I. Call to order
Co-Chair Rep. Cynthia Soto called the meeting to order at approximately 10:15 A.M.
A. Roll call: The following Task Force members were in attendance: State Rep. Cynthia Soto, CEFTF Co-Chair; Mr. Travis Brooks, representing State Rep. Esther Golar; Cecile Carroll, Blocks Together; Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless; Valencia Rias, Designs for Change; Andrea Lee, Grand Blvd. Federation; Bill Gerstein, Chicago Public Schools.
B. Establishment of a quorum: With 6 voting members present, quorum was not established. The Co-Chair announced that the Task Force meeting would proceed as a “Subject Matter” session.
C. Welcoming remarks: Co-Chair Soto welcomed the members of the public in attendance, and thanked them for their participation.
D. Approval of prior minutes: In the absence of quorum, approval of the Minutes of the July 14th, 2011 meeting was tabled.

II. Updates on Implementation of SB 630
A. CPS Consultant on the Facility Master Plan: The Co-Chair called on Task Force pro bono Advisor Jacqueline Leavy to update the CEFTF about what consulting firm Chicago Public Schools may engage to launch the Facility Master Planning (“FMP”) process called for in the Act. Ms. Leavy reported that a global management consulting firm McKinsey & Co. (with offices in Chicago) has been meeting with CPS officials. Mr. Gerstein confirmed that was the case, but stated that CPS will be bringing in a different consultant to do the actual work on the FMP. Ms. Heybach and Ms. Rias asked Mr. Gerstein to provide the CEFTF with the information about the new consultant. Mr. Gerstein will follow up.
B. CEFTF Meeting with CPS Leaders and FMP Consultant: Co-Chair Soto announced that CPS has agreed to meet with a delegation from the CEFTF on September 27, 2011, at 11:00 AM. CEFTF members were provided with a copy of the letter sent to CPS Board Vice President Jesse Ruiz by Co-Chair Soto, and CEFTF member Sen. Martinez, Chair of the Task Force Subcommittee on Facility Needs, Spending & Funding. The letter asks CPS CEO J.C. Brizard, CPS Board President David Vitale, Mr. Ruiz, and a representative of the FMP consulting firm to meet with the CEFTF delegation. As of the Sept. 19th meeting, CPS has confirmed the participation of all of the CPS decision makers that Rep. Soto and Sen. Martinez had requested to be part of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss CPS’ implementation of the provisions of the Act, and to ensure ongoing collaboration between CPS and the Task Force.
C. Key Benchmarks between now and January 2012: Rep. Soto then announced some of the key deadlines that CPS is required to meet under the changes in State law.
- By Nov. 1st, 2011: Publication of CPS “School Action” Guidelines. Ms. Leavy recommended that at the Sept. 27th meeting with CPS officials, the Task Force’s representatives also ask about how CPS is preparing to draft “School Transition Plans” by December 1st, 2011 for any proposed “School Actions”. The public will have 21 days to comment on the proposed School Action Guidelines before the Board of Education may adopt them.

Discussion by Task Force Members: Mr. Gerstein explained that the newly established CPS “Portfolio Officer” and his division in CPS Central Office are now assigned the task of drafting the Guidelines. Oliver Sicot is the Chief Portfolio Officer. Mr. Gerstein then reported on the CPS “Community Action Council” process in several pilot communities-a neighborhood-level planning process, to identify their educational needs through stakeholder input and plans. He noted that the
CACs will present their plans and recommendations to CPS CEO Brizard either today (Sept. 19th), or on October 12th.

Ms. Rias pointed out that with South Shore’s CAC’s late start, the Council has yet to see a full draft of their emerging plan, and that CAC members are not informed about (not “cognizant” of) how their Plans will impact other CPS decision making. This has been a grey area.

Ms. Carroll suggested that it is important that CACs’ plans be shared with the CEFTF, and the broader public, and Ms. Rias added, also with CPS’ FMP consultant. Ms. Carroll stated that the CAC reports need to be part of the development of any Facility Master Plan. Ms. Carroll also recommended that all of the CACs need to be briefed on the changes in the State Law. She suggested that Task Force members provide the CACs with information about the Act.

Ms. Heybach asked Mr. Gerstein if CPS planned to make the CACs’ written reports available to the public and the CEFTF. Mr. Gerstein said that every CAC is working in its own ways, but he expected the reports would eventually become public. Ms. Heybach stated that CPS needs to clarify how it will respond to the CACs’ recommendations. She asked what impact or “standing” the CACs’ plan will have on CPS’ actions.

Ms. Lee reported that the Bronzeville CAC is working hard to have an open process, and while Council members have copies, their draft has not yet been made public. She then raised the issue of “Turn-Arounds”: Although the Act does not include “Turn-Arounds” in the definition of “School Actions,” the CEFTF should track these as well, due to their profound impact on students, families, and communities. She recommended that the Task Force should discuss alternative approaches to school improvement with CPS, rather than the style of “Turn-Arounds” CPS has been using. She also noted that CAC plans may have an important relationship to the provisions required now in State law, regarding facilities planning.

Co-Chair Soto agreed that the CACs need to be educated about the changes in the State Law, and that the Task Force should also reach out to the general public and to Local School Councils to ensure people are aware of the reforms.

Ms. Heybach asked that CPS provide the Task Force with a briefing on the development of the School Action Guidelines and School Transition Plans at a CEFTF meeting, prior to November 1st.

