

# Catalyst

VOICES OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM



## MINISCHOOLS

**Philadelphia's 'charters'**  
post gains Citywide effort **page 4**

**Taft, Clemente, Foundations**  
Birth pains of schools-within-schools  
**pages 6-11**

**Thumbnail sketches** Hyde Park,  
Field, Dyett, Chicago Vocational, Whittier  
**pages 12-15**

**Opinions** A business leader calls for more  
state aid for Chicago schools **page 17**

**Reviews** New book sheds new light on  
Latino role in reform **page 23**

**Letters** • **page 18**

**Diaries** • **page 20**

**Elsewhere** • **page 24**

**Updates** • **page 26**

**Bright Ideas** • **page 32**

## Reform heavyweights promote small schools

by Dan Weissmann

**R**oberto Clemente High School in West Town is dividing its 3,000 students into four "houses." These schools-within-the-school are part of far-reaching reforms, which follow years of community pressure.

In the Price Elementary School building in Kenwood, 10 teachers have opened Foundations, a minischool that reflects their progressive teaching philosophy. The teachers transferred to Price en masse from another school after winning permission to open Foundations from the Board of Education and Price's local school council.

At Taft High School in Norwood Park, Principal William Watts snared a \$232,000 vocational education grant last year with a proposal that hinged on the creation of five specialized minischools. Since then, Watts has been working to win over his faculty to the project. The first minischool opened this September; the others are scheduled to open next September.

Clemente, Foundations and Taft are among at least a half dozen Chicago schools that have joined a budding

"schools-within-schools" movement in Chicago. The idea—creating a number of small schools within one large school building—gained national attention from a project begun 17 years ago in East Harlem, N.Y. It also is central to high school reform in Philadelphia.

Chicago itself has several long-standing variations. Hyde Park Career Academy, for instance, started its schools-within-the-school program 10 years ago, and Dyett Middle School has had grade-level "houses" since it opened in 1972. (For details on programs at these and other schools, see stories on pages 6-16.)

Now, however, a number of influential organizations are promoting the idea: the Chicago Teachers Union through its Quest Center, the University of Chicago through its Center for School Improvement, Designs for Change, the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, and Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI), a public-interest law firm that co-founded the Lawyers School Reform Advisory Project.

And a new organization, the Small Schools Workshop, is devoted exclusively

**PULLOUT SECTION** • *Results of a survey of principals by the Consortium on Chicago School Research.*

to promoting, studying and helping schools-within-schools in Chicago. William Ayers, a faculty member at the University of Illinois at Chicago, launched the workshop with a one-year, \$150,000 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, which also supports the Quest Center.

Even before the workshop was funded, Ayers and BPI Executive Director Alexander Polikoff had been leading an informal "working group" on schools-within-schools for several months. The group started last May, when East Harlem administrator John Falco made a short speaking tour in Chicago, arranged by BPI. Teachers, principals, CTU officials and representatives from school-reform groups and community organizations have attended workshop meetings.

The CTU hopes to host a conference early next year to generate more teacher-designed minischools. At the conference, groups of teachers from different schools would be given information, encouragement and time to draft a plan for a small school within their school. After the conference, a review board would award 25 schools \$1,000 grants and other support to jump-start their minischool.

The union is seeking a \$110,000

grant from the Chicago Community Trust to fund the project. If the grant isn't approved, the Quest Center's next semi-annual conference will attempt the same project on a smaller scale, says John Kotsakis, special assistant to the president for education issues.

## Research supports smallness

Supporters of schools-within-schools start with the idea that large schools—schools the size of the average Chicago school—are not as good for kids as smaller schools. Research backs them up.

"The bigger the school, the worse the student achievement," says University of Illinois Prof. Herbert Walberg, summarizing results of his study of New Jersey's high schools. The finding held up even in the face of differences in school spending, the family background of students and other variables.

Further, writes Temple University researcher Diana Oxley, "A sizable body of research indicates that large school size adversely affects student involvement in school activities, attendance and school climate, and contributes to higher rates of dropping out, vandalism and violence."

In Chicago, a survey of elementary teachers conducted by the Consortium on Chicago School Research showed that teachers in schools with enrollments under 350 tended to have the most positive attitudes toward reform. (See *CATALYST*, October 1991.)

"It is not impossible to have a good large school," writes John Goodlad in his influential book, *A Place Called School*. "It simply is more difficult. What are the defensible reasons for operating an elementary school of more than a dozen teachers and 300 boys and girls? I can think of none."

Only 46 of Chicago's 481 elementary schools enroll 300 or fewer students. A recent paper from Designs for Change puts the average enrollment at 645.

Having established that big schools tend to be bad, small-schools advocates go on to ask why. First, they say, big schools let children "fall through the cracks"—and the bigger the school, the bigger the cracks.

Before the massive Clemente started subdividing, says Principal Louis Galdi, "People just didn't know each other. And that sort of thing breeds—well, not contempt, but a lack of trust."

Galdi says that when he was the

school's chief disciplinarian, he saw directly how its huge size fostered anonymity, which, in turn, bred discipline problems: "A teacher would come and say, 'Well, this student was disrespectful, and he wouldn't show me his ID card,' and so on. And I would talk to the kid and ask what had happened. And the kid would say, 'I don't know. He asked for my ID card. I didn't know who he was! So I refused to give him my ID card, and one thing led to another.'"

In contrast, "In a small school, strangers and strange behaviors stick out and can be addressed with dispatch," writes Deborah Meier in a 1989 *New York Times* article. Meier is a former teacher (now principal) who helped launch the minischool movement in East Harlem.

Meier contends that large, anonymous schools breed parental apathy, too. In smaller schools, she writes, "accountability to parents, as well as to the community, becomes a less knotty problem."

Small schools may be especially important for poor, urban children, adds Fred Hess, executive director of the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance. Urban students typically have more stresses and fewer supports outside school and, therefore, need more attention and support at school, he explains.

## Teachers 'lost' too

But students aren't the only ones who can feel anonymous in huge schools. "I was at one of these school events," says Clemente's Galdi, "and two teachers saw each other. And one said to the other, 'Oh, I knew you from...college! What are you doing now?'"

*'I'm working here.'*

*'Really? How long've you been here?'*

*'Five years. How long have you been here?'*

*'Seven years.'*

*'Where do you work?'*

*'Well, I'm on the eighth floor. Where do you work?'*

*'I'm in the basement.'*

"And," concludes Galdi, "they'd never met each other!"

However, just making schools smaller will not solve all their problems; making schools smaller will not magically transform all the relationships inside them.

"If it makes sense to break the school down into smaller units, then I think it

## Suggested guidelines

The schools-within-schools working group convened by William Ayers of the University of Illinois at Chicago and Business and Professional People for the Public Interest wrote these "guiding features" for a school-within-a-school:

■ **SMALL SIZE** 200-300 students in elementary schools; up to 500 students in high schools.

■ **COHESIVE FACULTY** Teachers who share a vision of schooling choose or agree to work together collaboratively.

■ **SUBSTANTIAL AUTONOMY** Teachers lead and manage each school. Each school has physical integrity, helping foster its own sense of community and identity.

■ **INCLUSIVE ADMISSIONS** Admission policies promote diversity within the student body and give weight to student and parental commitment to the mission of the school, rather than to ability.

makes sense to articulate the kind of elements that have to be in place for those units to become intellectually and emotionally rich communities," says Michelle Fine, architect of a schools-within-schools plan for Philadelphia's comprehensive high schools. Without other changes, she says, "You could have small, boring places."

## Beyond smallness

Chicago backers of schools-within-schools tend to be interested in innovation, community and choice, all of which are served by smallness and autonomy.

"Large entities tend to stifle innovation, muzzle collegiality, delineate roles," says Kotsakis of the CTU. "They create egg crates."

For innovation to be effective, he and others argue, it must come from teachers because they are the ones who will have to make it work. And smallness makes teacher innovation possible. "Teachers can meet to discuss issues and differences without complex governance structures," explains Deborah Meier. "Understanding the budget does not require an advanced degree in accounting. Looking in on colleagues and sharing ideas becomes possible."

When small schools proliferate, parents will have an array of choices, too, Kotsakis notes, speculating that, as a result, parents may come to be more invested in their kids' education.

However, in order for the choices to be meaningful, the autonomy of the small schools has to be protected.

Ann Cook, director of a New York alternative school, says, "Unless...the people who are in the houses have real autonomy to determine...what they want to teach and how they're going to teach it, how they want to integrate courses, how they're going to work with kids [and so on]—unless they're able to have some control over those things, it's Mickey Mouse. It's not real."

Small-schools advocates often point to the example of East Harlem, in which a local administrator encouraged teachers to come up with their own schools. (See *CATALYST*, November 1990 and September 1992.) "Our teachers have the knowledge; they have the expertise," East Harlem's John Falco told Chicagoans during his visit last spring. "Why don't we let them use it? Empower these teachers, and we will get real action in these schools."

Kotsakis says, though, that it's unlikely



Music teacher Jim Neuman (center) leads a discussion with other Taft High faculty to lay plans for the liberal arts "school-within-a-school."

Chicago will replicate East Harlem, in part, because subdistrict administrators here "aren't that strong."

Further, in Chicago, administrators and reformers alike have been reluctant to trust teachers, he notes. In view of this reluctance, "local school governance is an enormous impediment" to creating schools-within-schools, he says, expressing fears that principals and local school councils might interfere with the autonomy of a minischool's staff.

There is, however, a good deal of enthusiasm for the idea at the Board of Education. For example, the board's educational support committee readily embraced the new Foundations School housed in Price Elementary. Kotsakis hopes to persuade the board to protect schools-within-schools; for instance, the board could require that, once a school-within-a-school is established, it would be entitled to a share of the host school's discretionary funds.

## Teachers most resistant?

More significant resistance may come from teachers themselves. Working together may be hard for teachers who feel that "autonomy is the only thing they've got" after working for years, even decades, in an impersonal bureaucratic system, Fine says.

"Change is so hard," agrees Betty Dispenza-Green, principal of Chicago

Vocational High School, which recently divided into seven minischools, "especially for teachers who've been teaching for 20 years, 25 years."

"For all that time, if I taught geometry, I closed my door, and I taught my objectives without ever thinking at all about English or social studies. So, now everyone's in and out of my room, observing, meeting with me. Now I've got to listen to the drafting teacher. I may not be able to teach the concepts from chapter two right after chapter one, because in drafting class, the students need the concepts from chapter fifteen right now. Now I have to find a way to adjust to that."

Kotsakis contends, however, that the difficulty of the process, including the conflicts it can raise, are not only tolerable but also desirable. "There are two ways to try to re-think teaching and learning," he explains. "The first is to get a lot of lectures and articles and intellectualize over it. This is what we now call staff development.

"Another way is to just create a set of conditions which compels people to think about what they're doing in a new light. . . . If you tell a school like Funston, 'You've got to break yourself into four units,' can you imagine the political issues that would raise in the school? There would be a tremendous amount of conflict. And that means that people are thinking about what they're doing. Which I think is good.

"What we're trying to avoid," says Kotsakis, "is letting people just get into a different rut." ■

## Philadelphia's high schools

# 'Charters' post gains after three years

**M**ichelle Fine, Philadelphia's chief consultant for high school reform, talks more about creating "intellectually and emotionally rich communities" than she does about test scores. But more kids have been passing their academic classes since the reforms began in 1989, and even kids who aren't passing are staying in school at higher rates.

Since 1988, Pew Charitable Trusts have put up more than \$16.5 million to help Philadelphia restructure its 22 comprehensive high schools (the non-magnet, non-vocational schools). The money created and sustains the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative, an independent, non-profit corporation that helps teachers create "charters" in the larger high schools.

Each charter has a specific focus—either an academic specialty (like science), a career-prep theme (like business) or a particular way of teaching (like Socratic seminars). Each has 200 to 400 students and 18 to 25 teachers, including a teacher/coordinator, who has a slightly lighter teaching load. The Collaborative gives each charter \$21,000 a year, pays for daily "release time" for teacher/coordinators and provides consultants who help with curriculum and organizational issues.

The Collaborative also runs workshops for teachers, parents and administrators "to help them imagine what can be," says Fine, a professor at the City University of New York's Graduate Center. The Collaborative pays participants for attending. "I'm a big believer in bribes," quips Fine.

While conceding that the Collaborative's money gives it authority, Fine stresses, "We are nobody's boss. We can just make things sweet: 'So, charters get money, non-charters don't? OK, I'll make a charter.'"

Having grown out of Supt. Constance Clayton's resolve to reform the comprehensive high schools, the Collaborative is closely tied to the district. Pew's grant established it with district administrator Janis Somerville as executive director.

The first charters are now in their third year, and the program has grown to include 30 percent of students in the comprehensive high schools, including 45 percent of all ninth-graders. (The figure for ninth-graders is higher because many charters start with only a ninth grade and then add a grade each year. The 45

percent also includes some ninth-grade "institutes," which embrace all ninth-graders in a school.)

At every grade level and in every major academic subject, more students are passing now than before charters. The increase ranges from 12 percentage points (for sophomores passing history) to 5 percentage points (for freshmen passing math). Among kids who fail ninth grade, fewer drop out than four years ago—74.5 percent last year, compared to 83.5 percent in 1988. Attendance also has made modest gains, especially in ninth grade.

"It seems to work pretty well," says Connie Flood, a teacher in the Multicultural Charter at Furness High

School. "It's been a strong program. The teachers in the charter agree on what's good for students."

"For people who are really willing to take a little risk and do a little work—because it is an enormous amount of work—it's so nice to be able to do your own curriculum," says Liz Woods, a teacher in Furness' Humanities Charter.

"We tossed out a lot of stuff that the kids have no interest in, stuff they forget as soon as they leave school," says Zachary Rubin, a charter coordinator at Lincoln High School.

The focus of Rubin's charter, called The Temple Connection, is its arrangement with Temple University's education school; the charter takes in student teachers and, in return, gets extra staff development from university faculty.

"People on the school level have to be the idea people," says Linda Sampieri, who teaches math in The Temple Connection. She also mentions the benefit of working in smaller groups: "Students are watched over more carefully."

*"We tossed out a lot of stuff that kids have no interest in, stuff they forget as soon as they leave school."*

— Zachary Rubin, charter coordinator

To create a charter, teachers need the support of their principal and an OK from the Collaborative, which has certain guidelines. For instance, charters are not supposed to separate students by ability. As a result, the Collaborative said "no" to special education teachers at Furness who wanted to form a charter to serve special education students.

In addition to pushing charters, the Collaborative also promotes School-Based Management/Shared Decision-Making (SBM/SDM). If a school adopts SBM/SDM, its governing council (a mix of parents and teaching and non-teaching staff) gains control over discretionary spending and hiring. It also controls curriculum, the

## Charter's success a sore point

Crossroads, a writing-intensive charter, is widely regarded as one of the success stories of Philadelphia's charter program. A member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, Crossroads uses unconventional techniques and prepares its students at the all-black, inner-city Gratz High School for college.

A Crossroads student won a writing contest last year and had her play produced off-Broadway in New York. And the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and NBC Nightly News have featured the charter.

But within Gratz, "Crossroads is subject to a lot of hatred from other teachers," says Natalie Hiller, the charter's coordinator. "And now it's filtered down to the students."

The day before *CATALYST* visited Gratz, a schoolwide talent show had ended with verbal clashes between Crossroads students and students from the school's Business charter. "After the talent show, Crossroads people started chanting, 'Crossroads! Crossroads!'" reports senior Aaron Loric. "And Business started chanting back: 'Ain't shit!'"

As both groups of kids left the auditorium, teachers feared that fights would break out in the hallway. Students later claimed that the confrontation was nothing serious but also said that "things could have gotten out of hand" if teachers hadn't intervened.

