

ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
CHICAGO EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES TASK FORCE

State Representative Cynthia Soto and State Senator Heather Steans, Co-Chairs
Friday October 14, 2011 | 9:30:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Room C-600 (Committee Room)
Bilandic Building, 160 N. LaSalle, Chicago, Illinois

I. Call to order

- A. Welcoming remarks: Co-Chair State Rep. Soto called the meeting to order at approximately 9:35 AM, and welcomed the members of the public in attendance. She explained that Public Comment would be entertained as time permitted, since duration of the Task Force meeting was limited to 11 AM due to limited availability of this meeting room.
- B. Roll call for attendance: Present at the meeting were State Rep. Soto, Co-Chair; State Rep. Golar; State Senator Steans, Co-Chair; Clarice Berry, Chicago Principals and Administrators Assoc.; Rene Heybach, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless; Andrea Lee, Grand Boulevard Federation; Valencia Rias, Designs for Change; Cecile Carol, Blocks Together; Stacy Gates-Davis, Chicago Teachers Union; Bill Gerstein, Chicago Public Schools.
- C. Establishment of a quorum: With 10 members present, quorum is established.
- D. Approval of prior minutes (July 14, 2011 and September 19, 2011): Co-Chair Soto asked members to review the Minutes of 07/14 and 09/19. After review Ms. Rias moved to approve the minutes of both meetings; Ms. Heybach seconded the motion; motion approved unanimously.

- II. Public Comment:** The Co-Chairs moved up this Agenda item, as the CPS witnesses invited to testify at 10 AM were late in arriving. Rep. Soto announced before the first member of the public testified, that the Chair would suspend Public Comment when the CPS speakers arrived.

Ann Aviles, NEIU: Ms. Aviles testified that she is working with a homeless parent who's receiving no help from the school or CPS to get her child into a school. The CPS Office for "Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS)" is under-staffed, according to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. The former Chief for that department has not been replaced and many schools are not complying with the law anymore. An estimated 15,587 students needed STLS services last year. Rep. Soto said the CEFTF will talk to CPS about this department.

Dwayne Truss, Vice Chairman of the Austin Community Action Council (CAC): Mr. Truss thanked the Task Force for providing its Pro Bono Advisor Ms. Leavy to do a presentation on SB 630 at the Austin Community Action Council (CAC) meeting on Oct. 11. The Austin CAC plans to hold parent/LSC workshops to promote understanding of the new law. Mr. Truss said that Austin groups are excited about working with the CEFTF because CPS is ignoring the LSCs. He cited CPS' handling of the longer school day debate is an example of CPS' flawed communication process, since many Austin parents and educators are concerned about the lack of details, advance planning and preparation for a longer day. Rep. Golar asked Mr. Truss why he thought CPS was ignoring the LSCs. He replied that in the experience of the schools in Austin with which he's worked, CPS doesn't reach out to parents or LSCs, that it doesn't keep people informed or solicit public opinion. Rep. Golar said that based on assurances by CPS at the September 19th 2011 CEFTF delegation's meeting with school officials, she is hopeful that CPS will improve its communication process. Ms. Lee responded to the witness, saying that involved stakeholders need to ensure that CPS doesn't use CACs as an excuse to give them a green light in school actions.

Ms. Lee also stated that the education facilities master plan shouldn't be separate from schools' SIPAA's and CAC plans, with decision making coming from CPS' Central Office without community input.

James Patrick, retired principal, member of the Bronzeville Community Action Council, and board member, Chicago Principals & Administrators Assoc. and Chicago State University: Mr. Patrick noted that school actions will be announced soon and expressed concern that CPS will try to circumvent the process provided in the new law. He also expressed concern that CPS will accelerate school actions in Bronzeville in 2012-2013. He criticized Mayoral control of schools as "just a union-busting tactic" and urged members of the public and the Task Force to remain watchful and skeptical, in the event CPS attempts to continue making decisions behind closed doors.

