Violence in Chicago's public schools has declined steadily and dramatically over the past four years as schools have spent more of their own discretionary money on security.

Arrests on school property for all crimes involving the physical safety of children dropped 18 percent from 1990-91 to 1993-94, according to a CATALYST analysis of Chicago Police Department reports. Arrests for the most serious crimes, such as aggravated battery, arson, murder and robbery, were down 46 percent. And the number of weapons confiscated on school property declined 61 percent, with gun recoveries down 68 percent.

Lt. Randolph Barton, head of the Chicago Police Department's four-year-old School Patrol Unit, attributes the drop to an increased police presence. "The kids know we're around, and they know if they try to smuggle weapons to school or do something that endangers other students, we're there to grab them," says Barton. "Kids don't want to go to jail, so they're trying to stay out of trouble."

Charles Hill, an investigator in the School Board's Department of Safety and Security, credits increased attention from the whole school community. "I've been in this department 25 years, and I see more effort on the part of administrators, teachers and parents to maintain control," he says.

Schools certainly are spending more money on control. As their state Chapter 1 discretionary dollars grew steadily between 1989-90 and 1993-94, schools hired more security officers to supplement those provided by the Board of Education. The number rose from 59 in 1990-91 to 462 in 1993-94.

In high schools last year, the num-

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**Students sound off**

A new survey shows they view schools as havens from violence. Round-table discussion yields advice for schools, freshmen.

**Pages 8-11**

**The mayor sounds off**

His plug for 'privatization' ignites a debate.

**Pages 25-29**
With reform—and money, schools rule

Last school year, there were 270 arrests on school property for such serious crimes as murder and aggravated battery. That's far too many. But it's a lot fewer than four years ago, when there were 501 such arrests. Last school year, 188 weapons, including 40 guns, were recovered on school property. That's too many, too. But it's a lot fewer than three years ago, when 589 weapons, including 122 guns, were recovered.

Remarkably, as violence escalates in the broader community, Chicago's public schools are getting safer, Associate Editor Debra Williams reports in our lead article. But there's no paradox here. What we have, instead, is testimony to the potential of local school councils and—surprise, surprise—the power of money.

Four years ago, the School Board, at the urging of Mayor Richard M. Daley, starting paying for police officers to patrol Chicago's high schools. Just as important—perhaps more important—local school councils zeroed in on safety. And, as their discretionary dollars multiplied, councils spent more and more of them on security: Over the last four years, the number of security officers they have hired with state Chapter 1 funds has increased from 59 to 462, according to a budget analysis by the Chicago Panel on School Policy.

But schools' spending on security raises another issue: Just why are supposedly supplemental dollars, intended to bolster schooling for poor children, being spent on something as basic as safety? The answer, of course, is that there isn't enough "basic" money. But at least councils have flexibility with state Chapter 1. For example, Clemente High School hired 50 parents at $5 an hour to serve as mentors and hall monitors. Now, says council chair Cindy Rodriguez, "You hear kids saying things like 'Stop that! That one knows my mom!' Plus, kids know that this is a parent—this is someone who cares."

Clemente High School is the kind of place that Chicago school reform was made for. As Contributing Editor Dan Weissmann reports in Front Lines, the largely Puerto Rican community around the school had been protesting for 20 years to gain influence over curriculum, principal selection and other essentials. This was a community that knew what it wanted; so when reform came along, it ran with it. The local school council quickly cycled through three principals before settling on a Clemente insider, who happens to be Anglo. It hired a consultant to help craft a set of interlocking programs to increase achievement and strengthen school-community ties. And it paid attention to its faculty. Now all that smart work is beginning to pay off.

School reform has yet to figure out what to do with schools that don't enjoy such "social capital" to prod and support them. As Contributing Editor Michael Klonsky reports in Updates, Supt. Argie Johnson and reform groups are still working on their response to this challenge. Consensus building is a welcome change at Pershing Road, but it shouldn't take forever.

Privatization, the practice of contracting with private firms to do public work, is becoming a part of the school reform lexicon. The chair of the School Finance Authority wants some. The mayor wants some. And the president of the School Board wants some. All contend that in some arenas, private companies would do a better job than public employees. Predictably, school unions don't want any part of it.

In Updates, Managing Editor Lorraine Forte capsulizes the debate. One quote stands out. "There is no cure-all except hard work," says activist James Deanes. "The grass is not greener, the sky is not bluer where there's privatization." No, not inherently. But as long as some schools let the grass grow under foot, outside management should be given a try.

Linda Bengtson
Lorraine Forte
SAFE SCHOOLS

1 Violence in schools drops as security staff grows
Cops plus more adults add up to fewer incidents.

6 Metal detectors spur family debate
A wife (an LSC chair) and husband (a policeman) argue their schools' sides.

7 What other cities are doing to protect kids
Getting tough, providing 'safe havens,' having kids keep watch for weapons.

8 Schools an oasis from violence, drugs
That's what a new student survey says.

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They also tell freshmen to 'cool it.'

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Three programs that go beyond the 3 Rs.

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An expert describes the ideal violence-prevention program.

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VIOLENCE
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ber of school-funded security personnel (235) surpassed the number of board-funded security personnel (211).

Long-troubled Farragut High hired the most, eight. "Some are parents, others are community members," says Principal Edward Guerra, adding that they all wear uniforms. "We only had two or three people from the board, and it wasn't nearly enough." The school had suffered an average of 30 to 40 mob-action fights a month, he explains.

The school also installed twenty 24-hour security cameras in hallways, the lunchroom and other strategic points. Together, these measures cut fights dramatically. "Last school year, we only had 18 mob-action fights, which I think is still way too many," Guerra reports. "This year, we've had none."

Clemente High School stretched its dollars by hiring 50 parents as mentors at $5 an hour and assigning them in shifts to monitor the school's eight floors. If it had hired security officers instead, it would have gotten

weapon-free or stop violence.

The biggest deterrent to violence, principals say, is increasing the number of adults, particularly parents, in schools. "Kids say they feel safer when adults are around," explains Barbara Edwards, principal of Harlan High School in Chatham. "And when parents are around, student behavior really improves."

"Kids say they feel safer when adults are around, and when parents are around, student behavior improves."

—Barbara Edwards, principal

only eight. (For additional information on Clemente and its unusual approach to school safety, see Front Lines on page 18.)

Meanwhile, the Board of Education supplied elementary and high schools with a total of 767 security workers, including watchmen and security supervisors, officers and aides—a figure that has been relatively constant since 1990-91. It also picked up the tab for the more than 120 Chicago police officers assigned to high schools.

Also, all but nine high schools have taken up Mayor Richard M. Daley on his offer of metal detectors. Principals interviewed by CATALYST say that while the detectors discourage students from bringing weapons to school, they do not make schools

Principals also cite student activities, school uniforms and programs aimed at changing students' behavior, such as peer mediation and conflict resolution, as ways to prevent trouble in schools.

Maria Prato, principal of Clay Elementary in Hegewisch, says that while violence isn't up in her school, aggressive behavior is. "Children are living a faster pace of life," she points out. "A child's schedule may be getting up at 6 a.m., getting dressed, going to a babysitter, grabbing a bite to eat, going to school, back to the babysitter's and not seeing mom or dad until the late evening. That's hectic, and children feel anxious and stressed without knowing how to release these feelings."

Linda Layne, principal of Peager High in Roseland, concurs. "They have so much on their shoulders nowadays," she says.

Ideally, Layne would like three or four more counselors and an extra 30 minutes every morning so students could get "debriefed" from the streets. "Counselors could sit down and ask them about the night before, how things are going, if their morning on the way to school was all right. Kids would be able to let go of all that anger and steam, and then they could concentrate on their school work."

Both stress that educators need to be aware of these issues and devise ways to address them.

Here are a number of things schools are doing to help kids deal with anger and to keep schools safe.

■ ADULT MENTORS, CHARACTER EDUCATION

"The best deterrent is teaching students values," says Layne. "If students have values, you wouldn't see the aggressive behavior. Traditionally, children got them from home and the church, but if kids come from dysfunctional homes, and we see a lot of that, you have this anger."

At Fenger, teachers have begun conducting discussions on honesty, integrity, values and the like during division (homeroom). And one of the school's police officers and some male teachers "regularly have 'man talks' with our male students after school," says Layne.

She also stresses structure: "These kids may look like adults, but they are still babies who need structure."

Once, Layne said she asked a student who was wearing tight spandex
shorts and a revealing shirt to go home and change. "She told me she had two babies at home, and I told her I didn't care how many kids she had, as long as she was at my school, she was a child and was not going to wear that outfit at school," Layne says. "She went home and changed. Probably no one had ever taken charge of her like that. Children don't have a problem with structure, as long as you are fair."

**ETHNIC PRIDE** "We talk to our students about ethnic pride and pride in themselves," says Juanita Tucker, principal of Phillips High in the Oakland community. "We tell them this is a very special school; it's the oldest African-American school in the city. This is the school of singer Nat King Cole, [actress] Marla Gibbs and Jacoby Dickens [chairman of black-owned Seaway National Bank]. We try to infuse them with history and pride and tell them, as a Phillips student, they must represent excellence."

