

Illinois General Assembly Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force

FAQs: Chicago Public Schools' Draft 10-Year Master Plan

How can I get a copy or read CPS' draft 10-Year Educational Facilities Master Plan?

By State law, every parent/guardian, LSC, school attendance center, and your elected officials must have access to the Master Plan. Your school should provide you with access to the Draft. You can also read/download the Draft from the CPS website at:

<http://www.cps.edu/Results.aspx?k=Draft%2010-year%20Educational%20Facilities%20Master%20Plan>

Will the public have any input into revising the Draft Master Plan?

Yes, if you are pro-active. State law requires CPS to seek out your input; and requires CPS' CEO to publish a plan for public input, including public hearings. To date, this has not happened, but the Task Force's Master Planning Subcommittee will continue to meet with CPS to offer ideas for ensuring and gathering broad public input.

CPS has also set up an email address to which you can submit comments: FacilitiesPlan@cps.edu. However, it is unclear (as of May 22, 2013) **if or how** CPS has alerted the public that this feedback tool is available. The CEFTF welcomes your feedback, email us at: cefff.ilga@gmail.com

How did CPS come up with the Draft?

In October 2011, Chief Operating Officer Tim Cawley revealed to the CEFTF that CPS got input from **pro bono advisors at the consulting firm of McKinsey & Co.** to devise a master plan "template" and that CPS embraced McKinsey's advice that **any future investment in under-utilized "failing" schools should be CPS' lowest priority; CPS would not invest in any schools the district thought it wouldn't need in the future.**

In 2012, CPS' work on the master plan was minimal. Even before the abrupt departure of CPS CEO Brizard, CEFTF recommendations and inquiries about the Master Plan were largely ignored by CPS. In late October 2012 CPS held hastily-called, "invitation only" focus groups on both the Draft School Action Guidelines and some master plan questions. By November 2012, the new CPS CEO's focus had turned to School Closings. In January 2013, CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett put **Todd Babbitz (CPS' "Chief Transformation Officer")** and his **"Office of Strategy Management"** in charge of drafting the 10-Year Plan. Mr. Babbitz can be contacted at: TBabbitz@cps.edu.

Demographic analysis and enrollment projections were done largely by long-time CPS consultant Giacomo Mancuso. The Draft only projects population and enrollment until 2017, not for the full 10-year period (until 2023). **Community Analysis:** CPS staff then created new "Community" definitions, drawing 30 "Community" areas that don't coincide with definitions or boundaries used by any other government agency. A private firm, ESRI, "fit" U.S. Census Bureau data to these new boundaries.

Public input: CPS did a "Textizen" text messaging outreach effort in March-April 2013, promoted in ads on some CTA transit routes. The Textizen survey asked the public to text responses to a few structured questions on future facility needs of your school. In March, CPS also set up an interactive web page to take public input: <http://myvision.cps.edu/my-cps-vision/archived>; but very few comments have been submitted.

CPS also emailed a survey to LSC Chairs and principals and charter schools in Nov. 2012 to get school-level input. The Task Force found that many schools were unaware of the survey. At the urging of the CEFTF, CPS sent out the survey again in Feb. 2013 and continues to keep it "open" and active.

As of mid-March, hundreds of schools had yet to complete the survey. **If your LSC Chair and Principal did not know about this survey, you can still file a response at:**

<http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e6q9frlaha9ynr1t/start>

Please note: CPS has stated that the district will only consider ONE COMPLETED SURVEY RESPONSE PER SCHOOL.

If you have questions or concerns about the survey, contact John Ribolzi at jtribolzi@cps.edu; (773) 553-2612; Office of Strategy Management. Mr. Ribolzi is a “Resident” at CPS from the Broad Foundation. In March 2013, he informed the CEFTF that he was the primary drafter of the Plan; and that part of his job was to sift through public testimony from CPS’ Network-by-Network meetings on “under utilization” and school closings (held 01.28.13 through 03.06.13) for any remarks from parents and others who had testified, that CPS deemed to be relevant to the Master Plan.

Did the Task Force have any input into the Draft Plan?

Not directly. Despite the CEFTF’s repeated requests, CPS declined to give the Task Force the Draft prior to its public release May 1, 2013. But ever since the General Assembly enacted the requirement for a 10-Year Plan in 2011, the CEFTF has been providing CPS with recommendations and research on best practices for developing a Master Plan. In August 2012, the Task Force gave CPS detailed proposals for undertaking broad public engagement, parent empowerment, and coordination with other government agencies, but CPS did not choose to act on them.

Did our elected officials have input into the Draft Plan?

This isn’t clearly documented by CPS. Ask your alderman and state legislators. Some Aldermen have testified to the Task Force that they had no input into the Draft Plan. In fact, some Aldermen’s plans for revitalizing housing and attracting more families to their Wards – and thus future potential school enrollment growth - were not taken into consideration when CPS approved 50 School Closings May 22, 2013; and are not included in the Draft.

Has the CEFTF reviewed the Draft Plan?

Yes. CPS has yet to engage the public on crafting a shared educational vision for the future of Chicago’s public schools. Much more input and work are needed to develop a meaningful 10-Year Plan. The Task Force found . . .

- **The Draft EFMP did not have adequate input from sister agencies, elected officials and stakeholders.**
- **The Draft does not include a new Space Utilization formula, even though the Draft hints that the District needs to revise its flawed Space Utilization standards** and in the future, allocate space differently based on educational program design, e.g., allocate appropriate space to teach the Common Core curriculum, SPED, STEM, International Baccalaureate, and other educational programming.
- **CPS’ draft plan barely looks toward future trends for Chicago.** CPS cites data from the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), but has yet to analyze planned or projected new housing development by other initiatives or the private sector. The Draft focuses on the recent past’s housing and historic economic downturn – not on planned or likely future neighborhood revitalization.
- **Enrollment projections are suspect:** CPS’ Draft does not explain its methodology, or use many of the standard demographic measures that other school districts use (data on migration, outmigration, fertility rates, etc).
- **Questionable use of newly invented “Community” definitions/boundaries** to aggregate neighborhood-level data. CPS “created” its own boundaries to define 30 “Communities”, deviating from longstanding standard community definitions (Chicago’s 77 Community Areas) by which data are typically collected and reported.