Frederick Kendricks, Wells Prep Elementary school LSC, Parent Peer Education Network: Mr. Kendricks testified about problems with Wells College Prep co-sharing a facility with Phillips HS, now an AUSL Turn-Around school. He reported there had been problems before AUSL took over but now the situation has worsened. He reported there have been 3- 4 break-ins recently because school building doors weren't locked and the security cameras weren't on. He is concerned that nothing is being done to address the security problems. He stated that student and parent access to the administrations is very difficult, including both principals. He stated he had hoped that things are supposed to be more transparent with the new City Hall and CPS Administrations, but instead it's less transparent.

Adourthus McDowell, Parent, member of Kenwood Oakland Community Organization: Mr. McDowell commended the work of the Task Force, and explained that he has witnessed the negative impacts of CPS' previous school actions. In his experience, since 2004 LSCs' local control has been diminished especially when schools go on probation, which effectively has allowed CPS to take over schools. He stated that Mayoral control over CPS does not mean mayoral control over LSCs, which are themselves democratically elected. He stated that every community needs to learn more about the law, and asked what the CEFTF's protocol is if schools and community groups want a community presentation on SB 630. Rep. Soto replied that the task force is starting to set up meetings, and that community groups can simply ask for a Task Force representative to make a presentation.

III. Reports from the Chicago Public Schools on Progress Toward Implementation of PA 97-0474

Since the CPS presenters did not initially have copies of their reports to give to CEFTF members, Rep. Soto requested that CPS send for copies; after a delay, CPS staff arrived with and distributed hard copies of the two reports. CPS officials gave two PowerPoint Presentations.

A. Report (PP) on CPS' Drafting of School Action Guidelines (due November 1st, 2011) and CPS' plan for Drafting "School Transition Plans" - Oliver Sicat, Portfolio Manager, Chicago Public Schools

Mr. Sicat opened his presentation by stating that the mission of the CPS Portfolio Office is to ensure that all students will have access to "a quality seat" in the district to enable college and career readiness, and that the "quality of the seats" meets the demands for them.

Mr. Sicat's PP presentation showed two maps of the city, one of schools by CPS Performance Policy levels 1, 2 or 3; and one of schools which CPS classifies as under-utilized. Mr. Sicat stated that currently there are "123,000 seats" that are critically low-performing, with 207 schools on

“Level 3”, or, academic probation this year; and 119,000 “empty seats” citywide. Mr. Sicat then asserted there is a high correlation (overlap) of low-performing schools with under-utilized schools because “Parents are voting with their feet” and taking their students out of low-performing schools. These schools are clustered into the following two areas: (1) East Garfield, West Garfield, Austin, North Lawndale, Humboldt Park, and West Town (West/Near Northwest sides); and (2) Bronzeville, Englewood, Oakland, Kenwood, Armour Square, Douglass, Grand Boulevard, Woodlawn, Greater Grand Crossing, Chatham, Auburn Gresham, Washington Heights, Roseland, and West Pullman (South side). [Please see attached PP Presentation attached to these Minutes.] Mr. Sicat also said that CPS will release a new, higher standard for the performance policy in February.

Ms. Lee asked if CPS included charter schools in their utilization analysis. CPS responded that they didn't know. Ms. Lee pointed to the example of Perspectives Charter/IIT in the former Raymond school building, which has a very small enrollment. Ms. Lee then asked, what population projections is CPS using, and how CPS determined that there are 119,000 empty seats? None of the CPS representatives could answer the question.

Mr. Sicat then reported that CPS is on track to meet the new law's Nov. 1st deadline for release of Draft School Action Guidelines (“School Actions “ include closings, phase-outs, consolidations, co-locations and attendance boundary changes; but not Turn-Arounds). CPS' Draft School Action Guidelines will consider:

- Current academic performance
- Growth/Trend
- Attendance Rate
- Value Added
- Relative Performance in the school's community (“Network”)
- Drop-out rate (HS)
- Freshman “on track” to graduation (HS)

Draft School Transition Plans:

- CPS' approach is modeled on New York City's
- When proposed actions are announced, draft Transition Plans will include what will happen to the students, e.g. proposed Receiving Schools, support services, etc.
- Once proposed School Actions are announced, then CPS will seek community input on Transition Plans, over the months until the board votes (announcements by December 1, 2011; CPS Board vote in February 2012)
- CPS will figure out how much the School Actions and transition support will cost later, once the list is “ready”

Mr. Sicat stated that CPS does not anticipate proposing more Co-Locations, since Co-Locations are “a last ditch effort,” and CPS knows that they haven't been handled well in the past. CPS will propose Turn-Arounds when a building is at full capacity AND under-performing. CPS will announce these at the same time that they announce Proposed School Actions. CPS will continue to use its 2 current Turn-Around providers: CPS' internal Office of School Improvement (OSI) and the Academy of Urban School Leadership (AUSL).