Tucker says being a part of the Coalition of Essential Schools has helped because the program seeks to have students treat each other with respect and take pride in themselves and their culture. (See CATALYST, September 1994.) "The first principle of Essential Schools is that students use their minds well," says Tucker. "We tell our students, you don't have time to fight each other. You have work to do, things to accomplish."

Tucker says that one of her greatest rewards was hearing one Phillips student tell two others who were about to do battle: "Oh, no, we don't do that here."

**TOUGH LOVE** "The first day of school, I meet with known gang members and tell them what I will not tolerate," says Leona Collins, the recently retired principal of Parker Elementary in Englewood. "I let them know I know who they are and I wouldn't hesitate to call the police. And if necessary, students have been arrested and taken out in handcuffs to send a message to the others about what will not be tolerated at the school."

Most problems occur when students are coming to and from school, she says. Like many schools, Parker has organized parent patrols. It's not unusual for Collins and her assistant principal to join in. "I don't mind snatching someone if I have to," says Collins.

**SCHOOL ACTIVITIES** "We've got a Kwanza program, a mentoring program, career days, spelling bees, cheerleading," says John Q. Jenkins, principal of Esmond Elementary in Morgan Park. "Schools need to give children opportunities to feel special and to demonstrate their special skills . . . . . ."

"Schools need to give children opportunities to feel special and to demonstrate their special skills. It occupies them, and they don't get into trouble."

And if they should land in trouble, the school runs an in-school learning center, where children receive counseling. "We try to intervene before small problems turn into major ones," says Jenkins, who boasts that there hasn't been a major fight at the school in three years.

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![Parents Clotheria Ballentine (left) and Mary Williams maintain business when it comes to keeping the area outside Ris Elementary peaceful and orderly.](image1)

**Serious crimes**

The chart below shows the number of arrests on school property for the most serious crimes involving the physical safety of children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>'90-'91</th>
<th>'93-'94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Battery</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CATALYST analysis of Chicago Police Department reports.
Metal detectors spur family debate

All but nine of Chicago's public high schools have taken Mayor Richard M. Daley up on his offer of metal detectors. But their use remains a subject of controversy, sometimes even within families.

Take, for example, Camille Hamilton-Doyle, local school council chair at Kenwood High, and her husband, Clifford Doyle, a Chicago police officer who works as a part-time security guard at Hirsch High in Greater Grand Crossing.

In a telephone interview, Hamilton-Doyle told CATALYST why the school rarely uses its metal detectors. "We got metal detectors in April because they were being offered to us free," she says. "But the council voted that they would only be used randomly and for school parties like homecoming. They will not be stationed at the doors. Parents did not want students to feel they were mistrusted.

"Now Cliff's school uses them," she adds, handing the phone to her husband. "We use them just fine," says Doyle, "and our kids don't have a problem with them. It gives them a sense of protection. We don't have guns in our school because of them. And the detectors help keep beepers and telephones [often used in drug dealing] out of the school."

In the background, Hamilton-Doyle chimes in: "We are an open campus; yours is closed. Our kids are in and out of the building for lunch. . . . They really would not work for us."

Kenwood held four open forums, one each for parents, teachers, students and the public; all voted not to station metal detectors at the doors.

Still holding the telephone, Doyle insists, "But they are not as bad as some people think. At Hirsch, there are two people at the door. If the detector goes off, that kid is pulled to the side, checked, and the rest go through. It only takes 20 minutes."

In the background, Hamilton-Doyle counters, "Well, we don't want our kids, or anybody for that matter, greeted so negatively when they enter our building."

Like Kenwood, Clemente High in West Town accepted the detectors—"to stay on the mayor's good side," says council chair Cindy Rodriguez—but didn't set them up. "They're in the basement somewhere," she adds.

When the apparatus arrived at the school, Rodriguez explains, "I thought about it: There's never been a shooting inside the school. By creating congestion outside the school in the morning, while kids waited to pass through metal detectors, we would just be making them targets for drive-by shootings."

Other schools didn't even bother to stay on the mayor's "good side" and rejected detectors outright.

Lincoln Park High, for example, says it has a logistics problem (similar to Kenwood's). The school has an open campus, meaning students can leave school property for lunch, and it has two buildings. School officials reasoned that there is too much coming-and-going for metal detectors to be used efficiently.

The Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, a small, quiet, magnet school in Mount Greenwood, decided metal detectors were unnecessary. "We've never had a gun confiscated," says Principal Barbara Valerius.

DuSable High is situated in a violent community, Grand Boulevard. But Principal Charles Mingo believes that metal detectors would not improve the situation inside the school. With 20 entrances to the building, he has a hard enough time keeping outsiders, namely gangbangers, out. "It's all I can do to even keep people on the doors," he said.

Meanwhile, the unannounced, or random, use of metal detectors has been called into question by the courts. In June, Circuit Court Judge Leo E. Holt threw out a gun-possession case against a Fenger High student who was caught during the unannounced use of metal detectors. The judge ruled that the school and the police violated the student's constitutional protection against unreasonable search and seizure.

"I have no problem with metal detectors when they are stationary," Holt explained. "I do have a problem with them used randomly. It violates the fourth amendment, and students are citizens, too."

Holt's ruling has been appealed by the Cook County State's Attorney's office, leaving schools at least temporarily free to use detectors randomly, Holt said.

Elizabeth Crouch, Debra Williams,
Dan Weissmann
What other cities are doing to protect kids

by Elizabeth Crouch

BUFFALO, N.Y.

TIGHT SECURITY Last year, Buffalo Public Schools began requiring students to store backpacks and schoolbags in their lockers as soon as they enter school. In addition, lockers are searched at random by school security teams.

These policies are part of a comprehensive program that began in 1993 to eliminate weapons and violence in the schools. Other efforts include a telephone tip-line, increased security, and security and police patrols of the neighborhood around the school.

Already, the program is paying off. The number of weapons confiscated dropped from 346 in 1992-93 to 151 in 1993-94, and the number of assaults dropped from 211 to 156.

"[If you] go to a school [where] there is disorder, small incidents become disasters," says William Jackson, the district's director of security. "The key to running a good school is order."

For more information, contact Buffalo Public Schools at (716) 851-3575.

MEMPHIS, TENN.

WEAPON HOTLINE Memphis schoolchildren can now earn money for reporting weapons on school grounds, so long as the weapons are found. By collaborating with Crime Stoppers, a nationally known crime hotline, and the Memphis Police Department, the school system created the Weapons Watch hotline. Crime Stoppers pays students $50 for reporting weapons on campus, and that amount was recently doubled by a local organization interested in reducing crime.

Students who call in information remain anonymous, but they receive a verification number to use to claim their reward if a weapon is found.

So far, 130 weapons have been confiscated through the hotline, says Bob Raby, security coordinator for the Memphis schools. Altogether, the total number of weapons confiscated has risen from 279 in 1992-93 to 314 in 1993-94, and Raby attributes the increase to Weapons Watch.

While the money provides an incentive, the key is offering tipsters anonymity, says Raby. Many students, he explains, never call back to obtain their reward.

For more information, contact Bob Raby at (901) 325-5773.

Baltimore, MD.

SAFE HAVENS When Baltimore School Supt. Walter Amprey and Mayor Kurt Schmoke held the first of three "safe school summits" with students in August 1992, they found that most students felt safe in school but did not feel safe going to and from school.

The idea of a "safety corridor"—a group of churches, businesses or other institutions that would open up their doors to students for two hours before and after school—developed as a result.

Eight churches volunteered to become "safe havens" in the district's first pilot corridor, launched in early October. The safe havens are intended to serve as temporary emergency shelters for frightened or injured children.

In a kick-off ceremony, over 2,000 parents, students, staff and church volunteers marched through the neighborhood served by the pilot corridor, which is home to 7,000 students in 11 public schools and three private schools.

The 87 volunteers, most of whom are senior citizens, have been trained in conflict resolution and crime prevention. Volunteers were taught what to do if a child has been involved in a crime, is injured or ill, or is just plain scared. Many of the volunteers sit on the front steps of the churches to let the children know that there are people looking out for them.

Already, some children have come to the havens. And other neighborhoods are planning new havens that will include businesses and other institutions. Louise Phipps-Senft, an attorney who volunteered to organize the program along with Pastor Marshall Prentice of Zion Baptist Church, believes that churches should be the backbone of the corridors since they are already considered safe, but, she says, "We will work with whomever is there."

For more information on Baltimore's Safe Havens, contact Annabelle Sher at (410) 396-8723 or Louise Phipps-Senft at (410) 235-9655.

CLEVELAND, OHIO

WATCH YOUR HANDS In 1990, the Cleveland Public Schools began teaching elementary students what is, and is not, acceptable behavior. "We came across many instances where kids did not understand appropriate behavior," says Cordelia Harris, a health educator who helped develop the Watch Your Hands program.

The core of the program is an interactive student assembly, held at each of the 88 elementary schools, at which staff from the health education department teach children what hands should and should not be used for. Handshaking and drawing, for example, are good uses while hitting and punching are not.

The program also covers sexual misconduct, fighting and even cheating on tests. Teachers are trained in follow-up classroom activities, such as having students create art from hand prints or holding discussions about fighting.

