Illinois General Assembly’s
Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force
February 2011
Convened by Co-Chairs State Representative Cynthia Soto and Senator Heather Steans

Chicago Public School’s Educational Facilities: Task Force Findings & Recommendations
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.”

*Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force also referred to as the “CEFTF”*
The Process—since April 2010

- 10 Task Force meetings (open to the public)
- 4 Subcommittees, totaling more than 16 meetings:
  1. Public Input
  2. Facilities Master Planning
  3. CPS Policy Review
  4. Facility Needs, Spending & Funding
- 3 Public Hearings with 257 attendees
- 7 Focus Groups of 35 people (principals, teachers, parents, youth, organizations, elected officials [twice])
- 16 written testimonies (5 via email)
- Presentations by: CPS departments, 21st Century School Fund, Renaissance School Fund, Academy for Urban School Leadership, City of Chicago Department of Community Development, IL Center for Violence Prevention.
- Round 2 Public Hearings in February (3) to review and respond to recommendations

Website for list of TF members, detailed info, meeting agendas and notes at: [www.isbe.net/CEF](http://www.isbe.net/CEF)
Public Findings on School Actions and Student Assignment

School Actions
- School actions have a disparate impact.
- School actions have increased student violence.
- CPS failed to provide a “Student Impact Assessment” for school actions.
- School actions have affected some populations multiple times.
- School actions do not always account for performance and learning.

Student Assignment
- New non-traditional schools and traditional attendance area neighborhood schools are not treated equitably.
- New non-traditional school governing bodies lack public scrutiny and Local School Councils.
- Attendance boundary decisions are often altered to exclude or include a particular group.
- New schools may exclude the most underserved children and/or have greater choice in determining which students it enrolls (i.e. high needs, lowest performing, behavioral students often excluded).
Public Findings on Planning, Spending, Public Engagement and Accountability

Facility Master Planning and Capital Spending
- There is no clear process or accountability for how decisions are made on school actions, school openings, and school capital investment and new construction strategies.
- There are inequities in capital expenditures.
- The public does not have access to information about planned capital projects or the criteria for setting capital funding priorities.

Public Engagement
- CPS lacks a clear, transparent parent and community process for making educational facility decisions.
- Parent and community voices are often ignored and not-validated even if accurate.
- Decisions do not weigh student interests and opportunities as the most important.

Governance and Accountability
- CPS fails to follow its own policies on school actions.
- CPS lacks transparency and a clear process for decisions on building new schools, and selling, leasing, and related facility decisions.
- There is no system of oversight of capital plans or spending.

Other
- Overlying themes related to decisions and actions: race, demographics, utilization, co-sharing, gentrification, money, community development house, CHA Plan for Transformation, public participation, facility repairs, student assignment, academic performance, attendance boundaries, transportation, and safety.
- There is a negative stigma of students and educators from closed schools that creates difficulties for students in transferring and educators in hiring.
Testimony from the Public

- **Abbott** was not failing academically, but was closed for underutilization. The current school action policy allowed the designated receiving school for Abbott to be lower performing. The building is now occupied by Air Force Academy and is even more underutilized than before.

- **Raymond** was underutilized. Today Perspectives Charter operates inside their building, still underutilized 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.

- **Gladstone** received students from **Jefferson** and **Riis**; years later it closed after redevelopment displaced housing.

- **Andersen** School was performing, but was phased out for a new LaSalle Magnet II where existing Andersen students were excluded. They shared the building during a phase out and witnessed CPS invest in the new LaSalle Magnet II.

