

VOLUME V NUMBER 9 JUNE 1994

Catalyst

VOICES OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM

Beyond chopping the top

Two districts retool central offices

by Grant Pick

On Sept. 5, 1991, a task force of the Cincinnati Business Committee, composed of the CEOs of the 27 largest companies in town, released a report damning the public schools. After 16 months of study, involving more than 200 volunteers, the task force described the schools as "an organization plagued with problems: political discord, inefficient management, antiquated systems, and an administrative structure that has a tendency to maintain the status quo."

"The time has come for sweeping, fundamental change," concluded the Buenger Commission, named after its chairman, Clement L. Buenger, chairman of the Fifth Third Bank. "The entire Cincinnati School System must be opened up and transformed from a

top-down pyramid into an organization focused on individual schools and administered by professional managers who are given the incentives—and the responsibility—to produce superior educational performance."

J. Michael Brandt, then the interim school superintendent, had been on the job just 35 days when the Buenger Commission issued its findings. Just a month before, he had been a Cincinnati high school principal, and he remembers sitting at that press conference and hearing what he considered "a searing indictment of the system I had worked in for 20 years. I said to myself, 'Oh s---, what have I gotten myself into?'"

So began Cincinnati's march to administrative downsizing and reorganization, which has developed into one of the most sweeping in the country.

In most large school systems, there are frequent calls for reconfiguring the central office—for "chopping the top" or changing it fundamentally. But the undertaking, where it's been attempted, is an imprecise one, executed differently in each instance. "Usually, it's budget-driven, with somebody coming in and making cutbacks," says Chris Pipho,



JOHN BOOZ

Plans to make Service Center live up to name

by Grant Pick

Last spring, Charley Gillispie, chief financial officer for the Board of Education, was voicing his frustration over his job "to anyone who would listen," he says. "Everyone was saying 'downsize, downsize,' but no one [was] looking at providing quality service to schools." When at last he groused to officials at two leading business organizations—the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club and the Financial Research and Advisory Committee (FRAC)—he found receptive ears. Nine months ago, then, was born the goal of seriously retooling central office.

1993-94

The Year in Review

A time line of turbulence begins on page 4

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In This Issue: Getting down to business

"Pershing Road" and the discussions there about MIS, BRAC and TQM (management information systems, Budget Reconciliation and Control and Total Quality Management) may seem to have little to do with teaching Keisha and Johnny how to read and turning them on to literature. But it only *seems* that way. In a huge school system—indeed, in any school system where all the principals can't fit in the superintendent's office—all this bureaucratic stuff does matter for kids.

A central office that is poorly organized, poorly operated or poorly staffed (read: quality and quantity) robs principals and, therefore, schools of time. And time is one of the most precious commodities that schools have. In Michael Klonsky's article about the School Board's archaic computer system, Principal Madeleine Maraldi of Irving School complains that it's often quicker for her to drive to Pershing Road to get information than to try to retrieve it through the computer. Maraldi has much better things to do with her time, liking exploring new curriculum and working with teachers to help them change.

In our lead article, writer Grant Pick delves into two interesting examples of central office restructuring. In Cincinnati, the business community pretty much took over. Now, private companies perform some business functions, e.g. delivering interschool mail. And clusters of schools each have a director that oversees a variety of support operations, such as maintenance and lunchrooms. In Jefferson County, Ky., the superintendent, an ardent believer in cooperative leadership, is striving mightily through example and exhortation to change the mindset of fellow administrators.

Even so, Pick's article probably will send shivers down the spines of Chicago's ardent decentralizers, for Cincinnati and Jefferson County are still run from the center. Both districts, for example, created teacher training centers. Chicago's approach to instruction improvement is quite different; it distributes money to

schools—through state Chapter 1—and lets them find their own teacher training. Then the question becomes, What does central office do to ensure children don't suffer because a school can't or won't avail itself of good training?

Fenwick English, a University of Kentucky professor and former education advisor to the Chicago School Finance Authority, notes another dimension to the Chicago challenge. "In Chicago," he told Pick, "there's this vested interest in the bureaucracy on the part of the key players—the mayor, the board and the teachers union." And the engineers union, and the service workers union, and so on.

Albert Travis, the business consultant who will help Chicago blaze its own "corporate re-engineering" trail, sees his new assignment as "the most important work I will probably ever do." And perhaps the most difficult, as well.



WORTH PONDERING "At their heart, the problems of city schools are the result of our failure to place school reform inside of a broader vision of social and economic justice and our unwillingness to engage in the kind of political activity necessary to realize that vision. Without such an animating purpose, we are doomed to endlessly discuss the latest piecemeal reform, debate the latest (real) but not central problem, and watch as our public schools are abandoned by people who believe they cannot be saved."

Alex Molnar, education professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, in the May 1994 issue of Educational Leadership.



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Linda Levy Lorraine Forte

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Catalyst

VOICES OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM

VOLUME V NUMBER 9
JUNE 1994

CENTRAL OFFICE

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1993 Peter Lisagor Award, Best Newsletter.
1993 Distinguished Achievement Award,
Educational Press Association of America.

TWO DISTRICTS

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director of state relations for the Denver-based Education Commission of the States. "You see it done in different ways, and, to tell you the truth, nobody is doing this with much deliberation."

Where Cincinnati reworked its central office under pressure from the city's business community, down the road in Louisville, Ky., Stephen Daeschner, the new schools superintendent, is bending his dominion to his fervid, personal belief in organization theory, the latter-day, cooperative model for running a company or group.

In San Diego, Calif., the nation's 14th largest system, a swelling enrollment and a long-standing cap on property taxes forced central office cuts that since 1991 have lopped away 190 out of 2,500 positions and saved \$13 million.

Under pressure from politicians, unions, the business community and some school reformers, the Chicago Board of Education began chopping the top in 1989; since then, central and sub-district offices have lost roughly 33 percent of their workers. Now, the board finally is getting around to looking at what central office *should* be doing and how it should be doing it. As the board starts a process by which it hopes to refashion its administration, it's worth looking at how two other heartland, urban districts—Cincinnati and

Louisville—are dealing with the thorny matter of central office restructuring.

Getting down to business



J. Michael Brandt, superintendent of Cincinnati schools.

After the Buenger Commission report, the pressure on Cincinnati Schools Supt. Brandt, 47, mounted. The year before, Cincinnati voters had resoundingly rejected a tax increase, and the schools, a universe of 50,000 stu-

ence, Clement Buenger told voters they had a "moral obligation" to approve a newly proposed tax increase. But he added: If the voters come through and the schools don't act on his commission's recommendations, "I'll be their worst nightmare."

"He was looking me right in the eye when he said that," recalls Brandt, who got the message.

The tax proposal squeaked by, and Brandt set about engineering cuts. By June, he had eliminated 142 central office jobs; 65 of them were administrators, half the central office complement. Those who lost jobs received generous severance packages (which didn't happen in Chicago), yet it was not a happy time, Brandt recalls. "There were lots of icy stares, and silence reigned in the

"We eliminated the top and the bottom. Now we have directors, and then the worker bees."

—Steve Ottemann, businessman-turned-school-exec

dents, 84 schools and more than 6,000 employees, stood \$46 million in debt. (On a per-pupil basis, Cincinnati's debt was comparable to the shortfall Chicago faced a year ago.)

At a Halloween 1992 press confer-

ence, I know people who have never recovered psychologically. Several sought a doctor's care."

To keep the schools afloat, the state Legislature forwarded a \$170 million loan to the Cincinnati schools and

1993-94 The Year in Review

JUNE
1993



2 The School Board faces a \$415 million deficit that must be closed before schools can open in September. Mayor Richard M. Daley unveils a riverboat gambling proposal that he says would allow Chicago to help solve the looming budget crisis by borrowing up to \$70 million against future revenues. His proposal goes nowhere.

10 Mayor Daley backs away from legislative proposals that, for the first time, had put a Chicago mayor publicly at odds with the Chicago Teachers Union. With legislative powerhouse Michael Madigan standing in the way, Daley agrees to leave the issues to contract talks. The proposals would have given principals more power to fire teachers and hire non-academic staff.

7 The Center for Neighborhood Technology releases a report saying that by investing \$53 million in energy conservation projects, the schools could save up to \$13 million a year in lower electricity and gas bills.

15 To back up its call for a longer work day—at the same pay—the School Board releases a study showing that Chicago teachers put in less time teaching than do their colleagues in 10 other major urban districts, including Los Angeles, Houston and Dade County, Fla. (Miami and suburbs).

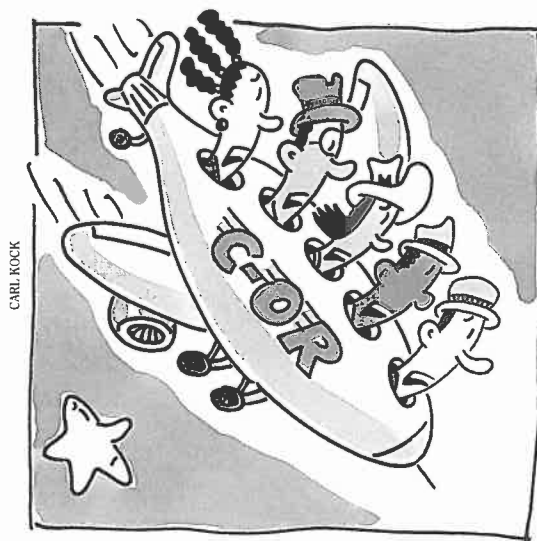
relaxed the repayment terms from two to 10 years. Also that June, Brandt hired Steve Ottemann, the controller for a subsidiary of Phillips Petroleum Co., as his vice president for administration, a key Buenger demand. Ottemann's turf became the entire non-academic part of the system.

Under the old regime, the schools administration was "a feudalized tangle-web that nobody had touched for years," says Thomas Mooney, the president of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers. "You had the czar of Chapter 1, the earl of special education, the prince of personnel, and there was little accountability to the schools."

Brandt and Ottemann pruned the structure, with help from an organization-transition specialist loaned the schools by Procter & Gamble, the city's dominant corporate presence. Previously, for instance, there was an assistant superintendent for facilities, reigning over separate directors for maintenance, transportation, food service and security, each of them with assistant directors. "We eliminated the top and the bottom," reports Ottemann, meaning today there are only directors. "Now we have directors, and then the worker bees." Each present-day facilities director assumes the responsibility for several areas, such as food service, building maintenance and custodians, at a dozen schools—security and transportation duties were spun off separately. "If a principal has a problem, all he has to do is call one

supervisor," says Ottemann.

Brandt axed three area superintendents, the equivalent to Chicago's sub-district superintendents; now, all 84 principals report directly to Brandt, though lead principals in each of seven new "minidistricts" act as liaisons with the central office. The curriculum and instruction department, once a 50-per-



son operation that selected textbooks and prepared curriculum guides, was pared to 10 people, and most prior duties of the department, retitled "quality improvement," now fall to district-wide curriculum councils in various subject areas. By July 1, the department of management information systems will consist of a skeleton staff of 14.

Computer operations are now being performed by a data-processing company in Phoenix, Ariz.

Ottemann has privatized other operations, too. "Instead of putting in an inventory-management system for the warehouse, I just got rid of the warehouse," he says. (Chicago still has a warehousing operation.) Now, the schools are serviced by a supply company in Columbus, "so when you want a roll of toilet paper you go to them," says Ottemann, who adds that the change has enabled him to negotiate volume discounts. Interschool mail presently gets delivered by a private courier firm.

Ottemann is scrupulous, too, in filling business positions at the board only with administrators who have had business training. "I won't say never, but if you're a principal, you're going to have a helluva lot less likelihood of being a director of human resources than you had in the past," says Ottemann. "If it's a non-education function, you're coming in from outside." (Chicago's new human resources director is a former principal.)

Meanwhile, the building occupied by the central office in downtown Cincinnati, plus the adjoining parking lot, are up for sale for \$4 million. Brandt intends to relocate the adminis-

17 For the first time, finalists for school superintendent debate on television. Argie Johnson, deputy chancellor for instruction in New York City, portrays herself as a "kids-first" educator. Laval Wilson, state-appointed overseer of the failed Paterson, N.J. school district, points to his skills as a contract negotiator and his success in raising test scores as Boston's superintendent.



Johnson

29 Gov. Jim Edgar and legislative leaders reach tentative agreement on a budget deal that would enable Chicago schools to reduce their deficit by \$84 million; it includes continuing the practice of speeding up state aid payments by one month.

18 Sensing a lost cause, Interim School Supt. Richard Stephenson says he won't seek the permanent position despite vocal support from some African-American leaders.



Stephenson

25 Argie Johnson gets the nod for superintendent. . . . Meanwhile, Mayor Daley ignores a legal deadline for selecting or rejecting School Board nominees from the School Board Nominating Commission. He didn't act until the following March, but wasn't penalized for the delay because the law doesn't provide a penalty.

30 The Democrat-controlled Illinois House makes permanent a "temporary" income tax surcharge and approves the \$84 million deal for Chicago schools. But the GOP-controlled Senate rejects the plan. The legislative session goes into overtime.

tration to half of an underused middle school in the northeast part of the city.

Cincinnati's downsizing has resulted in some \$25 million in savings, roughly half of what its debt had been, according to Ottemann. In terms of jobs, the central office is 70 percent of its previous size. Systemwide, says Ottemann, there are hundreds fewer employees, from custodians to teachers—partly from restructuring, partly from budget cuts—than when he and Brandt started. For the first time in seven years, the schools' \$292 million budget is balanced, Brandt reports.

By Chicago standards, the Cincinnati schools are woefully behind in site-based decision making. Of 84 schools, a mere three are experimenting with committees of parents, teachers, community members and students in making decisions.

Yet, the post-Buenger streamlining has wrought other reforms. Using "Total Quality Management," a form of systems theory abbreviated as TQM, 12 district teams are focusing on various areas—for instance, transportation, textbooks and in-school suspension—that are judged in need of fixing. Above all else, TQM encourages organizations to meet their customers' needs.

One minidistrict, armed with \$350,000 for staff development, has

been given the freedom to fiddle with the direction of its nine schools; next year, three schools will adopt an early-intervention reading program pioneered at Johns Hopkins University, and two others will become high-expectation "effective schools."

Perhaps most significantly, business leaders, notably Procter & Gamble



President John Pepper, have set up the Mayerson Academy, a staff development school, and endowed it with \$4 million. (The academy's name derives from one of the funders, a local property magnate.) Intentionally, the academy is affiliated with—but independent of—the school system. "We wanted it that way so the academy could skirt any

budget cuts," says Larry Rowedder, academy president and former schools superintendent in Fayetteville, N.C. The academy runs continuing education courses in a variety of subjects, from early childhood education and time management to how to use the Paideia and Montessori techniques, two strains of instruction that surface prominently in Cincinnati's magnet schools.