This isn't the first time that conflicts have come up between students from different charters. Recently, students

from another charter vandalized some student work that was on display in Crossroads' part of the building.

The day after the shouting incident, the staff is still shook up. Acting Principal Margaret Holloman calls all of Crossroads to a meeting in the auditorium's balcony. "Competition is in itself OK," she tells the students, "but there must be some positive way we can handle this. What happened yesterday could have been very serious."

"I'm kind of lost," Holloman admits. "Maybe someone would like to explain this to me."

### Revolution

Some of the students' replies sound like what the staff most fears: "We've changed," says Crossroads student Frank Cook. "Now we're very proud. Now the question is, Do you all like what you've created? It's like we're a Frankenstein's monster."

Later, Hiller admits to other Crossroads teachers, "What Frank said really summed it up in one line."

"It really reminds me of a revolution," says Hiller. "We [Crossroads teachers] want to go one way; the rest of the school wants to go another. We're not going to give in, and the rest of the school is screaming."

"There's a lot of teachers who want to go back to the old ways," Hiller continues. "We threaten other teachers because we say, 'You've gotta look at these equity issues, you've gotta stay past 2:30.' And

who wants to do that when you've been giving out worksheets for 20 years and your life is comfortable?"

"This is the opportunity that a lot of students have been waiting for," says Crossroads senior Jerome Barmore, who plans to go to Temple University. "This is really a second chance. I've gotten a chance to get on course."

"When it first started, I wasn't too interested," Barmore continues. "but the teachers stayed on us, like 24-7 [24-hours a day, seven days a week]. They made us see that they were really interested in us."

"People used to see Gratz as a rough school, but now they see that there's a program called Crossroads. It's preparing me to really go out there and deal with the world."

### 'Conflict is good'

Michelle Fine, architect of Philadelphia's charter system and chief consultant to the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative, doesn't view Gratz's struggles as a problem. "Ultimately, these conflicts *should* be happening," says Fine. "These are struggles about ideas, about identity. I mean, it's painful."

Such conflicts might not come up, she says, "if there was just a big *building*, and Business moved in, and Crossroads moved in, and three other charters...[but instead] we are trying to do a revolution inside existing schools." D.W.

daily schedule, books, materials and instructional practices.

So far, only one of the 22 comprehensive high schools has chosen SBM/SDM, but most others are "pursuing" it—meaning that their principals and union delegates have agreed to work on it. A 75-percent vote from staff is required.

"Everybody [at Furness] is pretty much buying into charters," says teacher Liz Woods, "but I don't think they're totally buying into school-based management.... People are

afraid of anything that deviates from the union contract as they know it, because they see that as some kind of protection. And I think they're just afraid of what might replace it."

At Lincoln, counselor Harvey Smith says, "Most of the opposition to school-based management comes from people who are entrenched—people who, due to seniority, have jobs that come with a lot of perks. They fear that restructuring will take those jobs away from them."

Fine is sympathetic to staffs' reluc-

tance. "Schools are nervous because they haven't yet seen the district's commitment to school-based management.... It's exactly what's happening in Chicago, [where] they gave [schools] Chapter 1 money and then ripped out their operating budget.... So all the schools are rightfully worried: 'Oh, you want to put us in charge when you're a zillion dollars in the hole?'"

Fine says teachers also are wary

*Continued on page 16*

## Principal-driven change

# Taft rushes to convert school by September

**P**erhaps the biggest success Taft High School has had with its schools-within-schools program is the money and attention it has drawn to the Norwood Park school.

With a \$232,000 federal vocational education grant, Taft has instituted an innovative program, the kind school reformers cheer. Only one of its five "houses" is up and running this fall, but that's a beginning. And this beginning has already garnered coverage in the *Tribune*, the *Sun-Times* and elsewhere; in addition, the school has won three local school improvement awards that brought in a total of \$13,500.

"I think we've milked it pretty well," jokes Principal William Watts, who was a suburban school administrator when Taft's local school council hired him in 1990.

"Everyone is coming to look at us," says Paul Reibman, coordinator of the path-breaking Business Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship house. "I feel like I'm in a cage."

Taft has become a focal point because its plan is remarkably ambitious. A year ago, Taft was a single school with 75 percent of its students enrolled in the general track—that is, they weren't preparing for college or a particular vocation. A year from now, Taft is scheduled to be five schools, with each offering training in a particular career, vocational or technical area, as well as sufficient courses for every student to meet college entrance requirements.

One group that wasn't immediately wowed by the plan was Taft's teachers. They hadn't had a hand in writing it, but they are the people who will have to carry it out. Initially, many were deeply opposed. Some remain so, especially counselors and

special education teachers, whose work likely will change the most.

Schools-within-schools became policy at Taft in November 1991 when the school won the massive voc-ed grant. Watts had written what he calls a "state-of-the-art proposal" for integrating vocational and academic education. Members of the school's professional personnel advisory committee (PPAC) later said they had seen the proposal but hadn't discussed it. "The general attitude of the PPAC was 'Yes' to anything to get money," recalls English teacher Pat Daniels.

In January 1992, Watts asked teachers to volunteer for the first house. Those who didn't were assigned to one of the remaining houses-to-be: Engineering and Manufacturing Technology, Communication Arts, Environmental and Health Science, and Public Service.

## Winning teachers over

Teachers were told they would be responsible for designing the programs. Each house curriculum would have to provide both career training and college prerequisites, and academic courses would have to integrate the house theme. For example, an English class in the Engineering house might revolve around technical writing. Further, teachers in each house could adopt any rules or schedule they wanted.

Last March, as Taft's teachers began meeting in their newly assigned groups, resistance and passion were running high. Much of those early meetings were consumed by debates over whether the plan was feasible. Reibman got notes in his mailbox calling him Watts' "stooge." Fistfights nearly broke out

at a teachers' union meeting, one teacher reported.

Watts told his teachers, "The paradox is, this gives you more freedom than teachers ever dreamed of having."

Responding, counselor Caryl Heinechen observes, "If you come up with an idea yourself, you're more enthusiastic about it. We were given ownership. We did not take ownership."

However, the teachers who volunteered for the pilot house were enthusiastic and worked to spread the sentiment. And Watts has been tireless. Quips LSC Chair Stan Hitchens, "If I could get some of what he's shooting up on... He's always got energy whenever I see him."

In May, the pilot house faculty circulated a "Faculty Declaration," a pledge to "commit ourselves to the Schools-Within-A-School experiment in school restructuring." Seventy-five percent of Taft's teachers signed it—a "miracle," Watts says.

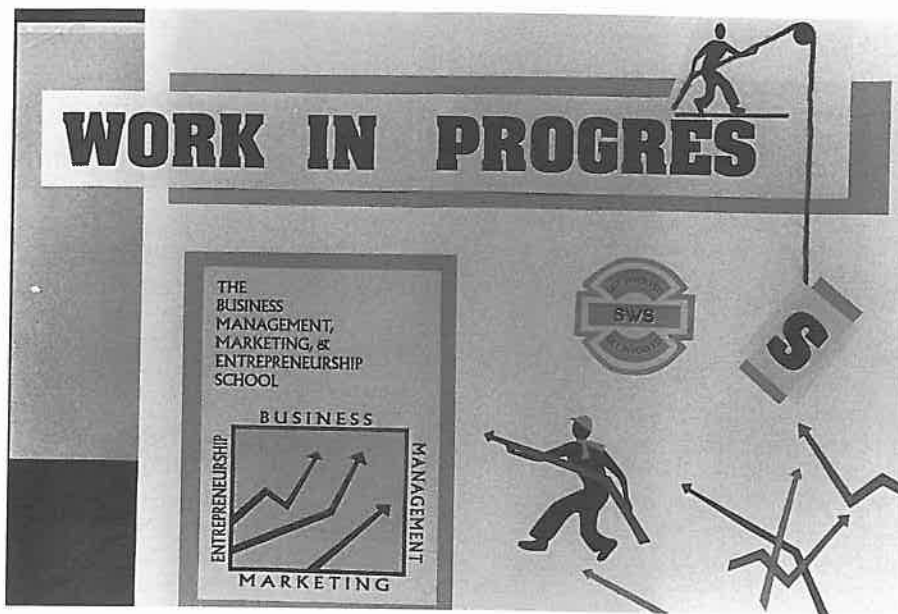
## Growing pains

But that didn't end the debate. In late September, Chicago Teachers Union delegate Nick Mitchell, a schools-within-schools advocate, reported that one house "is still arguing over 'do it or not do it.' They should be doing it." Mitchell is doubtful that all four remaining houses will open by next September; with planning meetings held no more than once a week, "there's just not enough time."

Thanks to start-up money, teachers in the pilot house had been able to meet more frequently and, occasionally, for a day or two at a time. Yet, Mitchell acknowledges that their experience may be as valuable as time to the teachers now in planning. "We know them, we know the conditions they're working under, they're right here in the building," he notes.

Concerned about the other four houses opening on schedule, Watts recently met with each planning team. "I'm more optimistic than I was," he reports. "I'd rather open everything on time, get it over with. You don't have to deal with the really hard problems until you do it, and the longer you delay, the harder it becomes."

Special education is one of the thorniest issues; the plan calls for spe-



A logo tells the story of Taft's Business, Marketing and Entrepreneurship "house."

cial ed teachers and students to be divided equally among the houses.

Special ed teacher Dick Lieberman argues that special ed shouldn't be part of the house system because its teachers will be spread too thinly. He asks, for example, "If the special ed teacher in another house has never taught civics or U.S. history, where is a [special ed] kid supposed to go to get those subjects?" Lieberman calls himself a "skeptic" about schools-within-schools, and claims that other special ed teachers share his concerns and his skepticism.

Watts says simply that "special ed must adapt to the structure... There are all kinds of ways to do it." The pilot house has no self-contained special education classrooms, he notes.

## More faculty needed

Taft's counselors also are unhappy. Next year, the school expects to close its attendance and programming offices, so that each house can make its own policies. The work now done by those offices will fall to counselors. Caryl Heinechen complains that she will become a "data entry clerk."

Counselor Gloria Herrick agrees, adding, "I won't like being pulled away from the kids."

A more broadly based complaint is that no house has the "right" faculty to offer the range of courses it would like to offer. There are two

parts to this problem.

First, putting all students through both a vocational and college prep curriculum leaves no room for many categories of courses: elective, honors, higher-level math and science; and, in most houses, foreign language courses will be eliminated.

Taft is working with Wright Community College to fill some of these gaps. Starting in January, the pilot house will send some students to Wright for classes in languages, word processing and advanced math. The joint program also offers students the option of getting "honors credit" for their classes by taking on extra assignments.

The second and more serious part of the faculty-composition problem is that a house may not have enough properly certified teachers for all required courses. No teacher in the Environmental and Health Science house, for example, is qualified to teach chemistry.

Currently, Watts is trying to fill vacancies with teachers who are certified to teach at least two subjects. (Taft's faculty is expanding because its enrollment is up more than 100 students, an increase that Mitchell, the CTU delegate, attributes to the school's good press.)

Then, as teachers retire or quit, houses will be able to recruit the teachers they need, Watts says. "Once the houses are settled," he adds, "we can maybe talk about

some horse trading."

Watts has pledged not to fire any teachers to make room for new staff with more appropriate certification. "I think that's an important guarantee to make," he says. "The mandate is: Given the existing faculty, with the certifications that they have, do the best you can to offer the courses kids will need. It's not going to be optimal."

Meanwhile, the pilot house is moving along. Its teachers voted to waive their contract right not to teach during "division"—the 20-minute period set aside for attendance and other house-keeping concerns. During that time, every teacher teaches a course in business or economics, for which students receive a half-credit per year.

Math teacher Jerry Patt says that he feels the loss of time, especially since the minischool has no attendance office; he now spends his lunch period phoning the parents of absent kids. But Patt sees advantages to the program as a whole. "I think it's better for discipline. I just have to go down the hall and say to Pat [another teacher in the house], 'What's with this kid?'"

## Teacher contract concerns

Dick Lieberman, an associate CTU delegate for Taft, is uneasy about houses being able to vote on contract waivers. Within a house, it takes only 11 votes [70 percent of faculty] to get a waiver, he says. "You can have 11 people gang up on you any time."

Other teachers are concerned about colleagues who willingly exceed contract requirements. For example, one teacher has taken on an extra class in order to make the pilot program's schedule more workable. Some teachers have asked Nick Mitchell, the senior CTU delegate, to file a grievance; he has refused. "I take the position that if the teacher involved doesn't mind a particular situation, there's no grievance," Mitchell explains.

Both Mitchell and Watts sit on the board of the CTU's Quest Center, which is promoting school restructuring that enhances the role of teachers; in selecting 11 schools for restructuring grants and assistance, the center ranked Taft's plan No. 1.

D.W

## Community-driven change

# Clemente plan has roots in '70s protests

In early 1973, student and community protesters twice shut down the old Tuley High School in demonstrations that nearly became riots. Their demands were removal of a principal they considered racist, reinstatement of an activist counselor and naming the new school that would replace Tuley after Roberto Clemente.

Fifteen years later, during the fall and winter of the 1988-89 school year, racism was still the issue. Protesters marched outside Clemente every Friday, calling for the ouster of a teacher whose comments in a magazine article reflected racist attitudes among Clemente's faculty.

By January 1990, eight of those protesters had become members of the local school council. But instead of trying to remove individuals, they resolved to transform the school as a whole.

The change in approach evolved during the protests over the 1988 magazine article, published in the *Reader*. In the article, three white teachers talked about problems they saw in the school and the West Town community. In the words of one, those problems included "incest and drug dealing and ignorance and poverty and cruelty and gang beatings and... all the [things] that that neighborhood has in abundance."

In the middle of the article, written as a conversation, another teacher says, "I'm uncomfortable about all the awful things we're saying about the kids, even the gang bangers." Other members of the school community were uncomfortable about them too, especially coming from Anglo teachers at a predominately Puerto Rican high school.

The identities of the teachers—and the school—were supposed to be masked, but there were plenty of clues to both. Bilingual teachers at

Clemente made the connection and got community organizations to join them in calling for the removal of the three teachers. All three got transfer notices the summer of 1988, but one of them, Kay Thompson, filed a lawsuit and won the right to stay at Clemente, pending a final judgment.

"Some comments in that article are sociologically true," says Jose Lopez, director of the Puerto Rican Community Center. But by defining the community only by its flaws and its differences from Anglo culture, the comments promoted racism, Lopez and others felt.

In protest over the article and Thompson's continued presence, community groups, churches and social service agencies formed a new organization called the Committee Against Racism at Clemente (CARC). CARC's members marched every Friday outside of Clemente for five

months, chanting "Kay must go!"

"It was like a spark," says Jose Morales of Aspira, a social service agency that joined CARC. "We used the issue of Kay Thompson to rally people around the larger issue of racism at Clemente."

By the time the court's decision came down in Thompson's favor in 1989, CARC was ready to shift its focus from protest to advocacy. "We understood that by getting her out, we wouldn't solve the problem," says Morales. "We came to understand that the problem has more to do with curriculum and with teacher training."

CARC ran a slate for Clemente's local school council, and the whole slate won.

The first few months were turbulent. The council immediately fired the incumbent principal, citing misunderstandings with teachers and friction with students. An acting principal filled in for two months until the LSC chose a permanent replacement; two months later, the new principal resigned, citing health problems.

Finally, long-time Assistant Principal Louis Gerald applied for the job. "We picked him even though he was Anglo," says Morales, "because we felt we needed someone who knew their way around the school." Gerald turned out to be "a good surprise for us," adds Morales. "We thought of him as part of the school's



JOHN BOOZ

Students at nine-story Clemente High crowd onto escalators during the scant four minutes between class periods.



