PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF CHICAGO’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
CPS’ Draft
10-YEAR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES MASTER PLAN AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS IN CONTEXT

Preliminary Draft, 2012-13 Annual Report of
The Illinois General Assembly’s
Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force
May 13, 2013
THE LEGAL MANDATE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY’s CHICAGO EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES TASK FORCE REVIEW

- “Ensure that school facility-related decisions are made with the input of the community and reflect educationally sound and fiscally responsible criteria.”
- “Consult widely with stakeholders, including public officials, about these facility issues and their related costs.”
- “Examine relevant best practices from other school systems for dealing with these issues systematically and equitably.”
- “Review Chicago public schools’ compliance with the provisions of (the state law) concerning school action and facility master planning.”
- Each year, “Prepare a report to the General Assembly, the Governor's Office, the Mayor of the City of Chicago, and the Chicago Board of Education indicating how the district has met the requirements of the provisions of ... this Code concerning school action and facility master planning.” [IL Public Act 97-0474]
What does State Law Require CPS to do to Create the 10-Year Educational Facilities Master Plan?

- Describe the District’s guiding educational goals & standards
  - Types of instructional programs, services in each school
  - Process, procedure, timelines for community participation in developing the EFMP
  - Enrollment capacity, utilization rate for each school
- Provide community-area level facility plans & individual school master plans with options for addressing facility and space needs for each over a 10-year period
- Analyze District-wide facilities needs & requirements
- Report on assessment of individual building and site conditions
- Identify potential sources of funding to implement the EFMP
- Provide data on historical, projected enrollment by school by grade
What State Law requires for the 10-Year EFMP (continued)

Chicago Public Schools must also . . .

- **Do a community analysis**, including
  - a study of current & projected demographics
  - land use
  - transportation plans
  - residential housing and commercial development
  - private schools inventory
  - water/sewage service expansion or redevelopment, and other municipal services
  - institutions of higher learning.

- **Distribute a preliminary Draft EFMP by May 1, 2013** to . . .
  - The City of Chicago, Cook County, Chicago Park District, CHA, CTA, local & state elected officials; and to
  - Every attendance center (all CPS and Charter schools)
    - Schools must make the Draft available to LSCs, Parent Advisory bodies, and all parents/guardians of CPS students.
Public Input, Community Engagement

Additionally, State law requires that CPS’ CEO must publish a procedure for conducting public hearings and submitting public comments on the Draft EFMP. Since P.A. 97-0474 became law in 2011, the CEFTF has urged CPS to work with the Task Force to ensure inclusive, widespread public participation in creating a shared educational vision and the Educational Facilities Master Plan; and to utilize “best practices” for master planning already demonstrated by other school districts.
THE CEFTF’S RECOMMENDATIONS:
CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE, FORWARD-LOOKING
10-YEAR PLAN FOR CHICAGO’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS
THE CEFTF RECOMMENDS “BEST PRACTICES” IN EDUCATIONAL FACILITY MASTER PLANNING

- An inclusive, informed, democratic process to develop shared educational vision
  - parent/educator/community participation in planning meetings on-site in schools
- Accurate data on which to base decisions
  - Updated data on facility conditions
  - Comprehensive community analysis
  - Research-based enrollment projections with assumptions about the future explicitly stated and justified
- Broad engagement, education of stakeholders to understand, develop Educational Program Design Specifications in keeping with educational vision:
  - Uses school utilization to reduce economic, racial and cultural isolation in schools; provide support spaces for nurses, counselors, social workers and psychologists; encourage community use; and provide adequate spaces for gyms, auditoriums, and other common spaces for school and joint use
- Fair and equitable distribution of space and capital funds, identification of schools and neighborhoods with the greatest needs
Why Should Planning Precede Closures/Consolidations of CPS’ Neighborhood Public Schools?

- Neighborhood Change is the only “constant”. The 10-Yr Plan must anticipate future educational and capacity needs along with future community revitalization.
  - Chicagoans want and expect the City to help revitalize neighborhoods, add affordable housing, and promote a “family-friendly” city.
  - Experts anticipate recovery from economic recession, a rebound in housing market.
- CPS needs substantive and broad public input to shape a shared educational vision for the District – which has not yet occurred.
- Great schools anchor great neighborhoods, help stabilize, improve residential property values (National Taskforce on Anchor Institutions, 2009).
- Mass school closings now perpetuate wasteful capital spending, not truly fiscally prudent. Planning first helps ensure good stewardship of limited capital funds.
- Eliminating capacity now undermines CPS’ ability to deliver high-quality programs, crowding relief, in the future.
CPS' DRAFT EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES MASTER PLAN: CONCERNS AND SHORTCOMINGS

CPS does not provide a clear Educational Vision for the District: Best practices call for creating a vision that is broadly accepted and embraced by the public.
- CPS has not engaged stakeholders in developing the Vision.