To entice teachers, the classes are free and scheduled throughout the day and evening and during vacations. Depending on when they attend, teachers can expect a continental breakfast, lunch or boxed dinner, and graduates routinely receive many materials they need to implement what they have learned, from books to expensive planning calendars. In just a year, Rowedder reports, up to 50 per cent of Cincinnati's teachers have studied at Mayerson, and that in a system where staff development had been "almost non-existent," he notes.

Change in Cincinnati is by no means complete. Though new financial software is set to go on line, Ottemann remains irked at the schools' overall data system; there is no districtwide computer network, and elementary school records and maintenance work orders are still logged by hand. (Chicago is ahead of Cincinnati in this regard.) "You get lots of people pushing paper and doing things inefficiently," he complains. "From the business

JULY 1993

12 The School Board unveils an unbalanced \$2.8 billion budget that calls for \$77 million in union concessions and \$120 million in new revenue.

14 Mayor Daley calls for a special legislative session to fashion a finance package and avert a school shutdown in September. Under state law, Chicago is the only district in the state that can't open unless it has a balanced budget.

15 The board's chief financial officer, Charley Gillispie, says the board's budget can't be balanced even with 10% salary cuts, thousands of job cuts and major program cuts.

AUGUST 1993

3 The School Finance Authority rejects the board's proposed unbalanced budget. The city begins developing alternative plans for students in the event of a lockout or strike.

13 A study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research shows that a third of elementary schools are using democratic politics to advance change in their schools; it concludes that school restructuring is "evolving in ways that can lead to major improvements in student learning." . . . The Legislature finally approves the \$84 million relief package and the tax-surcharge measure. It then adjourns.

20 The ACLU files suit on behalf of parents and students at the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, accusing the board and the Public Building Commission of race discrimination for allowing an expansion plan for the predominantly black, high-achieving school to remain stalled since 1990. Residents of the surrounding, predominantly white neighborhood oppose the plan.

world, I'm accustomed to saying, 'Show me the statistics,' but here we just don't have the numbers."

The school buildings are crumbling, and despite the economies of recent years and a hard-fought campaign, a \$348 million bond issue to fund building renovation was defeated last November. "That was extremely disheartening," admits Ottemann. "We ran into an anti-tax mood, and, to some extent, the voters were telling us they

among them special education supervisors, because "they came to know the youngsters and their families so well."

Ottemann has on the drawing board the idea of awarding performance pay increases and bonuses to principals, in large part as incentive to keep them in the field instead of shipping off to higher-paying jobs at central office. But Frazier fears that will breed favoritism.

According to Frazier, little of the cost savings from downsizing has trick-

Buenger recommendations, and though the group found much to laud, it also found fault. Too little money had been saved, and progress in launching the experimental pilot minidistrict had been "frustratingly slow." In addition, Brandt drew criticism for still having two deputy superintendents reporting to him, one to help manage the minidistricts, the other an aide for desegregation.

Mooney of the teachers union hails most of Brandt's initiatives but takes exception to the deputy for the minidistricts: "He's a center of gravity that pulls in power, an overlay from the old organization that evokes all the old suspicions."

The recent changes in Cincinnati are a function of taxpayer pressure, says Mooney. "Sixty percent of the schools' operating budget comes from local taxes," he points out. "You have to go back to the voters every three years—that's about as long as you can last—and if they turn you down, they plunge you off a cliff."

A lesson has been learned, says Ron Roberts, longtime executive director of the Cincinnati Business Committee, the group that provided the stiff kick in the pants that launched change. "This school system has gotten to the point where it understands the game. It's got a customer—the kids—and shareholders—the taxpayers—and both have to be served."

Meanwhile, student scores on nationally standardized achievement

"I'm accustomed to saying, 'Show me the statistics,' but here we just don't have the numbers."

—Steve Ottemann

still wanted to see results before they put money into the buildings."

Henri Frazier, an elementary principal and president of the 200-member Association of Administrators and Supervisors, says the retooling has seen its "gains and losses." On the one hand, the new era "has called up the old fire in people like me," Frazier says. "You're now the CEO in your building, and you have to be accountable. There's nobody over you anymore." Yet, Frazier also regrets the loss of seasoned administrators as well as lower-level staffers,

led to the schools; Ottemann concedes much of the money was spent to pay past-due bills. "Remember, up to this year we had a deficit," he says, "and a teachers' contract with 4 per cent increases annually." Teachers union chief Mooney, however, counts several new programs, including fresh Paideia and Montessori magnets and the return of art, music and physical education to every elementary site.

Last December, the Cincinnati Business Committee issued a report card on how well Brandt had fulfilled the

5 Mayor Daley unveils a new plan to get Chicago schools open: \$300 million in bonds, using \$55 million in teacher pension funds, delaying final state Chapter 1 payment to schools, and union concessions, including eliminating bonuses and increasing high school teaching time.

10 After siding with opponents of the proposed expansion of the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, Mayor Daley announces talks are underway to resolve differences.

15 Chicago's deadline for applying for a special early retirement package; 31 percent of the 12,800 eligible employees apply, including more than 2,200 teachers and 100 principals. Early retirements save the board \$10.2 million and pave the way for reducing jobs through attrition, which unions are willing to buy.

27 Gov. Edgar orders a special session on the schools crisis.

9 Supt. Argie Johnson officially starts work.

11 The Chicago Teachers Union rejects Daley-backed proposals for union concessions, including increasing teaching time in high schools and eliminating job guarantees for so-called "supernumerary" teachers.

23 Gov. Edgar rejects hosting "multilateral" budget-contract talks among unions, politicians and school officials. Eventually, Mayor Daley would agree to broker board-union talks in his City Hall office.



Edgar

31 The School Board fails to meet the legal deadline for a balanced budget.

tests—Cincinnati uses the California Achievement Tests—have risen slightly, and this year, Cincinnati 12th-graders were reported performing better on a state proficiency test than their peers in all other big Ohio cities. (This year marked the first year test results have been reported.)

Brandt, who became the permanent superintendent in 1992, allows that his tenure has proved quite a ride. “You’re trying to rebuild an airplane while it’s in flight and get everybody back on the ground safely at the same time,” he sighs. “I think we’re doing well. We’re making a first-class school system that holds people accountable and that’s capable of delivering good performance.

The systems man



Stephen Daeschner, superintendent of Jefferson County (Ky.) schools.

The cabinet meetings of Stephen Daeschner, the new schools superintendent of Jefferson County, Ky., which includes Louisville, are held each Monday at the VanHouse Education Center, the system’s central office.

Under the old superintendent, Donald Ingwerson, cabinet meetings were crisp, 90-minute affairs that dealt with nuts-and-bolts operational matters.

Under the driven, enthusiastic Daeschner, however, the meetings stretch from 8:30 a.m. into the afternoon, and they range widely, with no set agenda and lots of philosophical waxing. Cabinet members ardently argue their positions. A zealot for organization management, which calls for coopera-

had a wonderful discussion because somebody wanted to be *led* [rather than help lead]. So we talked about stewardship, and it was great.”

Welcome to Daeschner’s attempt to refashion the Louisville-area school system—and its central administration—to the cut of systems theory. Not only has Daeschner diced the cabinet meetings to a new recipe, but he’s taken other aspects of Ingwerson’s legacy, like a teacher-training school on

“It was very patriarchal . . . you had to get the blessing of the father—the superintendent—before you could do anything.”

—Lucian Yates III, service advocate

tive, team-driven leadership, Daeschner also sets aside as much as an hour to discuss a chapter from one of three books—*The Fifth Discipline* by Peter M. Senge, Peter Block’s *Stewardship* and his *Re-engineering the Corporation* (co-authored with James Champy)—which together constitute his bible.

Most of Daeschner’s subordinates take to the superintendent’s thrust, “but other folks are struggling with this,” he concedes. “Yet, just this morning we

which Cincinnati’s is patterned, and streamlined them. Where he takes the system in the future will be a function of his unyielding belief in cooperative, data-driven decision making.

The Jefferson County schools—at 96,000 students and 153 schools, about twice the size of the Cincinnati district—has had a turbulent history. In 1975, a U.S. District Court judge ordered busing for integration between the schools in Louisville, which were

SEPTEMBER 1993

2 The Legislature opens a special session on the schools crisis. Lawmakers eventually insist on having a new union contract in place before approving any borrowing package.

3 Before recessing for Labor Day weekend, lawmakers postpone until Sept. 12 the state requirement for Chicago to have a balanced budget before opening schools.



Kocoras

13 At the board’s request, U.S. District Judge Charles P. Kocoras grants a waiver until Sept. 23 of the balanced-budget requirement, allowing schools to open on Sept. 15. The board argued that it could not meet the requirements of its federal desegregation consent decree if schools are closed.

1 Without a balanced budget the school system shuts down—a week before school is scheduled to start. Supt. Johnson and about 30 volunteers stay on to oversee essential services.

5 In a special Sunday bargaining session, the teachers union agrees to lengthen high school periods from 40 to 50 minutes; the tradeoff is that teachers no longer have duty periods. With longer periods, the system needs fewer teachers and the board cuts positions through attrition, saving \$18.4 million. However, the board later is sharply criticized for the change, which caused scheduling chaos in many schools.

12 Meeting again on a Sunday, the board announces it can’t get staffing completed in time to open schools the next day; it sets Sept. 15 for the startup. The legislative reprieve on a balanced budget expires, and the system again shuts down at midnight.

15 Schools finally open, a week late.

heavily black, and the predominantly white surrounding county. Then began a tumultuous era when “all the school board meetings were acrimonious, the Ku Klux Klan was a-marching and the schools suffered from white flight,” recalls one local leader. The waters were calmed with the arrival of Donald Ingwerson as superintendent in 1981.

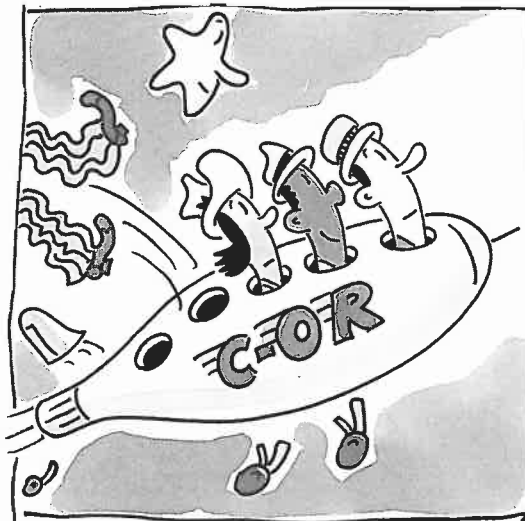
Ingwerson’s tenure brought a series of reforms. In 1984, the superintendent hired Phillip Schlecty, an education professor at the University of North Carolina, to start the Gheens Academy, a teacher-training arm of Jefferson County schools that is fueled in part by the private Gheens Foundation. Gheens’ hallmark became two dozen so-called professional development schools, where faculties developed shared visions and then got training and resources to pursue them. Gheens was particularly instrumental in the restructuring of high schools, ushering in concepts like team teaching. (When Cincinnati established its Mayerson Academy, Gheens served as the model.)

Under Ingwerson, hundreds of local businesses adopted schools, pumping in money, setting up mentoring experiences and engineering projects.

Administratively, Ingwerson “flattened the pyramid,” removing three executive directors who oversaw the elementary, high and middle schools. Administrators called principal liaisons moderated among groups of schools, but, fundamentally, all Jefferson County

principals reported directly to Ingwerson. “The idea was that a principal was supposed to call whoever had to get a problem solved,” relates Ingwerson. “If nothing was done, the second call was to me. Believe me, things got done.”

But there persisted the feeling that Ingwerson championed such a struc-



ture because it heightened his control. “It was very patriarchal,” recalls Lucian Yates III, a high school principal at the time, “because you had to get the blessing of the father—the superintendent—before you could do anything.” However, Malcolm Chancey, chairman of Louisville’s Liberty National Bank, the largest in the state, says Ingwerson was “a marketer, a concept man, right

for his time.”

Ingwerson resigned in 1993 to become president of a think tank on elementary curriculum in Los Angeles. (At the time, his 12-year tenure marked him as the longest-serving big-city superintendent in the nation.) Though Ingwerson’s resignation was voluntary,

he had come under criticism after relaxing desegregation standards to comply with the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), passed in 1990.

KERA requires students, particularly elementary youngsters, to have an education with a greater “consistency,” which Ingwerson says forced him to abandon mandatory busing. KERA also forced Kentucky school systems to adopt many new practices, such as ungraded, multiage classes for primary students and, by 1996, “site-based decision-making” councils at every school.

Daeschner was hired last summer after a search that narrowed to him and Loretta Webb, a deputy superintendent from Fairfax County, Va. Daeschner is white, and Webb is African American, and in the turmoil over race, Daeschner’s managerial style went unnoticed. “We were so busy hiring him that we didn’t hear ‘systems, systems, systems,’” says Jefferson County School Board member Gail Henson.

16 Roosevelt High senior Frank Escobar, 18, is shot and killed near the school, after a dispute that took place just after Escobar, a former dropout, had registered to return to school.

OCTOBER 1993

1 Supt. Johnson is criticized by the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund for failing to appoint any Latinos to her cabinet. Johnson later appoints Belkis Santos as associate superintendent for human resources.

6 After a flurry of last-minute recruiting by community and reform groups, more than 7,000 candidates meet the deadline for filing to run in the Oct. 21 local school council elections. . . . Students and teachers from Lake View High march outside the mayor’s office to protest program cuts.

21 Mayor Daley announces he will broker contract talks. Demonstrators march in the Loop, calling for a solution to the school crisis.

23 Judge Kocoras issues a second order allowing schools to remain open 10 more days—until Oct. 4—without a balanced budget.

4 Refusing the board’s request for a 30-day order to keep schools open, Judge Kocoras gives the board and the union until midnight Oct. 8 to reach a contract settlement, and the Legislature until midnight Oct. 15 to okay a funding package.

8 Responding to a lawsuit filed by several black and Hispanic parents, a second federal judge orders schools to stay open until Oct. 18, giving the board and the union a reprieve from Judge Kocoras’ midnight deadline. The suit charged that the balanced budget requirement is discriminatory because it applies only to Chicago, a predominantly minority district.