Old Guard, but he has demonstrated that he is progressive. He has a mind for change, more even than some of the Puerto Ricans in the school."

In early 1991, on the recommendation of activist Jose Lopez, the LSC asked sociologist Luis Nieves Falcon to come to Clemente to help achieve some of its goals. Falcon began by interviewing more than a quarter of the school's 188 staffers and several groups of parents and students. Teachers have referred to Falcon as "the peacemaker."

"There are teachers here that have very big differences in philosophy and educational strategy, but they know that we will never disrespect them as individuals," says Falcon. "And by my behavior, I demand that same respect from other people. I believe that it is natural for differences to exist among honorable people, but I don't think the differences should keep us from working together."

## Report a 'mirror'

Falcon issued a report that served as a mirror: Many teachers perceived the students—and the school itself—as deficient, it said, and many students saw teachers as uninterested in them. Falcon interpreted the reluctance of many Anglo teachers (who are in the majority at Clemente) to embrace the LSC's reforms as a response to "the Hispanic threat" to their power within the school.

At the end of the report, Falcon outlined a set of reforms, which the council has been pursuing ever since (without extra funds other than state Chapter 1).

With poor relationships at the heart of many problems, breaking the school into smaller units was considered essential. The summer of 1991, a group of teachers, parents, students and consultants drafted a ninth-grade curriculum. When Clemente opened its doors in September 1991, it had four houses: a bilingual house, two houses for tenth- through twelfth-graders and a ninth-grade house, where teachers used their new curriculum, revising it as they went along.

The need for a new curriculum was the main reason houses were divided by grade level, rather than academic theme. A curriculum for all

grades couldn't be rewritten all at once, so Clemente decided to start with ninth grade and add a grade every year.

This year, the teachers and students from last year's ninth-grade house are still together on the same floor (the seventh). And the new freshmen are using the curriculum tested on last year's ninth-graders.

## 'We know students better'

Carmen Rodriguez, assistant principal for the seventh floor, says that the new arrangement, especially keeping teachers with the same students from one year to the next, already is paying dividends.

"We've gotten to know the students better," she says. "I already know these kids inside out. And I'm getting to know their families, their home situations, their financial... everything. And you can really do something for these kids once you get to know them very well."

The houses function somewhat autonomously. "For all practical purposes, I am the principal of this house," says Rodriguez. "I supervise teachers. I supervise curriculum and attendance."

They are not wholly self-contained, though. Each house is based on one floor, but with all the science labs built into the eighth floor, for example, students have to travel between floors for some classes. Geraldini notes that teachers whose rooms aren't on the same floor as their school's base are "somewhat alienated."

The faculty from each house meets once a week, but a sense of community seems to be developing slowly. For one, the houses themselves are large. When CATALYST visited a seventh-floor meeting, 32 teachers were in attendance. "This school is huge," said a faculty member who asked that her name not be used.

But she went on to observe that teachers at least were sitting in a circle. "That's a new thing. Last week, everyone just sat wherever they wanted. People talked among themselves, some people were reading the paper."

Another problem is that house faculties have only limited time to meet. Rodriguez asked the LSC to consider scheduling longer and, if need be,

fewer house meetings. People hardly get settled in, she notes, before it's time to go.

Autonomy is another concern. Rodriguez also asked the LSC to allot each house a certain share of the school's discretionary dollars, so that houses wouldn't have to feel like they were begging every time they wanted to buy something or hold an event.

Although the LSC is devoting most of the school's discretionary funds to

*Continued on page 15*

## Clemente's reform program:

### ■ A MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM:

Being written over a four-year period by teachers, parents and students with guidance from consultants. Started last year with a ninth-grade curriculum, continuing this year with a tenth-grade guide.

### ■ SCHOOLS-WITHIN-A-SCHOOL:

Starting with a ninth-grade house last year, where staff used the newly-written curriculum, and adding one house per year. For now, bilingual students are in a house of their own.

### ■ STUDENT-CENTERED TEACHING PRACTICES:

Moving away from lectures, textbooks and drills, towards seminars, practica, and cooperative, group work.

### ■ ADVISORIES:

Making sure that each student is known well by at least one adult in the school, teachers meet with a small group of kids for a full period every day on a "non-teaching" basis.

### ■ INTENSIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

Using state Chapter 1 money for lectures and workshops to help teachers implement the school's new teaching practices, new administrative structure and new curriculum.

### ■ A PARENTS' INSTITUTE:

Conducting workshops on school procedures to help parents keep track of their children's work and progress, on school governance to make parents effective advisors to the LSC and on literacy development.

### ■ A STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM:

Plans are to put student leaders in charge of discipline procedures by the end of 1993.

## Teacher-driven change

# Foundations School a struggle from start



JOHN BOOZ

Joya Hudgins points to a picture as she reads a story to her younger brothers Jarrett and Jonathan at Foundations School. Foundations classrooms are non-graded.

**T**he Foundations School that opened this September in Price Elementary School is Chicago's most dramatic example of schools-within-schools:

- It is the first school in the city to be designed and run by its teachers.

- Its program is ambitiously progressive, incorporating a multicultural curriculum, whole language, Socratic seminars, hands-on math and science and parent participation.

- And it draws heavy support from the Board of Education and the Chicago Teachers Union, through its Quest Center. Indeed, the board has gone out of its way to support the program, bending rules to help steady the school in its infancy.

The board hopes to use Foundations, located in Kenwood, as a model for developing more such schools-within-schools. While the experiment no doubt will provide valuable information about how to manage such a program, it's doubtful that anyone would want to replicate Foundations' stormy beginnings.

The starting point for Foundations was a school in Woodlawn with a divided faculty. One group, largely white and young, favored a progressive teaching approach and was favored by the principal; the other group, largely black and older, adhered to more traditional pedagogy. Deciding to switch rather than fight, the young teachers spent months looking for a new home; when they arrived, new circumstances threatened them. And even now they are struggling to hold up enrollment.

The story begins in 1990 at Dumas Elementary School, where all of Foundations' 10 teachers worked until last summer. Many of them had been only recently recruited by Sylvia Peters, Dumas' former, high-profile principal.

"She wanted us to be role models for the rest of the faculty. Some of the other teachers felt resentful," says Lynn Cherkasky-Davis, Foundations' point person.

And many of Dumas' veteran

teachers were uncomfortable with the school's new, progressive direction. Peters offered to help the veterans find jobs elsewhere, says Cherkasky-Davis. "But there were some who said, 'We'll survive this...'. They made things as difficult as possible for us."

Carol Hughes, until recently the local school council chair at Dumas, takes a more charitable view: "I think some of the older teachers felt that they were being excluded."

And it didn't help matters that most of the new teachers were young and white, while the veterans were older and black. (Peters and all Dumas students are black.)

The breaking point came last March, when Peters left Dumas to join the board of the controversial Edison Project—a multibillion-dollar plan to create a chain of innovative, for-profit schools.

Charlotte Gray, who had been a teacher at Dumas since it opened, became acting principal. Gray declined to be interviewed for this article, but Hughes, the former LSC chair, describes her as "a more 'back-to-basics' educator."

When Gray took over, "the newer teachers were being excluded from the decision-making process," Hughes recalls. "I don't think it was anyone's plan. I think it was personalities."

By late April, Peters' recruits were actively planning to jump ship. The weekly meetings of a teacher-support group, called Teacher Talk (see *CATALYST*, June 1992), became strategy sessions.

## Wanted separate site

The group was well-positioned for the move. Peters and her school had acquired national reputations, and the breakaway teachers moved under that aura. Cherkasky-Davis had won numerous awards and grants, boosting her to prominence as well. And the group had become a favorite of Ted Oppenheimer, director of the Oppenheimer Family Foundation, which funds small educational projects throughout the city.

At first, the group hoped to create a new school at a new site. A consortium of museums had been talking about creating a school that would

use the city's museums as its classrooms, and the Dumas/Foundations teachers hoped to become that school. However, the teachers wanted a site by September, which was too soon for the museums.

John Kotsakis of the Chicago Teachers Union, who had acted as an intermediary between Teacher Talk and the museums, now helped the group write a proposal to the CTU's new Quest Center. The center agreed to endorse the proposed school, but only if the teachers could find a site.

Meanwhile, the School Board was considering closing schools to save money.

## 11th-hour victory

In early June, Supt. Ted Kimbrough met with supporters of the Dumas/Foundations group, including Oppenheimer and Alexander Polikoff of Business and Professional People for the Public Interest. Kimbrough said he wasn't about to open a new school when others were closing but that he would support the group if it found a host school.

The group presented itself to the board's Instruction Committee, which was to plans to make the program a branch of Fuller and to house it in the District 6 offices. Kimbrough nixed the idea at the last minute, saying it looked too much like opening a new school.

So on June 24, the Foundations teachers were in hot pursuit of a host school. If they could find one and get the signatures of all LSC members by 6 o'clock that evening, they could get on the board's agenda for the next day's meeting.

That afternoon, at the District 6 offices, Cherkasky-Davis, Oppenheimer, and District 6 Supt. Ora McConnor-Jones buttonholed Price's principal, Carl Lawson, who was attending a meeting about the closing of Shakespeare Elementary.

"They explained their thing in about 10 minutes. And we had about 20 minutes to make a decision," Lawson recalls. "We pulled it all together in about three or four hours." Lawson and LSC Chair Ron Sistrunk (then chairman of the CityWide Coalition for School

Reform) got the signatures of Price's LSC and submitted them before the 6 p.m. deadline.

But the group was denied a spot on the board's agenda; Kimbrough had declared the LSC's decision invalid because it violated the Open Meetings Act.

In a final reprieve for Foundations, the board failed to finish its business that day and planned to reconvene in two days—enough time for Price's LSC to approve the program in public session. Finally, on June 30, the board said "yes" to Foundations.

Foundations' teachers launched a recruitment drive, but the board soon ordered a halt to ensure that Price would have enough space to absorb students from the now-shuttered Shakespeare. As it turned out, not many Shakespeare students enrolled at Price.

Thus, when the school year started, Foundations had enrolled only about 100 students, far short of its goal of 159. A few Dumas parents were contacted, and some moved their children to Price. But recruitment was difficult because the Foundations staff was now busy running the school.

## Difficult balance

Had the School Board abided by its own rules, the school would have lost at least one teacher on the 20th day of classes. However, the board gave Foundations a pass, reasoning that the board itself had contributed to the low enrollment.

Further, to help maintain Foundations' enrollment, the board agreed to provide bus service to about 20 students who live less than a mile-and-a-half from school, which is the board's trigger point for transportation.

"We're trying not to publicize that too much," says Lawson. "Some Price parents don't understand that there are really two different schools here."

"Lawson supports the school, but it's a difficult balance for him," says Oppenheimer. "If he appears to be giving us something that other teachers don't have, then he's caught between teachers."

Still, Foundations seems not to have outworn its welcome. When CATALYST visited in early October,

several Price teachers said they hoped to learn more about the new school; none expressed concern that it was being unfairly favored.

More than other local experiments with schools-within-schools, Foundations and Price operate as two separate institutions. Students at Price have worn uniforms since last year, but Foundations does not require them. Lawson reviews the lesson plans of Price's teachers but not Foundations', who jointly plan curricula for their school.

Lawson calls himself Foundations' "building manager."

The methods of the two schools are different as well. In Price's fairly traditional program, students do much of their work individually at their desks. Foundations students are often found at "stations," working individually or in groups. Or they may be visiting another Foundations classroom for a program such as "Buddy Reading," which teams students of different ages.

## Back at Dumas

Meanwhile, at Dumas, Hughes reports that the school didn't have a lot of trouble replacing the departed teachers, most of whom did not have tenure.

Hughes had supported Sylvia Peters' innovations and her new teachers and had been "quite angry" at their departure. "They felt that they had no support here, but that was not true," she says, adding, "If you really believe in something, you should hang in there and try to get your point across."

But Hughes also believes the new principal "should have a staff that's in line with her way of thinking."

Dumas has consolidated around a traditional teaching approach. "More of an emphasis has been put on the basics because of the school report card data we've gotten back," Hughes says. "With all the programs that were brought to the school, our test scores did not reflect their success. And some people put a lot of emphasis on test scores."

Dumas "is going to make it under Mrs. Gray," Hughes concludes. "I think that she has the welfare of the children totally at heart." D.W.

# Chicago's different formulas for school division

## Chicago Vocational students sample house offerings

Chicago Vocational High School in Avalon Park split into seven minischools in January after joining a progressive school network that stresses close student-teacher relationships and in-depth learning.

**SIZE:** 3,126 students, 177 teachers, 8 counselors. Each minischool enrolls up to 750 students.

**STRUCTURE:** Each minischool combines several related shop departments—e.g., drafting, graphic arts and commercial art—with a set of academic classes. Librarians, P.E. teachers and special ed teachers don't belong to minischools, but all other faculty and counselors do.

**HOW/WHY:** In the late '80s, CVS administrators were looking for ways to change the school. "We were convinced that the children could do a lot better," says Principal Betty Dispenza-Green. "When we learned about the Coalition of Essential Schools, we said, 'Whoa! This is where we're trying to go!'"

Viewing traditional schools as too formulaic and impersonal, the Coalition reduces the number of students that any one teacher deals with, trades in a broad course of study for concentrated learning in essential areas and changes classroom practices to cast students as "workers" and teachers as "coaches." Students work in groups instead of listening to teacher lectures.

In 1990, CVS teachers voted to join the Coalition and began more than a year of planning. By the time the minischools opened last January, the full staff of two schools had taken

a six-week intensive training course, where they practiced using the Essential Schools process. All teachers will have taken the course by next fall. The Coalition also provides workshops and consultants.

"Students rebelled at first," Green recalls. Not only did kids complain that they could no longer see friends who were now in different schools, they also objected to the new teaching styles. "They'd say, 'You're supposed to tell us the answers!' Now we're not doing that," Green says.

After adjusting, some students are proud of the changes: "We, the students, are learning to take on more responsibility for our own education," says a Business School student.

Such radical change is often harder for teachers than for students, Green notes. However, the vote that brought the program to CVS required a "yes" from 75 percent of the faculty, so initial support runs strong. Sending teachers in large, cohesive groups to learn the Essential Schools process also helps bolster enthusiasm.

The CVS building has some adjusting to do, too: In about 40 percent of its academic classrooms, desks are bolted to the floor. "It's very hard to do the kinds of involvement you want to do," Green complains.

**MECHANICS, STUDENTS:** They rotate through several different shop areas (spending 10 weeks in each area) before choosing a minischool at the end of their freshman or sophomore year. Until they make that choice, they "belong to" the school that contains their first ninth-grade shop.

**MECHANICS, STAFF:** Each minischool has a coordinator. Each minischool sends two faculty members to CVS's professional personnel advisory committee. All teachers in a minischool have common prep and lunch periods, and all the minischool coordinators have a common prep period to make intraschool plans.



Earline Lee (seated, center) teaches hat-making to fashion design students in CVS' Professional Services School.

## Field teachers 'unleashed' by minischools

Field Elementary School in Rogers Park has split into five subunits in an effort to rejuvenate the struggling, overcrowded school.

**SIZE:** About 1,200 students and growing. Each minischool has 4 to 18 teachers.

**STRUCTURE:** One minischool serves prekindergarten through third grade, another serves eighth-graders. Three schools, each with its own theme, serve fourth-through seventh-graders.

**HOW/WHY:** Field opened five teacher-designed minischools last September—only nine months after the school's first all-faculty discussion

about schools-within-schools and only a year after the arrival of Principal Nelda Hobbs.