Parental involvement is also stressed. All parents receive a newsletter on the program, with ideas for at-home lessons, such as reviewing the "Hands Rules." Some schools provide parent training sessions.

The key to the program, officials say, is reinforcement, with lessons for each grade designed to build on the preceding year. "It's a continuous process," says Steve Sroka, a program consultant/teacher.

For more information, contact the Health Education Office of the Cleveland Public Schools at (216) 574-8983.
Survey results

Schools an oasis from violence, drugs

by Lorraine Forte

Principals often describe their schools as oases from crime and violence. Most students seem to agree, according to a new survey conducted by the Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Students said they feel safer in school, especially in classrooms, than they do immediately outside school or on their way to and from school. Also, younger students feel safer than older students do.

Those are among the findings of a survey of 36,000 6th-, 8th- and 10th-graders conducted this past spring in 240 elementary schools and 48 high schools.

Students also were asked about the prevalence in school of drugs, gangs and petty crimes, such as theft or threats from another student, and how they feel about school rules. In a separate survey, teachers from 271 elementary schools and 48 high schools were asked about school safety.

Chicago students view safety much as other students across the country, says Bernard James of the National School Safety Center in California. Center staff, he says, have found that “students feel the safest in the classroom, and as they start to move away from it and from adults who have control over the environment, they feel more threatened.”

Outside school is another matter. Kids worry about being in groups near school because they fear drive-by shootings or similar incidents, says Lt. Randolph Barton, head of Chicago’s School Safety Patrol Unit. “You have punks who, until they are dispersed by security, drive by or walk by flashing gang symbols,” Barton says. “The crime around schools is just not there, but I know kids are worried about these things.”

Here’s how students view their safety in and around school:

How safe do students feel?

**In classes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Very safe</th>
<th>Not safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th-graders</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th-graders</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th-graders</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In hallways and bathrooms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Very safe</th>
<th>Not safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th-graders</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th-graders</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th-graders</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Traveling between home and school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Very safe</th>
<th>Not safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th-graders</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th-graders</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th-graders</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outside around the school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Very safe</th>
<th>Not safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th-graders</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th-graders</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th-graders</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because graphs do not include students who chose the answers “somewhat safe” or “mostly safe.”
IN THE CLASSROOM 71 percent of 6th-graders, 73 percent of 8th-graders and 64 percent of 10th-graders say they feel “very” or “mostly” safe in classrooms.

IN HALLWAYS, BATHROOMS 54 percent of 6th-graders, 65 percent of 8th-graders and 47 percent of 10th-graders report feeling “very” or “mostly” safe.

BETWEEN HOME, SCHOOL 48 percent of 6th-graders, 49 percent of 8th-graders and 37 percent of 10th-graders say they feel “very” or “mostly” safe.

OUTSIDE AROUND SCHOOL 38 percent of 6th-graders, 44 percent of 8th-graders and 33 percent of 10th-graders feel “very” or “mostly” safe.

(The remainder in all groups said they feel “somewhat safe” or “not safe.”)

Following are other survey results:

PETTY CRIME Elementary students report more incidents overall, and in-school theft is more common than fights or threats.

Just over half of 10th-graders, but some 60 percent of 6th- and 8th-graders, report that they have had something stolen at least once. About 30 percent to 40 percent of 6th- and 8th-graders, but only a quarter to a third of 10th-graders, report that they have had a fight or been threatened by another student at least once.

DRUGS The vast majority of students said they have never been offered drugs in school.

Only 8 percent of 6th-graders, 16 percent of 8th-graders and 27 percent of 10th-graders say they have been offered drugs more than once in school.

GANGS Not surprisingly, gangs are more of a problem for older students.

Forty-six percent of 6th-graders, 41 percent of 8th-graders and 66 percent of 10th-graders say they “agree” or “strongly agree” that gangs are a problem at their school.

SCHOOL RULES Tough but fair.

Around 60 percent of students in all grades agree or strongly agree that school rules are strict but are also fairly enforced. Less than half of 10th-graders report that school rules make the building feel like a jail.

TEACHERS Most feel safe. Seventy to more than 80 percent of elementary and high school teachers “agree” or “strongly agree” that they are safe going to and from school; the same number “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that they are afraid to stay in the building after the school day.

As for weapons, 28 percent of elementary teachers and 41 percent of high school teachers are afraid of guns at their school.

The student and teacher surveys are the third and fourth in a series being conducted by the Consortium, covering a variety of issues associated with student learning.

The Consortium currently is preparing a report for each school on the responses of its students and teachers. For more information, contact the Consortium at (312) 702-3364.

Are petty crime and drugs a problem?

**How often have you had something stolen in school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6th-graders</th>
<th>8th-graders</th>
<th>10th-graders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than twice</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How often have you had a fight in school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6th-graders</th>
<th>8th-graders</th>
<th>10th-graders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than twice</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How often have you been threatened by other students?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6th-graders</th>
<th>8th-graders</th>
<th>10th-graders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than twice</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
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**How often have you been offered drugs in school?**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6th-graders</th>
<th>8th-graders</th>
<th>10th-graders</th>
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<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than twice</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
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</table>

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because graphs do not include students who chose the answer “once or twice.”
Freshmen should 'cool it'  

Teens sound off on school security

Do students feel safe in their schools? Do they think metal detectors work? What advice would they give to new students about staying safe and out of trouble? CATALYST talked with a number of students from four high schools around the city to hear what they had to say; eleven are quoted below.

Saul Harris, senior, Senn  
Mewsette Rios, junior, Senn  
Uno, sophomore, Sullivan  
Ricky Lewis, sophomore, Sullivan  
Celeste Anderson, sophomore, Fenger  
Tasha Outland, senior, Fenger  
David Rodgers, senior, Fenger  
Keith Wilkerson, senior, Phillips  
Tamika Williams, senior, Phillips  
Nashay Howell, sophomore, Phillips  
John Patterson, senior, Phillips

On feeling safe

HARRIS I feel safe all the time. Not just because of the school but because I have a lot of people who watch out for me anyway. So I don't have to feel intimidated. That's why I stopped my gang activities and things like that. I think that now I just feel safe knowing that I don't do nothing to nobody else and nobody don't do nothing to me.

CATALYST So you used to be in a gang?
HARRIS Yeah. . . . Jail time did me wrong, and I got out of that. My mother and my church brought me new things, and I'm kicking it with new thinking. Education is my priority.

RIOS Well, there's fights at Senn and everything, but it's just . . . there's gangs and stuff and they meet in a certain section, but as long as you get to class and you stay out of their way, you don't have a problem. It's just who you hang around with and what you do that get you in trouble.

CATALYST What about you, Uno?
UNO I don't feel safe. Too many gangs out in the schools. Too many people know me over there [Sullivan], so I don't feel safe. I want to go to Lane.

CATALYST Are you in a gang?
UNO Yeah, but I don't mess with nobody during school hours. I always leave that to be done after the hours of closing.

CATALYST But doesn't after-hours carry over to the next day?
UNO But I don't mess with nobody from my school. . . . Don't nobody mess with me 'cause I don't mess with them. I just mind my business, go to my locker, get my stuff and go home. That's it.

CATALYST Do you feel safe at school, Ricky?
LEWIS Nope. They [Stones] are always messing with us. . . . I don't do nothing. I just go to class and do my homework. Those Stones, man. Like today, I went out to lunch with about three other people and when we came back, the mob surrounded us. They wanted to kick our ass.

CATALYST What does the school do about it?
LEWIS The school don't do nothing.
UNO The police are even scared up there, man. It's rough at Sullivan. You think Senn is rough, but Sullivan is rough.

CATALYST Do you feel safe in school?
ANDERSON Yes. When I first heard about Fenger, I was told it was a bad school. But it's no: that bad.

OUTLAND If you look for trouble, you find trouble.

RODGERS I feel safe sometimes. When I first came to school as a freshman, I had a bunch of fights because I was still a nerd. Once I joined the football team, I hung around big people. People started saying 'Hey, he's on the football team,' and they started to get to know me.

But when I first came, the GDs [Gangster Disciples] were always beating me up. This boy just hit me for no reason in the lunchroom, and I asked him why he hit me and he hit me again. First it was a one-on-one fight; then someone yelled, 'GDs,' and then all hell broke loose. There was 14 of them. I was on the ground. Someone pulled out a brass knuckle and all of this [rubs his face] was swollen. My eye-

Source: Student survey, Consortium on Chicago School Research
Advice for students

HOWELL Go about your business. Stay in school, do your work. If someone is trying to fight you, walk away from it. Be better than that. If someone jumps on you, tell a teacher. Don’t be out there trying to be bad, because you can get hurt.

PATTERSON If they live in a bad area, they should choose a route that’s less violent, or try to get someone to drop them off at school. Try to avoid trouble. Walk away if they can. If there’s a situation they think they can handle, they shouldn’t try to impress anybody, just run.

HARRIS Just come straight. A lot of freshmen try to come in like they’re real hard, to get their reputation because they think somebody is going to mess with them. I’d tell them, that brings attention to you.

LEWIS Stay out of the gang stuff.

RODGERS The gang stuff is going to happen. My advice is to join a sport as a freshman because you’ll get to know a lot of people.