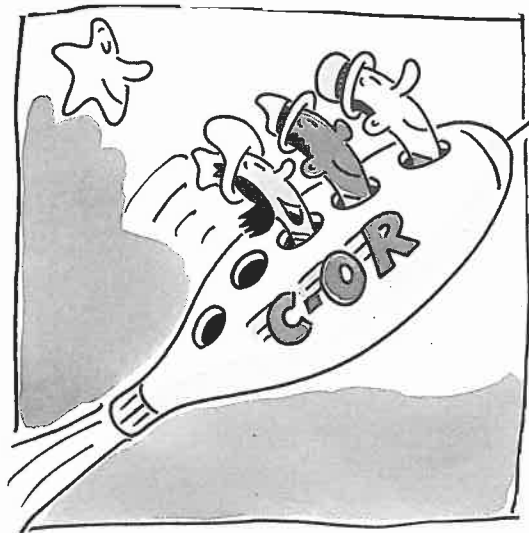
"Systems management is ingrained in me," explains Daeschner, who became a fan of data-driven, participatory administration while he was director of research, evaluation and planning for the St. Louis schools in the mid-70s. He came to Louisville from the schools superintendency in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

At the outset, Daeschner cast doubt on the wisdom of the flattened pyramid—of all principals reporting to him. "At cabinet meetings we sat around and asked questions," he says, "and people raised problems. One problem was obvious: The most politically astute principals had learned to manipulate the superintendent, and so they got more resources. It wasn't fair." Consequently, Daeschner reinstated a layer of bureaucracy: three top-level staffers (among them Lucian Yates), called "advocates," who would broker services for high, middle and elementary schools.

The principals had their misgivings. "Some felt the rug was being pulled out from under them, because they had enjoyed the direct link they'd had with Ingwerson," relates Freda Merriweather, the elementary school advocate. Yet, Merriweather takes her job seriously, pushing hard on issues important to her constituency, be it institution of a new early-literacy program called Reading Recovery or

extending the work year for principals. "When it's something relating to the elementary schools, I come into the cabinet meetings with my guns loaded," she says. "I know that when the others start to quiz me, I'd better be ready."

In other attempts to streamline operations, Daeschner took the management information systems department, a fixture in nearly all school districts, and lumped its functions with



both the computer-education curriculum and telecommunications (phones, televisions and fax machines). A trusted subordinate from Cedar Rapids was imported to run the new configuration.

Next, the Geens Academy received a makeover. Historically, teachers and

parents with curriculum questions had sought help from two sources, Geens and the curriculum and instruction department at central office. "There was massive confusion on where to turn," says board member Henson.

Now, the curriculum division has been melded into Geens with the creation of an "authentic assessment" office there. "The intent is to fundamentally redesign the curriculum and make it fit with KERA," explains Geens' interim director Brad Mathews, noting that KERA dictates 75 learning expectations. Geens also houses 34 resource teachers, each assigned to a half-dozen schools; they are to act as "personal bankers" for these schools, in the words of Senior Deputy Supt. Booker Rice.

Recently, the Geens Academy has come under scrutiny for its spending on such items as restaurant meals, gifts and flowers and for other alleged improprieties during the tenure of former director Terry Brooks. "Sure, there were a lot of meals and a lot of doughnuts," says Schlecty, Brooks' predecessor, "but you have to understand, this was part of saying to educators, 'You are . . . valued.'" Brooks, reassigned as Daeschner's special assistant before the controversy, has resigned, in effect, closing internal and state probes. Daeschner stresses that the changes he made regarding Geens do not relate to the Brooks matter.

In total, says Daeschner, his administrative reordering has meant the loss

OCTOBER 1993

8 Fourteen Schurz High School students are arrested during an impromptu walkout by several hundred students, apparently triggered by frustration over school cuts. Students also stage walkouts at Roosevelt, Von Steuben, Taft and Kelvyn Park high schools.

13 The Legislature adjourns—a day early—without approving a school funding package.

15 Over the objections of the School Finance Authority, Judge Kocoras gives the board and the Legislature until Nov. 15 to reach an agreement on a funding package.

18 Protesting staff cuts caused by the switch to 50-minute periods, teachers at Julian High call in sick, prompting school officials to cancel classes for the day.

9 After more than 16 hours of talks, the board and teachers union reach a tentative two-year agreement. Union members don't lose jobs, but don't get raises either. Some firsts: Employees will contribute to health insurance premiums. Teachers will work an extra five days a year starting next year, at regular pay. Job guarantees for so-called "supernumerary" teachers were eased somewhat. . . . Meanwhile, the engineers union agreed to a plan under which schools can stay open beyond the regular school day without having to pay overtime to engineers.

14 The teachers union's House of Delegates approves the contract—which includes a \$110 loan from the pension fund, to be paid back with interest—during a "fiery, emotional" meeting. The vote was 592 to 170. . . . The board votes 9-3 to transfer adult education and Washburne Trade School to City Colleges.

21 Roughly 132,000 people, including 46,000 high school students, vote in local school council elections. Turnout is down some 20 percent from 1991 and 50 percent from the first election in 1989.

of only 16 of 220 central office personnel. But slicing jobs and saving money "is not my objective here," he underscores. "The most important thing is function, to serve the kids."

While board member Sam Corbett reports there is "constant rumbling about what all those people at VanHouse are doing," there is no budgetary pressure to downsize, as there was in Cincinnati. Jefferson County schools, with a \$500 million annual budget, are

get the biggest bang for the buck with early-childhood programs."

Also in Daeschner's game plan: Establishing consistent entrance criteria for magnet schools. Figuring out how far site-based decision-making councils should go in monkeying with the basics of a school. Reinstating standardized tests. While KERA calls for such "authentic" assessment as collecting portfolios of children's work, Daeschner feels "the public still wants

Elementary. "Look at Toyota. Look at Wal-Mart. Dr. Daeschner has brought this kind of thinking here."

He's also leavened school board meetings with two openings for public comment, both before and after the goings-on; a local cable TV station broadcasts not only the deliberations but also a work session that precedes them.

At 52, Daeschner is a triathlete who makes sure he exercises (either running, swimming or biking) somewhere in his 12-hour day. "He's totally wired," says board member Henson. "He's always in a peripatetic mode, walking into offices and having conversations. People talk to him everywhere, as he's swimming in a lane at the Y in the morning and all day long."

Before the year is out, Daeschner estimates he will have visited 70 schools, "and I'm not talking about a casual visit," he says. "I spend an hour with the staff and another hour walking the halls, talking to the kids, the custodians, the food-service people."

"Steve's a pretty hands-on guy," remarks bank chairman Chancey, "but he's always looking at how his findings can be quantified and measured." While board member Corbett has misgivings about that orientation ("You can't always be driven by numbers"), his colleague Gail Henson has none: "Steve has very high expectations, and that's raised expectations around here." ■

Grant Pick is a Chicago writer.

"If you have a vision, everybody has to be part of it. Look at Toyota. Look at Wal-Mart."

—Nancy Wright Bowlds, principal, Greenwood Elementary

in "fairly stable" financial shape for an urban district with a 50 percent rate of poverty, according to Booker Rice.

Daeschner's biggest budget move is to shift \$1.6 million in federal Chapter 1 dollars from high and middle schools to early-childhood programs. His ambition is to extend service to all youngsters three and over. Daeschner concedes the Chapter 1 shift doesn't sit well with the secondary schools, who face a loss: "People are upset. They were happy with the way things were working. But the research shows that you

to see how their kids are doing compared to kids in other states."

Where Ingwerson kept control of decisions, Daeschner operates more openly. He conducts wide-ranging seminars with principals and various interest groups, pinning a portable mike to his shirt and roaming the room. He's fond of such open-ended questions as, "What would you say would make the ideal elementary school?" Many principals are excited. "If you have a vision, everybody has to be part of it," says Nancy Wright Bowlds, principal of Greenwood

NOVEMBER 1993

1 Sullivan High freshman Kati Faber, 15, is shot and killed across the street from the school during his lunch break, after quarreling with another student in a suspected gang dispute. The killing prompts Mayor Daley, Supt. Johnson and Police Supt. Matt Rodriguez to urge local school councils to adopt closed campuses and install metal detectors at all high schools.

10 Acting on an appeal filed by the School Finance Authority, a federal Appellate Court panel rules that Judge Kocoras did not have the authority to order schools to stay open. To head off another shutdown, Gov. Edgar immediately calls a meeting of legislative leaders.

15 School report card data are released showing that Chicago's scores on the state IGAP tests last spring rose. Of reading and math scores in the three grades tested—3rd, 6th and 8th—only 3rd grade reading scores fell.

4 Lawmakers recess again without crafting a school funding solution. . . . City Colleges announces the reopening of Washburne Trade School, which had shut down two months ago while the board negotiated the transfer of the school.

8 The Public Building Commission unveils a scaled-down plan for expansion of the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences; supporters of the school protest.

14 At a late Sunday session, legislators approve—by one vote—a two-year financial package for Chicago schools. The Finance Authority will sell more than \$400 million in bonds; schools will sacrifice \$32 million in state Chapter 1 funds; the board will borrow \$110 million from the teachers' pension fund.

21 Internal board audits found that millions of dollars in school funds, collected from pop machines and other fund-raising activities, have been misused or have disappeared altogether, according to a *Chicago Sun-Times* report.



Ten percent of the 660,000 square feet of space at Pershing Road is now vacant.

SERVICE CENTER

continued from page 1

The first results have come quickly, yet with little fanfare. In January, Supt. Argie Johnson, on the job since August, released a plan to bring about administrative restructuring that will make Chicago "the model of success for urban school districts by the year 2000." Based on the work of a broad-based steering committee led by FRAC Executive Director Janet Froescher, the plan—essentially a vision statement—views the current central office as "maintaining control of procedures, establishing compliance rules and regulations and ensuring conformity in schools. Now this role must be changed to one of balancing how to best provide service to schools while meeting various legal requirements. . . ."

The restructuring effort, to be underwritten by \$1.5 million from philanthropic foundations (principally, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation), is being led by the triumvirate of Johnson, Gillispie and board member Stephen Ballis, chair of the board operations committee. Below them sits the 30-person steering committee, composed of representatives from school reform groups, the business community, the mayor's office, the Legislature, the Chicago Teachers Union and the School Finance Authority.

"We keep adding people," says Pat Harvey, Johnson's executive assistant,

DECEMBER 1993

2 To ease overcrowding at Rogers Park schools, the board files eviction papers against a private, politically well-connected high school that had been leasing a board school building for 12 years. A judge eventually rules against the board.

8 Supt. Johnson pledges to reverse the increasing racial segregation of school faculties; earlier, a *CATALYST* analysis showed that, since principals have been allowed to hire their own teachers, the number of schools with segregated faculties has risen by some 36 percent. . . . Fifteen students are suspended from Urban Youth High School, an alternative school for former dropouts, for their part in a shooting in the Loop that sent shoppers and lunchgoers scurrying for cover. School officials later said some students would be allowed to return to school.

7 At a City Council Education Committee hearing, board Vice President Juan Cruz stirs a brief flurry over busing by suggesting the board's desegregation consent decree be modified to reduce busing and cut costs. However, Cruz fails to note that most of the \$76 million spent annually on busing pays for transporting special education students to special programs, not for busing for integration. . . . State Supt. of Education Robert Leininger resigns, citing frustration over inadequate state funding for schools.



Cruz

9 The year's marathon school crisis comes to a formal end when the School Finance Authority finally accepts the board's \$2.7 billion budget.

"the idea being, the more gray matter we get looking at this thing the better." Initially, the committee was light on local school council members and contained neither a subdistrict council chair nor an official from the Chicago Region PTA.

At press time, school officials and the restructuring committee were poised to hire CSC Index of Cambridge, Mass., a business consulting firm that is a leading proponent of "corporate re-

Consumer expectations have soared, say the authors, at the same time buyers experience greater access to product information.

"There are a set of activities that deliver a product to the customer," says CSC Vice President Albert Travis, "and what we look to do is revisit how to better deliver that service." Travis, who will lead CSC's involvement with the Chicago schools, says the firm has suc-

nuts-and-bolts direction will fall to a team composed of two Chicago school administrators, one with instructional expertise and the other on the finance side, plus a teacher and a principal, both released from their regular duties to serve on the project.

Froescher says the project will also rely on studies to see what's being done in other school systems, such as in Cincinnati, Ohio and Edmonton, Canada; and on focus groups to garner feedback, especially among local school councils. (For an Opinion essay on Edmonton, see *CATALYST*, September 1992.)

For years, there have been calls to "chop the top" in Chicago, and to a large extent that's been done. Since 1989, following the advent of school reform and several budget crises, the number of people budgeted at board headquarters and in subdistrict offices has been cut from 4,880 to 3,266, according to data from the Chicago Panel on School Policy. However, 617 of the initial 4,880 actually worked in schools, Hess says, pegging the real administrative downsizing at 1,000 posts, or 23 percent.

"But that's just downsizing," Hess points out. "That's not restructuring. At the central office you now have three people doing what four people used to do, so they're all demoralized, and the people out in the schools are frustrated because they can't get any response."

Yet the board has gotten rid of some Pershing Road departments, like exter-

"In Chicago, there's this vested interest in the bureaucracy on the part of the key players—the mayor, the board and the teachers union."

—Fenwick English, University of Kentucky professor

engineering." The longtime bestseller *Re-engineering the Corporation*, co-authored by former CSC Index Chair James Champy, makes the case that organizations must abandon assumptions about technology, people and group goals that no longer hold true.

For instance, the authors say that since the early 1980s, "the dominant force in the seller-customer relationship has shifted. Sellers no longer have the upper hand; customers do."

cessfully applied its theories to companies like Hallmark Cards and Amoco. Yet, he views his assignment with Chicago schools, the firm's first with a school system, as "the most important work I will probably ever do."

As lead consultant, CSC Index will hire additional, specialized consultants to offer advice on educational, technological and other issues. Area corporations are scheduled to loan executives to work on the project, slated to take two years. The

13 Eleven prominent school reform leaders protest plans by the corporate reform group Leadership for Quality Education to cut back on its advocacy work in favor of working with the school administration to bring about change. Eventually, LQE President Diana Nelson resigns in protest and is replaced by John Ayers of the Civic Committee, LQE's chief funder.



Nelson

20-21 Reacting to the decision to borrow money to keep schools open, Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's lower the bond ratings of both the Board of Education and the School Finance Authority. Moody's action lowers the board's bond rating to below investment grade, or "Ba." The lower ratings will result in higher interest rate costs for the board.

14 A report released by the National School Boards Association shows that Illinois public schools are the most segregated in the nation. . . . Mayor Daley expresses support for modifying the board's federal desegregation decree, on the grounds that busing for integration is wasted on a system that is 86 percent black and Hispanic. No action is taken.

