

## **UNDERSTANDING CPS' CAPITAL NEEDS REVIEW PROCESS**

On August 22, 2011, Governor Quinn signed Public Act 097-0474, amending the Illinois School Code by adding requirements for School Action and Facility Master Planning. In summary, the bill requires that the Chicago Public Schools (CPS):

- Follow a clear process for school actions
- Publish space utilization and facility performance standards
- Produce plans for capital improvement and a 10-year education master facility plan
- Ensure that information regarding capital expenditures and leases are accessible to the public

A key element to facility master planning is a capital needs review process. The primary way in which CPS will assess the capital needs of its facilities is through a detailed biennial assessment of each facility operated by the district. The biennial assessment will be conducted every two years (was previously done every three years) by a team of highly skilled building assessors. Every building owned, operated, or leased by CPS is assessed by a team of architects and engineers that can diagnose issues with a building that may not be apparent to the staff working within the building. The results of these assessments are sent to CPS's Capital Improvement team for review, analysis, and publication on the CPS website.

Given the overall size and need of the facility portfolio, along with continued budget constraints, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) necessitates a needs-based prioritization approach for capital planning and project prioritization. This approach ensures that all renovation work is done efficiently and that it prioritizes the facilities with the highest level of need while focusing on keeping buildings warm, safe, and dry. The aim of categorizing opportunities in this manner is to prioritize facilities with issues that may present a health/safety concern or which have an issue that may lead to accelerated deterioration of supporting systems if left unaddressed.

The most critical needs priorities are defined in the District's Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP), which can be found on CPS.edu. Although the results from the assessment serve as the foundation for understanding the condition of every school throughout the district, we also understand that systems are dynamic and constantly changing. For example, systems can change significantly over time or from one assessment to another, this can be driven by many factors including, weather (freeze/thaw cycles), accelerated deterioration and added deferred maintenance, and any recent capital or facilities investment. Therefore, CPS engages in a rigorous process-driven approach that begins with the most recent facility condition assessment and then incorporates additional perspectives, considerations, and real-time validation for identifying potential projects and determining which to recommend for annual and long-term capital plans.

While the recently enacted legislation has changed some timelines and how some information is distributed, please be assured that the fundamentals of this process have been in place at CPS for many years, and facility assessments are currently posted online.