OVERVIEW  We must establish a culture of thoughtful planning, continuous improvement and accountability for results. District financial, operational and accountability systems must be driven by priorities that lead to student success. Every employee should be held accountable for his/her contribution to student outcomes, and all team members must be provided with useful data and guidance that allow them to effectively work toward these goals. Communities and families must have a voice in shaping a vision for education in their neighborhoods.

OBJECTIVES

• **Create a 10-year plan for investing in school facilities that supports each neighborhood’s vision.** In partnership with community stakeholders, we are creating a 10-year educational facilities master plan for each neighborhood. The plan will allow us to invest in the types of specialty schools and programs that residents want and to maintain the optimal number of seats to serve students efficiently. It will also ensure an equitable distribution of high-quality, innovative school options across the district.

• **Safely transition children from schools undergoing consolidation to a higher-quality learning environment in their welcoming schools.** Working with the Chicago Police Department, the city’s Department of Family and Support Services, community and faith-based organizations and elected officials, we have created a safety plan for every school that will welcome students affected by school closings. Each plan addresses safety concerns including busy streets and intersections and other neighborhood conditions. To ensure a smooth transition, we also will increase the number of Safe Passage workers monitoring students’ routes to and from school and deploy additional safety personnel to each site.

At the same time, we are targeting significant investments into welcoming schools for all students impacted by consolidations. Investments include additional libraries and art rooms, increased access to technology such as iPads and expanded internet bandwidth, installation of air conditioning and the launch of new IB, STEM and fine arts programs. Welcoming schools will also have access to additional academic and social and emotional supports to assist students and the entire school community in ensuring a smooth transition.

• **Establish a common definition of school quality and a comprehensive school accountability system.** We will enhance our school accountability system and hold all schools – including charter, neighborhood and magnet schools – to a consistent set of measurable outcomes including attendance and graduation rate. In addition, we will define standards for school quality that provide a
clear picture of what students and parents should minimally expect from all of our schools. Standards will be set in areas such as instruction, professional learning, school climate and family engagement. This common definition of school quality will serve as a guidepost for principals while still allowing them to innovate and tailor their plans to their unique school environment. To set specific criteria, the Office of Accountability will hold in-depth conversations with parents, students, principals and teachers from different types of schools as well as with regional superintendents and university researchers. We believe that an inclusive process will allow us to arrive at both a definition of school quality and an accountability system that are grounded in research and also viewed as fair and relevant by educators in a variety of school settings.

- **Provide timely, useful data to school, region and district staff so that problems can be addressed more quickly.** School, region and district staff need accurate data on students – such as attendance, disciplinary incidents and interim assessment scores – to intervene in classrooms or schools where progress is slipping. District leaders also need regular feedback on the effectiveness of their programs and policies. Historically, data has been inconvenient to access, infrequently updated and not always reliable. Now, we are aggressively upgrading our data systems and providing more real-time key data points on our online “Dashboard” so that employees have the information that they need when they need it. The Office of Accountability will also coach district, region and school staff on how to use the data to drive improvement in both long-term planning and daily practice.

- **Create financial plans that focus on priorities and eliminate waste.** In the past, staffing and budgets for each CPS department were automatically renewed with little scrutiny. To accomplish more with declining revenues, we must eliminate bureaucratic waste and make every taxpayer dollar count. Now the leaders of every district office must assume that there will be no money in their annual budgets until they justify every position, program and expenditure as essential for meeting the priorities outlined in this plan.

- **Create a school funding process that is equitable and provides maximum flexibility for principals to meet student needs.** In the past, schools have been given rigid guidelines about how district dollars needed to be allocated in their school budgets – much more of a school’s budget was defined by central office rather than by principals who know their students best. To allow principals to target money more effectively in their unique school settings, and to ensure a transparent and equitable approach to allocating funding to schools, each school will now receive a set amount of funding per pupil. Principals will be empowered to spend funds on the staff, materials, technology or other resources that best serve their students.

- **Develop detailed operating plans to fund and implement district priorities.** Every regional and district leader will have an execution plan that outlines the work he/she must accomplish to meet the goals outlined in this action plan and the expenditures necessary to do so. Student outcomes and implementation progress related to each plan will be continually monitored and district leaders will be held accountable for results, always with the ultimate goal of improving student success.

” Standards are not rules issued by the boss; they are a collective identity. Remember, standards are the things that you do all the time and the things for which you hold one another accountable.”

Mike Kryzewski, Gold Medalist
Men’s Basketball Coach