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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CPS Fact Check On Consolidating Underutilized Schools

Claim: Closing these schools won't save money.

Fact: Based on actual spending at each underutilized school CPS is proposing to close, the District will save \$43 million annually in operating spending for a total of \$430 million over 10 years. By avoiding needed capital spending on underutilized schools proposed for closure CPS will save \$560 million over the next 10 years.

Claim: Classes at welcoming schools will be overcrowded.

Fact: Each welcoming school has sufficient space for the number of students expected to attend this fall. By combining underutilized schools, principals will have more resources to hire needed staff and be better positioned to avoid the larger class sizes that we often see in our under-enrolled, under-resourced schools.

Claim: Thousands of teachers will lose their jobs.

Fact: There are just over 1,100 teachers in underutilized schools proposed for closure. Many of these teachers will follow their students to welcoming schools per the joint CTU-CPS agreement included in last year's teachers' contract, which allows tenured teachers with Superior or Excellent ratings to follow students if their position is open at the welcoming school.

Claim: Student safety will be at risk.

Fact: The safety and security of every student is the District's top priority. In partnership with the Chicago Police Department, CPS will provide every welcoming school with (1) Safe Passage to provide safe routes for students to and from school every day (2) additional safety personnel inside each school (3) new and updated security technology inside each school and (4) social emotional supports to help build relationships between students, staff and families of both sending and welcoming schools in order to create positive learning environments by the start of the school year.

Claim: Students will have to walk several blocks more to get from home to their welcoming school.

Fact: For neighborhood students that will not receive transportation, the average increase in distance from their home to their school building will be less than two blocks.

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Claim: Students won't be going to better schools.

Fact: Per state law, every designated welcoming school will be higher-performing than the sending school. Criteria outlined in the CPS CEO School Actions Guidelines, which was filed with the state in October 2012, defines school performance that must be used in determining the performance of each school.

Claim: There is no population decline/CPS can find the money for things we want to fund.

Fact: According to U.S. Census data, there are 181,000 fewer African Americans in Chicago today than last decade. This has had a significant impact on the utilization rates of schools in these communities – in fact, 65 percent of underutilization in elementary schools is due to population decline. Due to declining revenues and an additional \$600 million pension payment, CPS is facing a \$1 billion deficit next fiscal year. While it has cut more than half a billion dollars in non-classroom spending over the last two years, it can't cut its way out of this deficit.

Claim: CPS created this problem.

Fact: Population declines over the last decade in both the African American community and in school-aged children are driving the majority of underutilization in our District's schools. Today, our schools have space for 511,000 children, but only 403,000 are enrolled.

Claim: This will result in vacant buildings and eyesores in communities, with no plan to deal with this.

Fact: CPS is working with communities and City Departments on a comprehensive planning process to determine the highest and best use for unused buildings.

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