CPS did not seek widespread public input for the Draft Plan:
- **Dec 2012-Apr 2013:** Emailed Principals to complete an online survey with their LSC Chair only (and not all LSC members). Hundreds of schools have yet to respond.
- **Jan-early Mar 2013:** Did intensive outreach to parents/guardians, the media, and schools about Under-Utilization & identifying schools to be closed; over 20,000 people attended. **No information on the EFMP was distributed or discussed.** CPS staff reviewed transcripts for any public comments that might address schools’ future needs.
- **Mar-Apr 2013:** Posted ads on some CTA transit routes (‘Textizen’ social media tool); created a “MyCPSVision” webpage. **Public response has been minimal.**
  - Identity of Respondents to online mycpsvision survey unclear; those who text not identified; conflicting info about which CTA routes posted it;
  - **No pro-active outreach to parents/guardians, teachers, principals or LSCs that these input options were available.**
A 10-Year Plan Anticipates Space Needs – Driven by the Educational Vision and Educational Program Design Specifications

- CPS needs a meaningful Space Utilization formula based on Educational Programs’ space needs. – known as “Educational Specifications,” or Education Program Design.
- CPS’ Draft 10-Year EFMP hints that CPS is moving in this direction.
- But since CPS’ current Utilization formula ignores educational program space needs, mass closures/consolidations eliminate capacity. DOWNSIZING NOW constrains CPS’ ability to deliver . . .
  - Overcrowding Relief
  - Class Sizes in keeping with State standards for SPED
  - CPS’ own class size standards and promises and CPS’ Collective Bargaining Agreement with CTU
  - STEM, IB, PRE-K, and COMMON CORE Educational Programs, and
  - SPACE for ART, MUSIC, RECESS, and COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS
How to Create a Vision: “Where do we want to be in 10 years?”

5-step Visioning Process (E.W. Chance, 1992, "Visionary Leadership In Schools: Successful Strategies For Developing And Implementing An Educational Vision")

1. Development and clarification of a personal vision by school district leaders (superintendent, central office personnel, building administrators, board members, lead teachers, etc.)
2. Development of an overall organizational vision through the involvement of community leaders, parents, teachers, staff members, board members, administrators, students, community and/or educational dissenters
3. Communicate the vision
4. Actualize the vision
5. Sustain the vision process

According to national experts, an EMFP should (Building Educational Success Together, 2009)

1. Be informed by the needs of communities through inclusive community engagement at a granular level
2. Identify goals that match communities’ needs with the resources the district can bring
3. Involve teachers and staff

http://cssrs.ou.edu/fiels/vision.pdf
Is CPS’ Vision a “Rear-View” Mirror Vision? “Half of our Public Schools Are Half-Empty”

While CPS sees an “Under-Utilization Crisis” in the rear-view mirror (looking back over the past decade) the CEFTF found . . .

- CPS’ Space Utilization Standards do not comply with State Law.
- Multiple Reports of CPS using inaccurate “room counts”.
- CPS’ Space Utilization Standards do not account for current Class Size Limits for Special Education students; penalize schools with higher-than-district wide average percentage of Special Education students and schools that use Title 1 funds to lower class size in the early grades for low-income children of color.
- **CPS ignores best practices in use in other major school districts for defining educational program space needs.**
- “Apples to Apples” Analysis showed **CPS’ current formula “inflates” degree of under-utilization, under-states degree of overcrowding – not a sound basis for projecting future capacity need.**
- CPS Top Official to CEFTF: **Our formula is “a blunt instrument”**.
Current CPS Utilization Formula “Inflates” Under-Utilization, Under-Reports Overcrowding

http://policy.cps.k12.il.us/Policies.aspx
Current CPS Utilization Formula “Inflates” Under-Utilization, Under-Reports Overcrowding
(Continued)

The problem comes in when CPS wants to use the average maximum of students per room as the midpoint of its formula range.

