Call to order: Task Force Co-Chair Soto called the meeting to order at approximately 5:50 PM.


b. Establishment of a quorum: With 9 members in attendance, quorum is established.

Also in attendance: Dr. Nona Burney, Alternate for Grand Blvd. Federation; Sen. William Delgado, former Co-Chair, CEFTF; 27th Ward Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr.; representative of 1st Ward Alderman Bob Fioretti; CEFTF pro bono Advisor Jacqueline Leavy; Speaker’s Office staff John Keigher (by phone conferencing).

The Co-Chair then explained the purpose of the meeting: The Task Force has called this special session because CPS only announced these proposed actions as of Wednesday, March 23rd, stating that CPS has to act in these cases on an urgent basis. The Task Force meeting has been called on an urgent basis because while 4,800 children in over a dozen schools potentially would be impacted by CPS’s Plan- including 102 homeless students, CPS did not provide the Task Force with any evidence to back up their plan, despite numerous opportunities to do so. Members of the public also contacted various Task Force Members, asserting that CPS made these plans without consulting with the affected schools and communities. Because the Task Force is mandated by state law to ensure broad public input on CPS school actions and facility decisions, the CEFTF has invited the public to put their concerns on the record here.

II. Presentation of Preliminary CEFTF Research Analysis

Rep. Soto then introduced and summarized the formal presentation of the Task Force’s preliminary analysis of CPS’ proposed School Actions. The CEFTF’s key findings include:

- CPS’s figures for how many students could fit into these schools, and how “under-used” the buildings are, do not reflect or follow the national norms and standards for educational facility capacity measures. For example:
  - If Beidler students move to the Cather School, or vice-versa, the combined school would be above 80% utilized.
  - A newly-consolidated Avondale/Logandale Campus would also remain overcrowded.
  - A consolidation of Schneider and Jahn schools also creates overcrowding. If Schneider relocates into Jahn, the Schneider building will be only 21% utilized by Alcott HS (as measured by national norms/standards for capacity).
• Despite CPS statements that these schools are not academically viable, they have all been making steady academic progress.

• Most of these consolidation plans will move children from better facilities to worse facilities, that need more repairs, or to schools that haven’t gotten much investment:
  o Some of these schools have gotten ZERO dollars since the beginning of REN2010 in 2004, including Jahn School, and Avondale and Logandale.
  o Some of these schools got improvements and are better facilities today, because the current school community advocated for them. Examples: Beidler and Tilton.

• The research shows that in most instances, neighborhood children would be moved out to make more space for charter schools. In the case of Urban Prep Charter HS-East Garfield, whether the charter stays at Cather or is moved to Beidler, either building would then be “under-utilized.”

The CEFTF’s pro bono advisor, Jacqueline Leavy, then presented the full PowerPoint presentation, which is attached as part of these Minutes.

III. Public Comment: CPS closure and consolidation announcements

a. Schneider Elementary INTO Jahn Elementary
b. Carpenter Elementary INTO Talcott Elementary
c. Andersen Community Academy INTO LaSalle Magnet II
d. Avondale Elementary INTO Logandale Middle School
e. Cather Elementary INTO Beidler Elementary
f. Best Practice HS, Chicago Discovery Academy & Bowen Global Visions INTO New Millennium HS
g. Tilton INTO Marconi Elementary
h. Other schools yet to be identified?

Approximately 200 people attended the special session, and over 40 members of the public made Public Comments. Teachers, students, Local School Council members, community organizations, pastors, principals, and parents all provided testimonies. Comments were made regarding all of the proposed school actions, with the exceptions of Schneider and Carpenter Schools.

There were no public comments submitted in support of any of the School Actions; rather, the members of the public presenting testimony repeatedly cited the same or very similar concerns, namely:

• The announcements by CPS are so late in the current school year as to preclude students’ applying to selective enrollment schools;
• It is too late for meaningful planning to support students, families, and receiving schools in these transitions;
• CPS failed to notify or work with local school communities on alternatives;
• Most witnesses indicated that the information the potentially impacted schools did receive was either incomplete or contradicted by subsequent communications from CPS;
• The safety of students will be compromised in most instances if these School Actions are approved, since children will be forced to travel outside their immediate communities;
• The history of capital investment in these facilities is such that improvements seem to have been made in anticipation of turning over the facilities to charter schools; and
• Neither CPS’ analysis of academic achievement or building utilization is accurate from the perspectives of the educators and parents/guardians of students in these schools.

The ILGA Members appointed to the CEFTF, as well as Senator Delgado, all responded to members of the public as they testified. The legislators thanked the members of the public for their testimonies, and expressed their frustration at CPS’ last-minute announcement, and failure to consider past Task Force requests for greater transparency and communication with the CEFTF before making School Action plans.

IV. Conclusion

Senator Martinez moved, and Dr. Burney seconded the motion, that the CEFTF will call on CPS to refrain from acting on these School Actions until such time as the General Assembly acts on the Task Force’s recommendations, which are being introduced in legislation. Co-Chair Rep. Soto called the question. The motion passed on a roll call vote of 8 “Yeas” and 1 Abstention.

At approximately 7:45 pm, the special session of the CEFTF was adjourned at the call of the Chair.