OUTLAND I suggest sports, too, and get in different clubs. If you get new students involved, they won’t have time to start things.

— Lynnette Richardson, Debra Williams

The discussion with students from Sullivan and Senn was arranged by the Youth Leadership Committee and held at Centro Romero on North Clark Street. Fenger and Phillips students were interviewed at their schools.

On metal detectors

HOWELL I feel safe with the metal detectors here. Kids can’t run in and out of here.

LEWIS That stuff doesn’t work.

HARRIS It works. They just don’t do nothing.

RIOS If it goes off, they don’t even search you. You can say it’s your keys, and they say OK.

CATALYST So what’s all the hype about metal detectors?

UNO [Schools] want parents to think that they’re concerned about it, but they are not really concerned. They don’t care.

HARRIS The metal detectors are kind of funny. You come in, and it beeps; then they say, ‘What’s that?’ [And you say] ‘Homey, that’s just my radio’ or something like that. You just walk on in.

RIOS They have the metal detectors to fill a quota, just so they can say they have it. That’s it. They should just get more serious with the students. They know that everyday after division, there’s going to be a group of gang-bangers sitting in the hallways. They know what spot they are going to be in, they should be there.

Advice for schools

CATALYST What would you do to make school safer?

LEWIS I’d put police on every corner. Every corner. And every time I see three people together, I’d break them up.

CATALYST So that means you couldn’t hang out with your buddies.

LEWIS Hell, naw, not outside of school.

CATALYST What else would you do?

LEWIS I would have counseling. If anyone had a bad record, I’d throw them out. Anybody in the same grade for three years, throw them out.

UNO I would make all the gangs come together during school hours and [make] a little peace treaty during school hours.

HARRIS It’s not a matter of more security or any type of things like that as it is kicking the knowledge to the people that this is your school, making safety for yourself. ... They [schools] need to come out with some kind of counseling thing where students try to work out their problems by themselves. I would like to stop fights. I’m always trying to stop fights. It should come from the student body before it goes to a higher level.

Sullivan and Senn students huddle for a photo after their round-table discussion with CATALYST. (Clockwise from back row) Ricky Lewis, Deidre Bozeman, Uno, Celeste Moura-Bedard, Soul Harris, Mausette Rios and Kathie Hanson.
Beyond the 3 Rs

Teaching kids how to handle anger, avoid violence

STAR program takes aim at guns, violence

Two 1st-graders pretend they are at home watching "The Bill Cosby Show," when suddenly they hear, "bang, bang!"

"I hear gun shots," says one. "Let's go to the window and see," says the other.

"No! Don't do that. Bad choice," shout their classmates, waving their hands wildly. "No!"

The scene is re-enacted, but this time the two decide that if they hear gun shots, the safest thing to do is take shelter under the table instead of going to see what happened, which is what young children typically do.

This skit was performed by students at Herzl Elementary in North Lawndale and is just one of the lessons in the STAR Program (Straight Talk About Risks). Aimed at reducing injuries and killings from guns, STAR teaches children the dangers of guns, how to recognize threatening situations and how to make wise choices to ensure their safety.

Developed four years ago by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, STAR takes different approaches for different age groups. Children in preschool through 2nd grade, for example, might discuss gun dangers in a manner similar to traditional discussions about the dangers of matches, sharp objects and talking to strangers.

For 3rd- to 5th-graders, who often have already been captivated by images ascribing power and glory to violence, special emphasis is placed on exploring their reactions to guns and violence on TV and in the movies. And for high school students, who usually already know about the dangers of guns, one lesson deals with the emotional, social and economic costs of gun deaths and long-term injury.

Christine Speiser, the center's education program specialist and a former Chicago principal, says the curriculum grabs students' attention because it is interactive. "There are no ditto sheets, no busy work, no fill-in-the-blanks," she explains. "There is a lot of role playing. We want the children to think and to think on their feet."

STAR entered the Chicago Public Schools in January, on the recommendation of Deputy Mayor for Education Leonard Domínguez. Seventeen schools volunteered for a pilot program, each sending some of its teachers for a day of training. The cost of the training and the materials is underwritten by several private foundations and individual donors.

Herzl Elementary in North Lawndale was one. "Last year, we had a 5-year-old bring a gun to school and fire it," reports Principal Betty Green.

"Thank goodness, he pointed it at the floor first."

So far, only three Herzl teachers have received training, but Green plans to expand the program to other grades. Herzl also arranges for police officers to talk with children about avoiding gun violence.

Grant Elementary, situated in the middle of the Rockwell Gardens public housing project, is another school that adopted STAR. "These kids see so much," says 5th-grade teacher Marcia Grinnard. "Sometimes we have to hold them after school because of shooting between these buildings."

Grinnard believes STAR already has made a difference. "We haven't had as many fights, and my kids' verbal skills are getting better. They are learning to express themselves and let out some of the anger by talking about actions that provoke conflict or dangerous situations they have experienced."

For more information about STAR, call Christine Speiser at (312) 920-0504.
Kids help kids solve disputes

Earlier this year, Yvonne Womack, principal at White Elementary in West Pullman, was approached by a new student who wanted to know about the program that helps kids settle their own disputes.

Womack couldn't have been more pleased. "I was thrilled that she asked me about it; for me it meant my students were spreading the word about the school's conflict management program."

At White, students are trained as peer mediators, or conflict managers, to help feuding students settle disagreements. "When we first started our program, it was just used during recess," Womack recalls. "But the staff started to notice the talents and strengths of the peer mediators, and now the program is used anytime there is a conflict between children."

Typically, teachers refer students to a conflict manager, but sometimes students refer themselves. Dressed in bright orange vests and toting orange clipboard, managers help students talk through their problem and then settle on a solution, which becomes a written contract between the opposing parties. For example, if a fight erupted because one student stepped on another student's books, the contract might ask one student to watch where he or she is walking and the other to make sure his or her books are out of traffic.

"Keep in mind, conflicts don't end," says Womack. "But there are different levels or degrees of conflict. What we are seeing are kids coming to us saying, 'Joey pushed me, I think this could lead to something,' as opposed to them going straight to the fighting stage."

Sullivan Elementary in South Chicago adopted peer mediation with a twist: Students help select the mediators.

"Most conflict management programs ask the teachers to choose who they think are the leaders in their class," says Assistant Principal Donald Butler, who runs the program. "We get our students to help choose, too."

Each classroom nominates five students, then the classroom teacher eliminates two names, and, finally, a teacher from the school's conflict management team eliminates one more name, leaving two students per classroom. (The conflict management team is made up of teachers who completed a 40-hour training session from the Center for Conflict Resolution.)

"These kids are student leaders," Butler points out, "children other children look up to."

From April 1993, when the program began, through June 1994, 100 mediation were conducted and only one dispute could not be resolved, he reports. "In that particular case, the student was not interested in resolving a conflict," says Butler. "He wanted revenge, pure and simple. In most cases, though, students are willing to compromise."

Adrian Wilson, a 7th-grader who has been a manager since 5th grade, says, "Conflict managers are taken seriously. I have mediated 8th-graders, and even they listen to me. Most of the time the problems the kids have are things they could figure out themselves, but they need help doing it—they are so angry."

He adds that although he is the helper, he's reaping benefits, too. "I've learned how to work with people and their emotions. That's going to come in handy when I become a lawyer."

For more information, call Yvonne Womack at (312) 535-5671 and Donald Butler at (312) 535-8585.

Preschool program deals first with teachers

The earlier you start, the better. That's one of two big lessons Rainbow House, a shelter for battered women and their children, has learned about violence-prevention programs over the past 12 years.

The other lesson is that programs must deal with teachers, too.

"Children need to be taught at an early age if they are to learn non-violent behavior, and teachers cannot be asked to teach children non-violent behavior until they explore how they themselves feel about it and deal with it," says Rainbow House Director Anne Parry.

Twelve years ago, Parry took Choosing Non-Violence, a program she had developed, into high schools but found that teenagers who were violent and involved in abusive relationships could not be budged. So, she began working with elementary-school children, finding that they, too, had begun to act violently.

"I'd ask them to tell me what they do when they get angry, and these 'normal' kids would tell me these terrible, awful, violent things they would do to release anger," says Parry. "I realized then I better try to reach them when they are much younger."

Now, Choosing Non-Violence is focused on children in preschool and kindergarten. At that level, says Parry, teaching non-violence is much like teaching colors, shapes and numbers. "Three-, four- and five-year-olds, those are the teachable ages in the development of a person," she says.

3 teachers quit

The program begins with lessons that help teachers examine their own attitudes, relationships and knowledge.

"I have met resistance with some teachers because they carry their own baggage," says Parry. "Some of them have been abused. Some of them don't know how to handle their own anger."

In fact, after one 10-hour training session, three teachers quit teaching because they realized they had unresolved issues concerning violence, Parry says. "One Head Start teacher who quit told me, 'I know now why I hit my students, and until I work this out, I don't need to teach children."

"Non-violence is a way of life," says Parry. "It's the way a teacher greets her students, talks to parents and other teachers about students. Teachers have to examine that before they can work effectively with students."

The program then moves to advice for handling different classroom situations and to activities for teaching cooperation and encouraging children to talk about their feelings. Teachers are encouraged to make anti-violence lessons a part of regular classroom work. For instance, after reading Cinderella, a teacher might talk about the verbal abuse that Cinderella endured and what she could have done about it.