When Hobbs took over at Field, she found the faculty "divided against each other." To help create closer bonds, Hobbs held a faculty retreat funded by a grant from the state.

Al Bertani, a consultant from the Center for School Improvement at the University of Chicago, co-led the retreat and later met with Field's curriculum committee to discuss ideas for revamping the school. The committee warmed to the idea of schools-within-schools, and in January it organized a full staff conference to introduce the concept. By the time the staff met again in March, it was ready to start making plans.

Between March and May, teachers "sifted" themselves into five schools, some on their own initiative, some with guidance from Hobbs. By the time school ended in June, students were slotted into the schools for September, and teachers were planning the next year's classes together. On the last day of school, teachers moved into their new rooms and briefed students on the year ahead.

"I never thought I'd see them so turned on," says Hobbs. "But once you give them some room to make decisions... I get chills when I think about it, it's so exciting. They're just unleashed."

"If it weren't for this program, I would have just packed my bags and left," says Anita Rubin-Martin, chair of the Classical School for fourth-through seventh-graders.

**MECHANICS, STUDENTS:** All eighth-graders are in the High School Prep program, and all three-to-eight year-olds are in the Foundations Program. The fourth- through seventh graders were divided by lottery into three schools: The Journalism School, the Environmental School and the Classical School. The random selection for the middle-grade schools effectively eliminated Field's entrenched system of tracking by ability.

**MECHANICS, STAFF:** Regular classroom teachers chose schools for themselves, and each team designed its own school. Each minischool has a chairperson, but decisions are made by consensus.

Non-classroom teachers, including a social worker, a librarian, bilingual

teachers, special education teachers, gym teachers, art teachers and assistant principals, comprise a sixth "school," called The Specials School. They rotate among the houses, serving much as they did in the past.

*(Note: Field's programs and their creation are described in greater detail in the Fall 1992 newsletter of Business and Professional People for the Public Interest. See Resource Roundup, page 16.)*

## Dyett built houses 20 years ago, now has 'cycles' too

In 1972, Dyett Middle School in Washington Park built "houses"; almost 20 years later, it subdivided the houses into "cycles."

**SIZE:** 730 students, 35 teachers. Between 165 and 280 students in each house, about 90 in each cycle.

**STRUCTURE:** The school has three houses, one for each grade level in the school. Within each house, there are cycles that embrace three classrooms and their teachers, who teach the core academic subjects. Kids get gym, French, industrial arts and

music from resource teachers who serve the whole school.

Every teacher in the school teaches reading the first period of the day; as a result, reading classes contain only 23 students, compared to an average of 27 for other classes.

**HOW/WHY:** The school was designed for a house system, with four wings, one of which now houses a subdistrict office. Principal Yvonne Minor introduced cycles to give teachers more control over their own schedules and curricula.

"This is heaven," says science teacher Dorothy Wilson-Davis. "The current empowerment of teachers comes from us asking and her saying, 'OK.' I don't think too many principals would do that." Other teachers confirmed that Minor was unusually supportive.

Since teachers in a cycle make their own schedules, they can arrange a common prep period.

Teachers from different cycles work together, too. For example, Wilson-Davis "shares" her science lab with another teacher in her house. The pair developed a system of "stations," each set up for a different experiment. Small groups of students work at each station, eventually making the rounds of all stations and experiments.

**MECHANICS, STUDENTS:** Students are assigned to a cycle when they enter Dyett and stay in it (with the same



Whittier Elementary science teacher Ed Huff helps students in the Rocket Club build models. For their work, the students will earn 'greenleaves' in the school's Microsociety Program.

three teachers) for all three years. A gifted program, not attached to any house, siphons off 30 kids from each house, or grade, and some special education students are in self-contained classrooms.

**MECHANICS, STAFF:** Each house has a counselor, 10 classrooms, a science lab, a lunchroom and a "commons" area. An all-school programmer schedules resource teachers; teachers in each cycle then make their own schedule. The principal and an assistant principal oversee all houses.

## Whittier principal lets teachers run the show

Whittier Elementary School on the Near West Side has split into three schools-within-a-school, or SWAS groups, as the school calls them. The move is part of Principal Irene DaMota's strategy to decentralize power.

**SIZE:** 550 students, with 150 to 200 on each floor.

**STRUCTURE:** Each SWAS group occupies a floor, and the floors are divided by grade level, with Head Start through first grade on the ground floor, second and third grades on the second floor and fourth through sixth grades on the top floor.

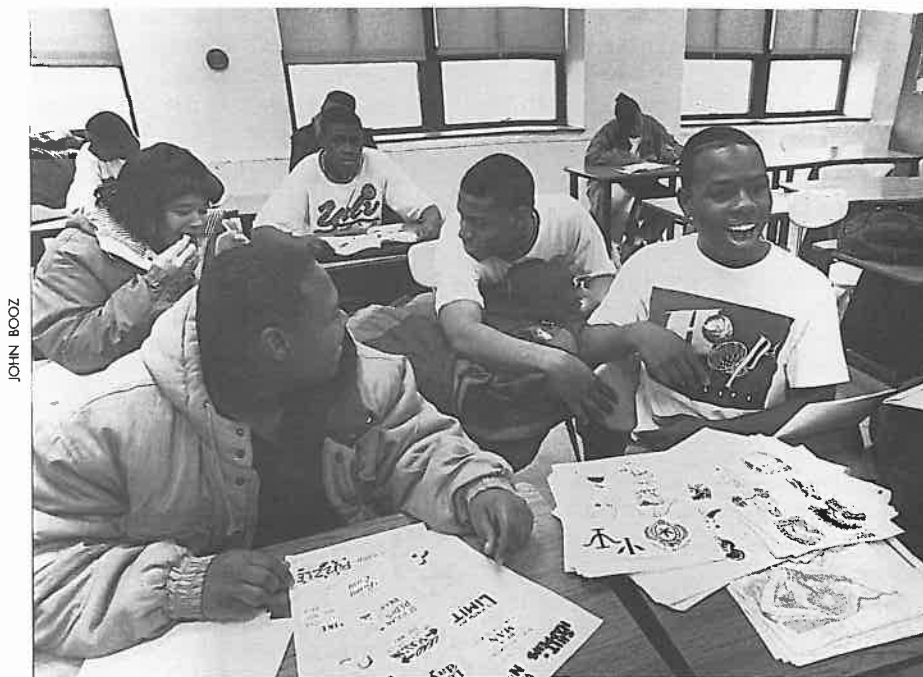
**HOW/WHY:** DaMota believes firmly in decentralization and hopes the smaller units of organization will be more efficient and more equitable, and will help foster a nurturing atmosphere.

"The function of the principal's office has become to pay the bills, [and to] no longer give approval or deny privileges to teachers," DaMota says.

Teachers do the rest of the governing, meeting in their SWAS groups once a week. They set discipline policy, plan curriculum, schedule classes and plan projects.

Each group gets a portion of the school's discretionary funds.

SWAS III (fourth through sixth grades), for example, adopted a Microsociety Program, in which students earn "greenleaves" by participating in class and doing their work. (The term greenleaves



JOHN BOOZ

Students in Hyde Park Academy's Transitional School hold a lively discussion on symbolism before writing essays.

stems from the full name of the school —J. Greenleaf Whittier.) Students are creating their own "microgovernment" that will make and enforce laws and be supported by an income tax. As the year goes on, students will become "microentrepreneurs," investing their greenleaves in businesses that provide services to other students.

Not all of Whittier's teachers were happy with DaMota's new approach. To any teacher who is unhappy, however, DaMota says, "There are 600 school improvement plans. If you don't like ours, please look for one that suits your wants." Several teachers took DaMota up on the offer.

Kindergarten teacher Maria Ascencio points out that although most of the departing teachers were bilingual, few of their replacements speak Spanish. Since all of the school's students are Latino, Ascencio worries about the message families are getting about the importance of bilingualism at Whittier.

Still, Ascencio praises the "dual-language" program that DaMota has started, where kindergarteners spend half their time in an English-only room and half in a Spanish-only room.

Several new teachers said that DaMota's policies were what brought them to Whittier. Tenna Middleton, who transferred to Whittier this year,

says, "I've been in the system for 10 years. I was in a high school, and I was ready to quit. But after coming here, I feel like a brand new teacher. Like there's hope, you know?"

SWAS III teacher Roberto Cepeda calls DaMota "a very courageous leader. She gives so much to the teachers. She respects them as professionals and as individuals."

And the father of a Whittier fifth-grader praised both the school and the teachers. "All I know is that my kid had gone to Catholic schools for four years and they didn't do anything for him," said the parent, who declined to give his name. "There's nothing negative I could say about public education at Whittier. The teachers care. I can tell by the expression on my child's face when he comes home that he had a wonderful day at school."

**MECHANICS, STUDENTS:** Students move up through the three floors as they progress through their years at Whittier.

**MECHANICS, TEACHERS:** DaMota assigns teachers to a particular grade level; within their groups, teachers assign themselves students. Since some teachers favor mixed-age grouping, the children in one room will sometimes span two or even three years in age.

# Hyde Park Academy has school for adults, too

Hyde Park Career Academy High School has had four schools within the school for over 10 years, the result of years of planning with community organizations.

**SIZE:** 1,000 in the Magnet School, 1,000 in the General School, 120 in the Transitional Center. A College Center, staffed by faculty from nearby colleges, serves adults in the community.

**STRUCTURE:** Each school serves a target group: The Magnet School is for collegebound students from around the city, the General School is for neighborhood kids, the Transitional Center is for students on the verge of dropping out or being "pushed out," and the College Center is for adults in the community.

**HOW/WHY:** In the mid-1970s, The Woodlawn Organization (TWO) decided to save Hyde Park High School as part of a broader plan to revitalize the Woodlawn community.

TWO hired the former director of an innovative Boston school as the project's chief consultant. Organizers got help from the Board of Education, the Chicago City Colleges and the University of Chicago. "When you talk to people who were part of this effort," says Principal Weldon Beverly, "you find that they believe in community *involvement*, not community *control*. The professionals design the program, and the community supports it."

TWO financially supported the Hyde Park Career Academy Project from 1976 through 1981, paying over a half dozen staffers as they designed the new schools.

The theory in structuring the new schools was to ensure that Hyde Park maintained a range of students. Magnet students, it was thought, could be role models for general students; and both of those groups could provide an example to kids in the Transitional Center.

Hyde Park's schools-within-a-school do not have hard-and-fast bound-

aries: Many teachers work in both the magnet and the general programs, and some students take classes in both; upper-grade electives are often open to students from both programs. And students from both of those schools and the Transitional Center take gym, art and music classes together. However, each program does have its own counselors and a full-time coordinator.

Due to recent budget cuts, the schools now are even less distinctive. The Magnet School had received special funds to maintain a lower student-faculty ratio. "But the board, in its wisdom, has cut all of that and decided to make all the schools the same [in terms of funding]," says Beverly. One result is that the Magnet School lost an Advanced Placement chemistry class because only 17 students had enrolled.

The school also had to declare its computer lab, math lab and resource center off-limits because the cuts left them without staff monitors.

But the school has plans for one more school-within-the-school—a ninth-grade academy. Beverly says he hopes to "ease the transition to high school by concentrating all of our most nurturing, child-centered teachers in the ninth grade. There aren't enough such teachers to go around in any school, unfortunately. Unless you concentrate them in the ninth grade, a lot of freshmen will miss out."

**MECHANICS, STUDENTS:** Kids with above-average reading scores are eligible for the magnet program, and the General School takes all neighborhood kids. Students who are finding either program too much for them can opt for up to two years in the Transitional Center. "There are two ways out of the Transitional Center," says coordinator Robert McGregor. If students improve their grades and attendance, they can go back to the General School; otherwise, after a maximum of two years, MacGregor refers them to night school.

**MECHANICS, STAFF:** The Transitional Center, with its four teachers and one administrator, is completely self-contained. The College Center's courses are taught by faculty from surrounding colleges. Other academic faculty tend to be associated with either the general or magnet track, but many teach some classes in both. D.W.



Wanda Guilden puts the final glaze on a mural painted by Clemente High students.

**CLEMENTE** continued from page 9

teacher workshops, there are doubts about whether the effort can transform the whole staff. "Some [teachers] have been teaching for 20 years, and we only have two consultants here—part time," notes the anonymous faculty member.

"On the positive side, this just started last year," she adds. "We are in the baby stages."

Geraldi says there are signs of progress. "Our failure rates have decreased, but not as much as we'd like. Dropouts are down a little too, but when you start with so many kids dropping out, it's hard to see progress a little at a time."

By the time Clemente's reforms are fully put into effect, Falcon, who visits the school several times a year, expects to be gone. "I don't think I should be here too long," he said last June. "Not more than a year. Otherwise, it would be dependent on me, and I'm not about promoting dependency. I'm about developing freedom."

Kay Thompson, the object of the 1988-89 protests, now works on campus with organizations like *Aspira*. She doesn't talk to reporters anymore, but she has had conversations with Lopez.

"At this point, she is not even an issue," says Morales. "She is not what we call a racist pig. She has a legitimacy at the school. I think we are even pleased that she is still there, working with us. I think she understands what we are about."

D.W.

of sharing authority with parents, though the Collaborative is encouraging it. "I think the places that are doing probably the best intellectual work are somewhat more reluctant because they're just beginning to have an intellectual conversation with peers and [wonder] how broad a circle you can have and still have that conversation be about curriculum, instruction and so forth. But we're all growing on that one."

They're not growing fast enough for some parents, though. At a conference last May, an irate parent followed Fine to the podium. "You are not asking the people that matter... Let's be real. That's what they say in my community: Let's be real. You've needed our help all along. Ask for it, and then be willing to receive it when it comes."

## What critics say

As for staff critics of Collaborative programs, Fine says they are "a small crowd [but] important voices."

Teacher Connie Flood, though not a foe, articulates one criticism: "[The district has] been plugging in new programs every year for a long time. The history is that these programs come in for about five, six years, then they're out."

Indeed, Bill Tomasco, a department head at Furness, notes that one of the biggest obstacles to getting teachers to work together to make new curricula for charters is Philadelphia's Standardized Curriculum, which prescribes what should be taught every month of the year. Initiated about six years ago, teachers were just getting used to it, he observes.

Teacher frustration over such reversals was high enough that even with massive resources, the Collaborative had a hard time getting teachers to take advantage of them. "We used to have to provoke people into imagining that outsiders could be useful," says Fine.

Eventually, though, "people get more trusting," she reports. "People say, 'I don't know enough science to do this. Yeah, I need some help.'"

Fine says the Collaborative eventually should retrench into a clearinghouse.

"We should be the one who says, 'Hey, you want to know about assessment? Why don't you check out...'"

At the moment, though, some Collaborative backers are concerned about the immediate future. A top district official who ran interference for the Collaborative resigned and was replaced by two individuals with less

enthusiasm for restructuring. Indeed, one of the two was principal at one of only two high schools that was not pursuing SBM/SDM.

"To pull this off takes an incredible amount of guts, knowledge and experience," says Fine. "In the absence of any of those, we're hoping for the best." D.W.

## Resource roundup

### ALLIANCE FOR ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS

The Illinois affiliate of the Coalition of Essential Schools, the Alliance helps schools restructure teaching, learning and school organization.

Warren Chapman  
Alliance for Essential Schools  
100 W. Randolph St.  
State of Illinois Center  
Suite 14-300  
Chicago, Ill. 60601  
(312) 814-1487

### BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Staff has studied East Harlem schools; newsletters on schools-within-schools are available.

Mary Galloway James  
BPI  
17 E. Monroe St.  
Suite 212  
Chicago, Ill. 60603  
(312) 641-5570

### CHICAGO PANEL ON PUBLIC SCHOOL POLICY AND FINANCE

An issue of its *Reform Reports* newsletter deals with schools-within-schools.

