I. Call to order and welcome
   A. In attendance: State Rep. Soto; Cecile Carroll, Blocks Together; Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless; Andrea Lee (by phone) and Dr. Nona Burney, Grand Blvd Federation; Xian Barrett, Chicago Teachers Union; Dr. Clarice Berry, Chicago Principals and Administrators Association; Robert Runcie, Chicago Public Schools. There being only 7 members present, quorum is not established. The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Soto at 10:08 a.m.

   Staff in attendance: John Keigher, Speaker’s Office; Jessica Handy and Becky Locker, Senate President’s Office (by phone); Sarah Hartwick, House Republican staff (by phone); Jackie Leavy, pro bono advisor to the CEFTF; Mary Filardo, expert pro bono advisor to the CEFTF.

   B. Vacancies, Appointments Pending: Rep. Soto announced that a second vacancy has been created by Sen. Dan Cronin’s departure from the State Senate. To date Senate Minority Leader Radogno has not named replacements for either Sen. Cronin or Sen. Hultgren.

   C. Minutes of Previous Meetings: Lacking quorum, the Chair called for the Minutes of the prior meetings of October 21st, 2010 and November 9, 2010 to be put to the provisional approval (recommendation to approve) of those members present. The recommendation to approve both sets of Minutes was unanimous; formal adoption will be tabled until the next full meeting of the Task Force. However the provisional approval will permit the posting of the October 21st and November 9th minutes to the ISBE webpage, thereby providing public disclosure.

II. Presentation of Preliminary Research Results

   Mary Filardo, Expert Pro Bono Advisor, 21st Century School Fund, Building Educational Success Together.

   Ms. Filardo provided the Task Force members present with a briefing on the progress toward completion of an independent analysis of the data sets provided to the Task Force in mid-October 2010. Ms. Filardo distributed an alphabetized print-out, listing all CPS schools with the total capital spending from 1996-2010 as reported by CPS, to provide Task Force members with an accessible list of schools. The total investment per school varies widely, from as little as under $1,000 spent at the Chase School Annex, to tens of millions of dollars at some schools. Some 103 school facilities received less than $1 million in capital improvements over the 15-year period. More than half of all Chicago public school facilities received $5 million or less over the past 15 years. Ms. Filardo reported that these school facilities on average are 70 years old, which suggests they would likely have needed a great deal more investment than they received, just to keep pace with maintenance and replacement of aging systems.

   New school construction totals for various new buildings also varied widely: The recently completed Westinghouse College Prep HS cost $115.8 million to construct, while the Little Village HS cost just over $70.3 million. Ms. Rias stated that the apparent escalation in capital costs has been noted by school/community groups, and is a matter of great concern. Ms. Filardo responded that while construction costs usually increase over time, a full examination of the differences in costs between similar or comparable new construction projects will likely be beyond the reach of the pro bono research team, but might be addressed by better data collection and greater transparency on the part of CPS. Ms. Filardo did suggest that one best practice that the
Task Force and CPS might consider is the use of randomized audits of school construction projects to get at the variances in capital costs.

Ms. Filardo’s briefing prompted a discussion by Task Force members about the need to require greater transparency and better data collection, as well as a more transparent needs assessment process that establishes more balanced priorities. Dr. Burney, Ms. Heybach, Ms. Rias, Mr. Barrett, and Rep. Soto all expressed concern that before new construction projects are undertaken, CPS needs to prioritize pressing facility needs and deficiencies in existing school facilities, while providing transparency throughout the facility planning and investment process. Dr. Burney stressed that CPS should have a clear and specific set of standards that define the educational adequacy of all its facilities.

Mr. Runcie of Chicago Public Schools suggested that the Task Force may want to confer with the Council of Great City Schools regarding funding challenges for school construction, and the need for greater federal funding to the state and local school districts.

Ms. Filardo also distributed a print-out of capital spending through 2010 for capital projects that CPS identified as being related to the Renaissance 2010 Initiative, including capital spending on facilities that were closed and demolished; or closed and re-opened as a new school. The initial analysis shows that CPS has spent just over $721.578 Million on facilities for REN2010 new schools. Ms. Filardo emphasized that the materials she distributed are merely illustrative of the types of information that can be generated from analysis of the data sets that CPS has provided. She will continue to work with the Facility Needs, Spending & Funding Subcommittee to refine the key questions that the FNSF Subcommittee and the Task Force wish to address through examination of the CPS data.

The pro bono research team is still working to “clean” the data provided by CPS before an accurate final analysis of spending trends can be completed. The research team needs additional clarification on various issues, including square footage for some CPS facilities, especially additions; as well as further clarification on the disposition of some of CPS’ facilities.