16 Cook County Housing Court Judge Morton Zwick appoints an outside contractor to do long-neglected repair work at Caldwell Elementary. The Board of Education had been fined \$250 for building code violations in November 1993, after failing to complete the repairs.

17 Publishing heir Walter H. Annenberg pledges the biggest grant ever to public schools: \$500 million, 30 percent of which will go to the nation's largest districts, including Chicago.

22 Mayor Daley renews his pitch for a state income-tax increase to permanently solve the school funding crisis, with some of the money going to property-tax relief.

nal resources, and added others, notably the Office of Reform.

To Gillispie, Hess' view leaves out some key improvements made since Gillispie's arrival in March 1992. After the consulting firm of Booz Allen & Hamilton delivered a stern report on board finances several months after his arrival, says Gillispie, "We tried to focus on how services are provided to the schools." Schools now order supplies by computer, he reports, and the former 10-day delay in getting purchase orders processed has been eliminated. The board has streamlined payment procedures for vendors, making discounts possible. And some internal audit functions have been spun off to private companies to save money.

The new move to restructure has its doubters. "In Chicago, there's this vested interest in the bureaucracy on the part of the key players—the mayor, the board and the teachers union," says Fenwick English, a University of Kentucky professor and for four years an education reform consultant to the School Finance Authority. "They say, 'Pershing Road may be bad, but it's ours, and we control it.' The business community is intrigued with restructuring, but it's not like in Cincinnati, where business controls the town."

Cincinnati Schools Supt. J. Michael Brandt says that Chicago will face difficulties downsizing in a landscape so grounded in site-based decision making. "With site-based control, the call

Cutting the fat

The following shows the change in Chicago's central office, citywide and sub-district positions during the last five years.

	FY 89	FY94
Central Office	1,917	1,149
Citywide Administration	688	880
Citywide Services	256	1,088
Subdistrict Offices	2,020	149
GRAND TOTAL	4,881	3,266

Source: Chicago Panel on School Policy

from the field is for more resources, but with downsizing you can't respond, so they get frustrated at the schoolhouse," Brandt cautions. "If you have both things going on at the time same, you've set yourself up for failure."

Steering committee members, however, are hopeful. "Implementation is always the big question with reform, but, so far, everybody is saying the right thing here," says Donald Moore, executive director of the reform group Designs for Change. Moore is especially high on CSC Index: "The people at CSC are more in tune with what we're trying to do in Chicago than traditional educators, who still fall back on the old

top-down model."

"I'm in favor of restructuring if it speeds up the ability of people to get answers," says James Deanes, president of the Parent/Community Council. But Deanes fears a blood-lust about cutting bureaucrats. In several areas of central office—reform, curriculum and federally funded programs—Deanes says there are presently "not enough bodies to do the work." Moreover, he worries that further cuts will sacrifice African-American administrators, whom he argues should constitute "a proportionate share" of those who run the Chicago schools since the student population is 58 percent black. (Currently, between 50 percent and 60 percent of those in central office, citywide and subdistrict positions are black.)

Chicago restructuring participants are cautious about predicting how the project will turn out. Ballis wonders how many more central office positions can be cut, "seeing as we've already done such a huge reduction." Eventually, Hess thinks, "There could be fewer administrators, or there could be more, though I'd have a hard time swallowing more." Gillispie doesn't rule out the heightened possibility of privatizing more functions, "but I'm not walking into this predisposed to anything," he says.

But one thing is for sure, says Ballis: "In the past, all our decisions have been driven by economics. Now we're saying, 'Let's build an administration by what we need.' It's time." ■

JANUARY 1994

7 More than 100 Board of Education employees line up at Pershing Road to complain about shortchanged paychecks. One teacher received a \$1.29 paycheck for two weeks of work. . . . A five-year-old student at Merzl Elementary accidentally fires a semiautomatic handgun in his kindergarten class. No one is injured.

11 The Chicago Police Department reports recovering 62 weapons on or near school grounds this school year, compared to 94 weapons by the same time last year. Officials attribute the decrease to metal detectors and the hiring of more security guards by schools.

12 In his "State of the State" address, Gov. Edgar proposes creating at least 12 charter schools in Chicago and elsewhere in Illinois, to free schools from state mandates and bureaucratic red tape. A charter school law would later pass the House but has yet to go before the Senate.

5 The federal government threatens to cut off at least \$10.4 million in special education funds to Chicago public schools because of "deplorable" conditions in private schools that the system pays to serve handicapped children. The board and state enter into negotiations with the feds.

10 A nine-year-old student at Greene Elementary is charged with juvenile unlawful use of a weapon after he is found in school with an unloaded .25-caliber pistol.



Vaughn

22 Jacqueline B. Vaughn, president of the Chicago Teachers Union for a decade, dies of cancer.

What principals want

TONY GETSIC



Cozette Epps-Buckney
Jones Metro High School
Downtown

"The more paper we use and the more hands that pass that paper, the greater the chance of it getting lost. I'm not saying its incompetence, but when you have a system this size and five or six people are handling the same piece of paper, it's bound to happen."

To solve the system's paperwork woes, Epps-Buckney proposes a computerized database linking schools and central office.

"We have a computer system, but we need to use it to full capacity," she says. "The name of the game is information

superhighway."

Staffing should also be handled more quickly. "It takes too long," she says. "If you have a good, qualified person that you want to bring on board, it takes several weeks to do it."

Central office also needs to provide more support for new principals, who, since reform, have been entering the system in substantial numbers. (Epps-Buckney was a principal at Fuller and Robinson elementary schools before coming to Jones.)

"Our job is to support the one-on-one interaction that goes on between teachers and students. To do that, principals have to know about schools-within-schools, charter schools and open enrollment. They need to know how to market their schools, where to get grants, all kinds of things," Epps-Buckney says.

Ideally, new principals should be able to call central office for such information; and central office, she adds, "should be a vehicle to link new principals with a mentor—a retired principal—who can offer advice and assistance. New principals need an outsider who can look at the school's resources and advise on the best ways to use them."



JOHN BOOZ

Rochelle Riddick
Davis Developmental Center
Calumet Heights

"Last fall, central office held a two-day workshop for new principals. It was helpful, but it was not enough."

Riddick, herself a new principal, says she "would love to see them provide more support services that are hands-on. They are good at providing technical assistance, like the kind I get from the Department of Special Education and Early Childhood Education, but I would like a contact person that I know I can call who would steer me in the right direction if I had questions or problems."

Principals also need more time to gather data and statistics that central office requests.

"Often, I am asked for information and the return deadline is two or three

31 Since local school councils began choosing principals under reform, the number of black and Hispanic principals has grown to 61 percent; in 1988, it was 44 percent, according to board reports. As of January, 50 percent of principals are black, 39 percent are white, and 11 percent are Hispanic.

FEBRUARY 1994

1 President Bill Clinton's proposal to concentrate half of Chapter 1 funds on low-income communities gets voted down in a House subcommittee. The move would have helped cities like Chicago, which have high concentrations of poverty. Under the current formula, hundreds of high-poverty Chicago schools don't receive federal Chapter 1 money, while some much wealthier suburban schools do. (See story on page 28. For further explanation, see *CATALYST*, February 1993.)



Clinton



Reece

2 The teachers union's House of Delegates votes unanimously to elevate Vice President Thomas Reece to president, a post he will hold until May 20 union elections. George Schmidt, longtime critic of the union hierarchy, runs against him, deriding the latest contract.

4 Accounting firm Arthur Andersen releases a report showing that building contractors overcharged Chicago schools by over \$7 million in 1992. The findings later lead to the resignation of longtime administrator James Harney, head of the facilities department.

9 The revised, \$18 million plan to expand the Chicago High School for Agricultural Science gets the City Council go-ahead, over the objections of black aldermen who call the compromise plan racist.

days later," she says. "That's not enough time, when you have several requests and other things going on too."

Carlos Azcoitia
Spry Elementary School
Little Village



JOHN BOOZ

"Schools should be given more autonomy over discretionary monies like state and federal Chapter 1 funds."

More budget autonomy, says Azcoitia, would include giving schools the authority "to transfer money from one program to another directly at the school instead of going through an intermediary at central office." Principals could then, for instance, easily switch funds from a remediation program to an enrichment program, or from textbooks to supplies.

Schools should also be allowed to buy directly from vendors of their own choosing, instead of those supplied by

central office. "What's wrong with us going to Best Buy or Silo to get the best deals?" he says. "Central office's vendors tend to be a little high; schools could shop around and probably save some money."

As an experiment, he suggests giving a few schools a pot of money—say, \$30,000—to spend and manage themselves.

Central office should also speed up the process for bringing new staff on board at schools. "If we have a vacancy and we check and verify the person's credentials at the school and have a copy of his or her teaching certificate, we should be able to bring that person on board [immediately]."

To help them keep sight of the bottom line—students—central office personnel should be rotated periodically from their jobs at Pershing Road to positions at local schools, he adds. And "principals should be able to leave their schools and teach at other schools, so they never get stale either."

Karen Kerr
Bond Elementary School
Englewood

"One week I had to attend [central office] meetings that required teacher involvement, but it was the week of the Iowa tests. Also, sometimes I am required to attend meetings at central office that conflict with each other."



2008 NHOT

To prevent scheduling conflicts, central office must become more attuned to what is going on at schools and communicate better among its own departments, Kerr says.

Along these lines, she adds, training sessions at central office need to be rescheduled for earlier in the year. Training on preparing budgets and school improvement plans was given at the end of the second semester, she explains; and budget training was also given around student testing time.

Kerr acknowledges that cuts in the staff at Pershing Road have made it difficult to provide services. But, she adds, "One day I was put on hold for 15 minutes. I just needed a question answered. I understand people are busy, but 15 minutes is a bit much."

Debra Williams

FEBRUARY 1994

10 Board President D. Sharon Grant warns that "heads will roll" over the nearly year-long truancy of one of 19 neglected children in the "Keystone Case," who were taken from a two-bedroom apartment on the West Side. The youth was out of school the year the board fired all 153 truant officers; that year, truancy rose 14 percent. . . . The teachers union files suit against the board to recoup over \$2 million owed to members because of problems with the payroll system.



Grant

17 Barely six months after Supt. Johnson's selection as superintendent, Board President Grant publicly warns that Johnson might be on the way out unless speedy progress is made to improve schools.

14 Supt. Johnson unveils the first version of her Three-Tiered Model for School Improvement. Reformers later criticize the plan for sorting schools by test scores, and complain that the plan skirts the authority of local school councils. Eventually, the plan is revised to allow schools to rate themselves on a range of criteria for improvement.

16 The state Board of Education reports that the number of school districts on the financial watch list has risen to 145, up from 111 last year.

22 The U.S. Supreme Court declines to hear the appeal of former Morgan Park High Principal Walter Pilditch, who had claimed he was the victim of reverse discrimination by black local school council members who voted not to retain him as principal. A jury had ruled in Pilditch's favor, but an appeals court threw out that verdict. . . . Supt. Johnson unveils an analysis showing that 37 schools have had four years of declining math and reading scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.

New day dawning for computer system

by Michael Klonsky

In 1990, the Board of Education installed an addition to its computer system that would keep schools from padding their budgets. Called BRAC, for Budget Reconciliation and Control, the addition enforces board and union rules on staffing.

Before BRAC, says School Board member Stephen Ballis, "Principals were able to hold as many teachers as they wanted, regardless of staffing formulas. These included ghost positions, which should have been closed out."

But now that schools are testing the possibilities of reform, says Ballis, the board has come to see the down side of BRAC and the whole management information system to which it was attached. (The system contains data on everything from test scores and dropout rates to purchasing and budgets.)

The most celebrated cases involve Taft and Chicago Vocational high

schools, which are trying to create more hospitable learning environments for their children by creating schools-within-schools. When the School Board cut positions and changed the high school schedule at the last minute last fall, BRAC (the enforcer) wiped out months of work on schools-within-schools and set the whole program back a year; the system could not meet these schools' special scheduling needs.

"When I came here," says Taft Principal William Watts, "I thought this school system was about change. I thought Taft would be run like a single high school district, where they would give me my budget allotment and let me educate students. Instead, I found myself under the thumb of a bureaucracy that isn't about change." (In May, Watts accepted a job in the suburbs, which is where he worked before becoming principal of Taft in 1990.)

Recently, through the intercession of small-schools advocate Alexander Polikoff, head of Business and Professional People for the Public Interest,

Taft, Chicago Vocational and other like-minded schools learned how to manipulate the computer system to accommodate their programs. (Schools' schedulers were instructed to add an extra digit at the end of all course numbers within a given minischool; students assigned to that minischool then should be instructed to choose only courses ending in "their" digit.)

Despite this advice, Polikoff maintains that the computer system is "out of tune with a decentralized school system. The system is set up for control from the center, and it doesn't allow for change at the school level. Principals who know how to work around the system can do it. But for small schools to survive and flourish, radical changes need to occur."

Radical change?

The School Board is, indeed, contemplating radical change. At an hourlong press briefing on May 2, Linda Higgins, its new computer consultant, sketched a state-of-the-art system that would do everything from empowering principals and teachers to ensuring information-age learning for students. On hand to reinforce this vision were three well-regarded principals: Larry Thomas of Coles Elementary, Madeleine Maraldi of Washington Irving Elementary and John Mazurek of Casals Elementary. However, the trio never got to speak.

23 Offering no explanation, Supt. Johnson fires Deputy Supt. JoAnn Wooden Roberts, hired only four months earlier. . . . The board votes to adopt the Learning Outcomes Standards developed in conjunction with the teachers union.



Wooden Roberts

MARCH 1994

1 The Chicago Cluster Initiative, an attempt by city and government agencies to coordinate services, switches gears and decides to pursue the possibility of opening boarding schools for children in several of the city's more troubled neighborhoods. . . . By today's deadline, more than 1,100 Chicago employees with teaching certificates had applied for the second round of early retirements.

23 The reform organization Schools First files suit against the board to halt the impending removal of local school council members who failed to file financial disclosure statements; the suit says only 25 percent received notices that they had to file. The board backs down the next day.

25 A 13-year-old honor student, Crystal Merrit, is shot to death while walking to Anderson Community Academy. A 15-year-old student, said to be the intended target, was walking with Merrit and was wounded in the side. Two young men, one 19 years old and one 16, later were charged as adults with first-degree murder.

2 Gov. Edgar's budget message calls for a \$160 million increase for school funding in 1994-95, including a \$37 million increase for Chicago.