Iva Lane, director of information and advocacy  
Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance  
220 S. State St.  
Suite 1212  
Chicago, Ill. 60604  
(312) 939-2202

### CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION

Arranges visits to small, alternative schools in New York.

Priscilla Ellington, co-director, elementary  
Heather Lewis, co-director, secondary  
Center for Collaborative Education  
1573 Madison Ave.  
New York, N.Y. 10029  
(212) 348-7821

### CENTER FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Provides background information and research. Can outline a process for developing schools-within-schools.

Al Bertani or Tony Bryk  
Center for School Improvement  
University of Chicago  
5835 S. Kimbark Ave.  
Chicago, Ill. 60637  
(312) 702-0555

### PHILADELPHIA SCHOOLS COLLABORATIVE

Provides material on Collaborative programs and research papers on schools-within-schools.

Michelle Fine  
Philadelphia Schools Collaborative  
21st Street, south of the Parkway  
Philadelphia, Penn. 19130  
(215) 299-7279

### SMALL SCHOOLS WORKSHOP

Works with principals, teachers, local school councils. Provides information and assistance in developing schools-within-schools.

William Ayers  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
College of Education (M/C 147)  
Box 4348  
Chicago, Ill. 60680  
(312) 996-9689

### QUEST CENTER

An arm of the Chicago Teachers Union, the center is planning a two-day conference for early next year that will highlight schools-within-schools. Video and written materials are available.

Deborah Walsh, director  
Quest Center  
222 Merchandise Mart Plaza  
Suite 400  
Chicago, Ill. 60654  
(312) 329-6254



## All groups must rally for more state aid

by Lawrence Howe

It's not all bad that the proposed constitutional amendment on school funding struck out in the election on November 3. Despite the good intentions of its sponsors and the strong favorable vote it received, adoption of the amendment would have led to enormous confusion. The General Assembly, with the help of hordes of eager attorneys, would have had the task of sorting out a new structure for school funding in Illinois based on a constitutional provision loaded with ambiguities.

We can all be thankful that Illinois did not start down the same treacherous road on which California has embarked; out there, major issues are regularly ducked by the state legislature and converted into propositions to be decided by popular vote in referenda at general elections.

Perhaps most important, the failure of the amendment permits us now to concentrate on the daunting problem of finding sufficient new revenues for the Chicago public school system so that its doors can open at the beginning of the next academic year in September 1993.

We know enough now to be able to identify and quantify the size of the budget gap which must be closed for fiscal year 1993-94. We can also state



JOHN FIGLER

with certainty that potential savings in the operation of the system, many of which are now under way or have already been completed, will not close that budget gap. In short, Chicago's school system will be unable to operate next year unless it receives substantial new revenues.

Chicago is engaged in a dramatic and historic movement of reform, converting its school system into a radically new decentralized structure. None of this could have been accomplished without the work of a remarkable collection of parent, community, business and school activist groups who together caused the adoption of the School Reform Act of 1988. That same coalition has maintained enormous pressure on the system to complete its transformation to the structure contemplated by the 1988 statute.

But the reformers have been so busy putting the heat on the Board of Education (and many of them calling for the deep-sixing of the superinten-

dent) that they have paid little attention to the fundamental financial problems of the school system. Others have ignored the basic financial crisis and concentrated on the issue of vouchers or choice. This cannot continue.

The school system's financial crisis is an issue that crosses all lines within Chicago's school community. The Board of Education, the School Finance Authority, parents, the unions, the communities and the entire reform coalition have an identical interest in maintaining the financial viability of the city's schools. And Mayor Richard Daley must be included in this list.

The need for action is immediate. The Illinois General Assembly meets in mid-November in the "veto session" and then will reassemble in early 1993 to deal with a wide range of issues, with the state's own fiscal problems dominating the discussion. We must bring the financial problems of Illinois' public schools to that agenda coherently and forcefully.

Gov. Jim Edgar and leaders of the General Assembly have previously dug in with the rallying cry, "No additional taxes." But if Chicago's schools fail to open next September, the political fallout will be as dangerous for them as for all other government officials, especially when it is understood that the underlying cause of the near bankruptcy of the Chicago school system is the steady decline in recent years of funding from the State of Illinois.

The main roadblock to the Chicago system's obtaining additional revenue is a proposition that has been so fre-

---

*Lawrence Howe is executive director of The Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago. He was a member of the late Mayor Harold Washington's Education Summit.*

quently repeated that it has become a myth, far removed from any factual basis. It says that the system's budget gap is simply the result of a bloated bureaucracy, that with some tough cost cutting, the budget could be closed without any new revenue.

But by now, fair-minded observers know better. Clearly, important savings will be obtained from management changes now being installed at Pershing Road.

Equally clearly, in its contract negotiations, the Board of Education must arrive at salary and work-rule changes

that will relieve some of the present burden. But studies done by the Civic Committee, Booz Allen & Hamilton (with Washington, Pittman & McKeever), the Financial Research and Advisory Committee and numerous other business-oriented entities have demonstrated that even the most optimistic estimate of these savings will leave the system with a deficit of at least \$250 million.

The time for action is now.

The State of Illinois, under its existing constitution, has the "primary responsibility for financing the system

of public education." The landmark 1988 School Reform Act is being implemented, the state's new accountability law is operative, significant management improvements and cost savings are under way and the oversight body, the School Finance Authority, has been reorganized under the dynamic leadership of Mike Koldyke.

It is time for all members of the reform coalition to ask that the state now meet its responsibility to provide the additional funds needed for the public school systems of the state. ■

## Letters

### Laws, contracts, lack of funds restrict local control

As your readers know, I have decided not to seek an extension of my current contract or to become a candidate in a national search that the Chicago Board of Education must conduct. This is a decision I made for myself, even though many have portrayed it as one that was made for me either by the board or Mayor Richard Daley. While the reasons for my decision will be kept private, I would like to comment on the assessment of my performance in the November issue of *CATALYST*.

Perhaps the most persistent charge is that I neither embrace nor understand Chicago school reform and its goal—the empowerment of local schools. At the heart of this charge is an apparent misunderstanding of one crucial fact which, unfortunately, has continued to hamstring our collective efforts to improve the academic achievement of our students: The Chicago School Reform Act of 1988 did not replace the myriad state and federal laws that govern what this district and each of its schools *must* do, and many of those laws require centralized, rather than decentralized, decision making.

I fully appreciate the value and importance of placing decision-making power in the hands of parents, teachers and others who work tirelessly each day at the schoolhouse. As a father, I know how well a school can perform if parents are invited to participate and to exercise their influence. As an educator, I know schools

can do better if their teachers are encouraged to be innovative, well-educated and well-versed in successful teaching techniques.

I repeat my contention that all are responsible for student performance, but, in a bottom-up system of education, *those who are closest* to children must be held directly accountable for their progress or regression. Those individuals are the ones who spend hundreds of millions of dollars in state and federal discretionary funds on supplementary enrichment programs. They are the ones who develop and implement school improvement plans.

### Some centralization needed

I also believe that each school district, each school and each person associated with a school must obey all the laws that govern our schools, even if they run counter to local decision making.

The Illinois School Code is a very thick document, and Chicago School Reform is just one, relatively new part of it. There are laws, both inside and outside the Code, that determine for us how public funds are to be spent, how goods are to be purchased, how money may be raised at schools, how employees must be treated, how our vendors must be treated, how repairs must be made, how children must be admitted to school, what they must be taught, and so on.

I believe in the validity of many of these laws, and I believe in some degree of centralized decision making. Our legislators have agreed. The Chicago School Reform Act does provide for a central agency (Article 34-1.01 of the Illinois School Code), a board that is the *only* body in the district recognized by law as

the one that may sue or be sued. This means that a central body is ultimately held accountable for the operations of this district.

Such centralization is required, because local decision makers should be free to concentrate on student performance, not price quotes for cans of paint.

This is not to say that we shouldn't seek to change legislation if we feel it is unduly burdensome on our efforts to better educate each child. Many issues were debated during the legislative process that resulted in the Chicago School Reform law, but were not included in the final act. They include powers that principals have over other employees in the building, and provisions within the teachers union contract that deal with class size and supernumerary teachers. These issues can cause problems that must be dealt with through the legislative process, and, in some cases, collective bargaining with unions. These processes must be respected.

Success in our schools is also held hostage by a well-recognized shortage of funds for public education. We find ourselves in a position in which too many people, including our elected officials, blame our schools for poor performance after having refused us the adequate resources.

Not only is there a lack of new resources, which threatens the very survival of the district, there is also limited flexibility for managing the budget. Our \$2.67 billion budget includes only about \$100 million in funds that the Board of Education may actually manage. The remaining funds are linked to legally mandated programs or employee contracts that are subject to negotiations.

I have always been an advocate for children. I am proud that Chicago now

has year-round schools. I am proud of the progress we've made in integrating special education students into "regular" schools and classes. I am proud that we facilitated a smooth integration of the socioeconomically diverse student groups at the South Loop School and its branch site into one setting, despite the surrounding controversy. I am proud that my budget projections have been accurate, and that responsible business leaders concur with my assessment of our fiscal plight; they are now helping to find solutions. I am proud that our schools have opened on time and have remained open each year for the past three years without any work stoppage, an event that has been foreign to this district throughout the years.

However, there is much work ahead of us. We must raise public education above its current role—a raggedy vehicle used by those who seek to advance their political agendas or to fill someone's pocketbook.

*Ted D. Kimbrough, general superintendent  
Chicago Public Schools*

## Chicago schools need leaders who will buck status quo

The year draws to a close; 1992 has proven to be a successful year for those change agents, both locally and nationally, who took risks in the face of formidable odds and broke through barriers erected by those who would maintain the status quo.

The willingness of average citizens to embark on a new course of action when confronted with business-as-usual leaders is the guiding spirit that defines Chicago's school reform movement.

May this national spirit of change take root in Chicago! Our hope is that the Board of Education will see fit to weed out the lingering resistance to change that continues to smother the system. There should no longer be a philosophical debate about restructuring—it's the mandate of the School Reform Act, the vast majority of parents and teachers support it and it's beginning to have an impact at hundreds of schools throughout the city.

Chicago's plan for restructuring is sound and reflects many of the successful elements outlined in "Decentralization and Accountability in Public Education," published in 1991 by the RAND Corporation's Institute for Education and Training.

One of the report's findings aptly describes the situation in Chicago: "After an initial period of floundering, in which many school staffs concern themselves with labor-management and budget issues, schools that are free to solve their own problems will develop specific and

well-defined missions, climates and methods of instruction. These need not be unique or innovative—many schools may develop as frank imitations of an existing model appropriate for their situation. But schools are likely to become less and less alike. The challenge for school boards and superintendents will be how to assist schools and guarantee quality in a system whose basic premise is variety, not uniformity."

We sense that positive change is underway within the board's leadership. We are encouraged by the board's current effort to form a working partnership among local reform activists, educators, LSC members and area universities to help develop a meaningful assessment process to quantify success and performance results as they are achieved at each school.

In addition, Charley Gillespie, the new chief financial officer of the system, has reached out to include reform groups and financial oversight organizations in a task force working hard to achieve long-term fiscal stability for the system.

The children in Chicago's public schools deserve the best thinking, ingenuity and constructive support that our leaders, both within and outside the school system, can provide. Working together, we must all participate in the effort to ensure that adequate funding levels are achieved for Chicago's public school children. We must make sure that the restructuring plan adopted by the Board of Education and the School Finance Authority is strengthened and effectively implemented. And we must work together to support the efforts of local school council members and teachers to provide educational innovation and excellence in the classroom.

Our public schools deserve a leader who can effectively deliver on these issues. The time for that leader is now.

*Diana Nelson, president  
Leadership for Quality Education*

## Problems of Teachers Academy not unexpected

The report of the perhaps temporary shutdown of the Teachers Academy for Mathematics and Science (see *CATALYST*, November 1992) is sad news to those of us involved with inservice teacher training. Yet the news was not entirely unexpected.

It all gets back to the history and basic premises of the Academy's founding. A Nobel Laureate in physics, University of Chicago professor Leon Lederman, stepped out of his field of expertise and tried to do the same level of work in a greatly disparate field: urban public edu-

cation. Nobel laureates seldom succeed in such endeavors.

In Chicago, Lederman met with representatives of most local universities but failed to note that several already were involved in teacher retraining. Rather than seek to help them better coordinate their programs with one another or use his name to get more federal funding and expand them, Lederman got the U.S. Department of Energy to fund something entirely new, untried and not attuned to the social psychology of urban school teaching and teachers.

One irony of the adventure is the locale of the Teachers Academy (TAMS) on the campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology. Walk one long city block north of TAMS, and you arrive at Siegel Hall, headquarters of the IIT Department of Physics, which has housed an extremely well-regarded teacher program in chemistry, life sciences, mathematics and physics. It is called SMILE and was well-established when TAMS was but a dream.

The SMILE program for physics teachers is nearly two decades old, and the program for secondary and elementary mathematics teachers is about five years old. I have been a part-time administrator and seminar leader all of this time. We have had very great success in bringing teachers out of their occupational isolation and into a collegial, sharing and learning environment. We know this by the large number of teachers who return year after year.

IIT has been very generous in opening its campus to public school teachers, but our own SMILE funding sources, the National Science Foundation and the Illinois Board of Higher Education, are themselves now undergoing budgetary crises. While the Chicago Board of Education has been of limited financial assistance (they have their own money woes), their quiet, non-monetary support and enthusiastic cooperation has been very, very heartening.

The crowning irony was reading in your article that TAMS advocates a hands-on approach to teaching math and science. That has been the cornerstone of SMILE every day of its existence.

*Larry Freeman, teacher  
Kenwood Academy*

*CATALYST* welcomes guest editorials and letters to the editor. Send them to *CATALYST/Opinions*, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 500, Chicago, Ill. 60604. They may be edited for clarity and space.

# Diaries

This month, *Diaries* shows how better security at one school pays off with improved attendance. A principal bemoans yet another year without raises. Teacher interns learn to face the frustrations of teaching in inner-city schools. One LSC questions the merits of its school's gifted program. And other schools strive to strengthen community ties. As always, our diarists write anonymously.

## More security pays off

**LAZARUS, teacher**

**Aug. 6** To address the long-standing security problem at our school, the local school council conducted a number of surveys. Meeting tonight to review the results, to plan additional hearings and to press forward toward developing a comprehensive plan that all parties can own. The volume of data is overwhelming, and another meeting is called to further digest the material and prepare recommendations. Despite the summer break, there is no letup in the succession of meetings.

**Aug. 10** Another LSC meeting on the school security plan. Several students were invited to express their views. Council representation is good.

**Sept. 2** Our LSC presents its security policy to the community. Although it contains a controversial provision on parent accountability, those present seem willing to go along with it. As one person says, "If nothing else, it has drawn considerable publicity and put the school on the map."

I have strong reservations about the merit and feasibility of such tactics; they leave the classroom teacher with no real method to implement the attendance policy.

**Oct. 7** A change in deployment of security personnel and hall guards has made a tremendous difference in the hall traffic during class periods. A detention system that is enforced is also helping. Students are going to class in greater numbers than in previous years. Now the challenge is to use classroom time productively.

The administrative crackdown on gang insignia also seems to have

paid off. The feeling is that the school is safer than in previous years. We have not solved all the problems concerning eruptions of violence, but the feeling now is that violence is not the norm, only the exception.

## Raises today, gone tomorrow

**OLIVIA, principal**

**Sept. 18** At a Sept. 1 meeting with some principals, Florence Cox, president of the Chicago Board of Education, announced that the just-approved budget included a raise for the principals. "We couldn't leave you out again," she said, referring to the board's refusal to give principals a raise the previous year. She got an enthusiastic round of applause.