Ms. Filardo then demonstrated the type of comparative analysis of facility spending that other public school districts conduct, e.g., the Washington DC Public Schools. The DCPS worked with 21st Century School Fund, Ms. Filardo’s organization, to establish a data collection system that enables facility planners to track facility spending by dollars invested per square foot; and develop plans and projections for future needed basic system maintenance, repair, replacement, and the scheduling of future major capital improvements. Ms. Filardo and other members of the pro bono research team will continue to work with the CPS data, and seek additional clarification and checks from CPS Operations Dept. staff and consultants.

Given the size and complexity of Chicago’s public school facilities portfolio, and the limitations of the citywide data available, Ms. Filardo suggested that the Task Force analyze in greater depth some sampling of schools. Ms. Lee of the Grand Blvd Federation noted that in her organization’s community service area, there are 40 public schools. Ms. Filardo encouraged GBF and the Task Force to collaborate on an in-depth analysis of this “sample” of schools. While some Task Force members expressed doubts as to whether such case study analysis is needed, Rep Soto encouraged the FNSF Subcommittee to consider Ms. Filardo’s suggestion. In any event, a quantitative analysis of CPS’ facility spending would be regarded as extremely useful by state legislators, as they consider what steps the General Assembly may take in the wake of the CEFTF’s work and findings.

III. Presentations from Invited Witnesses
   A. Chicago Public Schools Office of New Schools
   B. IFF (Illinois Facilities Fund)
   C. “Stand For Children”
None of the agencies invited to speak before the Task Force sent representatives. In a communication to the Task Force’s staff from the Speaker’s Office, Jonah Edelman of the group “Stand For Children” declined to testify, stating that his organization is focused on issues related to student achievement and not to any aspect of facilities.

Mr. Runcie of CPS noted that he had encouraged the Academy of Urban School Leadership (“AUSL”), which manages “Turn Around” initiatives in several public schools, to testify before the Task Force. Chairman Soto acknowledged the presence of Mr. Tim Cawley of AUSL, and invited him to make his presentation during the Public Input portion of the Agenda.

**IV. Preliminary Report Outlines from the Standing Committees**

Given the late start of the meeting, and the desire of AUSL and others to provide public input, the reports of the Public Input; Facility Master Planning; CPS Policy Review; and Facility Needs, Spending and Funding subcommittees were tabled for discussion. However the FMP Subcommittee Co-Chair, Ms. Carroll, distributed written copies of their preliminary report outline, “Six Elements of a Well-Managed Capital Improvement Plan;” and a detailed description of the “Capital Improvement Strategic Plan for the Albuquerque, New Mexico Public Schools”. (Please see attachments to the Minutes.)

**V. Public Input**

**A. Testimony by Greg Jackson, Illinois Center for Violence Prevention:** Mr. Jackson, the Executive Director of the Center, provided verbal testimony, and at the request of the Chair Rep Soto and Ms Heybach, he agreed to provide the Task Force with a written statement. This statement is in fact a study in progress that looks at the incidences and increases in violence when schools are closed, phased-out, and consolidated.

Mr. Jackson testified that in the real world, an increase in violence does appear to be linked to the closing and consolidation of schools. He explained that the ICVP has been conducting evidence-based, customized anti-violence programs in schools and communities, in conjunction with the State Dept. of Children & Family Services, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the federal government’s Center for Disease Control. These programs include anti-bullying initiatives and anti-violence curricular programs, aimed at de-fusing a climate of violence in and around public schools. Through its work, ICVP has identified certain key “protective factors” that contribute to violence prevention. These protective factors are lowered, removed or otherwise compromised when CPS closes and consolidates schools without adequate advance planning and provision of critical support services. These protective factors include such dynamics as familiarity with the travel route to and from school and home, availability of transportation, established relationships with adults, etc.

Mr. Runcie of CPS stated that CPS already comes up with a plan in the case of every school action aimed at mitigating the potential for violence. Mr. Jackson responded that more needs to be done. Ms. Heybach pointed out that homeless students are already vulnerable and marginalized and that their forced mobility in the wake of school actions tends to exacerbate the degree to which they are at risk. Mr. Jackson stated that the ICVP would strongly recommend that CPS collaborate with organizations like his to develop and implement an Anti-Violence and anti-bullying curriculum, especially for “receiving schools” that have an influx of students from a closed school. Mr. Barrett asked Mr. Jackson if he thought it would be helpful if CPS did a School Closing Impact study that addressed explicitly the potential for violence and ways to mitigate the potential for violence. Mr. Jackson replied that CPS needed to form more partnerships with groups like his that were experienced and knowledgeable in the field.