- By Dec. 1st, 2011: Announcement of CPS’ proposed School Actions, and release of Draft School Transition Plans. Ms. Leavy stated that this key benchmark was inadvertently omitted from the Agenda of today’s meeting. Co-Chair Soto duly noted this, and added this item to the list of Key Benchmarks.

Discussion: Several Task Force members commented on the need for clarity from CPS as to how local school stakeholders are to be included in drafting and finalizing School Transition Plans. Ms. Rias noted how important the new deadline for announcing School Actions will be, to give schools early notice, and allow students the option of applying for selective enrollment placements.

- By Jan. 1st, 2012: Facility Utilization and Performance Standards are to be developed by CPS and published on its website, with dissemination to several key stakeholder groups.

Discussion: Ms. Lee recommended that the CEFTF should identify experts in the field of educational facility planning to give the Task Force input about space utilization standards. This is in keeping with the national “best practices” research that the CEFTF did to develop its recommendations for the legislation, and she stated that other perspectives, standards in use in other cities, and knowledge building on this issue are critical moving forward.

Rep. Soto noted that past school closings based on “under-utilization” had often been controversial, and had not taken into account the educational program needs or after-school uses of our
neighborhood schools. She also expressed concern that in the past CPS did not consider the
demographic changes in communities, or the impact of new schools in lowering enrollment in any
given school year. She expressed her expectation that these failings will be corrected in
accordance with the new provisions in State law.

Ms. Rias added that as these standards are developed and used for the FMP, CPS’ consultant
needs to help devise a transparent, data-driven approach to defining the need and priorities for new
construction projects.

III. Public Comment

Austin Community Action Council representatives Mildred Wiley and Dwayne Truss: Ms. Wiley stated
that when the Austin CAC presents its Plan to CPS, the group is going to ask Mr. Brizard how the facility
needs related to the Austin plan are going to be addressed. She will express the opinion of the CAC that
the FMP process and the CAC process must come together. Mr. Truss stated that the Austin CAC
regards the enactment of SB 630 as very important, and has requested a guest speaker at its next
meeting (October 11, 2011) to explain the new reforms. Mr. Truss explained that the Austin community
had built its CAC of some 20+ active participants from a pre-existing Education Committee already
working through a community-wide effort called “Austin Coming Together” (“ACT”). Because their CAC
was able to come together quickly, Austin is the first CAC to publicly release its Plan (in late August)
through the local media. He has provided the Task Force’s pro bono advisor with a copy. He also
stated that their CAC had the active support of Austin’s 29th Ward Alderman Deborah Graham, who co-

Responses from the Task Force: Rep. Soto thanked the Austin CAC members for their comments, and
stated that the Task Force will reach out to all the CACs to brief them on the changes in the State law.
Ms. Carroll then asked the speakers about the Space Utilization figures cited in the report. Mr. Truss
and Mr. Gerstein both responded that these are the usual figures that CPS has been using. Mr. Truss
replied that the CAC has noted that these figures need to be carefully examined. Ms. Carroll explained
that CPS utilization data have been problematic in the past, and urged the community to make their own
assessment.

Mrs. Harris, PPEN, Grand Blvd Federation: commented that members of her community have
indications that CPS is already planning major decisions impacting their local schools, especially more
school closings and consolidations. She is concerned that CPS is making plans before their CAC’s
report is presented to Mr. Brizard. At a meeting she attended earlier today with Mr. Brizard, Mrs. Harris
reported that the CPS CEO believes there is excess capacity in CPS facilities, approximately “157,000
empty seats”.

Responses from the Task Force: Ms. Rias asked whether Mr. Brizard told parents in that meeting the
basis for his estimate of excess capacity. Mrs. Harris said he did not explain where/how he is getting
that figure. Mrs. Harris stated that she hopes CPS takes the CACs’ Recommendations seriously, and
does not pre-determine its decisions before those plans and the new provisions in State law are
addressed.

Mr. Kendrick, student member of the Ida B. Welles Preparatory Academy Local School Council:
Testified about current pressing problems at his school, which is co-located with Wendell Phillips HS.
Mr. Kendrick reported that there has been a flare-up of theft and burglary problems in his school. He
explained that even though they are sharing the facility, the Academy for Urban School Leadership,
which operates the Phillips HS Turn-Around, controls the building and is not being responsive to
problems his school is facing. He stated that unlike other Co-Locations, the Phillips/Welles campus has
no Campus Manager. He urged the Task Force to inquire about his school’s situation, and to make
sure that CPS’ new School Action Guidelines address problems with Co-Locations.

Responses from the Task Force: Rep. Soto stated that the CEFTF’s expectation is that CPS will
respect the definitions now in the law, and create clear guidelines and policies regarding Co-Locations.
Ms. Rias responded that CPS needs to evaluate Turn-Arounds, but is concerned that CPS is planning up to 18 new “Turn-Arounds” for the next school year.

Mr. Adourthus MacDowell, Local School Council Member, John M. Smyth Magnet School: commended the Task Force and General Assembly for enacting SB 630. He stated that many people are concerned about whether the new reforms will be implemented. In the past, the public has experience that CPS has not always respected state law, and cited the persistent erosion of Local School Councils as an example. He stated that “We can only expect what we inspect,” and urged the Task Force to monitor CPS closely. He also stated that members of the public all have to do their homework to understand what is called for in SB 630, and to also participate in its implementation.

IV. Conclusion

After thanking the members of the public for their comments, Co-Chair Soto proposed that the next full meeting of the CEFTF be held on either Sept. 30th or Oct. 14th. Staff will follow up, and notify all members. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:15 PM.