Computer crushes a school

Taft High School Principal Bill Watts spent most of last summer preparing his staff for schools-within-schools. His plan was to reorganize Taft into four minischools around different career goals.

Four days before school was to open, disaster struck. Watts was told that all high schools would go to 50-minute class periods and that he would lose 17 teaching positions.

With little time or know-how to translate his plan into language the School Board's computer would understand, Watts saw his school shoved back into the traditional organization. By the time things were straightened out, Taft's minischool teachers had been replaced by super-numeraries (veteran teachers who lost jobs at other schools). These replacements had little interest in or knowledge of Taft's restructuring effort.

"All the work we had done to reorganize our school had to be put on hold," said Watts. "The central office required that we completely re-enter all of our school information along lines compatible with the new board scheduling." On such short notice, this was impossible. Some teachers, demoralized, quit, and finally Watts himself resigned for a job in the suburbs.

Michael Klonsky



Jim Powell (left) and Frank Angone man the control station at Pershing Road's computer center.

Days earlier, several School Board members and the press had raised questions about Higgins' background (she had never worked for a school system before) and her no-bid contract (the board had paid her \$75,000 for the vision statement and was to pay another \$390,000 for a plan). When reporters again brought up these issues, board President D. Sharon Grant abruptly ended the press briefing and had Higgins escorted out by security guards.

Later, Maraldi told *CATALYST* about her frustration with the current system. "Information is so hard to get and so slow that I find myself constantly

coming to the board by car because it is faster than the computer."

Thomas, a first-year principal, notes, "We are using our state Chapter 1 funds to bring in [computer] programs like Writing to Write and Writing to Read. But our building is not equipped for the kind of computer growth we need."

While controversy swirls around the cost of Higgins' contracts, those sums pale in comparison to the potential costs of equipment, installation, software and service; the figure being bandied about is \$800 million over 10 years. Perhaps that is why Ameritech, UNISYS, Compulink, IBM and Apple,

MARCH 1994

14 Whitney Young Magnet, Bogan High, and Kenwood Academy take first, second and third place respectively in the state's Academic Decathlon. Whitney Young later places fifth nationwide. . . . Four Chicago teachers are among the 10 winners of this year's Golden Apple Awards for excellence in teaching.

16 Nine months past the legal deadline, Mayor Daley finally acts on the pending nominations for the School Board by rejecting all the contenders selected by the Nominating Commission; meanwhile, 2 of 15 board seats are vacant, and two members are serving on expired terms. Daley calls for a return to the days when board members were picked directly by the mayor.

13 In his weekly column in the *New York Times*, Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, accuses Chicago school reformers of ducking the issue of student achievement. While "the jury is still out on decentralization," he writes, reformers have failed to assess its impact on student learning and to address what's working and what's not.

15 Dawn Clark Netsch wins the Democratic nomination for governor. Central to Netsch's campaign is a plan to increase school funding and lower property taxes by raising the state income tax. Gov. Edgar wins the GOP nomination.



Netsch

23 Supt. Johnson finally wins praise from school reformers for a top-level appointment when she names Hefferan Elementary Principal Pat Harvey as special assistant. Reformers criticized earlier appointees as "old guard."

Inc. offered workers, without charge, to help Higgins with interviews of administrators and principals.

A number of potential funding sources are emerging. Chicago already has snared a \$15 million, five-year grant from the National Science Foundation to upgrade math and science education, which might pick up some technology costs. A bill pending in the Illinois Senate would provide matching grants for school information technology.

U.S. Education Sec. Richard W. Riley has made technology a primary emphasis. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which President Clinton signed in March, authorizes \$5 million to start an office of technology and underwrite state planning grants to promote the use of technology in education reform. The administration has also requested \$50 million in next year's budget to promote increased use of technology in schools.

But funding is only the most obvious of the questions raised by the board's proposed "21st century" overhaul and expansion of its computer system. Less obvious are those dealing with teaching and learning.

For example, what will be the impact on curriculum? "Computers are a tool, like textbooks," observes William Schubert, chairman of the curriculum department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "They can play a useful role in helping teachers and kids, or they can be used to turn teachers into clerks, delivering a packaged product." ■

The ills of a 20-year-old system

The following are among the problems of the Board of Education's current management information system (MIS), as identified by administrators and principals.

■ The system is 20 years old and wasn't designed to support decentralized decision making. Chief Financial Officer Charley Gillispie has been warning of "a complete collapse" for more than a year.

■ The pupil-to-computer ratio is 24 to 1, among the highest in the nation and much higher than the ratio in most suburban school districts. Linda Higgins, the board's computer consultant, advocates achieving a ratio of 6 to 1, or 3 to 1 within three to five years.

■ Only 10 percent of Chicago's schools have significant numbers of usable computers. Only 15 percent of teachers know how to use them; as a result, many teachers oppose computers out of fear of the unknown.

■ MIS' business management side is not aligned with its educational side, leaving educational concerns out of many budget decisions.

■ The system is inflexible and doesn't allow for restructuring at the school level. "Good ideas" cannot be implemented without significant changes in central office computers, and teachers cannot learn from each



JOHN BOOZ

Jim Powell refiles academic records, now housed in one small room. Before computerization, they took up floors of space.

other because there is no school-to-school networking.

■ The present system is inefficient and requires too much work on the part of principals, assistant principals and central office staff. Many activities that should be automated are still done manually, and the coordination of activities across departments and schools is nearly impossible. Principals currently spend 50 percent to 75 percent of their time on administration, largely as a result of cumbersome operations.

Michael Klonsky

23 The board votes unanimously to try to recover over \$300,000 paid for repairs on a building leased to Austin Developmental Center, a company owned by board President Grant's mother. At issue in the controversy is whether Grant was responsible for the property and exerted her influence to obtain the repairs, charges she denied. Board lawyers, however, later contend that any lawsuit seeking to recoup the \$300,000 would have little chance of success because of the board's obligations as the owner of the property.

APRIL
1994

8 The School Finance Authority names veteran FBI agent Kenneth K. Holt as inspector general, to weed out waste and financial corruption in the school system; the post was created by the General Assembly as part of the school borrowing package.



Harvey

23 The U.S. House of Representatives approves "Goals 2000," which sets goals and standards for school and student performance. Goals set out in the legislation include a high school graduation rate of 90 percent, competency in major subjects by certain grades in school and drug- and violence-free education. The bill passed the Senate on February 9.

21 The Illinois House approves a plan to create up to 45 non-profit, non-sectarian charter schools in Illinois, including 15 in Chicago.

Reviews

Philly pierces bureaucracy to create small schools

by Michael Klonsky

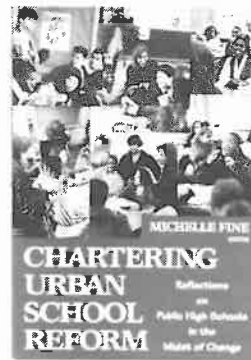
If there is a major American city where reform seems to be changing high school education, it's Philadelphia. In most cities, including Chicago, high schools are changing more slowly than elementary and middle schools are. The big, comprehensive high school, where individuals fade into a faceless mass, still rules the roost. Teachers see more than 100 different students a day, and education typically is "delivered" without any real knowledge of those students or their families or their out-of-school lives.

But in the City of Brotherly Love, a group of educators with a love for students and an appetite for change have begun to create high schools where stu-

dents and teachers gather in small, intimate settings and stay together as a community for four years. These educators have given us a glimpse at what restructured high schools in our city might look like when teachers, community people, parents and reformers get together to build better schools. A new book by the architects of Philadelphia's high school reform tells their story.

In 1988, a group of educators, community activists and business people created the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative to reinvent Philadelphia's 22 neighborhood high schools. And boy, did they need reinventing!

"Less than half of the typical 9th-grade class ever made it to 10th grade, in many schools more than 25 percent of incoming 9th-graders were 16 or older, and 30 percent of them had been



CHARTERING URBAN SCHOOL REFORM: Reflections on Public High Schools in the Midst of Change

edited by Michelle Fine
New York: Teachers College Press, 1994. 217 pages.

APRIL
1994

27 Computer consultant Linda Higgins presents to the School Board her \$75,000 "vision" to revamp the Chicago Public Schools' computer system. Some board members balk at paying her another \$390,000 to finish the planning.

MAY
1994

4 James Harney, the former head of school facilities, retains Ald. Patrick O'Connor as his attorney—as the Cook County State's Attorney investigates whether the board picked up the tab for work on Harney's home. . . . School activists and several black elected officials blast Mayor Daley at a City Council meeting for his support of a bill that would cut the School Board from 15 to seven people.



Koldyke

28 Following a study by management consultants, School Finance Authority Chairman Martin Koldyke says that school repairs and maintenance are so badly managed that the system should hire an outsider to oversee them.

5 Gov. Edgar unveils his plan to increase education funding: New revenues and riverboat gambling, matched by local funds, would generate \$2 billion for elementary, secondary and higher education over the next five years, he says.

10 The School Board announces it will receive a \$15 million, five-year National Science Foundation grant to overhaul math and science curricula so that all 8th-graders take algebra and all high school students take at least three years each of math and science.

labeled as needing special education," writes Michelle Fine, the founding director of the Collaborative and the editor of *Chartering Urban School Reform*. Fine was an associate professor of psychology in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania when the Collaborative was born; now she teaches at City University of New York.

"Parents were doing what they could to get their kids into private or parochial schools, with the result that about one-third of all school-aged children were not attending public schools," Fine continues.

The challenge was daunting: reinvigorating teachers who had been beaten down by years in the system, re-engaging students who had been left to drift, organizing parents for the cause.

"Teachers were moved from school to school. They had no control over their work and were the victims of arbitrary policies that had little to do with educational issues," Fine said in a recent interview. "We had to organize parents and community members," she continued, "to get the leverage we needed. School reform has got to be rooted inside and outside the school to produce the pressure for change."

The idea was relatively simple: break high schools into smaller learning communities where students and teachers could establish closer ties among themselves and with each other.

Each community, called a charter, would have its own distinct character,

designed by teachers with participation from parents, students and community members. Each would enroll 200 to 400 students—of mixed achievement levels—and prepare them for college or employment. With a common planning period, teachers would work continually to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment.

"Simply stated," says Fine, "our collective work was radical, systemic reform—not one more 'project.'"

In clear, relatively jargon-free prose, *Chartering Urban School Reform* documents this bold attempt to change public schooling; the book is essential reading for anyone interested in school restructuring.

Fine sees the Philadelphia model as perhaps the public school system's last hope for staving off privatization or a voucher system.

Aside from Fine's own contributions, *Chartering Urban School Reform* contains a dozen other pieces written by high school teachers, parents, university faculty, evaluators and activists. Their experiences are summed up in both personal and theoretical ways. For example:

■ Nancy Zane, an organizer for the Collaborative, tells how discipline problems ease as schools become smaller and more intimate learning communities and as rule-making becomes more democratic. A collaborative or social approach to discipline is posed as a viable alternative to such now-trendy approaches as "assertive discipline."

■ Bob Fecho, an English teacher, shows how a student's study of profanity among her peers leads to an understanding of the relationship between language and power.

■ In "Girl Talk," Diane Waff, a teacher/researcher in a charter for mildly disabled students, shows how important "listening to student voices" is in helping teachers re-examine the attitudes and prejudices they bring into the classroom.

No 'alternative schools'

Michelle Fine is certainly the right person to pull this story together. She is from a rare breed of academics who can get beyond the confines of the university and put knowledge and theoretical skills to work in the community. Fine, along with Jan Somerville, then the associate provost at Temple University, founded the Collaborative with the help of a large (\$16.5 million over six years) grant from Philadelphia-based Pew Charitable Trusts.

"We were committed to transform *with*, not *despite* and not *around*, existing public schools," says Fine. "We would not set up alternatives, or exempt a few schools with waivers from district-union processes. We were committed to systemic change affecting all."

This commitment made for some tough struggles with the school sys-

See **REVIEWS** page 28

11 Jason Jackson, 15, is shot and killed, and two other teens seriously wounded, in a drive-by shooting across the street from Lindblom High. . . . The Illinois House unanimously adopts Gov. Edgar's plan to boost education funding without a tax increase. Under the plan, one-third of new revenues would be earmarked for education beginning in fiscal year 1995, until the state's share of school funding reaches 50 percent instead of the current one-third.

12 More than a year after eliminating all 153 truant officers, the board takes six parents of chronic truants to court under a new program (see *CATALYST*, May 1994). A judge orders two parents to undergo family counseling, gives continuance dates for three other parents who fail to show and issues an arrest warrant for the sixth, who had repeatedly failed to cooperate with school officials.

12 School Board officials concede their new \$3.7 million automated payroll system—bought under a no-bid contract—does not protect the district from employee cheating.

19 Appealing the dismissal of its lawsuit against the state's school funding system, the Committee for Educational Rights presents oral arguments to the Illinois Appellate Court. The suit, brought by a coalition of school districts, argues that the funding system is unconstitutional because it relies primarily on local property taxes, creating wide funding disparities between poor and wealthy districts.

19 The *Chicago Sun-Times* reports that board President Grant is under investigation by the FBI for allegedly agreeing to steer a \$30 million health care contract for Blue Cross-Blue Shield through a School Board vote last November, in exchange for promises that Blue Cross would later do business with her own firm. The process of awarding health care contracts has long been an issue; in 1992, an appellate court ruled that the board could have saved up to \$97 million by asking for bids on a three-year, \$484 million contract it signed with Blue Cross in 1990.

Columbus takes conservative approach to change

by R. Craig Sautter

When a principal receives a petition from 170 students, it usually means trouble is brewing. But the petition that Joseph W. Edmonds, principal of Christopher Columbus Elementary, held in his hand both pleased and troubled him.

Almost all of his 5th- and 6th-graders were pleading to stay for a couple more years in the old red-brick school in the Ukrainian Village neighborhood on the Near Northwest Side. They liked their school so much that they wanted Edmonds and the local school council (LSC) to create 7th- and 8th-grade classes so they wouldn't have to leave. That made Edmonds feel good. Among other things, the petitioners didn't want to have to try to fit into a bigger school in some other neighborhood or to deal with gangs along the way. That troubled the veteran principal.

"Columbus is like a family," says Blanca Fonseca, a community member on the LSC. That's a theme echoed often at the school. "Everyone from the parents to the students to the teachers feel at home here. That's why the children want to stay. They really like their school. Everyone cares about them here. Plus they are afraid of the gangs

on the way to other schools. There are no gangs at Columbus."

Edmonds knew there was nothing he could do to help the students. "There is simply no room. We have to explain to them," he told the LSC at its monthly 8 a.m. meeting.