"We want our children early on to learn to speak up and protect themselves with words, to negotiate and resolve conflicts without violence," notes Parry.

For more information, call Anne Parry at (312) 521-5500.

Debra Williams
Expert advice

Teach children to ‘think first’

by Kevin P. Dwyer

Today, more youth die from violence than from all natural causes and diseases combined. The fear of violence erodes children’s hope and self-esteem, the foundations of their learning.

Schools, parents, children and communities are searching for remedies to this epidemic of youth violence. They want to know “what works.” Programs abound, but so far, few are old enough to have measurable effects. However, research does suggest several elements for lasting effectiveness.

A successful program must involve all school staff in teaching children to think before they act. It must recruit parents as partners in this stop-and-think coaching; and consequences for unacceptable behavior must be clear. The goal is to have children regulate their own behavior rather than rely on adults to control them.

Further, the school climate should instill respect, pride and ownership by all. Teachers should receive the professional support they need to solve classroom problems and develop high academic goals. School psychologists, counselors, social workers and nurses should be made available to children, parents and teachers for direct help and consultation. Bureaucratic barriers to these services, such as policies that require professionals to spend most of their time on paperwork or rigid rules on who can counsel children, must be identified and removed.

Children with academic problems must not be allowed to feel frustrated and fail, since these negative feelings result in anger and hopelessness, which fuel violence. No crisis can be ignored. Quick-response teams should be created to design, try, measure and, if necessary, modify interventions. Agencies outside the school must be made part of a school’s network of support.

In a recent issue of School Psychology Review, Ronald D. Stephens of the National School Safety Center concurs with these recommendations and makes several more, including:

- Establish a parents’ center in each school to encourage parent participation.
- Make the school welcoming and safe before the school year starts.
- Identify troublemakers and share information about them with other agencies.
- Establish vibrant extracurricular activities.
- Involve students in their safety by giving them a role in designing interventions and identifying problems.
- Establish clear discipline policies.

Project Achieve, developed by the School Psychology Program at the University of South Florida, exhibits many of these characteristics. Two years after it was put into use at one school, disciplinary referrals decreased 86 percent; incidents of fighting, 72 percent; and disruptive behavior, 88 percent. Suspensions declined from 13 percent of the school population to 3 percent. Special education placements decreased 91 percent, and student retention in grade virtually disappeared.

The first thing the school did was assemble a team of teachers, other staff, parents and community leaders to identify the school’s problems and devise a set of solutions; the whole staff then voted on the solutions, which included having everyone teach social skills like “stop and think.” Teachers were expected to deal with behavior problems in the classroom. However, they were assisted in designing classes that were more manageable, and encouraged to quickly seek help when problems arose. Parents were invited to be part of the school and participate in activities aimed at building parenting skills. Everyone in the school community was made to recognize that he or she is responsible for every student.

Meanwhile, Milwaukee’s public high schools have experienced some success with efforts that involve whole staffs in teaching conflict resolution, impulse control, empathy and anger management. But even with such “primary prevention programs” as Project Achieve and the Milwaukee effort, there is a need for special support for students who repeatedly strike out in response to frustration and for those who are seriously disruptive. Skill-training groups will work with some of these students; but others may need alternative programs. Again, research suggests some essential elements. Alternative programs should provide vocational skills and have the flexibility to address each child’s particular needs. They also should provide psychological counseling and should work in cooperation with other agencies. Finally, parents should be involved. The success rate of such comprehensive programs has been far higher than for programs that focus more on punishment.

Youth violence is not a school problem; it is a community problem—one that’s not limited to large urban areas. And there are no easy or cheap answers.
The chart below shows the number of arrests on school property for crimes involving the physical safety of children. They range from murder and aggravated battery to gang intimidation and reckless conduct. The '93-'94 total represents about 1 percent of total school enrollment.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrests</th>
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<tr>
<td>'90-'91</td>
<td>6,251</td>
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<tr>
<td>'91-'92</td>
<td>5,643</td>
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<td>5,261</td>
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<td>'93-'94</td>
<td>5,128</td>
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Source: CATALYST analysis of Chicago Police Department reports.

Violence continued from page 5

During that time, Esmond's staff also has become younger, which Jenkins see as a plus. "New teachers have a higher level of energy. They aren't burned out yet," he explains.

**Detention Center**

Truth Elementary on the Near North Side opened a detention center, where a counselor and an assistant work with students who otherwise would have been suspended.

"Every child in this school knows how to fight," says Principal Perneice Pugh. "Why? Because they have to fight to get to school. Plus, we have a lot of crack and cocaine babies here. They will fight at the drop of a dime, and yet they love each other."

"I don't want these kids suspended and in the streets," she adds. "They'd either get into mischief or stand around right outside the door because they have nowhere to go."

In the center, staff talk to children, calm them down and try to get to the root of the problem. Children then work on classroom assignments before being sent back to their regular classes.

The number of children being sent to the center is decreasing. Wanda Hopkins, chair of the local school council, speculates that the reason is that children know they will have to work there. "This center is not a holding area; it is a learning center," she says.

**Mental Health Team**

As part of the Comer Project, Riis Elementary on the Near West Side has created a Mental Health Team to help create a school climate that promotes learning. (See CATALYST, May 1994.)

"We are trying to help [children] learn to deal with their anger, and, so far, our school has been more or less peaceful," says Principal Susan Milojevic. "We've had kids bring knives to school, but I think we scare them to death, and that stops."

Milojevic says it also doesn't hurt that she and her staff are "old-fashioned busybodies," who keep abreast of what's happening in the community.

"When there is trouble, we often get a call from someone who says, This is going to happen, hold the kids in school for a little while longer. We also have lots of parent volunteers. We walk the streets; we visit homes. If you keep an eye on kids, they are less inclined to fight and get into trouble," she says.

Riis also has a "zero tolerance" policy on gang symbols. "No gang symbols, no earrings, no colors," insists Milojevic.

The figures on security personnel at schools were provided by The Chicago Panel on School Policy.

Paying for success

Monthly, the Board of Education's Department of Safety and Security reviews schools' reports on violations of the Uniform Discipline Code, shifting security personnel to schools with increased need.

"We lost a security guard because we were told we didn't have enough incidents," complains Marietta Beverly, principal at Clark Middle School in Austin. "Instead of rewarding us . . . we lose people. What am I supposed to do, pull back my security, so our incidents will go up and then I get my security person back?"

"We only have so many positions open to fill," responds department investigator Charles Hill. "And if we think a school needs more security, and another school doesn't, we're going to move people where they are needed."

Debra Williams

Resource guide due out soon

The Illinois Council for the Prevention of Violence has assembled a guide to violence-prevention programs, Peacing It Together: A Violence Prevention Resource for Illinois Schools

Each of the 27 programs listed in the booklet was reviewed by a broad-based, 50-member task force. Booklets are scheduled for distribution to schools throughout the state in early November.

Already, though, the council's effort has won a nod of approval from a researcher who has questioned the effectiveness of many violence-prevention programs. Writing in the May/June 1994 issue of the Harvard Education Letter, Marc Posner of the Education Development Center in Newton, Mass., cites Illinois as a good model for nudging its schools to adopt violence-prevention programs and evaluating programs to help schools make informed choices.


Other resources:

- The Center for Conflict Resolution offers materials and helps schools create peer-mediation programs. For more information, call (312) 372-6420.
- The Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution is sponsoring a series of seminars in schools, through 1995. For more information, call (312) 850-1917 or (217) 384-4118.
- The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence is working to reduce needless gun deaths and injuries through the STAR program and other projects. For more information, call (312) 920-0504.
- The Anger Clinic conducts anger-management workshops for organizations and corporations around the country. This summer, director Mitch Messer conducted a workshop for Chicago teachers as part of a Board of Education series. For more information, call Messer at (312) 263-0005.
- The National Association for Mediation in Education (NAME) offers publications and videos on conflict management, plus a newsletter that lists training sessions and conferences around the country. For more information, call (413) 545-2462.
Reform is on the move in the Chicago Public Schools. Now, more than ever before, it permeates all aspects of our organization. The good news is that it is working.

Thanks to innumerable people inside and outside the school system, this revolutionary movement continues to evolve. The ongoing collaboration with community, philanthropic, education, business, reform, and civic groups is unprecedented. Together we are on a sojourn to save our children.

We call those who have been working hand in hand with us our "critical friends." Through our critical friends, we look into mirrors that reflect our strengths, weaknesses, and needs.

Confronting shortcomings is never easy. Nevertheless, we are taking a hard look at ourselves. As a result, we are shouldering the responsibility for correcting what is ours to correct. Through reflection and correction, we are strengthening our capacity for supporting our schools.

Our primary challenge is improvement of student achievement. There are currently three strategies in place to meet that challenge. They are:
- to make our operations more efficient and effective;
- to establish measurement and accountability systems; and
- to continue improving educational processes.

Through these strategies, the schools' earlier focus on governance has shifted to a much-needed instructional focus.