So instead of using the contractual maximum of students in the classroom as the maximum in the range for the school, like so:

Apples to Apples in Chicago Public Schools, a project with Raise Your Hand

http://cpsapples2apples.wordpress.com/2013/01/24/space-utilization-does-central-office-use-36-as-the-average-maximum-class-size-or-not/
Current CPS Utilization Formula Out of Step with Class Sizes, Approaches in other IL School Districts

The CTU’s analysis of class sizes in Illinois found:

- Chicago’s average class sizes at the early childhood grades (K-1) are larger than 95% of all Illinois school districts.
- On average across all elementary grades, Chicago has the 14th highest class size averaged across the elementary grades (K-8).

http://www.ctunet.com/quest-center/research/position-papers/class-sizes

Additional Research: Glen Ellyn, IL District 41’s Space Utilization Study

- Is based on quantitative and qualitative criteria
- Considered many factors CPS does not, such as . . .
  - Classroom size, special programs, bldg size and capacity of infrastructure (restrooms, lunchrooms, hallways, etc.) to support students’ common needs, how district’s current facility utilization compared with similar facilities throughout the country - and more
  - Engaged local school principals, custodians, teachers, curriculum specialists, administrative support staff, psychologists in assessing educational space needs.
CPS’ 10 Year Draft EFMP is Based on Inaccurate & Incomplete Data

- Updated Facility Condition Assessments Incomplete
  - Only 6 of proposed Closures/Consolidations have updated assessments; only 212 schools’ assessments have been updated district-wide
  - Without updated assessments, CPS’ “Capital Cost Avoidance”/”Savings” estimates for closings unreliable
  - So is CPS’ overall estimate of district facility needs
- CPS does not provide methodology, supporting data for its operating cost estimates, or operating savings for downsizing now.
- Enrollment, demographic projections questionable...
  - No explanation of CPS’ methodology, calculations
  - Questionable use of newly invented “Community” definitions/boundaries to aggregate neighborhood-level data
  - Longer-range population/enrollment estimates missing – the Draft EFMP enrollment projections are for 2011-2016, not 2013 - 2023
Current, Future Community Development = Need For Greater Future Capacity

CPS’ Draft EFMP Community Analysis Incomplete; No Strategy for Ensuring Comprehensive analysis:

- Relies almost exclusively on CHA data
- Extent of intergovernmental coordination unclear; no concrete “next steps” outlined
- No strategy for documenting current, future private-sector driven development
- No projection of future demand for affordable family housing
- Ignores forecasts of housing market recovery, redevelopment of Chicago’s foreclosed single- and multi-family housing stock
- Focused on past housing, historic economic downturn – not on future redevelopment
City-wide, Neighborhoods are Changing; Over 7,000 New Housing Units Approved in 2011-12 Alone

CPS’ draft FMP relies primarily on CHA housing plans for each community area. Other data sets are needed.

Best Practices: New York City provides a detailed projection of new housing production annually.

Proposed Best Practice: Recognize schools as neighborhood anchors, incentivize redevelopment around them.
IS CPS’ “Right-sizing” Strategy – BEFORE planning for the long term – Fiscally Prudent?

Draft EFMP Lacking Details on Vacant, ‘Surplus’ Facilities”

- CPS currently owns 24 vacant buildings – unsold for over a decade. CPS’ proposed Closures/Consolidations will ADD 61 vacant schools to that total.
- CPS has not developed or disclosed a plan for marketing, selling vacant school buildings.
- Vacant school buildings add to blight, undercut local property values.

Has CPS considered the taxpayers’ investments over time?

- CPS had spent nearly $173 MILLION on repairs, modernizations or expansions in the schools that would be left vacant.

(Source: Chicago Public Schools Capital Improvement Programs, 1996-2013 report past capital spending projects totaling $172,928,417 in facilities to be closed/consolidated)

CPS will now rush to spend $155 MILLION on facility upgrades for Welcoming Schools before the start of the 2013-14 School Year.

- Without updated facility assessments
- With just weeks to plan, contract for construction projects
CEFTF PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Chicago Public Schools should plan FIRST, and put all proposed School Actions “on hold” until . . .

• A revised utilization formula which bases “efficiency” on educational program design is put in place.

• Updated facility condition assessments are completed, particularly for schools affected by proposed Closures/Consolidations and Co-Locations – including Welcoming Schools.

• The public has time, opportunity to comment on, carefully review Draft 10-Year Educational Facilities Master Plan.

• A truly comprehensive Community Analysis is completed.

• A full and transparent cost/benefit analysis is undertaken.

• CPS commits to and carries out a robust, inclusive planning effort based on best practices.