**B. Presentation by Academy for Urban School Leadership on “Turn-Around” Schools.**

Please see attached PowerPoint Presentation submitted by Tim Cawley of AUSL. (Special
Note: Please see below, and also as an attachment, the addendum to the AUSL presentation of 12/07/10, submitted by Mr. Cawley in response to the request of the Chair, for more information on AUSL’s non-CPS funding sources.)

Mr. Cawley gave a slide presentation which aims to “dispel the myth” that Turn-Around schools displace students, and that a “turn-around” means “everyone has to go.” He stated that system-wide, on average 30-35% of students do not return to the same school from year to year, and thus there is a citywide pattern of high student mobility. Rather, he argued that AUSL’s model of “whole school transformation” is the best way to improve neighborhood schools; and that by giving capital improvements to turn-around schools, CPS could ensure that its capital dollars were going to the neediest schools and students. At Sherman Elementary, AUSL’s first Turn-Around, it re-hired only one teacher, but she is still there. He stated that AUSL’s Turn-Arounds serve the same communities, students, and families as before they intervened.

When questioned about AUSL’s rate of re-hiring teachers who were in those schools, Mr. Cawley stated that only about one-third of teachers even re-apply; and that AUSL’s re-hire rate in very low. At Orr HS, AUSL re-hired 17 of 85 teachers, and the “regretted” hiring “so many” of them. Slides showed improvement in standardized test scores at several AUSL schools; however, they also showed that scores were improving in some schools before the turn-around action, if not at as rapid a rate of improvement as occurred post-turn-around.

Several task force members pointed out that many of the schools that were put into a Turn-Around were in deplorable condition, were not well maintained, and never received often-requested facility improvements aimed at supporting the schools’ academic programs. Mr. Cawley dismissed the idea of facility investments as a key element in improving student outcomes in struggling schools. He suggested that the CEFTF should look for a “return on investment” and support coupling facility investment with proven programmatic changes and improved outcomes, rather than continuing to invest in the worst-performing schools. Task force pro bono advisor Mary Filardo pointed out that a growing body of research does in fact demonstrate that facility investments do contribute to better teaching and learning outcomes. Mr. Cawley then conceded that the capital dollars of course must go to correct unsafe or unhealthy conditions, but insisted that whole school transformation was the only strategy likely to succeed. He emphasized AUSL’s training model, stating that since 2003, 368 trainees have completed their program, and that 83% of those teachers are still in CPS schools, mostly in high-need schools, and “some” in AUSL Turn-Arounds. Currently AUSL has 77 “Resident Teachers” in training.

Ms. Rias and Rep. Soto asked why CPS couldn’t undertake the same kind of transformation strategies at all neighborhood schools, rather than having to hire and bring in a third-party to do so. Rep. Soto questioned how the current, third-party approach could be sustainable. Mr. Runcie of CPS pointed out that CPS did not have the resources to support the special kinds of programs, from teacher training and mentoring, to extra programs, after-school activities and student mentoring, that AUSL offers. Mr. Runcie pointed out that Mr. Cawley’s presentation forgot to mention the millions of dollars in outside resources that AUSL leverages from foundations and corporations. Once Mr. Runcie brought up the extra funding that AUSL has to work with, Mr. Cawley explained that Turn-Around Schools do receive a “modest” incremental increase in funding per pupil for 5 years. Rep. Soto then requested that AUSL provide the task force with more details about its external funding and resources. Mr. Cawley said he would provide additional information on AUSL’s funding.

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(1) Instructional coaches, tutors, extra administration and teachers

Two parents of students at Dulles Elementary School on the South Side (and a part of the Woodlawn “Promise Community” Initiative) also testified, expressing their strong support and enthusiasm for AUSL and the positive changes that the program brought to their previously struggling neighborhood school.

**VI. Conclusion**

A. The Chair requested that if at all feasible, Subcommittee Co-Chairs should submit their respective reports on “Findings and Recommendations” by the next full Task Force meeting, which will hopefully take place in January 2011. ILGA staff will confer with the Task Force Co-Chairs, and convey a specific deadline to the task force members.

B. Next meeting date will be set and communicated by email after conferring with the Task Force members about their schedules.

C. At approximately 1:15 pm, the Chair called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Barrett so moved; the motion was seconded by Ms. Rias; and by voice vote, the Task Force adjourned.