Overview of Research & Findings Leading to The Task Force Recommendations

Illinois General Assembly’s Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force
Co-Chairs: State Representative Cynthia Soto and State Senator Heather Steans

March 11, 2011
Illinois Public Act 96-0803

“Established the Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force* to ensure that school facility-related decisions are made with the input of the community and reflect educationally sound and fiscally responsible criteria.”

Website for list of TF members, detailed info, meeting agendas and notes at:

www.isbe.net/CEF

*Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force also referred to as the “CEFTF”
Background: The Issues & Problems Addressed by the CEFTF

- The General Assembly affirms the right of students to equal access to high-quality educational facilities & educational opportunities.
- The ILGA also affirms the need for safe, educationally adequate & appropriate school facilities for all students.
- The statute seeks to ensure broad public input in the facility-related decisions of the Chicago Public Schools.
- How have students been affected by CPS's “School Actions”? (Closings, Phase-Outs, Consolidations, New School Creation, Turn-Arounds)
- How do we ensure facility-related decisions, investments and management are made in a fair, transparent, equitable, and cost-effective manner that produces educationally adequate & appropriate facilities for all students?
- CEFTF solicited broad public feedback on its Preliminary Recommendations (3 Public Hearings in February, written feedback).
Overview of CPS Educational Facilities

Chicago Public Schools data provided to the CEFTF reveal the following “Big Picture”:

- 642 School Buildings are in active use
  - Total School Space: Approximately 60 million square feet (SF)
  - 683 Active School “Organizations” (“schools” where instruction takes place) operate in these 642 buildings.
  - 41 School Buildings operate as “Co-locations” – more than one active school organization in the same building, with 35,152 students in attendance
  - CPS now has 71 Charter Schools, with 33,701 students, operated by 31 organizations.
CPS Facilities Overview: Capacity & Utilization

- According to CPS:
  - **Capacity** of the Chicago Public School system’s school buildings is 630,460 students, based on CPS’s standard –but often challenged - formula for determining capacity.
  - **2010-2011 enrollment** is **402,426** (as of Dec 1, 2010)
  - CPS data given to the CEFTF identifies its district-wide utilization at 64%
  - But recently, CPS officials revised the system-wide capacity figure downward, to **480,000***. This is not reflected in the data CPS provided to the CEFTF in October 2010.
  - Historically CPS has used “under-utilization” as a reason for closing or consolidating schools.

* Statement of CPS Interim CEO in WBEZ Public Radio Interview, March 2011.
Analysis of Capacity and Utilization

- **Capacity** is a function of program—class size, school size, special education services offered, early childhood education, science, music, library and other specialty spaces available, as well as the efficiencies of the building itself.

- A modern definition of CPS capacity – to determine utilization - would indicate that the district needs an average (over all grades and types of schools) of **150 gross square feet per student** to meet educational program requirements.

- CPS identifies **224 schools** as utilizing less than 50% of their ‘capacity’—but there is clearly a problem: CPS currently operates with an average of **96 gross square feet per student** (over all grade levels and school types).
CPS Capacity/Utilization Measures at Odds with National Standards & Best Practices

- **CPS Definition**: “Total Capacity relates directly to the number of classroom spaces available to the school. . . . spaces not designed as classrooms . . . are excluded from capacity calculations. . . . Total Capacity is defined as the sum of the number of classrooms measuring 600 square feet or more (“Average” or “A” sized classrooms) multiplied by thirty, plus the number of classrooms measuring less than 600 square feet (“Below Average” or “BA” sized classrooms) multiplied by fifteen. Total Capacity = [(A X 30) + (BA X 15)].” (CPS Presentation to CEFTF, Oct. 21, 2010)

- **National Standards**: Are based on a recommended “Gross Square Feet” per student, which includes all spaces in the school needed to provide an adequate and appropriate educational experience. The national median standard for elementary schools is 125 gross square feet per elementary school student.
CPS Flawed Formula Leads to Inaccurate Conclusions about “Under-Utilization”, Bad Decisions

Using the national median for school space utilization, (125 GSF for elementary schools), many schools deemed “under-utilized” by CPS would in fact, be “at capacity” or even over-crowded.

CPS policy states that capacity over 80% is over-crowded.
Students & Schools Impacted by Closings & Consolidations

From 2001 to 2010, CPS closed 72 schools
-- Impacting 21,197 students*
  • 83% African-American
  • 15% Latino
  • 15% with learning disabilities
  • 91% eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch program (poverty measure)
  • The overall number of homeless students impacted is not known, but is estimated by Chicago Coalition for the Homeless to be in the hundreds.

• **Andersen** School was performing, but was phased out as a new school (LaSalle Magnet II) moved in to “share” the building.
• **Abbott** was not failing academically, but was closed for under-utilization. The building is now occupied by Air Force Academy and is even more underutilized than before. Now occupied by Air Force Academy, it is even more under-utilized than before.
• **Raymond** was deemed under-utilized. Today Perspectives Charter operates in their building, still under-utilized by CPS standards.
• The performing **Carpenter** students were phased out for underutilization, and the Ogden expansion moved in with new capital spending to support their school.