Now, in response to the Chicago Teachers Union's protest against the projected dismissal of some 500 support staff (to help balance the budget), the board is again leaving the principals out. The raise has been withdrawn. "It's so disheartening," laments one principal.

**Oct. 29** Here we go again. Today's *Chicago Tribune* reports that Supt. Kimbrough yesterday promised principals to try to come up with some money to increase their salaries. By Jan. 1, he will report on the feasibility of a pay raise. All board members agreed with Kimbrough that an increase is overdue. One principal said, "It is refreshing to hear that."

However, where is the money coming from? Kimbrough is quoted: "We are going to do this kind of in-depth revisiting of all of the places where there may be money. There

may be some ways."

Should we hold our breath? On again, off again, with glosses galore. What a whipsaw way to build morale and run an organization!

## Building community ties

**MATTHEW, teacher intern**

**Sept. 24** The strike at Inner-City Elementary (see *Diaries*, November 1992) scheduled to demonstrate the parents' position in favor of closed campus has been canceled. The community met and decided on other alternatives than the original plan of keeping children home.

**Sept. 29** To cover a community demonstration this morning, several news media crews were outside the school to interview parents, students and staff. Our concerned parents have formed an action group to mobilize all community residents in an effort to encourage the agencies that decide on certain neighborhood policies to meet and discuss problems.

The demonstration was successful in drawing attention to some of the residents' concerns. This initiative was greeted with positive feedback from several agencies and prompted an agenda for developing community improvement proposals.

A representative from one of the agencies involved spoke up in support of the parents' protest: "Working together we can endeavor to. . . come up with a plan. . . Let's work it out."

The parents, in view of these developments, have decided to postpone discussions on closed campus.

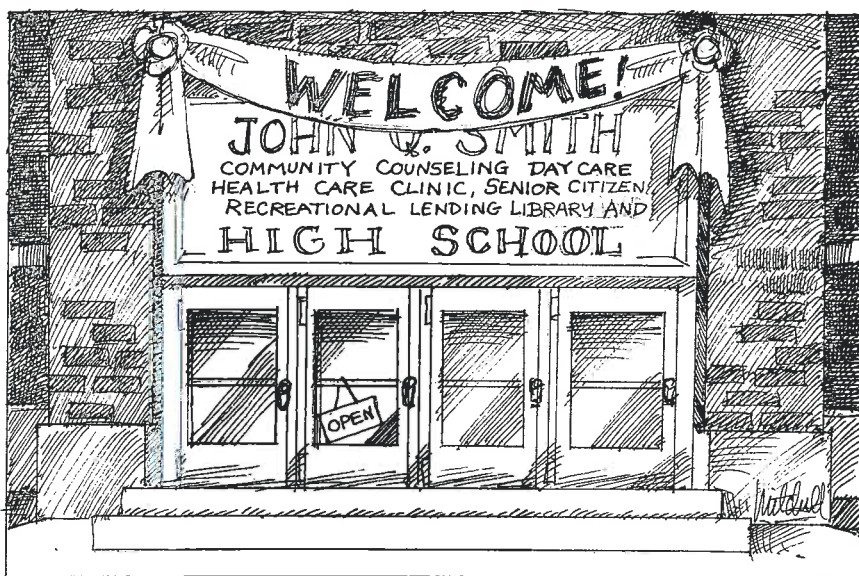
**LAZARUS, teacher**

**Sept. 26** A weekend meeting on parent involvement sponsored by a community organization. Our faculty is fairly well represented. The links are being forged between school and community to implement change at our school. Other teachers are begin-

ning to see the possibilities.

Aside from our LSC members, parent involvement at our school has been minimal. We have a teacher assistant who has taken upon herself the task of collecting names of potential parent volunteers.

**Sept. 28** Representatives of the Cluster Initiative are anxious to bring community resources into the school. Our principal gives full cooperation. Our community is rich in social services, yet until now there has been little attempt to inform area schools of what is available and to encourage participation.



KURT MITCHELL

**Sept. 30** A sad day. A community worker with a social service agency that provides counseling for our troubled youth has lost her job because of a shortage of funds. Years of being there for the students during and after school hours will end.

**Oct. 8** A Cluster Initiative meeting at a feeder elementary school that has a population larger than the high school. More than 30 people gather in the school library; they represent schools, LSCs, social service agencies and other institutions. A local bank has recently made its position of community representative full time.

**Oct. 16** The days are filled with meetings to lay the foundation for school and community to work together. We are moving toward becoming not just a full-service school but a full-service community.

**Oct. 20** A small group of people

representing the cluster and the local parks meet to explore mutual interests. Although most members of the group had spent much of the day attending other meetings, energy and excitement build as each person discovers the truly mutual benefits of fitting school, community and park district into the larger picture of serving youth and their families.

I truly believe that our cluster is making history as it taps into the already existing social services in the community. Old walls between service providers are beginning to fall down.

**ROBIN, observer**  
**Oct. 25** LSC meeting. I was struck by the respectful way a number of members mentioned the local neighborhood organization, which has hosted many meetings to address issues of concern to the various schools. People feel this organization is very knowledgeable and helpful.

**MATTHEW, teacher intern**  
**Oct. 2** The Urban Teacher Corps interns' project for September was to develop a School Profile—a synopsis of the staff, facilities, available programs and demographics of the surrounding community. The profile can become a well-organized guide for the school to use. And it can be used in future community development projects. But it was also a very important intern project; in collecting the information needed, I discovered the inner

workings of a school and the rich history of a community. It's what every new teacher needs to know before going into any school or community to teach.

## SIP mere paperwork?

**LAZARUS, teacher**

**Oct. 7** A former student stops into the main office to ask for a copy of our school improvement plan for use in an undergraduate course. The principal is out, and no one seems to have any idea where a copy can be found. The student, who would have been satisfied to have someone express the school's mission, leaves disgruntled and in disbelief that something as important as the SIP could be so difficult to locate. This incident symbolizes that the SIP is still more of a paperwork requirement than the guide moving us toward change. Yet, many of the changes taking place in the school are cited in the plan; the problem is largely one of broadly publicizing the goals.

## Baptism by fire

**LAZARUS, teacher**

**Sept. 25** Our Teachers for Chicago interns are interested in more than the classroom. They discuss establishing new clubs for the students. One of them eagerly looks forward to participating in homecoming activities.

**Oct. 13** One of our interns has encountered some deep disappointments. She has met her first pregnant student. She has seen her first student to leave school and the community for gang-related reasons. She has experienced the joy of seeing a student begin to take classroom work seriously only to have that student transferred when classes were leveled down to the contractual maximum.

Another intern has met the frustration of dealing with a "regular" classroom half filled with special ed students with a wide range of learning needs. In the midst of bafflement and despair, the teacher seriously reflected on his situation. Although another class assignment had been

offered to him, he concluded that he would not give up on the class and that he had resources to build the students' self-esteem as a first step toward getting them to learn. I have profound respect for his decision.

**MATTHEW, teacher intern**

**Oct. 1** All of the interns within the Urban Teacher Corps program are settling into their respective schools with enthusiasm. Of course, there were the initial concerns of: Will we accomplish all our objectives for the month? What routines do we need to establish to be more effective at the school and in the homes? How will we establish meaningful partnerships with teachers, administrators and parents? After a few weeks in the schools, we are formulating some excellent answers. So far we are all doing well and getting better.

## A sense of family

**LAZARUS, teacher**

**Oct. 16** A recent graduate returns for a visit and urges some teachers to write to a friend who is frittering away his college time and scholarship. There is a sense of family here. Our graduates look out for each other.

## The politics of tracking

**ROBIN, observer**

**Oct. 25** At School A, the gifted program has met with some criticism from teachers of "regular" classes who believe the "best" students are creamed off, leaving them to teach the less successful children and those with various problems, and leaving them without the role models who would be provided by motivated, bright students.

This week at the LSC meeting, the principal requested approval to continue the program. A parent asked, "Why don't we have a gifted bilingual program?" and the principal replied that that was something the council should discuss. A number of other questions arose. Another parent asked, "How are children chosen for gifted?"

When the principal replied that an

outside person tests the children, a teacher wondered, "Does teacher judgment come into it?" Parents wanted to know: "Are there children in it who shouldn't be or not in it who should be?" "Has it ever happened that a child in gifted did poorly on the Iowa test?" "Do parents understand the program?" A teacher asked, "Are some children kept out of gifted because of behavior?" (This is an issue I've heard mentioned before by teachers; they are inclined to believe that well-behaved children end up in gifted classes and behavior problems end up in regular classes.)

The principal answered all these questions, but the council didn't seem entirely satisfied. A parent suggested a meeting at which teachers of gifted classes and a representative of the bilingual department could answer questions. The chair added that some regular teachers should be invited so the council could get their ideas about the gifted program.

It will be interesting to see how this works out. Last year there was a lot of discussion on the part of the majority of the teachers about the program, but I'm not sure how many of those who complained would be willing to come to the LSC to express their views.

A complicating factor could arise if many of the children of LSC members are in the program. I know of one for sure. This might be an interesting test of self-interest versus the general good. Parents of top students typically (and no doubt naturally) support gifted programs and believe them highly beneficial, even though some research suggests they may not be particularly beneficial. More serious controversy focuses on the argument that "tracking" is harmful to the slower students and to the sense of community in the whole school.

## Progress

**LAZARUS, teacher**

**Oct. 9** Our LSC has allocated a large amount of state and federal Chapter 1 monies for staff development, so we are able to offer our teachers the opportunity to attend conferences without their having to pay for them out of pocket and losing a

day's pay. Teachers are beginning to submit requests to attend professional seminars. We hope to see improvement in both morale and teaching.

**ROBIN, observer**

**Oct. 3** The LSC of School C, concerned for some time that high levels of lead might exist in the school, pressed the principal to bring in the Board of Health to test the building. High levels of lead were indeed found and a repainting project quickly began. The gym, cafeteria, kindergarten and first-grade rooms were painted first because those are the places where children six and under were being exposed to high levels of lead; the rest of the school will be repainted during vacations.

**LAZARUS, teacher**

**Oct. 15** After an inservice meeting where the teachers were called upon to go the extra mile and work together even more for the benefit of the school, someone put a letter to St. Jude, the patron saint of lost causes, in my box. I have been trying for more than twenty years to promote change at our school. But the cause is far from lost. I believe change is a lot closer than many might think.

The number of teachers who volunteered for our PPAC is fewer than the number of positions, but I feel this is a good time to be part of the school planning process. I feel our LSC has award-winning potential. It was the LSC that brought the school into the Cluster Initiative and pushed for reform and restructuring. Members attended meeting after meeting, working incessantly toward a vision of the school that most of the professionals in the building could not even imagine. Maybe that is because our teachers do not send their children to our school. Our LSC does. ■

### Want to be a Diarist?

CATALYST would like to expand its corps of anonymous diarists. If you would like to share your experiences with school change, call or drop a note to CATALYST Editor Linda Lenz, (312) 427-4830.

## New book sheds new light on Latino role in reform

by Mary O'Connell

Something about the school events of 1987-88 clearly touched a deep chord in the people who took part in them.

Perhaps it was the intensity of the emotions: anger over the 1987 teachers' strike, grief at the death of Mayor Harold Washington, exhilaration and exhaustion over the final reform victory in the state legislature. Perhaps it was the fact that, for a moment, in pursuit of a common cause, people reached across the barriers that divide blacks from whites, activists from corporate leaders, downtown from neighborhoods.

Perhaps it was simply catharsis, as years of frustration gave way to breathtaking, even frightening, change. And certainly it was the sense of being present at a historic, once-in-a-lifetime gathering where citizens and legislators came together to craft, line by line, a major reshaping of public policy. Whatever, hundreds of people played some part in launching school reform, and all feel that they own it; and many of them have sought ways to tell the story.

Charles Kyle is one of those people. A former Catholic priest who has worked for many years in Chicago's Latino communities, Kyle got involved in the mid-80s through efforts to stop the fierce gang violence that, then as now, was claiming hundreds of



### **KIDS FIRST/PRIMERO LOS NIÑOS: Chicago School Reform in the 1980s.**

by Charles L. Kyle and Edward R. Kantowicz  
Springfield, Ill.: Illinois Issues, 1992.  
367 pages.

young victims on Chicago's streets.

Commissioned by the education group *Aspira*, he examined enrollments among Latino teenagers at two Northwest Side high schools (Wells and Clemente). He found an astounding dropout rate of 75 percent over four years, a far cry from the official Board of Education figure of 10 percent over one year. His research—followed by similar studies from *Designs for Change* and the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance—put numbers behind what many people already sensed: Chicago's schools were failing most of their students.

Along with the research went preaching and organizing. Kyle

helped put together a much-publicized 1984 funeral procession in which Latinos from all over the city marched through West Town toward Clemente High School to dramatize the interrelated problems of gang violence and poor schools and mourn the loss of a "generation too precious to waste." In *Kids First/Primero Los Niños*, Kyle makes this march the symbolic leadoff of the school reform movement.

The strength of this book is the way it puts school reform in context. Kyle and co-author Edward Kantowicz, a Chicago-based writer, trace the roots of the movement back through Chicago and U.S. history of the last half century. They give a thumbnail account of such topics as Latinos in Chicago, gangs and their persistent influence in Chicago's neighborhoods, the election of Harold Washington and his struggle to consolidate his power. They pull in national contexts as well: the school decentralization battles in New York 25 years ago, and the national debate over education that began with publication of "A Nation at Risk" in 1983.

And they trace previous struggles over the city's schools, reaching back to the 1960s protests led by civil rights activist Al Raby against Supt. Benjamin Willis and moving through the superintendencies of Redmond, Hannon, Caruso, Love and Byrd. They describe in considerable detail the 1985 state reform laws that created high hopes but produced disap-

---

Mary O'Connell is editor of *The Neighborhood Works* and author of *School Reform Chicago Style: How Citizens Organized to Change Public Policy*.

Continued on page 31

# Elsewhere

## DETROIT

### Empowerment champions lose.

Following a month-long teachers' strike, three Detroit school board members who championed a plan to give schools more local control were swept out of office Nov. 3 by challengers backed by the teachers union.

The three ousted members had been elected in 1988 as part of a slate of four candidates who called themselves the HOPE team. The team backed a radical "empowerment" program that shifts from the central board to local schools purchasing power, control over the budget and authority to select teachers. Schools must vote to become part of the program; the principal, 75 percent of teachers and 55 percent of parents must approve. (See *CATALYST*, May and October 1992.)

But what angered union leaders most and prompted the strike was the board's proposal to allow empowered schools to waive teacher contract provisions without union approval. (In Chicago, contract waivers require union approval.)

The strike was settled with empowerment still intact; up to 45 of the district's 247 schools will be allowed to vote on it. Before the strike, 15 schools had voted to become empowered.

But bitterness over the battle led the Detroit Federation of Teachers to target the HOPE team in the school board election.

Of the four HOPE members—board president Frank Hayden, David Olmstead, Lawrence C. Patrick Jr and Joseph S. Blanding—only Patrick was re-elected. Union-backed challengers Rodeana Murphy, Kwame Kenyatta and Robert M. Boyce won the other three seats.

Two other incumbents, Margaret Betts and Irma Clark, were also re-elected; both support empowerment but did not run on the HOPE ticket. In all, seven of 11 board members call themselves pro-empowerment.

The outcome of the election puts local control and other reforms in jeopardy. It also threatens the job of Supt. Deborah McGriff, who was hired by the reform-minded board and openly campaigned for the HOPE slate. McGriff's contract expires next year.

