



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL ANNOUNCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR SCHOOL REPURPOSING  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

*Community Leaders, Planning Experts, Social Service Providers and Government Professionals to Make  
Recommendations on the Planning and Process for Repurposing Closed School Facilities*

Today Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced the creation of the Advisory Committee for School Repurposing and Community Development. The committee has been established to explore and recommend an implementation plan for repurposing closed school facilities, with a goal of reengaging the facilities as vital and vibrant community assets. The Committee's strategic recommendations to the City of Chicago will be focused on improving the economic vitality and quality of life in the city's neighborhoods.

"The City of Chicago has an opportunity to use these facilities to revitalize our economy in key areas and expand opportunity for Chicagoans in our neighborhoods," said Mayor Emanuel. "I look forward to reviewing the recommendations after the committee's careful consideration of what is best for our future."

Consisting of city and community leaders, the Committee will conduct an extensive and rigorous review of the specific closed school buildings and the communities in which they are located. Included in the broad array of materials they will consult are physical and financial assessments of the conditions of the buildings; demographic and economic trends for the surrounding community; maps of the assets, nearby abandoned buildings, code violations, and crime incidents; and existing planning efforts for the surrounding area being implemented by the City of Chicago. This vast collection of resources will enable the Committee to make informed decisions about the process that will best reflect the communities' needs. Additionally, over the course of their deliberations, the Advisory Committee may determine that even broader input is required and engage other participants to contribute to the review.

Ultimately the Committee will submit recommendations to the City that establish a set of principles to guide decisions about repurposing the properties, a process for engaging the community, an approach to soliciting and reviewing proposals, and an implementation plan and timeframe.

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The members of the Advisory Committee are:

- Wilbur Milhouse (Chair), Milhouse Engineering & Construction, Inc.
- Andy Mooney, Department of Housing and Economic Development
- Shirley Calahan, Calahan Family Foundation
- Ricardo Estrada, Metropolitan Family Services
- Jim Capraro, former Director of Greater Southwest Development Corp.
- Linda Goodman, Goodman Williams Group
- Tom Tyrrell, Chicago Public Schools
- Raul Raymundo, Resurrection Project
- Susana Vasquez, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Julia Stasch, MacArthur Foundation
- Bernita Johnson, Quad Community Development Corp
- Ald. Rey Colon, 35<sup>th</sup> Ward
- Ald. Latasha R. Thomas, 17<sup>th</sup> Ward

“I am pleased to be working with the committee to develop a process for repurposing the closed school buildings and making a positive impact on the lives of fellow Chicagoans,” said Committee Chair Wilbur Milhouse. “I’m confident in the ability of the highly qualified community leaders named to the Committee to determine a plan of action that improves communities and revitalizes neighborhoods.”

The establishment of the community-oriented Committee follows the lengthy, meticulous, and thoughtful process carried out by Chicago Public Schools during the school consolidation process, which involved the consideration of feedback from thousands of parents, teachers, and community members. The comprehensive school consolidation review process lasted over several months and began with an exploratory Commission on School Utilization which engaged community input, gathered extensive information, and produced a report to CPS that recommended the consolidation of 300 schools. This was followed by a lengthy period where CPS officials conducted community meetings and public hearings and made further cuts to the list based on community concerns. Finally, after further engagements with the public, the Chicago Board of Education voted to consolidate 50 underutilized and under-resourced schools, ultimately removing 280 of 330 initially recommended schools from the final list. These 50 facilities will be the buildings that are considered by the Advisory Committee.

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