In making our operations more efficient and effective, CSC Index had donated its services to analyze our processes and improve our student and school focus. We are also working with an inspector general. Together, we are uncovering corruption and mismanagement. Other initiatives include facilities and planning improvements, an information technology plan, and a new budget process. The new budget process increases school control of their resources and makes financial information more understandable.

Establishing measurement and accountability systems enables the school system to put in place learning outcomes to guide teaching and learning. An assessment system will measure the outcomes, providing the kinds of information as needed by teachers, schools, and the district as a whole in improving the educational processes. A restructuring of the research and evaluation department will improve the availability of data.

All of this is aimed at improving our educational processes. To that end, we have launched a systemwide school improvement effort - Pathways to Achievement: The Three Tiered Process. This initiative encourages student-centered learning environments, parent/community partnerships, and professional development. Other initiatives include funding for critical educational needs, a major science and mathematics effort, a small schools task force, and numerous local school efforts.

External studies of our school system indicate that approximately 45 percent of our schools have developed systemic approaches to reform, while as many as 25 percent are moving in the right direction. These schools are taking their rightful lead in reforming teaching and learning. The initiatives described above will benefit these schools as well as those that need an extra boost.

School reform is working and the school system is getting better.

While we are correcting what is ours to correct, we are not letting politicians off the hook. There is the hypocrisy of a reform structure put in place without the adequate funding, programs, and controls to make it work. There are years of gimmicks that have guaranteed the school system's financial woes. There is the continual refusal to establish adequate, equitable funding for education throughout this state. And, there is the neglect, greed, and political divisiveness that undergirds it all.

In the game of politics, politicians often become the primary stakeholders. We cannot allow this to happen. As a former United States Senator Barbara Jordan said, "the stakes are too high for government to be a spectator sport." We the people are responsible for our institutions, including our schools. We are also responsible for pressing our case to the public and to legislators. We must forge the collective will and political might to make schools thrive and to ensure students' success.
KENTUCKY

Test scores up. Five years after Kentucky enacted a sweeping reform law that overhauled school governance and finance, students have made significant improvements on at least one portion of the state's new achievement tests.

The percentage of students scoring at or above the "proficient" level in math, reading, science and social studies rose significantly in 1993-94, according to an article in the Oct. 5 issue of Education Week. (Test scores are divided into four rating categories: novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished.)

"This significant improvement in the scores is a clear indication that Kentucky's education reform effort is working," said Thomas C. Boysen, state commissioner of education. But he cautioned that the state still has a long way to go, since about 85 percent of students still score in the two lowest rating categories.

The tests are administered to 4th-, 8th- and 12th-graders, in writing, math, reading, science and social studies. Created under the reform law, the tests include portfolios, performance tests, and multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The scores just released are for the open-ended portion of the tests; other results will be released in January.

Also in January, schools will be eligible for the first time for cash rewards based on improvement—or sanctions for failing to improve. In 1992, schools received a baseline score, based on their test scores and attendance, retention, dropout and high school transition rates. They had until the end of the 1993-94 school year to improve.

While those schools that exceeded their improvement goal will get cash rewards, those that didn't will face sanctions that could include a possible takeover by outside educators.

LOS ANGELES

What's bilingual? Teachers in 24 predominantly African-American elementary schools are teaching black students who use so-called "black" English how to speak standard English, according to the October 1994 issue of Teacher Magazine.

Officials hope the program will help increase student achievement and combat the negative perceptions and low expectations many teachers have of black students because of the way they speak.

Many black students don't use standard English because "they don't know what to do to change their 'bad' English, and we don't know what to tell them to do," said Noma LeMoine, a speech pathologist who directs the program. "You can sit and tell me all day that it's 'desk' instead of 'des,' but if you don't understand that what I'm saying is a result of a different linguistic rule, how can you ever change it? That's why just correcting a student doesn't work."

The district is spending $1.8 million per year on the program. Nearly 1,000 teachers and 600 paraprofessionals, most of whom are not black, were trained for the program. Teachers were given a list outlining the linguistic differences between standard and black English—which some linguists say uses the same grammatical structure as several African languages spoken by slaves brought to America—and suggestions for discussing with students the appropriate time to use each.

Los Angeles is not using federal bilingual education funds for the program, but LeMoine believes it should. However, the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association for Bilingual Education disagree, arguing that black English is not a separate language. Linguists agree that if two language systems are "mutually intelligible," then they are not separate languages.

PHILADELPHIA

Call for change. Local leaders demanded an overhaul of the Philadelphia schools after a panel of education experts castigated the system for an "attitude of helplessness and resignation" that deprives students of a quality education, according to an article in the Sept. 28 issue of Education Week.

The report, issued in connection with a long-standing desegregation lawsuit, charges that the district has failed to push students to improve their achievement, failed to maintain buildings, neglected early childhood education (in part by cutting programs from racially isolated schools), built magnet schools mainly in predominantly white areas and set disproportionally high caps on white enrollment in magnets. Problems are worst in the district's most racially isolated schools, the report contends.

The report also faults the central office for being "perhaps the single greatest cause of [the district's] teaching and learning failures."

The panel of experts was appointed by Commonwealth Court Judge Doris A. Smith, who ruled in February that the district was guilty of shortchanging black and Hispanic students.

Among the report's recommendations are a proposal to create local school councils with hiring and firing power over teachers. Other recommendations are for smaller classes, a longer school year, more magnet schools, reducing central office staff and imposing a system of rewards and sanctions for district employees.

Rotan E. Lee, president of the School Board, said many of the recommendations overlap with a reform plan outlined recently by newly hired Supt. David W. Hornbeck, who was an architect of Kentucky's reform plan.

Lorraine V. Forte
A 20-year battle for reform begins to show results

by Dan Weissmann

T

wo years ago, when CATALYST visited Roberto Clemente High School in West Town, the school’s ambitious plans—including schools-within-schools, a new curriculum and a learning center for parents—were just off the launching pad. (See CATALYST, December 1992.) “We’re in the baby stages,” one teacher said then.

Today, many of those early initiatives are flourishing. Schools-within-schools are firmly in place, giving students a smaller “home base” in the eight-story school. And parent monitors roam the halls (see story on page 22), while other parents take classes in literacy, parenting skills and English as a Second Language, or study for a high-school diploma.

Clemente teachers have finished writing a multicultural curriculum that aims to broaden what gets taught (by including different cultures) and change how it gets taught (by suggesting active lessons).

Change also is visible outside the classrooms. In the halls, murals depicting everything from cartoon characters to leaders of radical political movements now cover the school’s cinderblock walls, giving testimony to new cultural programs. After school, the same hallways echo with the sounds of Clemente’s own salsa band, Son del Barrio.

Also impressive are some measurable results:

- The percentage of Clemente students passing all their classes is up by a third, from 33 percent in 1988-89 to 44 percent last school year.
- Several dropouts, described by school officials as “hard-core gang members,” earned diplomas from a new alternative program. (See story on page 22.)
- Twenty teachers earned masters degrees through weekend classes at the local school council helped bring to Clemente from Northern Illinois University’s Adult Continuing Education program; the program was tailored to Clemente’s staff, with classes focused on the day-to-day issues involved in teaching in a multicultural, urban school.
- Twelve parents earned high-school diplomas last year through the Parents’ Institute. One was Antonio Beltran, who since 1990 has been a community representative on Clemente’s local school council. Now, Beltran, a retired steelworker, is running for alderman. And LSC chair Cindy Rodriguez is working toward a college degree. Struck by the sight of parents older than she struggling to read simple sentences, Rodriguez says, “It made me think, ‘What am I doing with my life, anyway?’ I thought, ‘If they can do it, I guess I can too.’”

Despite these advances, however, the school’s dismal attendance, graduation and dropout rates hardly budged between 1988-89 and 1992-93. (As CATALYST goes to press, 1993-94 data are not available.)

New curriculum

Two years ago, teachers were writing a sophomore curriculum as they tested a new 9th-grade course of study. Now, the entire school has a new curriculum, and every teacher has a copy. Before the school year began, teachers spent a few days just going over the new material.

“The students have read more,
they've written more and they know more," says Patricia Boland, a Chicago Teachers Union delegate and former LSC member.

Whether standardized tests will confirm Boland's judgment is another matter, she says. "Those tests don't cover what the new curriculum is teaching, so I don't know if school reform will ever lead us to success on standardized tests."

Small schools

Two years ago, freshmen were on one floor, bilingual students were on another, and everybody else was scattered throughout the rest of the eight-story building. This year, each graduating class has its own floor—where students take three of their four major subjects—and its own administrative team, comprising an assistant principal, a dean and a few counselors. Students generally leave home base only for electives, science and physical education, each of which continues to have a floor of its own. This more structured arrangement helps make the school feel more secure and personal, says students and administrators. (See story on page 21).

Recently, LSC members have been talking about getting more mileage out of the assistant principals by requiring them to observe more classroom teaching. "They are not doing that," says Carlos Ortiz, a teacher LSC rep and Clemente's school reform coordinator. "They are concerned with discipline and attendance, and they are doing a good job with that. But if there's nothing going on in the classroom, what do you want perfect attendance for?"