Sen. Steans asked why CPS can't get community input before drafting the plans. Couldn't CPS work with the Community Action Councils (CACs) that it set up already last year? Mr. Sicat replied that CPS won't engage the schools "until the list is ready," then the schools slated for Actions will have 60 days to provide feedback to CPS.

Dr. Berry questioned why CPS is relying on New York City's model, when a court ruling challenged the New York City's schools' handling of closings? She asked why CPS did not solicit any input from the principals. Mr. Sicat replied that CPS had thought that the NYC model was successful, in that the transition plans worked, even if the school closing process didn't. He said CPS is "just using this as a base model" and asked for information on other alternatives. Ms. Heybach responded that CPS and the Coalition for the Homeless have already established an effective transition model when working with homeless students who have had to make transitions due to past CPS school closings. She asked why CPS wasn't using that model for Draft School Transition Plans. Whatever the model, she added, the CPS Office for Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) responsible for assisting homeless students, has fewer staff today than it had in 2008, even though the number of homeless CPS students has grown over the years; and the STLS Office will have even more work if CPS approves additional School Actions. Mr. Sicat replied that his Office would look at the Homeless Student Transition plans and process and take them into consideration.

Ms. Lee asked for clarification on the criteria for trend and growth, and over how many years. CPS has used 2 years but research shows that is an insufficient period for schools to improve; and CPS gives charter schools at least 5 years to meet standards. Mr. Sicat could not answer Ms. Lee's questions, stating "I don't know, we're looking into it." Rep. Soto then asked, what CPS has done or is currently doing to help schools on probation. She asked why CPS wouldn't provide resources now, rather than taking more Actions. Mr. Sicat did not reply.

Ms. Rias stated that Probation schools are supposed to have a corrective action plan, and asked Mr. Sicat to provide them to the Task Force. She stressed that these schools have had plans presented to the LSCs to help them understand how to get off probation. She asked for further clarification on what standards would CPS use to identify schools for Actions, when so many are on academic probation. Given that CPS has just said there will be another, higher performance standard introduced in 2012, but not announced until February 2012, which standards will CPS apply to choose 2012-2013 Actions? Will CPS give Level 3 schools a chance to improve relative to the new standard? Mr. Sicat replied that he appreciated that transparency at CPS has been a problem in the past, but when the schools are announced, "none of this should be a surprise." He referred the Task Force to Dr. Denosa for further explanation. Mr. Cawley added that CPS is not just using NCLB "AYP" or test scores, but also making community comparisons; and that two-thirds of CPS schools don't make AYP. Ms. Rias pointed out that CPS academic probation isn't the same as NCLB status, which is confusing for parents. She then asked if CPS planned to take into account the CAC plans that community/school stakeholders have worked on for nearly a year. CPS officials did not answer Ms. Rias' question about CAC plans.

Dr. Berry responded that with CPS' current performance policy, which CPS plans to use as the primary School Action criterion, some schools stay on probation for two years after reaching benchmarks. She said the CPAA has been questioning this for a long time. She stated that CPS' "value-added" metric is a statistical construct and doesn't inform practice, needs to be re-examined, and does fairly judges principals and schools.

Mr. Cawley replied that CPS is stressing “relative performance,” i.e., how schools in the same neighborhoods, serving the same students, perform in comparison to one another.

Rep. Golar responded that CPS has been very unstable: It had “Area Instructional Officers, then Chief Area Officers, and now “Network” Chiefs. She stated that many schools have reported that they didn't get meaningful assistance throughout these periods; and urged CPS to use corrective actions, teacher action and community action to help probationary schools. But she added, this is not happening in her district.

Ms. Gates stated that closing a school is quite disruptive to students, families and the community, asked how CPS will involve school staff in transition plans. Mr. Sicat replied that the draft plans will be presented to the community followed by a period of input.

