



For more information contact:  
**CPS Office of Communications**  
Phone: 773-553-1620  
Website: <http://www.cps.edu>  
Facebook: [ChicagoPublicSchools](#)  
Twitter: [@ChiPubSchools](#)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
January 10, 2013

**Statement from CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett on Release of Commission on School Utilization Report**

I'd like to thank members of the Commission on School Utilization and its chair Frank Clark for their tireless commitment to engaging our communities around this issue, and I look forward to giving the report a thoughtful review over the next few days to consider their recommendations. We face a very real and very daunting financial crisis that threatens everything in our District, which is why the work of the Commission and its feedback from the community is so critical. This work is far from over and we must continue to engage the community and give them the respect they deserve during this process over the next several weeks.

**Barbara Byrd-Bennett**  
CEO, Chicago Public Schools

**Background on Commission on School Utilization and Utilization Crisis Facing CPS**

CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett formed the eight-member Commission on School Utilization to engage school communities around the District's utilization crisis as she felt the community deserved to provide feedback at the front-end of this process and have a voice in how CPS would move forward in its efforts to right-size the District. She personally lobbied legislators in Springfield to get the approval needed to extend the deadline for releasing a final list of schools (as required in HB630) that would be included as part of CPS' right-sizing efforts.

CPS faces a daunting utilization and budget crisis as it faces a \$1 billion deficit next fiscal year. At the same time, CPS simply has too many schools and too few children – today CPS has space for over 500,000 students, but just over 400,000 are enrolled in our schools. This is stretching its resources much too thin. Since 2000, Chicago has lost more than 145,000 school-aged children (0-19), which has been the overwhelming driver of underutilization in our District – making up 65% of all causes of underutilization.

According to 2012 enrollment data, 50 percent of all CPS schools are underutilized and nearly 140 are more than half-empty. By right-sizing the District's footprint, CPS will be able to better direct its limited resources and invest in programs that will give all children a more well-rounded, high-quality education they deserve.

As part of its community engagement efforts, the Commission held six public meetings over the last month and a half. Commission members heard from hundreds of parents, teachers, students and community members, and subject matter experts, including CPS officials, academics, researchers and Chicago Teachers Union leaders. CEO Byrd-Bennett will be reviewing the Commission's recommendations over the next several days and will then provide a formal response. That response will include which recommendations she will accept as part of her decision-making process as she continues to work with the community and the Commission over the next several weeks to address the District's utilization crisis.