If reform seems to have come more quickly to Clemente than to other high schools, perhaps that's because a head of steam had been building for more than 20 years. Intense activism in the local Puerto Rican community had centered on the school even before it was built in the early 1970s. According to Assistant Principal Edward Negron, a longtime neighborhood resident, many of the recent changes at Clemente were on protesters' lists of demands 20 years ago. He notes, for example, creation of a curriculum that includes Latin American

The Student Body

At 2,558, it almost fills the building.
Twenty years ago, Clemente replaced the old Tuley High, which had been dangerously overcrowded.

Most are Latino, mainly Puerto Rican. Poverty is high.
84% Hispanic, 12% Black, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% White, 0.2% Native American, 71% low income.

Average test scores remain far below city and state averages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10th-grade reading, IGAP</th>
<th>10th-grade math, IGAP</th>
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<tr>
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<td>154</td>
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<td>Chicago</td>
<td>182</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
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The Neighborhood

West Town, a Near Northwest Side community
"This school has been identified as a Puerto Rican institution.... In this neighborhood, there's been a struggle against gentrification; we're losing this community, and Clemente is a barricade."

—Edward Negron, assistant principal

The Educational Program

Key Objective
Make school more responsive to student, community, parent needs; cut dropout and truancy rates.

Main Changes
- Divided building into four schools-within-a-school.
- Had teachers write a new, multicultural curriculum.
- Created Parents' Institute, where adults take literacy, parenting, high-school equivalency, other courses.
- Started an alternative program for kids on the verge of dropping out.

Patricia Boland, Clemente's Chicago Teachers Union delegate and former LSC rep, uses the school's new curriculum in her 9th-grade classroom.
history and the community having a say in selection of the principal.

Activism was running high when the first local school council was elected in 1989. The previous year, three white Clemente teachers had vented their frustrations about the school in a long interview with the Reader magazine. To many local residents and faculty members, the teachers' complaints about the students and the neighborhood, both mostly latino, smacked of racism.

Two of the three teachers quickly left the school, but the third resolved to stay, triggering protests that grew to include community groups and churches and became weekly rituals outside the school.

Then, school reform brought the beginning of what appears to be a happy ending. A slate of candidates chosen by the protesters won the first local school council election in 1989. The new council commissioned a report from an outside consultant to help focus its efforts to make the school more responsive to the community. The report outlined many of the strategies Clemente has pursued ever since, including minischools, a multicultural curriculum and the parent-learning center.

Since then, one of the reformers' biggest worries—bringing resistant teachers "on board"—has largely dissipated, as many old-timers took early retirement. About a third of the school's staff retired in the last two years, and a few others transferred out, bringing new teachers to Clemente.

Many of the newcomers are also new to teaching, which administrators and veteran teachers consider a double-edged sword. On one side, the newcomers are enthusiastic and open to innovation. On the other, they're just learning the craft of teaching. "I wouldn't give you ten dollars for any day of my first five years of teaching," jokes Boland. "It's rough."

New teachers are chosen, not by the principal alone, but by a committee that includes staff and parents. Assistant principal Edward Negron proudly cites that which many classrooms still lack.

Disagreements aside, relationships seem to be getting more harmonious. The council, for its part, has made a point of including teachers in the reform process. The new curriculum was written by Clemente teachers, with some guidance by outside consultants. Also, the council has made staff development a priority.

The graduate program that awarded masters degrees to 20 Clemente teachers last year is the most tangible evidence of a shared commitment to staff development. And the on-site classes and the local focus of their content contributed to a sense of community among the teachers, says teacher Ellen Kennedy. "Many of us had been in masters' programs before and never finished them," she notes. "Here, there was a sense of commitment to each other."

"There was a very strong sense of multiracial unity in the group," she adds. Kennedy, who is white, views the group's unity as an important step forward for the school—a step toward "a vision that is anti-racist, but not separatist."

Says Boland, "We've been dragged kicking and screaming into a new era, and we're going to love it."

"We've been dragged kicking and screaming into a new era, and we're going to love it."
—Patricia Boland, teacher

process as an example of how the school has "collectivized decision making."

Of the veteran teachers who remain, many, including Boland and history teacher Judith Gearon, say they're pleased with the reforms. Not that there aren't quibbles. Gearon, for instance, questions the council's decision to spend $31,000 to send a group of students and faculty on a trip to Puerto Rico and Mexico this year. Local activist José López cites the trip as one of the school's accomplishments, pointing to the importance of giving Latino students a real taste of their cultural heritage. Gearon wonders if the money might not be better spent on computers, for instance,
A new school for 'fed-up' kids

by Dan Weissmann

Enrique Romero taught his first lesson in Clemente's Satellite program as he and his students were walking to their off-campus classroom on the first day of school last year. Several students warned Romero that while they wouldn't give him any trouble, they did intend to "bust"—get high—during class sometimes.

Instead of telling the students "no way" or threatening reprisals, Romero used the warning as a springboard for a physiology lesson. He got the students to hyperventilate until they were dizzy. "See?" he told them. "You can get high on pure oxygen. So what do you need to smoke weed for?"

Romero's impromptu lesson is emblematic of the Satellite, a "second-chance" program for kids who were on the verge of dropping out or being kicked out of Clemente. "These kids were totally fed up with traditional schooling," Romero explains. "The idea was to make school so interesting that they would want to be there. So anything that they wanted to know about, we'd learn about: drugs, martial arts, alternative medicine, acupuncture . . . ."

As a result, Romero took his students on field trips and brought in speakers that included lawyers, drug-abuse prevention specialists, ex-convicts, a tai chi master and school officials, including Principal Lou Gerald, whom Romero says got "boozed out of the Satellite."

Romero contends that the problem his students had with traditional schooling was not that they weren't smart enough for it but, rather, that it wasn't smart enough for them. "In a managed environment like Clemente, they're starved intellectually," he says.

The challenge for Satellite teachers was getting students to apply their talents to school and other legal enterprises. Some Satellite students made money dealing drugs. "I would tell them, 'With the skills you have from selling drugs, you could manage any business.' I wanted to turn them from having a business selling drugs to running a business they could have the rest of their lives."

"One thing all these kids have in common is that they have no future, as far as they can see."

—Enrique Romero, teacher

The problem was, "the rest of their lives" did not seem like a long-term proposition. "One thing all these kids have in common," Romero notes, "is that they have no future, as far as they can see. They could be dead tomorrow. And they see themselves as alien in our society because they don't see a place for themselves in the future."

Political outlook

The Satellite teachers believe society is to blame, and that orientation carries over into their lessons, which have a different political outlook than traditional U.S. classrooms.

For instance, the day that CATALYST visited the Satellite program, teacher Marcos Vilar and his students were talking about cimarrones, runaway slaves in South America who built their own societies; jibaros, poor European immigrants who left indentured servitude in Puerto Rican cities to make their own society in the countryside; and piratas, or pirates.

Vilar reminded the class that piratas were like the cimarrones and the jibaros, in that they were creating a society of their own, outside of the colonial society; the main difference, he said, was that pirates were a coastal people.

"They were accused of stealing gold and riches from Europeans," he acknowledged, "but in reality the Europeans had no right to that gold either. They had enslaved Indians and forced them to mine that gold from their own country. So calling these people pirates was a way of criminalizing people who wanted to be on their own."

Just as some of the content of Satellite instruction is outside the mainstream of American schooling, so, too, is the Satellite's structure. One teacher works with one group of students in one room for three and a half hours each day. The Satellite program had two such classrooms last year, each in a different off-campus location.

The idea was to keep distractions to a minimum and to provide a location that was safe for all the students. For some, simply getting to Clemente had been problematic because they had to cross gang turf boundaries.

This fall, Satellite classes are meeting at Clemente while lawyers at the Board of Education iron out formal contracts with the organizations hosting off-campus classes. Clemente officials say they hope to move classes to the off-campus sites within a month.
With the Satellite "grounded" at Clemente this fall, the program has been waiting to revive its most ambitious experiment from last year, recruiting dropouts—kids whom Romero and others at the school call "hard-core gang members."

'Not selling dreams'

"Joey," a gang leader who had gotten kicked out his freshman year for fighting, was one of last year's recruits. At the time, he was looking for a steady job—maybe a city job. "A friend told me that to get a city job, I had to kick up to somebody political," he says. He wound up talking with José López, director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, which has strong ties to the school. (López, a professor at Northeastern Illinois University and Columbia College, is also a member of CATALYST's editorial board.)

López recommended that Joey get an education, not just a job. "All kinds of schools used to sell me dreams," but none had been able to help him get a diploma. "That was aggravating me, so I didn't trust nobody!"

López assured Joey that this program would be different, and encouraged him to get some friends to join him. Joey lined up several dozen gang members, and, soon, Romero's Satellite was serving kids from Clemente in the morning and kids from the street in the afternoon.

The results were mixed. Not all of Joey's friends stuck with the program. "My homies didn't believe me," he says. "They were like, 'Aw, we've tried those things. They're just selling us dreams!'"

But Joey and five of his friends got credit for their work at the Satellite through a night school program that Malcolm X College runs at Clemente. They got their diplomas over the summer.

Now that other gang members have seen a neighborhood leader like Joey graduate from the Satellite, Romero believes the program will have more credibility. Now, he says, street kids are asking him when the off-campus classes are going to start again.