*Students displaced and students in designated “receiving” schools.
Chicago Public Schools spent approximately $4.6 billion in capital projects since 1996.

There are another $1.4 billion of projects in progress or planned through the Modern Schools Across Chicago Initiative.

. . . Totaling nearly $6 billion in facility investments.

While CPS assesses each building’s condition and needs, criteria for capital spending priorities system-wide are not clear:

- $625 million of the nearly $1.14 billion in capital funds spent for FY2006-2010 was spent on only 67 of 603 Chicago Public Schools.
- No capital funds were spent in 330 Chicago Public Schools between FY2006-2010.
Current Facility Needs Assessment Compared to 2006-2010 Spending

- CPS says that correcting problems identified as “Phase 1 and Phase 2” deficiencies are its top priorities.
- 43% ($457 of $835 million) of Phase 1, Exterior Envelope (Roof, Masonry, Windows) - were addressed.
- 16% ($302 million of $1.8 billion) of Phase II, the MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing) - needs were addressed.
- 31% ($503.8 million of $1.6 billion) of the Phase III, Interiors and Program Enhancements - were addressed.
- 12% ($36 of $311 million) of the Phase IV, Site (Landscaping, Parking, Athletic Fields) - needs were addressed.
Tremendous Facility Needs Unmet

- 92 CPS schools need an average of $137 per sq ft—a total of $750 million—to bring them into good repair.
  - 44,095 students attend these schools
    - 85% are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch
    - 12.1% are special education students
    - 12.8% are English Language Learners
  - The average GSF per student in these schools is 139 GSF (these schools not under-utilized by national standards)
- The average capital investment still needed in the other schools is much lower - $51 per sq ft.
Maps: Schools with Highest/Lowest Per SF Facility Investments
CPS: Annual Capital Obligations

Projects by Fiscal Year

- $0
- $200,000,000
- $400,000,000
- $600,000,000
- $800,000,000
- $1,000,000,000
- $1,200,000,000


Red: New Construction
Blue: Renovations
## CPS: Annual Capital Obligations

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<th>Renovations</th>
<th>New Construction</th>
<th>Total</th>
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CPS: Aggregate Capital Budget

Funding Sources (1998-2010)

- Local: 92%
- State: 7%
- Federal: 1%

Legend:
- Local
- State
- Federal
How states stack up in support for school construction funding

Source: State Capital Spending on PK-12 School Facilities, 21st Century School Fund and the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, November 2010

Illinois provides only about 8% of total school district capital outlay

State Share of Capital Outlay
Recap and Summary:
CEFTF Preliminary Reform Recommendations
Lack of Master Planning = Inequality of Access to Educationally Adequate, Appropriate Schools

- After spending $4.6 billion, how is it that we *still* have 92 schools in such poor condition?
- Allocating spending so that “everyone got something” is not strategic or cost-effective: Schools’ needs and CPS spending need to be better aligned.
- With scarce resources, CPS must balance school modernization with new construction.
- CPS’s school capacity formula is flawed, yet drives crucial decisions.
- Without a master plan, CPS spent millions to repair or modernize schools that were then demolished or closed.
- There are great disparities, inequitable spending varying widely from school to school.
Task Force Preliminary Recommendations

- Facility-related decisions must be aligned with educational goals and based on the students well-being and learning first.
- CPS should be required to have a 10-year long-range Facility Master Plan -- developed in collaboration with community, parents, LSCs, educators and other stakeholders.
- Transparency must exist through access to accurate and well-documented information in capital spending, assessments, actions, and openings.
- Decisions should be collaborative, inclusive, and accountable.
- A Citizen Oversight Panel will ensure accountability and governance.
- School actions -with the existing students' interests as a priority - must be accompanied by clear, convincing evidence and an Educational Impact Statement (EIS).
Preliminary Recommendations...

The General Assembly should predicate CPS’s State funding for school facilities on the following requirements:

- Creation of a 10-Year Master Plan, and 5-Year Capital Programs, based on educational goals and vision, as well as physical needs assessment; developed with public input and participation.
- Transparent, publicly available annual capital budgets and annual capital spending reports.
- Evidence of intergovernmental and inter-agency coordination in establishing the long-range Plan.
- A transparent process setting priorities based on clear criteria.
Preliminary Recommendations . . .

- Collection and public disclosure of adequate information about facilities, including physical condition and educational “specifications”, student achievement measures, student and community demographics, maintenance and capital investment costs, and more (see Recommendations for more details)
- Ongoing public oversight of CPS’ capital planning and spending
- Equitable facility investment and utilization when schools are “co-located”
- Transparency and fairness, with strong public and Local School Council input in School Actions decision making
- Required “Educational Impact Statement” before taking School Actions.
- Substantive and sustained support services for students in transition due to CPS facility-related decisions.
Acknowledgements

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To learn more about the 21st Century School Fund and BEST, go to:  [www.21csf.org](http://www.21csf.org)