The incident is an instructive one, for it confirms that Columbus students sincerely like their school. It is "their school," and it "cares" for them and "protects" them. Thus, Columbus has achieved the sixth National Education Goal, providing children with a safe, drug-free environment where real learning can take place.

As a small school—just 380 students and 21 faculty members—Columbus probably commanded considerable allegiance before school reform came along. But increased participation by

parents and community members has broadened and deepened that loyalty.

Efforts mirror research

Columbus exhibits many features of what researchers call "effective schools." In addition to its orderly environment and small size, it boasts high student engagement in learning (time on task), a skilled, veteran teaching staff, and a strong, hard-working principal. Edmonds has been the school's principal since October 1972—he was appointed on Columbus Day—and his contract has been twice renewed by LSCs.

While many in Chicago are itching for radical changes at schools, Columbus is proceeding slowly, deliber-



Parakeets, mice, shells, fossils and couches (for curling up with a good book) are staples in Andrew Halicki's class.

R. Craig Sautter teaches philosophy, politics, literature and creative writing at DePaul University's School for New Learning. He co-authored *Smart Kids, Smart Schools* (Simon & Schuster, 1991) with Edward B. Fiske and Sally Reed.

COLUMBUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ately and relatively conservatively. The school conveys a sense of seriousness and respect for learning, rather than a buzz of hands-on excitement.

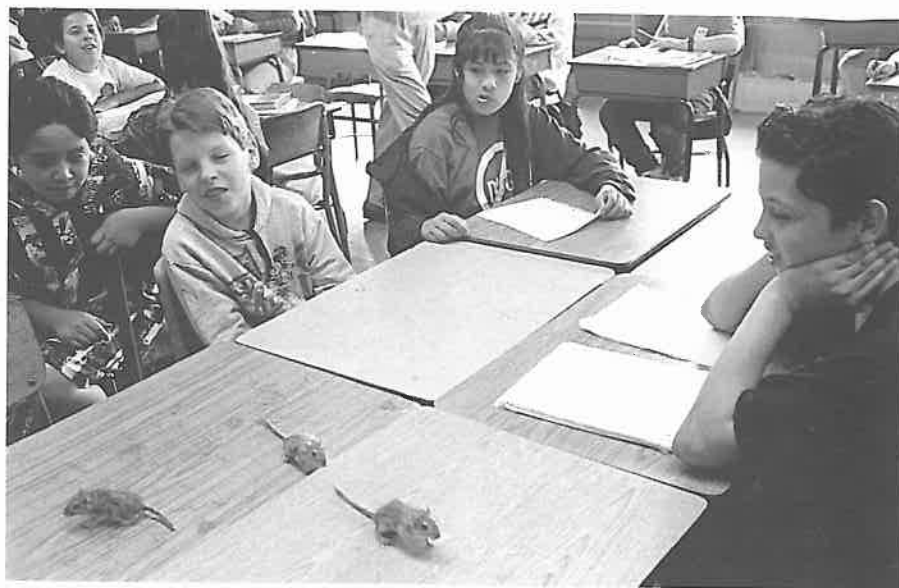
So far, the strategy is paying off. Columbus is one Chicago elementary school that is making progress, as measured by the state IGAP tests. Each of the past three years, Columbus has posted gains in both reading and math, with average reading scores up 10 points since 1990 (to 184) and math scores up 38 points (to 190). (Citywide, the reading average was down 21 points while the math average was up seven points.)

Academic reform at Columbus has refocused the faculty on the 3 Rs, with a strong bilingual component. About 80 percent of Columbus students are Hispanic, and bilingual Spanish/English classes are conducted at every grade level. Columbus also employs an Arabic bilingual teacher. And several other teachers and assistants who speak Polish and Ukrainian work with students in small groups outside the regular classroom.

Primary-grade focus

"The first LSC and school improvement plan put the stress on reading and writing at the primary level," Edmonds relates. "Now we direct the majority of our discretionary monies toward that as policy, so when we started a summer school we made sure that the primary student was emphasized. When we started an extended-day program using federal [Chapter 1] money, we focused on the primary kids. Overall, we figured we needed to identify problems and needs early so children wouldn't get so far behind at 5th and 6th grades. This is still our focus, not that we neglect the intermediate grades and older children."

The new focus begins each morning when the whole school reads from 9 to 10:30 a.m. "This is primarily reading instruction," Edmonds points out. "Some teachers use this time for DEAR—Drop Everything And Read. But for most students, this hour-and-a-half each morning is predominantly instruction in reading and writing. This is probably one reason test scores went up. We



TONY GETSIC

Mice scurry about during a break. Students take turns petting and caring for the animals.

are more focused on these fundamentals. And everyone is working on them."

Another reason Edmonds cites for reading improvement is the school's Reading Recovery program. (See sidebar.)

Teaching styles vary

Columbus has not radically overhauled its curriculum, nor does it offer a particularly progressive educational experience for most students. In fact, to reformers pressing pedagogical innovation, teaching methods in some classrooms may seem as old-fashioned as the aging school building that was erected in 1912 as an annex to the original building constructed in 1887.

Educational philosophies at Columbus vary from classroom to classroom. While some younger teachers take a whole language approach to reading and writing and employ project-based learning, others are just as committed to phonics and sight-word drills.

Columbus teachers agree that Edmonds is "pretty good" about letting teachers use the approaches they feel work best. For example, Andrew Halicki teaches Ukrainian, Spanish and Polish 5th- and 6th-graders in English and

their native languages. For the most part, he is far from a traditionalist.

"My main emphasis is spelling," he says, "because once you know the word, you can read it and write it. But besides that, I try to be innovative. We do lots of project learning and enter a lot of contests for things like posters and speeches and debates. Whatever I can find. Some of the kids recently won a VCR for the school with their speaking skills."

Halicki's classroom is exotic, filled with display cases of fossils, shells, fox and mink skins and sponges. Plants and cuttings grow by the large windows. Parakeets chatter in their cage. He brought furniture from his house—couches to read on, or for kids who are sick but with no one at home to look after them, and a TV set and stereo so kids can work to music. "We have a good time," says the 18-year teaching veteran, who has spent his last four years at Columbus.

"Learning goes on here, and there are incentives," he notes. "But the kids learn whether they like it or not. First I try the sweet approach. If that doesn't work, I go to the tough approach. Most of the kids try very hard and are doing very well. The principal is pretty open, so I run my class the way I want to. The kids enjoy it."

In contrast, Valerie Zadura, one of

the school's 2nd-grade teachers, is much more traditional. She speaks English, Ukrainian and Polish, and has been at Columbus for 21 years, teaching classes averaging more than 30 students. She steadfastly believes in a strong phonics approach.

"The first month of school I concentrate strictly on phonics," she explains. "The students usually haven't gotten phonics yet when they come to my class. [The 1st grade takes a whole language approach.] Then we use the Ginn basal reader. I divide the class into three reading levels and work with the slower readers on sight-word flash cards. But the top readers go through the text quickly and then do more reading in literature, while I work with the others on basics. I am very heavy on reading, spelling and math, so there is very little time for science or social science. Most of the kids are cooperative, do their homework and are excited about things. These kids are wonderful."

Coaxing innovation

Edmonds confirms that Zadura is a good teacher, even if to some her methods are out of style these days. But Edmonds realizes curricular change is advantageous to the students and essential for the school. "We have a conservative element at Columbus that is hesitant about change," he admits. "One of my jobs is to work with those who are willing to change and move forward toward a consensus. This year, several teachers used [federal] Eisenhower grant money to attend workshops on math, cooperative learning and portfolios and are starting to introduce those to other teachers in the school."

But change is tricky, Edmonds notes. "I don't think you can just force it on people. That is counterproductive. We have to start with a core and let the others come around by seeing the new approaches working in action."

Edmonds plans to press his LSC for more money for staff training. The PPAC has suggested changing the school starting time to allow for more training. "Maybe next year we can do that so teachers can investigate these

ideas and find the pros and cons," Edmonds hopes. "Granted, our reading scores went up, but they can go down just as fast."

Pull-outs dropped

About 92 percent of Columbus' students qualify for the free lunch program, so reform also brought the school \$230,000 in state Chapter 1 funds, used primarily to hire additional staff. "Now, every classroom has the services of a full-time aide plus a teacher. That has been a big help," Edmonds concludes. "It lets us give each kid more attention."

Columbus is proud of its federally funded computer lab, which it had prior to reform, and its new extended-day and summer school programs. Eight teachers participate in the after-school reading and math program,

which is conducted for an hour-and-a-half two days a week. Each teacher works with about nine students. Extended school was started because primary teachers didn't like pulling children out of their regular classes for special help; they found the practice distracting to the class as a whole, and the related turmoil meant less continuity and time-on-task for kids.

Since reform, parent participation also has increased, yielding more money for the school through bake sales and the like and more volunteer hours in the classroom.

"Parents and community really support this school," agrees Karen Kreinik, who "co-teaches" 1st grade and Reading Recovery. "On report card pickup day and week, almost every parent shows up and talks to me about their child."

The LSC also draws good participation. But Edmonds found working with

Teacher learns from Reading Recovery, too

The Reading Recovery room at Christopher Columbus Elementary School, tucked away in a converted janitor's closet, is reputedly the smallest in the city. But despite its size, it has proven effective in jump-starting 1st-graders who have few, if any, reading skills.

"In Chicago, the children who successfully complete this program end up in the top reading groups," says Karen Kreinik, who, along with Assistant Principal Cathleen Kahn, are the school's Reading Recovery teachers. "Any kid who goes through Reading Recovery ends up eager to read. I've never seen a kid who completed the program who wasn't eager to read."

The program provides daily, half-hour, fast-paced, one-on-one tutoring for youngsters who score in the bottom quartile of their class and are at risk of becoming non-readers. What distinguishes the program is its sophisticated, yearlong teaching training, which equips teachers to

discern children's particular reading problems and respond in a way that guides the children toward solving the problems for themselves.

Thus, while Reading Recovery relies on a specific set of activities, it provides truly individualized instruction.

"I know so much more about reading than I did before," says Kreinik. "I now know how to attack the problems and which [reading] strategies the child needs to get under control to learn to read."

At Columbus, there are only eight students in Reading Recovery at any given time. They exit the program when they attain the reading average for their class; as a result, about 18 to 24 children participate each year.

Columbus adopted the program in 1991 because it fit its school improvement plan, which called for a new emphasis on primary grades. In the first three-year phase of Reading Recovery, the board paid half the costs, Columbus the other half.

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the first LSC “a little rough.” He acknowledges, “I was a little sour about reform at first, to tell you the truth, being a member of the Principal’s Association, seeing what happened to a lot of my friends and losing my tenure. We didn’t appreciate that and still don’t. The issue is still in the courts. But as far as getting people more involved in the school, reform did that.”

Committed principal

Edmonds receives good support from most teachers and the current LSC. “This is one of the best public schools because of our principal,” insists community representative Fonseca. “He doesn’t just sit in his office. He is everywhere. If the crossing lady is sick, he will be outside helping the children. If a child is sick and needs to be taken home, he will do it. Most of all, he real-

ly knows how to talk to the kids. And he respects our culture too. He keeps in touch with the parents. He can deal with any problem.”

LSC President Martha Ocasio agrees and adds, “Plus, the teachers will take the extra step. They are real nice.”

“The second LSC has been smoother,” Edmonds says. “I like lump-sum budgeting, involving the council and having the council sign off. . . . When the community comes in and everyone participates, there is more of a commitment to follow through.”

“I used to dread the annual budget meeting before reform,” Edmonds confesses. “I had to present material I didn’t understand, and they didn’t understand. But now everyone has input on the budget. So it expands everyone’s understanding, including my own. I’m a better principal for it. Of course, sometimes we have to reinvent the wheel, and I miss the help we used

to get from the district coordinators.”

In the end, Columbus has succeeded in creating some of the important elements promoted by Effective School research—a positive school environment, shared goals and high expectations, meaningful parent and community involvement, a strong principal and quality teachers. In addition, although an overcrowded and aged school, Columbus is a small school—and more and more, research indicates that small schools and caring environments translate into better learning for kids.

The fact that its students are so desperately loyal to the school, and that its principal and teachers are popular with parents, count not a little in providing the supportive infrastructure for effective school learning. And even though Columbus may be a slow explorer of change, it has shown evidence that the land of better student achievement is already in sight. ■

Liz Bakall, Reading Recovery program evaluator in the Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning, praises the Reading Recovery staff at Columbus. “That school has two very well-trained teachers,” she confirms. “And Columbus has a very involved, dynamite principal, who not only selects programs, but learns and understands them. When Mr. Edmonds selected Reading Recovery, he didn’t just jump on the bandwagon, he investigated it. . . . Mr. Edmonds is one of the most well-informed people about the teaching of reading and the language arts in the city.”

“In schools where Reading Recovery has the support of the principal and the primary-grade staff, the program is flourishing, flourishing,” Bakall adds. “Kids are achieving the ability to read so they are moved out of the program in an average of 14 to 16 weeks.”

“One of the most important facts about Reading Recovery is that children learn to appreciate reading,” she adds. “They feel very good about them-

selves as a result. And as they move on, they are maintaining their level of competence with their grade-level peers.”

Carolyn Farrar, manager of intervention and improvement services at the Illinois State Board of Education, says that regular reading instruction stands to benefit, too, from the increased knowledge of Reading Recovery teachers.

“Reading Recovery works,” says Edmonds. “However, this is our last year of the first three-year phase. Next year, we will have to assume all costs of the Reading Recovery teacher as well as supplies and transportation costs, about \$43,000 total. We will use our [federal] Chapter 1 funds to do it. It would be a shame to drop it after making so much progress.”

A 1992 evaluation by the state board of 4,960 students across the state who participated in Reading Recovery during 1988-92 found that the majority of students made significant gains on standardized tests given at the end of



the 1st grade, and only a few students still qualified for extra remedial instruction. However, former Reading Recovery students still had average test scores that were lower than those of non-program students.

R. Craig Sautter

Elsewhere

NEW YORK CITY

Tougher to graduate. Beginning in the fall of 1994, all 9th-grade students in New York City schools will be required to take three courses of academic mathematics and three courses of academic science in order to graduate, according to the May 11 issue of *Education Week*.

Non-academic math and science courses, often taken by students in the non-college prep track, will be eliminated. The new requirements are believed to be the most rigorous ever imposed by an urban school district.

"The easy way out is the road to nowhere," Schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines said in announcing the move. About 300,000 students will be affected by the change.

