

# Transcript of the Testimony of

**Date:** January 23, 2020

**Case:** PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HOPE HIGH SCHOOL

**TOOMEY REPORTING**

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**January 23, 2020**

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COMMUNITY MEETING  
PRESENTATION

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HOPE HIGH SCHOOL

JANUARY 2020

THURSDAY , JANUARY 23, 2020  
COMMENCING AT 5:30 P.M.  
HELD AT KERSHAW MAGNET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
6450 SOUTH LOWE AVENUE, CHICAGO ILLINOIS

APPEARING ON BEHALF OF CPS:

MR. HERALD "CHIP" JOHNSON, Chief of Family &  
Community Engagement

MS. LAUREN FELDMAN, Director of Strategy

MS. MIRLENE DOSSOUS, Notetaker

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1 MR. JOHNSON: Well, good afternoon, Everybody.  
2 Let's call this meeting to order.

3 I am "Chip" Johnson, the Chief of Family &  
4 Community Engagement & Education. You usually see my  
5 face in these kind of settings.

6 Standing next to me is the Chief of Network 16  
7 Megan Hougard, who's been my colleague for some years  
8 now and now the Chief of the High School Network.

9 And we are bringing together in front of all of  
10 you our colleagues, CPS colleagues here. And I'm happy  
11 that we do have one alumni from John Hope. Again, this  
12 is bittersweet for me because I spent 12 years of my  
13 career at John Hope as well.

14 So we're talking about the proposed closure of  
15 John Hope. Now, we know right now there are no students  
16 in the school, just Mr. D., Mr. Durr, Mr. D. and, of  
17 course, things are being wrapped up at the school. So  
18 we're here to talk about what we're going to do and what  
19 the legal process is that we follow when we go through  
20 proposed closures.

21 So you'll see that we have the proposed -- the  
22 presentation on the school action that Chief Hougard  
23 will present, and then we're going to open it up for  
24 public comment from 5:45 until 7:00.

1           However, seeing that there's only one person  
2       here to speak, after that public comment has ended, then  
3       we will, if there are no other speakers that come into  
4       the room or that sign up to speak, then we will adjourn  
5       the meeting. Okay?

6           I will hand this over to Chief Hougard.

7       MS. HOUGARD: All right. Thank you.

8           As Chief Johnson said, we'll do a short  
9       presentation based on the school action and then have  
10      public comment.

11          We are happy to answer other questions after  
12      the scheduled public comment concludes as well.

13          So the school action process is a process  
14      guided by the State. The legal process that's outlined  
15      begins October 1st. CPS publishes the draft guidelines  
16      around the school actions, and then before December 1st,  
17      CPS needs to propose -- make public the school actions  
18      and send notice letters and draft transition plans.

19          In January then there are two community  
20      meetings held. In February or later, there's an actual  
21      hearing at the Board Chamber. That's also a public  
22      hearing in front of a school action judge, and then the  
23      Board will vote after that.

24          The proposed school action is to close

1 Hope High School effective July 1st, 2020. There are  
2 currently no students in Hope, and with no further Board  
3 action, the School would close effective July 1st, 2021.  
4 That's already been voted on and passed by the Board.

5 As we talk about this process, the new  
6 Englewood High School that's very close to here was  
7 opened this fall. That is the hundred million dollar  
8 investment in a community high school for Englewood that  
9 encompasses the boundary of Hope, Robeson and Harper  
10 High School.

11 And there's always some questions around  
12 TEAM Englewood. TEAM Englewood did not have an  
13 attendance boundary. It's a citywide high school.

14 So at the end of last school year,  
15 Hope High School had 20 enrolled students. At this time  
16 all 20 students have transferred to other CPS schools of  
17 their choice. That was before the school year started.

18 Students who transferred received ongoing  
19 transition supports, funds were made available to each  
20 of the receiving schools that was \$6,100 per student in  
21 transfer funding, and we also continue to provide  
22 support, academic support, socioemotional support,  
23 transportation support to all of the former  
24 Hope students who have transitioned to other CPS

1 schools.

2 And this begins our process for public comment.  
3 So we have Ms. Nevins in the front who has the time  
4 guidance.

5 And, Judy, are you going to call our speakers?

6 MS. CAMACHO-CAMPBELL: Yes.

7 So there's currently one speaker. So Speaker 1  
8 can come up.

9 MR. FERGUSON: Good evening, Everyone. My name is  
10 Derrick Ferguson. I'm a product of John Hope. I'm  
11 actually one of the members of the John Hope Alumni that  
12 we formed about five years ago.

13 My concern was when I -- when we found out the  
14 school was closing, well, first, we see that the  
15 railroad bought up all the property over there. This  
16 has taken away from John Hope.

17 I grew up at a time when we had families over  
18 there on 55th and Normal up to 59th. And with them  
19 buying up the property, the families are gone, they  
20 basically took out a community. So now there's no  
21 students to go to John Hope because their families are  
22 gone.

23 So me personally, I think that was wrong. So,  
24 John Hope, we support our school, and, you know, I'm



1 kind of nervous because I'm not used to speaking, okay,  
2 like this, it's a shame that it happened.

3 And my question is; why couldn't the school be  
4 like retrofitted or something else done to it instead of  
5 just letting it go? I know a charter school was in it,  
6 but could anything have been done to stop this, to  
7 attract more students in order to keep it open instead  
8 of shipping the property -- I mean, shipping families  
9 and everything around? So that's just my concern about  
10 it.

11 I drive through the neighborhood almost every  
12 day, and it's a shame to see how our neighborhood went  
13 down, the families taken away, and now, you know, things  
14 are happening to the school.

15 So that was just my concern and the John Hope  
16 Alumni concern because we love our schools. I'm a  
17 product of John Hope. I came out in '84. I know that's  
18 a while ago, but still a lot of us love our school. A  
19 lot of beginnings come from John Hope.

20 So I just -- I'm concerned about it.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. HOUGARD: Thank you.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Do we have anybody else that's from  
24 our audience that wants to speak?

1 (No response.)

2 MR. JOHNSON: Okay.

3 MS. HOUGARD: Okay. Well, this will conclude our  
4 second public hearing, public community meeting.

5 The third community meeting is --

6 MR. JOHNSON: January 29th.

7 MS. HOUGARD: -- January 29th at 6:00 p.m. in --

8 MS. CAMACHO-CAMPBELL: 5:30.

9 MS. HOUGARD: -- 5:30 in the Board Chambers at  
10 42 West Madison.

11 MS. CAMACHO-CAMPBELL: Yes.

12 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you all for coming out and  
13 listening to us tonight.

14 And we will see you if you are interested to  
15 come to our third community meeting for the proposed  
16 closing of John Hope.

17 Have a good evening.

18 MS. HOUGARD: Thank you.

19 (Which were all of the proceedings had in the  
20 above-entitled cause.)

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
2 ) SS:  
3 COUNTY OF C O O K )  
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5  
6

7 ROBBIN M. OCHENKOWSKI, being first duly sworn,  
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10 That she reported in shorthand and thereafter  
11 transcribed the foregoing;

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