- Neighborhood students lose access to new schools:
  - **Albany Park** was turned over to a charter.
  - **Westinghouse** is part-selective enrollment.
The Public’s Questions

- Why did Jones College Prep receive $23.6 million for major building improvements AND a $106 million for a new school?
- Attucks experienced an emergency closure in spite of regular building assessments. Now students are bussed to an empty school across the street from another neighborhood school, maintaining its attendance boundaries. What happens to the old vacant building? Will attendance boundaries always be for a school outside of them with bussing?
- Why haven’t chronic overcrowding and poor conditions at Gallistel been addressed?
- When will Stowe get the repairs it needs?
- How are new construction and other priorities really determined, and how are needs among schools balanced across the entire school district?
- Who is actually determining how to rank and prioritize CPS’ capital investments?
Research and Analysis

Of Chicago Public School Data
Mary Filardo, Executive Director
21st Century School Fund, Washington, DC

www.21csf.org
(202) 745-3745
Utilization—A key factor in closings

According to CPS:

- **Capacity** of the Chicago Public School system’s school buildings is 630,460 students
- **2010-2011 enrollment** is 402,426 as of Dec 1, 2010
- CPS identifies its district wide utilization at 64%
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 vs 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.
- Chicago Public Schools, currently operates with an average of 96 gross square feet per student.
Comparing CPS Space per Sq Ft Standards to the Nation

Source: 15th Annual School Construction Report, School Planning and Management, Table 5, February 2010
Flawed Standards for CPS Capacity

- CPS identifies 224 schools as utilizing less than 50% of their ‘capacity’—but there is clearly a problem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>CPS Capacity</th>
<th>Enrollment 2010-11</th>
<th>% Utilized per CPS</th>
<th>Bldg GSF</th>
<th>Actual GSF/Student</th>
<th>GSF if using capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clark PK-8th</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43,600</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Academy</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36,400</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtenay</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29,400</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
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<td>Esmond</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>72,600</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Not all schools are fully utilized, but CPS’ formula doesn’t accurately identify which ones are and by how much.
Chicago Public School Capital Spending 1996-2010

- 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 (paid for by City of Chicago TIF funds).

Criteria for capital spending priorities were undefined:

- Over half ($625 million) of the nearly $1.14 billion in capital funds spent from 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.

*As of 4/16/2010; Analyzed by 21st Century School Fund in Washington, DC.*
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 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

- 92 CPS schools need an average of $137 per square foot—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 square ft per student in these schools is 139 SF (so these schools are not under-utilized by national standards)
- The average capital investment still needed in the other schools is much lower - $51 per square foot.
The Bottom Line

- Money is being spent all the time without a plan.
- There are significant winners, but too many schools and students are chronically ‘left behind’ with extremely high facility needs.
- School actions are based on performance, capital, or utilization criteria that shift from year to year,
  - but utilization and needs assessments are flawed; criteria are applied inconsistently across the city, and CPS capital spending is neither transparent or accountable.
- An analysis of CPS’ own data supports the public’s findings.
CEFTF’s Summary of Analysis

- After spending $4.6 billion, how is it that we *still* have 92 schools in such poor condition with facility repair needs?
- Priorities for fixing schools compared with building new schools are not clear.
- Schools’ facility needs assessments and CPS spending need to be aligned to address what schools need compared to what they received.
- Money was spent to repair or modernize schools that were then demolished or closed.
- There is evidence of unexplained disparities: Inequitable spending varying widely from school to school.
- CPS school utilization information is flawed, yet drives crucial decisions.
- Allocating spending so that “everyone got something” is not always driven by need.
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).
Soliciting More Feedback

- **Public Hearing Dates:**
  - Friday, February 18, 2011, 10:00 AM – Noon
    Bilandic Bldg Auditorium, 160 N. LaSalle 5th Floor
  - Wednesday, February 23, 2011, 5:30 - 7:30pm
    Northern Trust Bank, 7801 S. State Street
  - Thursday, February 24, 2011, 5:00 – 7:30pm
    Roberto Clemente HS, 1147 N. Western Avenue

- **Written feedback will be received until 5 PM, TUESDAY, March 8, 2011.**
  - Go to ISBE website to review Recommendations and download a Feedback Form: [www.isbe.net/CEF](http://www.isbe.net/CEF)
  - Complete the Feedback Form or share general comments. Submit it via fax or email:
    - Email: ceftf.publicinput@gmail.com
    - Fax: Public Input Co-Chair, Valencia Rias @ 312-236-7927