To prepare teachers to teach the higher-level courses, the school system will offer staff development courses this summer. Students' schedules may be changed to include seven or eight periods of math and science per week, rather than five.

Schools takeover. Citing a need for "drastic action" in the face of long-standing educational failure, Schools Chancellor Cortines says his office will take over six of the city's elementary and junior high schools, according to the April 29 issue of the *New York Times*.

Cortines also plans to ask the state Legislature to give him clear authority to intervene in failing schools. Under the law that decentralized New York City schools in 1970 (creating 32 local districts, each with its own superintendent), the chancellor can intervene in schools only in cases of criminal corruption.

"Why doesn't that authority to act or exert leverage extend to educational corruption?" Cortines said.

Cortines called for a "collaborative takeover," in which his staff would work with the schools and local superinten-

dents to improve education. The superintendents have agreed to remove four of the six principals before next fall, according to the *Times*.

The specifics of the takeover would vary from school to school. But educators from Cortines' office will be assigned to spend several days a week in each of the schools, helping to retrain teachers, review curricula and improve parent involvement.

Several of the seven members of the Board of Education applauded Cortines' action. "If a chancellor can't step in to seek improvement, then we've got a system that's out of control," said Esmeralda Simmons, an appointee of former mayor David Dinkins.

Cortines also asked local superintendents to intervene in 14 other failing schools; another 20 schools have been asked to take remedial action on their own and "will be thoroughly assessed in the fall," Cortines said.

Cortines' action comes after months of visits by senior aides, along with Cortines himself, to 100 of the city's 1,100 schools, singled out because of low achievement.

In Chicago, Supt. Argie Johnson, previously deputy chancellor in New York, proposed a similar approach in her Three-Tiered Model for School Improvement. But she backed off after reformers criticized the plan for relying too much on test scores and usurping local school councils' authority.

MICHIGAN/NEW YORK

Fighting burnout. Plans that will allow teachers to defer part of their salaries to pay for sabbaticals will be put in place next fall in the Muskegon County, Mich. and Rochester, N.Y. schools.

The plans, modeled after Canadian education policies that took hold in the 1970s, have been touted by union lead-

ers, district officials and others as a way to reduce teacher "burnout" and cut costs, according to the May/June 1994 issue of *Teacher* magazine.

Many U.S. districts offer paid sabbaticals, but limit the number of participants because of the costs. In Chicago, sabbaticals are unpaid.

Under the deferred-salary plan, teachers will work for 80 percent of their salaries for four years and then take a sabbatical in the fifth year, also at 80 percent of salary.

Districts are expected to reap savings by replacing teachers on sabbatical with teachers who rank lower on the salary schedule.

MICHIGAN

Chartered home schools. The first school to open under Michigan's new charter school program will be a home-schooling academy focused on "back to basics" and morals instruction, according to the May 11 issue of *Education Week*.

Under the charter, approved by the Berlin/Orange Township School Board, teachers and a handful of administrators will be housed at a building in Ionia County and communicate with students by computer; pupils will be enrolled from across the state. The academy will receive about \$5,500 per pupil in state aid, which organizers say will pay for personnel, computers for every home-schooling student and computer software, modems and printers.

Officials of the Michigan Education Association criticized the charter. "A certain type of morality and values will be sanctioned with tax dollars," said spokeswoman Kim Brennen Root. The MEA opposed the charter law itself.

A proposed charter school law for Illinois would prohibit home-based charters. The law has passed the House but has yet to go before the Senate.

Lorraine Forte

Schools with segregated faculties face hiring restrictions

by Anastasia Benshoff

Almost 400 schools would face restrictions in the hiring of new teachers, under an administration proposal to enforce the faculty integration requirements in the School Board's desegregation consent decree.

The 1980 decree with the U.S. Department of Justice requires that the percentage of white and non-white faculty members at each school reflect city-wide percentages, plus or minus 15 percentage points—and should eventually be within 10 points. Currently, non-whites make up 56 percent of the city's teaching force; thus, the faculty at each school should be 46 percent to 66 percent minority.

Since the School Reform Act gave principals the power to select new teachers, faculties have become increasingly segregated. Between 1987 and 1992, the number of schools violating the consent decree rose from 216 to 336, according to a *CATALYST* analysis, published in December 1993. In April, the School Board released figures showing that by 1994 the number of schools out of compliance had grown to 392.

Under the administration's proposal, these schools could fill vacancies only with teachers whose race would bring the schools closer to compliance with integration requirements.

The administration also has proposed tightening procedures for schools to apply for waivers from faculty integration requirements; waivers can be granted when a program requires certain skills from a teacher, and the principal can show that the teacher in question is uniquely qualified. An internal review found that the application process has

not been uniform; the administration is recommending standard criteria and uniform application procedures.

Other recommendations are:

- Prohibiting teacher transfers that would put either the "sending" or "receiving" school out of compliance. Previously, only the impact on the receiving school was considered.

- Continuing to exclude bilingual and special education teachers from faculty integration requirements. One suggestion is to treat each group as a separate pool. Schools with special education teachers would have to work toward a racial mix among those teachers that reflects the racial mix among special education teachers citywide. The same approach would be used with bilingual teachers.

Evangeline Levison, director of affirmative action, said it was not until 1991, when the board conducted a personnel study, that it found out how many schools had fallen out of compliance with the decree. That year, then-Supt. Ted Kimbrough directed the office to draw up guidelines to bring schools into compliance slowly, she says.

"Under reform, [the board] can't tell [schools] who to hire and fire. We're not going to be able to make any major wholesale moves to put schools into compliance," says Levison.

Board quietly expands student transfer program

The Board of Education has quietly expanded its student transfer program in an 11th-hour bid to meet a state deadline for beginning open enrollment this fall.

The 1988 School Reform Act requires the board to develop an open-enrollment policy whereby students can attend any school in the city that has space available and does not have special admission requirements. Initially, the board was to begin phasing in the policy

in the 1991-92 school year.

Subsequently, legislators changed the deadline to 1994-95 to give schools more time to improve their programs and become competitive.

Despite having had two years to formulate an open-enrollment plan, the board did not begin work until earlier this year. And in April, the board's desegregation committee rejected a plan developed by the board's Equal Educational Opportunity Office, saying it did not go far enough in opening the city's schools.

Instead, the board approved an expanded permissive transfer policy. Until now, students could apply for transfer to another school within their subdistrict. Under the new plan, students can apply for admission to schools within a five-mile radius. Transportation will be provided to students who receive free or reduced-priced lunch. High school students can apply for transfer citywide but are not eligible for transportation.

Looking to the next phase, desegregation committee members say they are examining ways to make schools more competitive by having each emphasize a certain curriculum. Other options include creating specialized schools-within-schools. Desegregation Committee Chair Charles E. Curtis Jr. pledged to hold public hearings before proceeding. He said he wants a preliminary plan for 1995-96 written by July.

Although the board's first phase is not as dramatic as some reformers had wanted, Zarina O'Hagin, director of the Lawyers' School Reform Advisory Project, says the board is complying with the law. "The law says they can phase in [open enrollment], so it's certainly legal," she concludes. "They just have to keep expanding options."

However, the board has done little to help parents take advantage of the new policy. Parents were only notified through a letter sent home by principals and were given only a month to enroll their children in another school.

Anastasia Benshoff

Congress reducing 'pull-outs,' dropping tests for Chapter 1 program

All Chicago schools receiving federal Chapter 1 funds could use that money for schoolwide projects, instead of just for so-called pull-out programs, under legislation now advancing in Congress.

That means a school's lowest-achieving children would no longer have to be taught separately from their peers, and computers and other equipment purchased with federal Chapter 1 dollars could be used by all students instead of just the low-achievers.

Further, the legislation would elimi-

nate the requirement that Chapter 1 serve only children who score poorly on standardized tests.

"The educationally disadvantaged approach is a thing of history," says Bob Schireman, an education advisor to Sen. Paul Simon, who is a member of the Senate's education subcommittee.

Educators have widely blamed the testing requirements for forcing teachers to focus instruction on lower-level skills. And with no testing requirement, schools would no longer lose Chapter 1 funds if scores rise.

Principal Maria Diaz Ortiz of Nobel Elementary in Humboldt Park called the likely changes "fabulous." As test scores at Nobel have risen, the school has suffered a steady decline in federal Chapter 1, from \$800,000 in 1989 to \$250,000 in 1993.

The testing requirement also has barred children in bilingual education from federal Chapter 1 programs, since language barriers often keep them from taking standardized tests. "We could offer the same service to students in the bilingual program—augmented staffing, bilingual assistants and materials for everyone, not just the children in Chapter 1," Ortiz says.

On May 17, the Senate subcommittee approved the proposed legislation. Federal Chapter 1, the federal government's largest education program, distributes \$6 billion annually to public and private schools with low-income children. This school year, Chicago received \$168 million.

To reduce "pull-out" programs, the legislation lowers the threshold for schoolwide use of Chapter 1. Currently,

Chicago favors beginning teachers

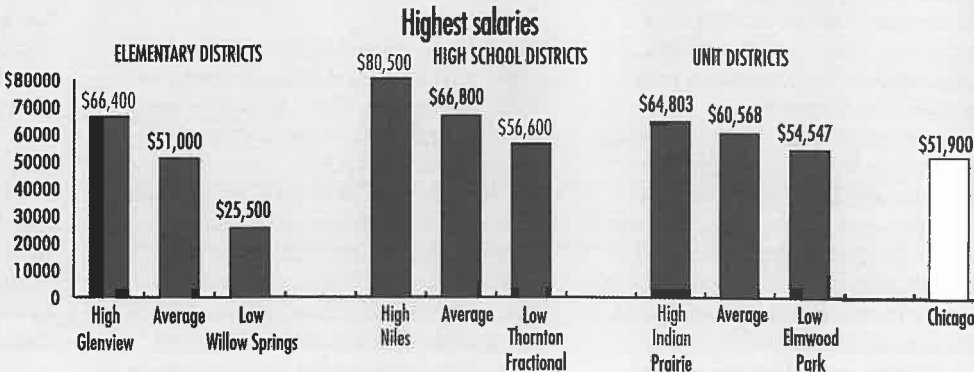
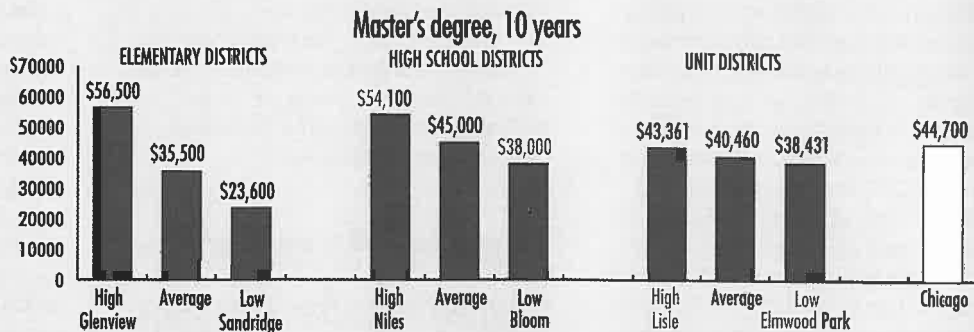
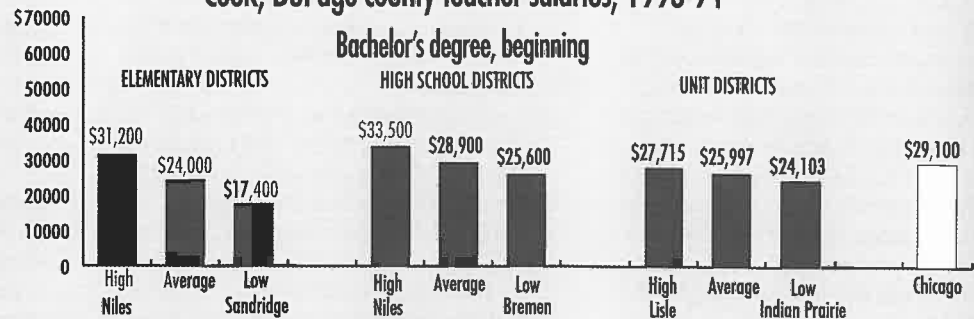
Chicago's pay scale for teachers is more generous to less experienced teachers than it is to veterans, compared to other districts in Cook and DuPage counties. Only 24 of the some 180 districts in these two counties pay newcomers more, according to data in the state's *Illinois Teacher Salary Study, 1993-94*.

Further, Chicago teachers advance through the salary schedule at a much faster rate, hitting the maximum in just 11 years. Only one other district in Cook and DuPage requires fewer years to top out; the average is 19 years. However, Chicago's top is well below average, compared to high school and other unit districts, and only slightly above average for elementary districts.

The salary scales don't tell the whole compensation story, though. In Chicago, teachers' take-home pay is 8 percent higher than scale because the School Board pays most of the teachers' share of pension contributions; about 30 percent of Cook and DuPage districts pick up a portion of their employees' contributions.

Linda Lenz, Rosland Briggs

Cook, DuPage county teacher salaries, 1993-94



75 percent of a school's enrollment must come from low-income families; under the Senate subcommittee's proposal, the threshold would be 30 percent—a number that encompasses all Chicago schools that receive federal Chapter 1.

The legislation faces several more hurdles—the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Relations, the full Senate, then a conference committee where differences with a bill already passed by the House of Representatives will be ironed out. (Language in the House bill and in the Senate subcommittee bill move Chapter 1 in similar directions. The House calls for a schoolwide threshold of 60 percent, which would take in most Chicago schools with federal Chapter 1 funding.) Then, the U.S.

Department of Education sets rules.

A major disappointment for urban school districts was the failure of the House to embrace President Bill Clinton's proposal to steer more funds to areas with high concentrations of poor children, like Chicago. Currently, 90 percent of all school districts, including rich ones such as north suburban New Trier High, receive federal Chapter 1 funds. Under the Clinton proposal, Chicago could have received an additional \$30 million, says Richard Laine, executive director of the Chicago-based Coalition for Educational Rights. But, adds Laine, "I'm afraid that ship has sailed."

The Senate subcommittee proposal calls for some shifting, but in such a limited form that New Trier, for exam-

ple, would still receive more federal Chapter 1 dollars per low-income student than Chicago receives, says Schireman. "It doesn't make sense that New Trier gets any money at all, and we shouldn't be protecting them," he says.

Clinton's proposal would have taken money away from states with smaller concentrations of low-income families. "For a senator to vote for a bill that loses millions of dollars for his state in an election year is political suicide," notes Schireman.

Minor changes are being made to the funding formulas, but very little extra money is likely to be targeted at poor districts; another opportunity will not come for another half-decade.