Ms. Lee asked, instead of deciding the School Action list downtown first, can't CPS reach out and engage principals and schools first. She urged CPS to ask schools what they need to improve, and on that basis hold all parties accountable. She added that neighborhood schools need the same level of financial support and professional development as new schools get.

Ms. Carroll stated that CPS' new CEO J.C. Brizard announced in the media earlier this year that CPS would not initiate any additional Turn-Arounds until there is a comprehensive evaluation of the turn-around strategy thus far. She then asked Mr. Sicat if the evaluation will happen before more Turn-Arounds are announced. Mr. Sicat responded that CPS already thinks that AUSL and CPS' OSI are “doing a great job.” Ms. Carroll responded that in examining AUSL's plan for the Turn-Around of Orr HS (Humboldt Park) and Phillips HS (Grand Boulevard), concerned parents and community members have found that AUSL is not meeting contractual obligations at either school. Mr. Sicat did not respond.

B. Report on the current year's CPS Capital Program - Tim Cawley, Chief Administrative Officer, Chicago Public Schools.

FY12 Capital Budget Summary: Mr. Cawley showed a PowerPoint presentation, and introduced CPS' Budget Director who would help address questions from the Task Force. However, because of the time constraints, a full “question and answer” session had to be tabled, and the Budget Director did not have time to complete her portion of the presentation.

Mr. Cawley expressed concern about future funding for CPS, stating that in FY 2013, CPS' projected operating budget deficit will be \$400 million, and \$800 million in FY 2014. As for capital funding: CPS buildings are on average 75 years old and CPS doesn't have the funds to fix all schools. CPS currently owes about \$400 million in debt service for previous school construction and renovation borrowing. The FY12 approved budget allocates \$390 for capital improvements. The following are highlights of Mr. Cawley's presentation:

CPS' Process for prioritizing capital improvement projects included:

1. Index ranking: weighted calculation - condition of the building
 - a. Envelop (exterior - masonry, windows, etc.)
 - b. Mechanical system (boilers, HVAC, etc.)
 - c. Educational needs

Mr. Cawley stressed that CPS has limited capital funding, and cannot address all facility problems, remarking that for example, "We can't afford to do air conditioning in all schools - it costs \$60 million for the Track E [year-round] schools alone. If we get federal jobs money, we'll do it."

2. CPS vetted all "proposed" capital projects through a "facility master plan" model produced with CPS' consultants, that uses a "3 x 3 matrix" aligning utilization and academic performance. CPS' consultants: McKinsey & Co., Tishman and URS. Principals are involved in school evaluations every 3 years [Please see PP presentation attached to these Minutes.]

Mr. Cawley showed the matrix and then stated that capital investment in under-utilized schools will generally be deferred, and is not regarded as a priority for CPS' facility spending. Using the matrix, CPS evaluated facilities on a community by community basis, ranking all schools by enrollment and performance. Over-enrolled, high-performance schools are high priority. Schools falling on the matrix as under-enrolled and low-performing will be deferred for facility investment and are the lowest priority. Mr. Cawley concluded: "If there's a high chance that a school won't exist in five years, we do not spend money on it."

3. CPS also considered the geographic distribution of projects.
4. Proposed project budgets are a comprehensive five-year forecast.
5. Related overhead and investments are included in the budget, e.g., technology, FY13 AOR fees, environmental assessments, architectural fees, etc.

FY12 CIP Funding Sources are provided in the PP Presentation: (1) Bond proceeds or CDB grants of \$339 Million; (2) TIF reimbursements of \$9 Million (for ADA compliance); (3) State grants of \$43 Million (for Early Childhood construction, vocational schools, and energy efficiency). Mr. Cawley Charters and AUSL get foundation grants for CIP but CPS does not.

Because of the time limit on use of the meeting room, Co-Chair Soto had to adjourn the meeting, thus preventing completion of CPS' presentation, or a Question & Answer period with Task Force members. The Co-Chair stated as the meeting adjourned that further discussion was needed, as CPS had not previously shared its "master facility plan" or "3x3" Matrix with the CEFTF.

The Co-Chair asked staff to confer with members to set a date for the next Task Force meeting. The October 14, 2011 meeting adjourned at 10:55 AM.