: That's her strategy to help me.

18 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: I see. Okay.

19 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.

20 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: That's a very good thing  
21 to do. Okay.

22 MR. MARTINEZ: So I am here to support the expansion  
23 of our regional bilingual gifted center as it will give  
24 more access to more students city-wide that are

1 looking -- students and families who are looking for  
2 programs like this.

3 I am very proud to say that the families of  
4 both schools went together, got together, they  
5 organized, and they said that they wanted something for  
6 each of their communities, and that's very valuable when  
7 two different communities because my school is also a  
8 commuter school.

9 So when my parents and Cooper parents get  
10 together and said we want this because we love our  
11 schools, that was a win-win for the entire district.

12 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Yeah.

13 So did this surprise you when this happened?

14 MR. MARTINEZ: Not at all.

15 It's just that we have -- I have never tried  
16 it. It never occurred to me until my parents say we are  
17 going to go and talk to the parents at Cooper because  
18 most of them came from Cooper.

19 So I believe that the love for their schools is  
20 what made this possible. So I am very happy that  
21 there's no objections, everybody wants this to happen.

22 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: It's very interesting  
23 to -- I don't know what's your comment on the idea that,  
24 you know, we didn't always have these LSC's.

1 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.

2 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: And then, you know, they  
3 wanted to get more participation by the community and  
4 everything, and that was a big move, you know. This is  
5 a while ago, but still that was a big change that took  
6 place.

7 Do you remember when that was?

8 MS. GARCIA-SANCHEZ: In the '90s.

9 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: I thought it was just like  
10 recently, you know.

11 MS. GARCIA-SANCHEZ: It feels like yesterday.

12 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Yeah, yeah.

13 But it seems to me that, you know, looking  
14 at -- looking at it and hearing about, you know, the  
15 people coming up with these ideas and so on in the  
16 community and the parents, teachers and the staff  
17 involved in it.

18 MR. MARTINEZ: So my opinion is that the faster way  
19 to get through to students is through their parents so  
20 when parents are together and they establish -- it's not  
21 about agreeing or disagreeing, it's about coming  
22 together with ideas to benefit students and make  
23 policies changes in the school and getting the opinions  
24 from different partners. So I think it's something very

1 positive.

2 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Now, your school, people  
3 have been turned away from your school, there's  
4 competition to get into your school, am I correct?

5 MR. MARTINEZ: That is correct, your Honor.

6 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. And this will allow  
7 more persons to become educated to participate in your  
8 advanced program, is that correct?

9 MR. MARTINEZ: That is correct because the point of  
10 entry will change to the primary grades.

11 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. So this is  
12 something that you're benefitting people throughout  
13 Chicago, maybe they'll want to come here that are not  
14 even here, they don't know about this maybe.

15 MR. MARTINEZ: Absolutely.

16 Many parents have to commute to work, so  
17 Orozco Academy being located in the great City of  
18 Pilsen, I think that it's a great point of entry for  
19 people to put their kids in a grade school, go to work  
20 and come back.

21 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Yes. We -- Okay. So  
22 it's -- it's a really -- maybe a win-win-win situation.

23 MR. MARTINEZ: Absolutely.

24 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: You know, somewhere out

1 there, and people don't even know about this good  
2 planning that's going on here, you know, in the  
3 community, and opening the door for other people is  
4 quite a wonderful event to get them to this higher  
5 program, right?

6 MR. MARTINEZ: Absolutely.

7 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: More challenging program.

8 MR. MARTINEZ: It's at the level of the students and  
9 challenge them at the level of some gifted students.  
10 They'll get the opportunity that they need because they  
11 tend to be unique within classrooms, and our school,  
12 we're going to open the door to have more access to  
13 those students that need that kind of academic support.

14 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. Well, keep up the  
15 good work.

16 MR. MARTINEZ: Thank you, your Honor.

17 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: All right.

18 So, let's see, do we have anyone else ready to  
19 go now, or is it time to take a break?

20 MS. BRIZUELA: I think we can take a break.

21 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. We'll take a break.