Michael Selinker

REVIEWS

continued from page 21

tem's bureaucracy. The relationship between the Collaborative and former Supt. Constance Clayton had its contentious moments, and many of the conflicts between district administrators and reformers have not yet been resolved.

During its first two years, the Collaborative had one foot inside and the other outside the bureaucracy, which gave it a unique advantage. With independent funding from Pew, it functioned fairly independently. But based at central office and with its director in the superintendent's cabinet, the bureaucracy couldn't ignore it.

Conflicts between the central office and the Collaborative's leadership grew in intensity when, according to Fine, "they [central office] reneged on all their promises to shift more decision making down to the charters." Finally, both Fine and Somerville resigned in protest.

The Collaborative now has shifted course and become entirely an outside organization. Its offices have all been moved to local schools and into communities.

The Collaborative's insistence on locally designed charters led to another kind of frustration: uneven progress.

"There are still some schools in which charters look a lot like tracks," writes Fine, "and a few schools in which only two charters exist."

So, are Philadelphia's charters "working"? Leaving aside a much-needed discussion of what "working" means, the charters, by the most commonly used standards, have made demonstrable progress.

Each comprehensive high school now has at least two charters; eight have five or more charters. The percentage of students enrolled in charters has increased from 12 percent in 1988-89 to 61 percent in 1993-94. Charter attendance is currently 79 percent, compared to 73 percent for non-charters. Charter students pass their core courses—English, history, math and science—about 10 percent more often than non-charter students, are retained less often, and accumulate more credits toward graduation.

Further, all these gains were made despite budget constraints that have kept the teaching force level while enrollment increased 10 percent.

However, a recent report by Pew asserted that restructuring had lost ground. The report sharply criticized both the school district and the teachers union for failing to provide consistent leadership and support.

Even so, Pew's Robert Schwartz says that "the early signs in this crucial fifth

year of work in the high schools are promising."

And intensive efforts are underway by charter teachers and parents to recapture lost momentum.

Could Chicago follow in Philadelphia's path? Many indicators say "yes." Over the past two years, a small-schools movement has emerged, with groups of teachers at several high schools coalescing around shared educational philosophies. At Taft, Bowen, Clemente, Austin, Harper and Chicago Vocational, principals have initiated attempts to create schools-within-schools. And last year, the Board of Education formally approved the concept of small-school restructuring; but it hasn't backed up its words with action.

Chicago schools hurt

Quite the contrary, experiments at Taft and Chicago Vocational took a big hit last September when teachers at newly established schools—within—schools were reassigned or eliminated as the board imposed budget cuts.

With the enthusiastic support of Supt. Argie Johnson, the School Board and the Chicago Teachers Union extended the length of high school class periods from 40 minutes to 50 minutes, a move also aimed at saving money. This deprived schools of the

Comings and goings

AT PERSHING ROAD Robert L. Johnson, former special assistant to the superintendent, has been named assistant superintendent for school operations. . . . **Adrian Beverly** has moved from administrator to assistant superintendent for instructional support. . . . **Jacqueline Baker** has moved from acting to assistant director of the bureau of employee relations. . . . **Maurice A. Bullett**, former acting director of teacher personnel, has been named director of the bureau of recruitment and certification.

TEACHING AWARDS Five Chicago public school teachers were among 10 teachers nationwide to receive \$1,000 cash awards as winners of the Kohl Foundation International Teaching Award. They are:



Roy Coleman



Ira Carol McGill



Patricia Beiler



Richard Morgan

Roy Coleman, physics, Morgan Park High; **Ira Carol McGill**, fine arts, Simpson Alternative High; **Patricia Beiler**, art, Cameron; **Richard Morgan**, music, Beethoven; **Edward Pino**, fine arts, Orozco.

PRINCIPALS RETAINED The following principals have been retained under new contracts expiring June 1998: **Eleanor Addison**, McDade Classical; **Marcus M. Ahmed**, Whistler; **Robert Alexander**, Pulaski; **Rosie**

B. Ard, Dickens; **Carlos Azcoitia**, Spry; **Myron M. Berger**, Buckingham; **Clarice Berry**, Fiske; **Warner B. Birts**, Englewood High; **Robert Blitstein**, Meyer; **Deborah Clark**, Skinner; **Leona Collins**, Parker; **James W. Crowe**, McCormick; **Irene DaMota**, Whittier; **Joseph W. Edmonds**, Columbus; **Herman Escobar**, Nixon; **Almeda Felmster**, Ruggles; **Betzaida Figueroa**, Kelyvn Park High; **Denise M. Gamble**, Herbert; **Solomon Gibbs**, McNair; **James B. Gilliat**, Pasteur; **Salvador Gonzalez**, Chopin; **Elaine A. Hall**, Robinson; **Steven R. Hara**, Daley; **Marcia Hartnell**, Suder; **Peter Hastings**, Onahan; **Lawrence Head**, Pope; **Gandy A. Heaston**, Haines; **Flavia Hernandez**, Salazar; **Ana Marie Higginbotham**, Morton; **Donald J. Hill**, Hayt; **Cynthia Humes**, Sexton; **Cecilia James**, Spalding; **Glenda Johnson**, Brighton Park; **Helen M. Johnson**, Anderson; **Jerry E. Johnson**, McCorkle; **Patrick J. Kenny**, Bunche; **Naomi Kilpatrick**, Carver Middle;



Edward Pino

Edward T. Klunk, Amundsen High; **Ruth L. Knight**, DePriest; **Arthur Kubic**, Dore; **Peggy Little**, Trumbull; **Madeleine Maraldi**, Irving; **Constance Martin**, Tanner; **Sandra Mawrence**, Hawthorne; **John C. Mazurek**, Casals; **Effie P. McHenry**, Wentworth; **Susan M. Mилоjevic**, Riis; **Donald R. Morris**, Burroughs; **Terrence Murray**, Haugan; **Johnnie M. Newton**, Burke; **Wilfredo Ortiz**, Lowell; **Julia L. Palos**, Ruiz; **Stanton Payne**, Westinghouse Vocational; **Leona S. Paytes**, Higgins; **Marcella Richman**, Talcott; **W. Delores Robinson**, Sumner; **Diana C. Rochon**, Harte; **Nilda Rodriguez**, Schneider; **Rudolph J. Salmeron**, Carpenter; **Sandra R. Satinover**, Jenner; **Edwin A. Scott**, Ft. Dearborn; **June G. Shackter**, Decatur Classical; **Edith R. Sims-Davis**, Corliss;

Cora L. Smith, Fermi; **Theresa B. Smith**, Hearst; **Edis F. Snyder**, Gale; **Patricia Taylor**, Garvey; **Olga Villalba**, Burns; **Thomas G. Walter**, Belding; **Theodore M. Washington**, Randolph; **Catherine M. Wells**, Farnsworth; **Lonnie V. White**, Gershwin; **Laura Williams**, Harvard; **Karen Wilson**, Nansen; **Cynthia A. Wnek**, Schubert.

SINCE OUR APRIL ISSUE On April 12, the local school council at **Prescott Elementary** voted 8-2 to hire **Francis Cantarelli** as the school's new principal. In 1988, Cantarelli resigned as head teacher at Salazar Bilingual Center in Pilsen to become the principal of a school in Wichita, Kans. The same two council members who had previously voted to retain former Principal **Karen Carlson** cast the votes against Cantarelli. . . . The **Morgan Park High School** Local School Council went for stability and continuity, naming **Charles Alexander** the new principal in a unanimous vote on March 24. Alexander, former acting principal and assistant principal for discipline, started out at the school 25 years ago as a history teacher. "He was held in great respect by both the student body and the faculty," says **Capers Funnye**, LSC chair. Alexander won out over 18 applicants. . . .

At **South Shore High**, principal selection remains at an impasse months after the return of LSC teacher representative **Edwin Brown**, who charged he was improperly transferred from South Shore because he voted not to retain Principal **Eddie L. Washington** in February. (Brown was transferred back in March.) The LSC has received more than 25 applications, reportedly including Washington's, but is split 5-5 on how to proceed with selection. Subdistrict 11 Supt. **Grady Jordan**, to whom the applications were sent, refuses to release them until the LSC establishes a game plan. He could eventually send three candidates for temporary principal to the general superintendent for final selection.

Lorraine Forte

ability to innovate with class schedules and use of time.

Efforts at Chicago high school restructuring also have been hurt by an inflexible central computer system that has made it difficult for schools-within-schools to assign their teachers and students to appropriate classes.

For a Philadelphia model to work in Chicago, there would have to be some commitment, some political will from

the leadership, to move beyond cookie-cutter approaches and provide the flexibility intended by the School Reform Act.

Fine could well be talking about Chicago when she warns: "If this round of reform fails, some form of privatization, 'alternatives,' independent charters (without collective bargaining), or elite 'options' will prevail. Poor children will be abandoned, punished and blamed. But many of us will know that

the very public-sector bureaucracies that have claimed an interest 'in all children' will be largely responsible—for their refusal to change to meet the needs of children." ■

Michael Klonsky, a CATALYST contributing editor, is a writer/researcher for the Small Schools Workshop, based at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Letters

School Board, Julian LSC broke the law in removing me

I am responding to the April 1994 issue, which contained several statements regarding my situation at the Julian High School that were not accurate. First, although the Board of Education has illegally removed me from the Julian High School, the matter is currently in Administrative Review before the Circuit Court of Cook County. Since this matter remains unresolved until it is decided by the Circuit Court, or the Appellate Court thereafter, I remain the principal of Julian High School; my position cannot be legally vacated or filled.

Secondly, the article states that I asked, "How did I get through that whole year without cracking up?" I never made any such statement or raised any question regarding my stability in the situation. In fact, there was never any question in my mind as to whether I would "get through the year" at Julian.

However, I would raise one question regarding this whole matter. That is: Why, with so many of our young men in critical need of positive African-American male role models, especially in the high schools, are we sending messages that it is acceptable to continually eradicate those few positive male images from their presence for the sake of political expediency?

This is the unfortunate warped reality of school "reform." Armed with newly ordained

powers to hire and fire principals, some untrained councils have chosen to flex their muscles to show who is in charge and to intimidate principals. In my case, an untrained, illegally constituted council, with the support of board attorneys, conducted a self-serving effort to replace me—in violation of my existing four-year contract and in direct violation of the Illinois Statutes.

In their effort, the Julian local school council and the board chose to: disregard the significance of my having been overwhelmingly selected from over 85 candidates for the position of principal at Julian, slight my record of outstanding achievement and 25-plus years with the system as a superior teacher and administrator, overlook the fact that I turned down a new four-year contract at the John W. Cook School (which was 1 of only 26 Ameritech Award recipients in 1991), and illegally interfere with my four-year contract at Julian.

As principal, I reported this situation to Supt. Ted Kimbrough, Board President Clinton Bristow, Deputy Supt. Robert Saddler, High School Subdistrict Supt. Grady Jordan, Deputy Supt. Paul Vega, board attorneys Joyce Price and Iris Sholder. Each turned a deaf ear on my appeals and allowed the situation to continue unbridled. The real question was whether any or all of them would do the politically expedient

thing and sit on it, or "do the right thing" and act on it. Obviously, the "politically expedient thing" was the choice.

The most incredulous aspect of this whole matter is that the Chicago Board of Education continues to waste hundreds of thousands of our tax dollars in legal fees in blind support of a blunder made by the Julian Local School Council and the law department, rather than to simply correct their impropriety. It is in the best interest of the taxpayers of this city that this matter be resolved shortly. However, if necessary, I am prepared to go the long haul—all the way to the Illinois Supreme Court.

George Eddings

Writer Chuck Schubart responds: George Eddings ceased to be principal when the School Board approved his removal. His position legally was declared vacant and then filled. The court rejected Eddings' request for an injunction reversing the removal. But if his unresolved lawsuit is successful, Eddings ultimately could be reinstated. Also, Eddings made the statement he now disputes. I read the text to Eddings before publication, and he affirmed its accuracy at that time.

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.

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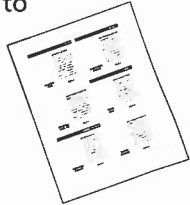
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Bright Ideas

At Hyde Park, freshmen get extra time to succeed

At Hyde Park Career Academy, freshmen get extra time to finish course-work—and, as a result, fewer of them are failing.

All 9th-graders are assigned to Freshman School, where students work at their own pace rather than meet strict deadlines. Currently, 27 teachers and 300 students are in the program.

"Essentially, all students can be successful, but not necessarily at the same time," Principal Weldon Beverly explains. "If it takes a longer amount of time for a student to reach a B [grade] level, that's okay. This program gives students an extended amount of time to complete the work."

Freshman School—a concept Beverly launched two years ago—is part of "Starting on the Right Foot," an initiative begun about four years ago by Hyde Park and its six feeder elementary schools. Using almost \$160,000 in grants from Chicago Community Trust, the schools opened middle schools within the feeder schools, began joint curriculum planning and started other programs to help kids make the transition to high school.

"We give students more time on



During Saturday School, reading teacher Jacqueline Anderson and her students discuss Moby Dick.

task," says Jacqueline Anderson, a freshman reading lab teacher. "If a student is failing or not doing what he needs for mastery—which is receiving grades of A, B, or C—we give the student additional weeks to make up the work." Students get six extra weeks to reach a C level; if they don't, they receive three more weeks. If their work is still not up to par, they receive a P to indicate they were

enrolled in the course but did not do passing work. (Hyde Park does not give out D's or F's.)

Students can make up their lessons during Saturday School, where teachers work from 9 a.m. to noon (for a stipend of \$8 to \$10 an hour); or, they can receive tutoring from peers.

"Freshman School helped me because I was able to get help if I needed it from the teachers," says sopho-

more Charmanda Frencha. "I think it's a good idea. You get the feeling [teachers] care because they're attempting to help you."

"Beverly restructured the freshman year so it's a protected year. It gives kids a second chance, and this eroded the 40 percent failure rate by half," says George Olson, dean of Roosevelt University's College of Education, who helped design "Starting on the Right Foot." Olson says that, since Freshman School began, about 28 percent of freshmen failed one course and less than 20 percent failed two courses. In comparison, the Department of Research and Evaluation reports that 40 percent of freshmen systemwide fail two major courses. "Even the students who failed were motivated for next semester," Olson says.

"The curriculum was really what helped me. Also, all the teachers I had last year made sure we understood [the lessons]," says Erika Wilson, now a sophomore. "Hyde Park has a very loving staff because all the freshman teachers and counselors are hand-picked."

Nikki Hopewell

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