The School Actions & Transformation Subcommittee held 3 working sessions in August 2012

- **Aug. 1st**: CPS reported on School Transitions for students/schools undergoing Actions and Turn-Arounds for the 2012-13 school year.
- **Aug. 23rd**: CPS updates Subcommittee; key problems and issues with 2011 CPS School Actions Guidelines and CPS’ implementation of School Transition Plans identified
- **Aug. 29th**: Subcommittee has in-depth discussion on ways to improve transparency, fairness and ensure substantive public feedback.
Challenges to Having a Problem-Solving Dialogue

- Frequent re-organizations in CPS central office, turn-over in STLS staff and other CPS staff responsible for SA, Turn-Arounds, and Transitions.
- Newly assigned staff need history and context of prior CEFTF recommendations, CPS/Task Force exchanges.
- Internal Coordination/Communication: CPS’ Portfolio Office recommends School Actions, Turn-Arounds; but does not place schools on probation, or know history of past probation interventions.
- CPS’ unresponsive to CEFTF’s early recommendations, or public input on School Actions Guidelines, Turn-Arounds, and feedback process.
- Public Comment period had no impact, CPS says “not enough time” to revise; 2011 Final Guidelines did not change from Draft version.
Key Concerns Identified: School Actions Guidelines, Transitions, Turn-Around Selection

- **Non-academic Performance Criteria**: Lacked evaluation of past interventions at struggling schools; and how CPS assessed school leadership, school climate/culture, or student safety.

- **Entire Guidelines Statement including Academic Performance criteria were generic and not specific to each particular type of Action CPS recommended.**
  - What criteria, evidence “trigger” a Closing, versus a Phase-Out? A Consolidation, or a Co-Location? No criteria for Attendance Boundary changes.
  - No disclosure of what criteria CPS uses to triggers a Turn-Around rather than a “School Action”.
  - “Geographic Network Averages” metric not widely understood, too new in Fall 2011; questions raised by Task Force members whether Network Averages metrics are even appropriate given diversity of schools within Networks.
Concerns, Issues with School Transition Planning, Implementation

- CPS has no tracking system in place to determine where affected students enrolled for 2012-2013 school year – no student-level data available until the Oct. 2012 student census.
- CPS’ mid-August 2012 follow-up phone calls revealed 40-50% of contact #s on file were not working, not in service.
- Parents welcomed CPS’ calls: Identified concerns about transportation needs, possible bullying/student safety at their student’s “new” school, questions about school leadership.
- CPS has no method in place to evaluate efficacy of Transition Planning, Transition implementation yet. Responsibility shifting to Portfolio Office, no team named yet (info requested at 08/01/12 meeting).
More Concerns, Students’ Transitions . . .

- CPS’ STLS Office under-staffed: Transition for homeless students in question. CPS estimated “less than 250” (at 08/23/12 meeting); but Coalition for the Homeless estimates 969 homeless students are affected.
- While STLS staff have reached out to homeless students impacted by Actions, they haven’t yet worked with AUSL Turn-Around schools (as of 08/23/12 meeting).
- CPS’ 08/01/12 Report on Transitions: STLS staff will have “office hours” at Receiving Schools only until Oct.31, 2012. P.A. 97-0474 requires support for all impacted students for 1st full school year of transitions.
- Receiving School Principals, Network Chiefs to be responsible for ensuring student tracking, retention, enrollment.
- Student Records? Question raised about status of transfer of student records (08/23/12 meeting). Requires follow-up discussions, reporting.
What State Law stipulates about the Student Transition Plans, Task Force Questions

- Must put students’ safety and well-being first and “ensure successful integration of affected students into new learning environments.”
- Draft Plan released December 1st, with announcement of CPS’ Proposed School Actions, must be developed collaboratively with local school educators and families of impacted students. **What specific elements came from them?** From LSCs or Parent Advisory bodies?
- Must identify services to support students with disabilities, homeless students, ELL students; and support all impacted students’ academic, social, and emotional needs.
- CPS must identify and allocate **TRANSITION SUPPORT RESOURCES for at least one academic year** following a School Action. But STLS won’t be in schools after 10/31/12.
- Given these requirements, details needed on allocated resources, services, and support for students and their Receiving Schools.
Subcommittee Recommendations to CPS

- **Revise the 2011 Guidelines:** Continue to work with CEFTF to do so.
- **Consider earlier release of Draft Guidelines** to encourage Public Comment, time to consider additional revisions after the 21-day period.
- **Disclose Public Comments** – transparency needed to know what stakeholders are suggesting.
- **Re-visit, revise CPS’ Jan. 2012 “School Utilization Standards”** – to incorporate grade/age/educational curriculum space needs, “best practices”. CPS’ current rankings are being challenged in many schools; and impact CPS’ decisions about Closings, Co-Locations, Phase-Outs, Consolidations, and Attendance Boundary Changes, as well as creation of a meaningful 10-Year Master Plan.
- **Evaluate impact of School Actions and Turn-Arounds at individual student level.**
- **Evaluate Transition Planning and Implementation.**
Additional, Specific Recommendations to CPS

- Specify criteria for each type of School Action.
- Disclose CPS’ criteria for what “triggers” a Turn-Around.
- Reinstate Exemption from Actions for schools whose Principal has been in place 2 years or less. The same exemption should apply to schools considered for Turn-Arounds.
- Include in criteria the following: Students’ past history of having experienced previous school actions and mobility; the school’s past history serving as a Receiving School, boundary changes, and effect of siting competing “new” schools in proximity.
- Disclose the “pool” of schools which “qualify” for each type of School Actions or Turn-Arounds. Provide clear rationale for WHY a school is ultimately chosen at this time.
- Specify data sources for non-academic factors – especially school leadership, school climate/culture, and student safety – in Guidelines.
More Specific Recommendations to CPS . . .

- Utilize Consortium on Chicago School Research “5 Essential Supports” SURVEY RESULTS in assessing possible School Actions, Turn-Arounds.
- Get “on the ground” data from schools about real-life space utilization.
- Adjust CPS’ “School Utilization Standards“ to reflect, respect optimal class size at specific grade/age levels and for the educational curriculum being delivered. (See sample policy, Montgomery County Public Schools.)
- Forecast future enrollment changes based on comprehensive planning WITH other government agencies, and their forecasts of future neighborhood redevelopment.
- If Actions are based on “under-utilization,” consider opportunities for “Joint Occupancy” by other agencies’, local government programs that stabilize students, families, surrounding community. (“Best practices” research)
- Stipulate a detailed process, time line for schools to offer Alternative Plans to CPS’ proposed Action or Turn-Around.
Specific Recommendations on Transitions

- School Transition Planning must involve Local School Councils, Parent Advisory bodies, families and educators. CPS should document this input.
- Include Receiving Schools in this planning.
- Follow-up with impacted families, especially phone calls, should begin as soon as Board approves School Actions or Turn-Arounds, and before the end of the school year prior to Transition.
- As per the Statute, identify and allocate specific resources and services to “ensure successful integration of affected students into new learning environments” for the entire first year of Transitions.
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The General Assembly Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force will continue to . . .

• Review CPS’ compliance with the new law, and prepare an Annual Report to the General Assembly, the Governor, the Mayor and CPS on how CPS has met the requirements.

• Continue to urge CPS to analyze the impact on students of CPS’ School Actions and other facilities-related decisions.

• Continue to gather public input and consult widely with all stakeholders in Chicago’s public schools through its own hearings, public testimony at its meetings, focus groups, and interviews.

• Continue to examine best practices from other school districts.

• And as needed, develop proposed policy and legislative recommendations for the General Assembly, the Governor, and the school district.