22 And thank you once again, Everyone, for being  
23 here. We'll take a little break to see if someone else  
24 is on their way, trying to make their way through the

1 traffic.

2 Did the ice storm start yet?

3 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Not yet.

4 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. Well, all right.  
5 We'll take a break, okay, take some time, okay?

6 Thank you.

7 MS. BRIZUELA: Thank you.

8 (Break taken.)

9 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. We're back on the  
10 record now.

11 And what I would like to do is to ask the  
12 persons who are here whether there's anyone that is here  
13 that would like to speak even though perhaps you might  
14 not even have signed up for it. Is there anyone -- Are  
15 there any other speakers that we have for the -- for our  
16 Cooper/Orozco hearing, anybody wish to -- well, except  
17 for Judge Dolan?

18 All right. So no one is coming forward, right?

19 So do any of you know of anyone else that's  
20 coming down that wishes to speak that hasn't come yet?

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

22 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Could you explain that in  
23 Spanish?

24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: She just said no.

1 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. So there's no one  
2 that you're waiting for or expect to be here that's not  
3 here that wanted to speak, am I correct so everyone that  
4 --

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: You are correct.

6 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: -- wishes to speak has had  
7 an opportunity to do so? Am I correct at this point?

8 MS. BRIZUELA: Yes.

9 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: As far as we know?

10 MS. BRIZUELA: Yes, as far as we know.

11 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. Very, very good.

12 And we're going to have an opportunity for  
13 additional people, if they wanted to add something, the  
14 schools have a program whereby they could notify -- they  
15 could be notified by e-mail, they could send in any  
16 comments that they wish to make by e-mail if they want  
17 to supplement the record in the next day or so. So  
18 that's one thing that's a possibility.

19 So if you know someone that says, oh, I really  
20 wanted to go and I wanted say X, Y and Z, you know, or  
21 something like that, well, tell them, yes, you can do  
22 that, and here's the way to do it, okay?

23 So is there anything we'd like to add?

24 MS. BRIZUELA: Just I'd like to add that the record

1 will remain open until 5:00 p.m. tomorrow. If anyone  
2 seeks to or wants to submit anything additional, please  
3 do so at transitions@cps.edu, or it can also be  
4 personally delivered to 42 West Madison. There will be  
5 an area to deposit any additional comments or documents  
6 that you would like to submit.

7 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. So I see that the  
8 assistant principal is still on the job, you know.

9 You don't get to go home early?

10 MR. FLORES: Not today.

11 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: So if someone at the  
12 school, you know, wants to, you know, send something in,  
13 some supplemental thing, you know what to do?

14 MR. FLORES: Right. Yes.

15 HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: Okay. Very good. So I  
16 appreciate it.

17 I'd just like to thank all of you for being  
18 here, and you really do have -- I mean, I -- my  
19 knowledge about your community and, you know, your  
20 schools in this detail, you know, led me to think, you  
21 know, that this is quite a wonderful place, and what  
22 you're doing goes exactly along with what people  
23 envisioned when they came up with these LSC's and the  
24 rest of it; that the community actually got involved in

1 these things and had a great deal to say, and the  
2 community people had a lot of input, and this is the  
3 result.

4           You have a very imaginative kind of project  
5 that has been developed by many people, and it looks  
6 like it's going to be a big benefit to your children,  
7 which is the important thing, not only your children,  
8 but also other children that you have benefited by your  
9 participation in moving this -- these ideas along.

10           So thank you very much for being here, and it  
11 was great to listen to you. Thank you very much.

12           So we'll complete at this time.

13           MS. BRIZUELA: Thank you.

14           HEARING OFFICER BOHARIC: All right.

15           (Which were all of the proceedings had in the  
16 above-entitled cause.)

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ROBBIN M. OCHENKOWSKI, being first duly sworn,  
 deposes and says that she is a Certified Shorthand  
 Reporter in Cook County, Illinois;

That she reported in shorthand and thereafter  
 transcribed the foregoing;

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

  
*Robbin M. Ochenskowski*  
 ROBBIN M. OCHENKOWSKI, C.S.R  
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