"We did not campaign against Dr. McGriff, she chose to campaign against us," challenger Murphy said. "We hope she hears the message that was sent to her. People are either not comfortable, don't understand or don't accept the whole reform package she is trying to implement."

Murphy, Kenyatta and Boyce told the *Detroit News* that the four-year-old reform effort needs to be put on hold. "You just don't keep moving forward when the election showed people were not satisfied with the flow of things," Kenyatta said. "Before we establish new schools, we need to fix the old ones."

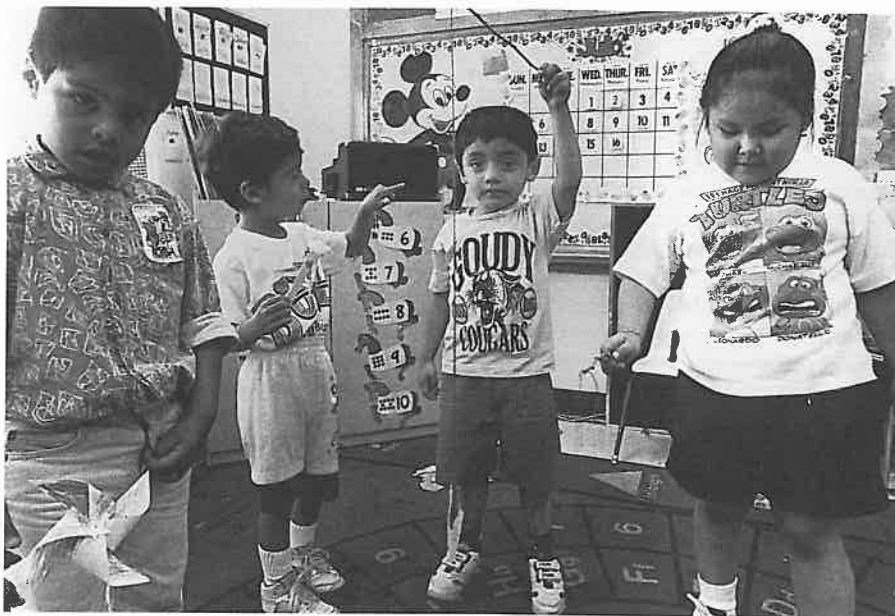
McGriff and reformers on the board counter that progress has been made: For the first time in 23 years, enrollment is on the rise, the district's budget has been balanced for the past four years, and test scores and

attendance are both up.

To bring more diversity and choice to the district, McGriff and the board opened three new academies for African-American male students; the academies were later opened to girls after a federal civil rights lawsuit was filed against the district by the National Organization for Women and other groups.

Still, the cornerstone of the board's reform program has been empowerment. Union leaders criticize empowerment as "elitist" and claim that empowered schools get more than their fair share of resources. "Choice schools were getting all the goodies, while local schools got nothing," said Carole Thomas, executive vice president of the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT). "That's why the community rejected the reform plan." Thomas claims that, over the summer, empowered schools were getting repairs while local schools got none.

McGriff denies charges of elitism. "It's absolutely untrue to say we are ignoring the neighborhood schools," she said. "For every new program, we have reserved seats for [neighborhood] students. Of 20 new choice ini-



Preschoolers at Goudy Elementary School in Uptown practice 'fishing' for toys with magnets.



tatives this year, 14 are programs in neighborhood schools."

The month-long teachers' strike ended with teachers signing a two-year pact that gives them a 4 percent raise this year and a 3 percent raise in 1993. The raises are contingent on the district's ability to raise money by floating bonds on between \$20 million and \$30 million in delinquent property taxes. School officials warned that, to pay for the contract, the district's budget will have to be cut by \$21.8 million.

Ousted president Hayden said that the DFT wanted "to show who was boss. And in the end, they did."

Board member Ben Washburn contends the anti-reform vote was made a part of the pro-Clinton/Gore, get-out-the-vote campaign by Detroit's labor organizations. "Unions have a lot of influence in the precincts, and they had their anti-HOPE slate on the cards, right behind Clinton and Gore," Washburn said.

The setback for reform angered members of the business community who were helping to fund empowerment and welcomed McGriff to Detroit.

"We will have to see if the agenda of the new board is compatible with the reform programs now in place," said Richard Gabrys, former chairman of the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, which administers a multimillion-dollar student scholarship and jobs program known as the Detroit Compact.

Asked Gabrys, "Why should we spend our money if people are not interested in reform?"

## COLORADO

**No vouchers.** A proposal to create the nation's first statewide school voucher system was defeated by Colorado voters in the Nov. 3 election.

Rex Brown, a senior fellow with the non-profit Education Commission of the States, told the *Denver Post* that the plan's defeat, combined with President George Bush's loss, "could cool the voucher movement nationwide." Bush is a voucher proponent; President-elect Bill Clinton opposes private school vouchers but favors public school choice.

The proposal would have given parents vouchers worth half the annual per-pupil spending in their school district (about \$2,100 statewide) to use at any public, private or home school of their choice.

The defeat signals that "the people of Colorado recognize the importance of public schools and don't want to abandon them," Dan Morris, president of the 28,000-member Colorado Education Association, said in the Nov. 5 *Post* article. He added, however, that "this is not a message that change [in schools] shouldn't occur or that the status quo is good enough."

A recent nationwide study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching found that 62 percent of more than 1,000 public school parents surveyed oppose private school vouchers. Seventy percent said they would not send their child to another school, either public or private, if given the opportunity. Asked to choose one of two options to improve education, 82 percent of parents preferred the option of strengthening neighborhood schools while 18 percent favored letting schools compete for students.

Carnegie researchers also found that only about 2 percent of parents participate in state and districtwide public school choice programs now in place in six states. Parents who transferred their children to another school usually did so for reasons unrelated to education, such as location or safety.

In Milwaukee, the site of the nation's only private school voucher program, less than 1 percent of eligible students participate. A 1992 study by a University of Wisconsin researcher found that parents were generally satisfied with the school they had chosen. Still, about 40 percent of participants left the program after its first year.

The Colorado plan was one of three education proposals on the ballot in that state. Voters defeated a proposed 1-cent increase in the state sales tax that would have raised an estimated \$330 million for schools each year, the *Post* reported. At the same time, voters approved an amendment that prohibits government from raising taxes without voter approval; schools also cannot enact spending increases higher than the

rate of inflation. As a result of both votes, Colorado schools face a \$700 cut in per-pupil spending next year.

## CALIFORNIA

**Channel One wins.** A California judge has declined to ban Whittle Communication's Channel One school television news show from public schools in San Jose. The ruling, according to an article in the November/December issue of *Teacher* magazine, is likely to pave the way for other public schools in the state to sign up for the controversial 12-minute show, which includes two minutes of commercials.

Fewer than 70 California public schools had signed up for the Whittle program, after state Supt. of Public Instruction Bill Honig threatened to cut off a portion of state aid to schools that subscribe. The program is available to more than 12,000 middle and high schools across the country; Whittle provides free video equipment to schools that sign up.

Honig, along with the state Parent-Teacher Association and two teachers in the East Side Union High School district, had sued the San Jose school system in an effort to have its Channel One contract declared a violation of state compulsory-education laws because of the show's advertising.

However, Judge Jeremy Fogel of the Santa Clara County Superior Court said he was not convinced that the inclusion of two minutes of commercials in the show was, in itself, illegal. The law would only be violated, Fogel's ruling stated, if students were directly or indirectly coerced to view the commercials.

The advertisements, Fogel wrote, "appear trivial in a world in which the rest of the students' lives is literally saturated with commercial inducements of all kinds."

But Fogel also said San Jose teachers must be allowed to opt out of showing the program, that students and parents must be told in writing that students are not required to view the show and that the school must provide a regular alternative, such as supervised study hall. ■

Michael Klonsky, Lorraine Forte

## Election bodes ill for Chicago schools, Berman sees silver lining

by Michael Klonsky

The Democrats are back in the White House, there's a Republican majority in the Illinois Senate, and the Education Amendment to the Illinois Constitution failed to pass. What does all this mean for Chicago schools and the funding they need to make school reform a reality?

"Nothing good," says Fred Hess, executive director of the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, who headed up the campaign for the amendment. Without the funding mandate the amendment would have provided, Hess sees school bankruptcy on the horizon. Under current conditions, the school system faces an estimated \$383 million shortfall for next school year.

"State government has no resources, and Mayor [Richard] Daley doesn't have the will to raise money locally to pay for his minions," says Hess, referring to the school system's unionized employees. "The prospects for schools opening next year are not good."

Reformers shouldn't count on the Clinton Administration to come to the rescue, Hess points out. "The White House is a nice pulpit, but if the federal government gives us any money, it will be for specific projects like Head Start, not for operations."

State Sen. Arthur Berman (D-Chicago), who spearheaded the amendment drive in the Legislature, is more optimistic. With voters splitting 57 percent "yes" and 43 percent "no" on the amendment, the referendum was a "victory" for increased school funding "even if it means higher taxes

to pay for it," says Berman, chair of the Senate Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. "The overwhelming majority support for the amendment sends a strong message to the Legislature."

To become part of the constitution, the amendment needed approval from either 60 percent of those voting on it or 50 percent of those voting in the election as a whole.

Before the election, conventional political wisdom had it that the amendment's only chance to win was by riding on the coattails of Democratic victories in the presidential and U.S. Senate races. But the amendment's 57 percent approval rating bested Bill Clinton's 48 percent of the Illinois presidential vote and Carol Moseley Braun's 54 percent of the senatorial vote.

### Downstate partners?

Chicagoans and voters outside the Chicago metro area gave strong support to the amendment—74 percent and 60 percent respectively. In metro Chicago, voters in Kane, Kendall and Will counties were about evenly divided. In suburban Cook County, 48 percent of voters supported the amendment.

Only in wealthy DuPage County did a large majority—59 percent—vote "no."

DuPage County is the political base of state Sen. James "Pate" Philip (R-Wood Dale), who is likely to become the next president of the Illinois Senate. Philip has been outspoken in his anti-Chicago attitudes.

Recently, he drew protests from Chicago school activists by lambasting bilingual education programs, saying, "They [students] should learn English."

"It doesn't appear likely that many of the pro-school Republicans we've been able to coalesce with in the past will take on Philip in his first year," says Hess.

Rep. Clem Balanoff (D Chicago), himself a big winner in the election, blamed the amendment's defeat on "the way the issue was framed as a whopping tax increase." He cited a well-financed campaign by big business, opposition from Gov. Jim Edgar and a "shying away from the issue" by many Democrats as other negative factors. "I was one of the few Democratic committeemen who gave prominence to the issue in my ward [the 10th]."

### Voucher push feared

Balanoff sees danger ahead with a Republican Senate majority and warns of "a renewed push for vouchers." Hess echoes the warning and "wouldn't be surprised by some kind of limited voucher bill in the upcoming General Assembly." Four voucher bills have been introduced since 1981, but none has made it to the floor for a vote.

Berman, however, doesn't see vouchers as an immediate threat and appears optimistic about the chances of building a new coalition for state support of public education.

From Berman's point of view, the vote totals show the potential for new alliances between Chicago and Downstate districts also in desperate need of funding.

"Education issues don't simply come down along party lines anymore," Berman says. "It is much more a regional issue." He calls for a "broad coalition around school finance" to be built with an eye toward the spring legislative session. ■

# Where President-elect Clinton stands

*In its October 1992 issue, School Administrator (a magazine of the American Association of School Administrators/copyright 1992) published the responses of President George Bush and presidential challenger Bill Clinton to questions posed by AASA. Below is an excerpt of President-elect Clinton's remarks.*

## ON FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Education must become one of our top national priorities. I have proposed several programs to bring our education system to a world-class level. First, I will fully fund Head Start. Head Start is a proven program which sends disadvantaged children to school ready to learn. I will increase funding for Chapter 1, and I will provide schools with the flexibility they need to spend the money in a way they think most efficient.

My administration also will address the needs of those the system is failing most: those who are not going on to college. We will establish a national apprenticeship program that will enable them to enter a course of study, designed by schools and local businesses, to teach them valuable skills, with a promise of a real job when they graduate. For those who do want to go on to college, we will establish a national trust fund out of which anyone can borrow the money they need. It will be repaid either as a small percentage of income over time or with two years of national service.

## ON SCHOOL CHOICE

I favor a system of public school choice, but I am unalterably opposed to any school choice system which would include private or parochial schools. Our public school system is an important national asset, and we should be investing in it, not depriving it of resources in favor of private institutions.

## ON NATIONAL STANDARDS

We must have a system of national standards which establish what each



*On the campaign trail, Bill Clinton speaks to students at Beasley Academic Center on the South Side. Clinton praised the school during one of the presidential debates.*

child must know in order to have a chance at advancement in the world of the 21st century. And we must have a system of national examinations to ensure that these standards are being met. In addition, my administration will establish a system of report cards for states, school districts and schools to evaluate our progress toward the goal of education excellence for every student in America.

We must establish standards, enforced through a system of meaningful examinations, not only to measure performance, but also to increase expectations . . . It has been shown over and over again that all children can learn, despite whatever disadvantages they may face, if they are given the proper guidance.

## ON UNFUNDED MANDATES

As a governor, I understand the need to stop the federal government from passing expensive mandates with no way of paying for them. As president, I will work to reverse the current trend toward new federal mandates without any federal support, a legacy of the Bush-Reagan administration.

## ON BILINGUAL EDUCATION

During the 1980s, funds for bilingual education were cut during a period of nearly unprecedented immigration. I support bilingual education programs which focus on teaching substantive areas in a child's native language while at the same time teaching English. ■

# 170 relocated from Pershing, schools' reaction mixed

by Tracy Guth

In an attempt to improve service, the School Board has relocated about 170 central office employees to schools and subdistrict offices. So far, reviews are mixed.

"The primary purpose was to transfer those who provide instructional and support services closer to the users," explains Deputy Supt. Robert Sampieri. His office plans to survey about 1,800 principals, local school council chairs and professional personnel advisory committee chairs in early January to see how the transfers are working out. "If it's falling apart, we'll need to take corrective action," says Sampieri.

To date, he adds, there have been few negative responses from the schools. "I think they are thinking, 'Okay, they're here, maybe they will be more accessible. Let's wait and see.'"

A CATALYST spot check of schools and relocated workers found pro and con views.

One teacher, who asked not to be identified, says red tape has increased. "Before the move, they were all in one place. Now I have to go from one building to another...to get certain documents through. It was easier when everyone was sitting at central [office]."

The teacher wonders whether the move was designed to make central office appear smaller. Asked about this, Sampieri declares central office is smaller.

Manuel Medina, a bilingual education specialist in Subdistrict 1, was positive about the move but overwhelmed with the amount of work he now has.

"Now that I'm working with a set group of principals and teachers, there's more personal contact," Medina explains. "It's a chance for them to feel more comfortable with

me and me with them."

Wendell Phillips High School in the Douglas neighborhood, once threatened with closing for low enrollment, now houses staff from the Department of Academic and Vocational Instructional Support (DAVIS) and the Reading Recovery program, which serves elementary schools.

"It has been a smooth transition," says Principal Juanita Tucker. "We're benefiting from what they're doing, and I think the feeling is reciprocal."

But Reading Recovery teachers say the specialists are hard to reach.

"It's harder getting in touch with them, because they don't have enough phones. That's the main thing," says Renee Schneiderman at Cameron Elementary in Humboldt Park.

"We have great difficulty getting through to them," agrees Leona Barrett at Ryerson Elementary, also in Humboldt Park. "It has been a little frustrating."

Barrett questions the decision to move the program to a high school instead of an elementary school. "It doesn't make sense."

Still, AIDS education specialist Beverly Biehr says the transfers have brought a change in atmosphere that is beneficial for everyone. "We're back in the schools," she notes.

"Personally I was never happy sitting in an office all day. I never liked leaving the schools."

Working at an inner-city school like Phillips, Biehr says, "We're reminded every day of why we're doing it. These are the real kids we're trying to serve."

Bernard Spillman, assistant superintendent of DAVIS, says school staff need to be aware that resources have been placed closer to them. "They

may feel more comfortable going to them at the school down the street than going through Pershing."

Spillman claims he has already seen an improvement in the quality of services provided by the 45 employees his department transferred to local sites.

Initially, "people were disappointed, and some maybe felt isolated," Spillman says. "But once you get back into the job, you're so busy that you realize you can do it wherever you are."

---

*Tracy Guth is a graduate student at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University. She is assigned to the education beat.*

## Rehiring of truant officers on hold for hearing

As CATALYST went to press in mid-November, the fate of about 350 fired employees, including 153 truant officers, remained in limbo.

The truant officers, along with 139 clerks and 64 high school library assistants, were laid off by the School Board in late September to help balance its budget.

The Chicago Teachers Union filed unfair labor charges against the board, accusing it of refusing to negotiate over the firings. The board, however, asserts that the CTU refused a mid-August offer to negotiate. The Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board had scheduled a Nov. 23 hearing on the charges.

While the CTU contract sets minimum staffing levels for teachers (i.e., class-size limits), it has no similar provision for truant officers, library assistants and most other employees in the bargaining unit.

Meanwhile, principals contacted by CATALYST say they are waiting for the IELRB's ruling before deciding whether to rehire truant officers with state Chapter 1 funds. The principals may have a long wait, since the decision of the IELRB hearing officer can be appealed to the full IELRB and then to the Illinois Appellate Court.

The 64 library assistants were cut

from those high schools that have at least two full-time librarians. The board has suggested that schools recruit students to help take up the slack, but librarians say students, teacher aides and other school staff do not have the professional background needed for the job.

Some schools are using school-community representatives to pinch hit for truant officers, and teacher aides to help in the library.

*Matthew Kowalsky*

## Chief 'mainstreaming' advocate resigns from board

One of the Board of Education's top, new administrators has announced his resignation. Thomas Hehir, associate superintendent for special education and pupil support services, will leave Jan. 4 to become a senior researcher at the non-profit Educational Development Center in Boston.

Hehir, 42, came to the CPS from

Boston in August 1990 as a staunch advocate of "mainstreaming" special education students into regular classrooms. The Chicago Teachers Union, some local school council members and private facilities serving the handicapped at public expense have strongly criticized his actions, contending they have stranded students without needed services. But in a recent federal lawsuit, mainstreaming advocates contend the process is moving too slowly.

*L.F.*

## Board pares central office again

When the School Board cut over 200 central office positions to help balance its budget, it eliminated the Department of External Resources, which solicited outside financial and other assistance. As a result, the board's Adopt-A-School program is now a thing of the past, leaving schools to find corporate partners on their own. Several other departments suffered major cuts, including special education and pupil support. "People have had to take on extra duties, and you can't constantly expect people to work 10- and 12-

hour days," says Associate Supt. Thomas Hehir, who recently announced he will leave in January. The board saved some positions by moving them from regular, budget-balancing funds to special categorical funds.

Below is the board's breakdown of central office positions paid for by regular and by categorical funds. Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures for FY91-92 are as of January 1992; figures for FY92-93 are as of August.

*L.F.*

Department	FY '91-92		FY '92-93	
	Regular	Categorical	Regular	Categorical
<b>Board of Education</b>				
Office of the Board	10	0	9	0
Dept. of Law	0	40	0	42
<b>Executive</b>				
Office of Gen'l. Supt.	9	0	8	0
Reform implementation	15	17	2	15
Communications	5	0	0	6
Affirmative action	7	0	2	0
Special ed & pupil support	109	38	90	43
<b>Chief operating offices</b>				
Internal audit	21	8	5	9
Chief operating officer	3	0	2	0
Research & evaluation	17	28	14	27
Mgmt. info systems	98	13	81	16
Human resources	106	36	66	52
<b>Business &amp; finance</b>				
Purchasing	27	2	21	2
Warehouse & dist.	29	59	21	59
Business & finance	2	0	2	0
Budget development	7	2	7	2
School-based budgeting	5	6	4	6
Accounting	103	44	95	41
Food services	0	81	0	54
Transportation	16	0	12	0

Department	FY '91-92		FY '92-93	
	Regular	Categorical	Regular	Categorical
Facilities	52	7	27	16
Facilities, central office	52	0	49	8
<b>Instruction services</b>				
External resources	5	1	0	0
Grants & tech. assistance	2	42	1	44
Instruction services	4	4	4	4
Curriculum	12	41	0	0
Voc & technical ed	9	43	0	0
Instruction support (DAVIS)	0	0	10	56
Language & cultural ed	4	31	2	29
Early childhood ed	2	28	1	31
Ed. service center six	0	9	0	14
<b>School operations</b>				
Office of school services	10	31	5	17
Safety & security	0	60	0	61
Equal ed opportunity	6	0	5	0
<b>CENTRAL OFFICE</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>653</b>
Elementary subdistricts	57	170	41	40
High school subdistrict	11	64	24	22
<b>SUBDISTRICTS</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>716</b>

# School activists focus on how to replace Kimbrough

BILL STAMETS

Supt. Ted Kimbrough announces his departure. From left are board members John Valinote, Bertha Magaña, Pam Lenane and Juan Cruz.



When Supt. Ted D. Kimbrough announced his June departure from the Chicago Public Schools, school activists began thinking not so much about who would replace him as how that person would be selected.

"We should learn the lessons of the past," says Lourdes Monteagudo, Chicago's former deputy mayor for education. If school reformers do not involve themselves in the process, she says, "an anti-reform superintendent could take his place."

Monteagudo contends that reformers were asleep at the wheel when the Interim Board of Education recruited Kimbrough from Compton, Calif., three years ago. "The selection process in 1989 left the reform movement out," she says. "Kimbrough was never questioned by a broad range of people. There was not scrutiny."

"You would only have to sit with him for an hour to realize that the man was not at all interested in reform," she adds.

Chicago Urban League President James W. Compton, who was president of the Interim Board, disagrees. "All the board members had plenty of opportunity to question the superintendent," he says.

"I think Kimbrough was doing an

adequate job," says Compton. "The problem is, we don't know what we're looking for in a superintendent. There are too many functions, too many agendas and too little power for a superintendent to be effective."

Within hours of Kimbrough's announcement, backers tried to rally support for him while opponents pushed for an interim superintendent. Sources close to the board said Mayor Richard Daley wanted an interim, reasoning that he or she would be more effective than a "lame duck" in dealing with the Legislature and unions.

The mayor reportedly favored Sara Spurlark, the former principal of Ray Elementary School in Hyde Park and a Daley's appointee to the School Board Nominating Commission. Spurlark, an African American, also is a staff member of the University of Chicago's Center for School Improvement and a consultant to the Chicago School Finance Authority.

On Nov. 16, the board voted not to hire an interim, explaining that it did not want to pay a second salary. It also said it would seek to eliminate from state law requirements that the superintendent hold teaching and administrative certificates, which

would make it possible to hire a non-educator. Previously, the Legislature waived the requirements for the life of Kimbrough's contract.

One other city school board, Milwaukee's, has taken the non-educator route. Two years ago, it chose Howard Fuller, then Wisconsin secretary of labor, to head the city's schools. Fuller, a longtime civil rights activist, had no education background but had earned praise for his work as head of the labor department and was widely supported in the black community.

Chicago board members also proposed 12 criteria for the next superintendent. Tops among them are enthusiastic support for placing "key decision-making authority at the school-site level" and articulating a vision for improving educational achievement.

Public hearings on the criteria were scheduled for 5 p.m. on Dec. 8 and 10 at the board.

When Kimbrough made his surprise announcement Nov. 5, he cited "personal reasons" for not seeking another term. Board insiders say, however, that he had just been informed that nine of 15 members opposed renewing his contract. They speculate that Kimbrough announced his departure to save face and forestall a negative evaluation by the board.

Michael Klonsky

## Thanks to CATALYST funders

Thirteen foundations and corporations joined CATALYST's original funders this year to keep the publication alive, well and coming to you nine times a year. We wish to thank them publicly.

They are Amoco Corporation, Chicago Sun-Times Charity Trust, CNA Insurance Companies, Continental Bank, Fel-Pro Mecklenburger Foundation, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, IBM, Illinois Bell, New Prospect Foundation, Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Foundation, Albert Pick Jr. Fund, Prince Charitable Trusts and Sara Lee Corporation.

pointing results and in many ways laid the groundwork for the School Reform Act of 1988. The book is half over by the time they get to the 1987 school strike, which is popularly considered the "starting point" of the school reform movement.

From this point on, the book offers a blow-by-blow account of the forging of the reform coalition and the drafting of the legislation that eventually became the reform law. The account is based on Kyle's own recollections (he was present at many of the key meetings) and on interviews with participants (the detailed footnotes, which pinpoint the source of many observations and anecdotes, are particularly helpful).

There are, inevitably, occasional factual errors, but overall the book offers a great deal of fascinating information—particularly on how reform politics played out in the Latino community and the on-again, off-again involvement of the United Neighborhood Organization—that I haven't seen anywhere else.

## Different perspectives

It is natural for participants in a complex event to see the part they were involved in as central, and Kyle is no exception. For him, the main story of school reform begins with the outcry in the Latino community against gang violence; moves through the 1985 legislation, the founding and broadening of the Chicagoans United to Reform Education (CURE) coalition, and on to ultimate victory in Springfield.

Figures who played a role in this set of events (former state schools Supt. Michael Bakalis, Tomás Sanabria of Network for Youth Services, Senate President Philip Rock) are highlighted; others are treated more marginally (Bernie Noven, for example, appears only a couple of times, and his group, Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE), is never even mentioned).

If, say, James Deanes of the Parent/Community Council or David Paulus of First National Bank were to write their own accounts, the emphases would surely be different,

and the central story would revolve not around CURE but around the P/CC or the Chicago Partnership.

Such variations in perspective are natural and enlightening. But the one shortcoming of Kyle and Kanotwicz's account is their relative downplaying of suspicions of school reform in the black community, and especially among black leadership. They take pains to point out that the reform efforts, and especially the CURE coalition, were multiracial. They're right—there were strong African-American voices at the table shaping school reform; but still, many of the most respected black leaders (the late Nancy Jefferson, for example) stayed away or were opposed.

This fact had and continues to have important repercussions for those trying to make reform work. Kyle and Kantowicz (who are otherwise very perceptive on racial politics) try too hard to explain it away instead of facing it head on.

The authors don't spend much time examining educational outcomes of school reform, for the very good reason that it's still too early to judge the results. They look for lessons elsewhere.

Probably their most interesting observation is on the eternal tension between step-by-step reform (as was tried in 1985) and wholesale change (as mandated in 1988). Incrementalism may work in some contexts, they conclude, but when you're up against an entrenched bureaucracy, as the reformers were in 1987, the only hope is to throw the bums out and start over. They draw the analogy (which others have also used) of the dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe, which, after decades of repression, fell in a few swift months in 1989.

But that analogy offers other lessons as well. It's clear that the peoples of Eastern Europe won't be able to create just, peaceful, democratic societies overnight—considerable struggle lies ahead. The same, of course, holds true in the effort to reform schools that had been politicized, underfunded, overcentralized and neglectful of the central mission of educating children. Reformers believe it's possible to reshape them to put "Kids First"—but nobody said it would be easy. ■

*CATALYST: Voices of Chicago School Reform* is an independent publication created to document, analyze and support school improvement efforts in Chicago's public schools.

PUBLISHER

Roy Larson

EDITOR

Linda Lenz

MANAGING EDITOR

Lorraine Forte

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

DiAnne Walsh

OFFICE STAFF

Regina Powell, manager

Maggie Duarte, intern

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Michael Klonsky

CONSULTING EDITOR

Durrett Wagner

INTERNS

Dan Weissmann, Debra Williams,

Matthew Kowalsky

EDITORIAL BOARD

Leon Finney, chair

Michael Anderson

Ava Belisle-Chatterjee

David Bergholz

Marietta Beverly

Nelvia M. Brady

Nancy H. Brandt

Wilbur B. Brookover

Linda Bush

Adrian Capehart

Bobbi Cobb

Larry Hawkins

Carlos Heredia

Leon Jackson

Raymond Lau

Anne C. Lewis

Mayra L. Martinez-

Fernandez

Richard B. Warnecke

Ex Officio

Edward Bergstraesser, chair, CRS Board

Yvonne V. Delk, executive director, CRS

Gwendolyn J. Jordan, director

program planning

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Diane Hutchinson, Timothy Prentiss

*CATALYST* is made possible

by grants from:

Chicago Community Trust

The Joyce Foundation

John D. and Catherine T.

MacArthur Foundation

Published nine months of the year by

the Community Renewal Society,

332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 500

Chicago, Ill. 60604. Phone (312) 427-

4830. FAX (312) 427-6130. Copyright

1992, Community Renewal Society. All

rights reserved. The opinions expressed in

*CATALYST* are not necessarily those of

CRS. Free to Chicago's local school council

members. Annual subscription rates for

others: students/unemployed, \$10;

parents/community, \$15; professionals,

\$20; organizations/institutions, \$25.

Back issues: \$1 if picked up; \$2 prepaid if

mailed. Call for bulk rates on back issues.

*Catalyst*  
VOICES OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM

# Bright Ideas

## DuSable zeroes in on failing students

Encouragement, close monitoring and parent involvement are the keys to a program that has helped low-achieving students at DuSable High School bring up their grades.

"Some of our students are either always absent or tardy, or they have an attitude problem, so they fail," says Sarah F. Dickens, a music teacher who coordinates the year-old program begun by Principal Charles Mingo. "When they fail, they drop out. We try to keep them from doing that by showing them they can be successful."

Students are placed in the program if they receive three or more F's in a grading period, have excessive absences and tardies or display severe discipline or behavioral problems.

"Before our students hit the door in September, we knew which ones had failing grades and were always absent or late," says Dickens. "Our goal is to make sure they start the year off right."

With the help of teachers and parents, students at the Grand Boulevard school draw up and sign a contract with



JOHN BOOZ

Sarah Dickens goes over progress reports with Raydell Wesley, whose grades and attendance improved under DuSable's monitoring program.

specific goals such as cutting down on tardiness and being prepared for class. Students who are having problems in certain subjects can get afterschool tutoring each day.

After the contract is signed, the student must carry a weekly progress report to each class. Once a week, teachers sign the report and note the

student's behavior, such as coming to class on time and finishing homework. The report must be signed by a parent each week and returned to Dickens. If the form is not sent back, Dickens calls parents to get it returned.

Students must improve their attendance and get rid of all F's for two marking periods before they can leave

the program. Last September, 349 students were in the program; by June, 108 had made enough progress to get out of it.

"I didn't like being monitored so closely, so I got my act together, started coming to school and brought my grades up from F's to B's and C's," says senior Raydell Wesley, who was put in the program for having too many absences. "And I don't want to go back to the program, so I'm doing what I have to do to stay out of it."

"I didn't want to carry all of my school books around with me, so I would make several trips to my locker, which made me late," says junior Chiquita Nowden, who was put in the program for being late to class too often. "The school called my mother and she put me on punishment. She said if I stayed in the house for awhile, that would give me time to think about being late. After that, I carry all my books to class now, no matter how heavy they are."

Debra Williams

**Catalyst**  
VOICES OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM

332 South Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Moving? Return your label with new address.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
PERMIT NO. 2382