Joey endorses the Satellite program, even though he doesn't think much of Clemente as a whole. "If they had a bunch of Enriques at that school, they'd be doing all right!" he says. An autobiography he wrote for class concludes: "This program didn't But I repeat didn't sell no Dreams!"

As an example of work that earned him a diploma, Joey's autobiography raises some questions about the Satellite, though. Many of its dozens of pages are gripping, but they're also full of mechanical flaws—misspelled words, grammatical and punctuation errors. "There wasn't enough time," says teacher Vilar, to make sure students dotted every "i" and crossed every "t."

"What we're doing with the Satellite program may not be perfect," says Vilar, "and it may not be the solution for these kids. But there's such a lack of hope among these kids, we've got to do something. If you want to look at something that's not working, why not look at the school system as a whole?"

Only a stopgap

The program was moderately successful last year; of its 59 students from Clemente, 29 are back in the Satellite this year, 22 are back in Clemente's regular program, and 12 have transferred to other high schools. Only 5 students are unaccounted for.

'It's been quiet. There's too many parents.'

Clemente High School has shunned metal detectors and employs fewer security monitors than it did before reform. Yet the school is safer and calmer than ever before.

"I remember when I first came here, two and a half years ago," says teacher Marcos Vilar. "Walking through the halls, there was an incredible feeling of tension. At any moment, anything could happen. And it did. There were fights, and kids got thrown through those glass windows."

These days, the school "is slower," says José Rivera, a Clemente senior, as he lounges in the lobby at lunchtime. "It's calmed down. Before, it was wild—a lot of gang wars. Students didn't want to come to class."

Looking around the near-empty lobby, he notes, "Right now, you can tell: It's nobody here. It used to be full. There were people eating, wandering around, not going to class."

When it comes to security, says Vilar, "You have two choices: You can have a very heavy police presence and empower teachers to be strict disciplinarians. That's one choice. Or, you can create a learning environment where people feel relaxed."

Clemente has opted for the latter.

So, instead of beefing up its security staff, as most other Chicago high schools have done, or turning teachers into cops, it hired parents, 50 of them, and placed them in the halls. Although the parents are officially hired as student mentors, their presence in the halls makes them de facto supplements to the security staff.

The parents work part time in shifts for $5 an hour—an arrangement that makes economic sense for both parties. For the school, the parents are a bargain, compared to traditional security guards. For many of the parents, the Clemente paycheck makes a big difference.

More important, says local school council chair Cindy Rodriguez, is that the parents are effective. "Kids have 10 times as much respect for parents as they do for teachers," she says. "You hear kids saying things like 'Stop that! That one knows my mom!' Plus, kids know that this is a parent—this is someone who cares."

Parent Gina Crespo, who works on the seventh floor, echoes Rodriguez. "As long as my daughter is here, I'm gonna be here, even if I have to volunteer. Because I care."

Rodriguez says parents also tend to have a friendlier manner. "Teachers
The Satellite program is a stopgap, and it can never be more than that, says Vilar's colleague Romero, who changed jobs to become a dean at Clemente this year.

"If we had the budget of the military, we couldn't solve the problem," he says. "To think that there could be some magic solution just because our program was successful, that's a falsehood."

What students really need, he believes, are parents who can give them some economic and emotional stability to help them make it in the world. A political commitment doesn't hurt either. He cites the "solid working-class values" his mother gave him.

A nurse, she worked hard, but made sure to take the family bowling on Saturdays, to church on Sundays and to political rallies during the week, "when she could sneak it in."

His mother's politics played an important role in Enrique's coming-of-age. "When I told my mother I wanted to join the armed forces after high school, she almost had a heart attack!" he recalls. "She said, 'I'd rather you stay here and kill racist policemen than kill people in another country.'" Finally, she told him at least to go to college first; then, if he still wanted to join the military, that would be his business. As it turned out, he didn't.

Last year, Romero's mother joined her son as one of the two aides in the Satellite.

"If everybody had a parent like mine, they could have made it," Romero says. "These kids need somebody like that. But I can only be a parent to 25 or 30 people, and we're already playing a role that we're not supposed to."

Indeed. On the seventh floor, parent Evelyn Toledo exchanges smiles and little jokes as she checks IDs of students going to lunch. She laughs quietly at anyone she catches trying to sneak in.

Students agree that the parental presence has made Clemente safer.

"Last year, there was tall people [big crowds] in the hallways," says a senior named Jaime. "This year, it's been quiet. They have too many parents working here."

Reducing chaos

While parents in the halls are the most visible of Clemente's security measures, two other initiatives, schools-within-schools and a Satellite program, have made important contributions.

Under schools-within-schools, every graduating class is based on its own floor and has its own counseling staff, assistant principal and dean. The arrangement makes for a more intimate, less chaotic environment for the school's 2,600 students.

"We know our students better than anybody else," says Assistant Principal Eddie Negron, who runs the fifth floor, where sophomores are based. "With schools-within-schools, you know every child's name, and a lot of their parents. There is no alienation. I could walk into the lunchroom on this floor right now and know everybody there."

"Yeah, it's very different," says senior Aracely Mejias. "When I first came here, it was so wild. That changed between sophomore and junior year, when they put us on separate floors."

Under the school's Satellite program, students on the verge of dropping out or being pushed out get another chance—in a setting that separates them from other students.

"We took 90 kids who were at risk, and were able to save them by giving them a chance to go to school," says Negron. "And it gives the other 90 percent of the school the chance to not have to deal with troublemaking kids."

Dan Weissmann
Moving The Reform Agenda To The Classroom: First Steps

by Deborah Walsh

Last year, Lynn taught in a school system that was driven by a standardized multiple choice test, which bore little or no relation to the text book she was required to use, which bore little or no relation to the system's 400 objectives for her grade. She was also required to give state tests which bore little or no relation to the above.

Next year, Lynn might actually teach in a system that not only has replaced the 400 objectives (or nearly 5000 for grades K-12) - the "trees" - with a picture of the "forest": explicit and clear expectations of what students should know and be able to do (60 each for benchmark points at the end of grades 4, 8, and 11) leaving Lynn and her colleagues to define the shape, size and color of the trees. They will determine which text book, if any, or other materials would best help students meet the expectations. The system is planning to eliminate the standardized test and replace it with an even more rigorous system-wide assessment that includes and goes beyond the basics, but is explicitly aligned with the expectations.

The system is Chicago, and it is a system, while not unique in its previous lack of alignment and continuity, is unique in trying to rectify the situation via a partnership with the CTU. The "Framework for Transforming Teaching and Learning" is meant to be exactly that: a framework or scaffold (the outlines of the forest) by which to create a fair system of continuity, linked to the highest possible expectations for what every Chicago school child should know and be able to do to survive and thrive in today's world. It provides a common understanding of the essentials of a good education (with the understanding that schools can add expectations) that holds true across this very mobile community.

Yet after establishing the framework, the idea is that system will get out of the way and let local school people figure out the best way to help their children meet these expectations.

We are serious about our commitment to these expectations & to supporting teachers & students in successfully achieving them.

Last year, a representative group of 30 Chicago teachers examined the best thinking embodied in the many national standard-setting efforts in every subject. They then created a synthesis for Chicago to critique and ultimately adopt for its 580 schools. The document, an attractive colorful chart depicting the state goals and Chicago's new expectations for students at the end of grades 4, 8, and 11, was meant to be political as well as an educational statement. It was meant to say that our past expectations weren't good enough for the present; that not only was society raising the bar on the high jump, the schools were too; that we wouldn't be satisfied with a proportion of our students meeting them but that we had to commit to helping all of our students meet these high expectations.

This document is unique in another respect: not only does it have the logo of the Chicago Public Schools, it also carries the union label. We are serious about our commitment to these expectations and to supporting teachers and their students in successfully achieving them. We know the history of many board policies that went nowhere and we are working hard to ensure that doesn't happen with this policy. We are part of the development of the system-wide assessment and have established 10 sites around the city to provide quality professional development tied to the Framework. We believe this alignment between expectations and assessment (and its assumption that school people can figure out how to get there) is what empowerment at school site decision making is all about.

We recognize that with the bold reforms here, an anti-system feeling was created in many arenas. While understandable, given the experience of many and the allure of new freedom, the reforms changed - but did not abolish -- the system. Without something binding us together, we are 580 little fiefdoms each doing its own thing without a context. We need a system like we need a government. The idea isn't bad but so often the reality is. That reality for the Chicago Public School system was changed dramatically in 1988. If public education is to survive in Chicago (and there is no guarantee that it will: witness the recent sell-out of the Hartford, Connecticut public schools,) we have to take those reforms all the way to the classroom. And the way to do that is to be clear about what our kids need, assess whether they are getting it and provide the resources and support at the school level for meeting our most important challenge and responsibility: giving our children the education they deserve.

Deborah Walsh is the Director of the Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center.
‘Privatization’ heading to Chicago public schools?

by Lorraine Forte

Is privatization, in some form, coming to the Chicago public schools? There are signs pointing in that direction. For one, a consultant to the Chicago School Finance Authority is set to issue a report in early November on the possible use of private contractors to perform custodial and maintenance services.

Second, one of the city’s universities is contemplating a bid to manage some schools, according to Deputy Mayor for Education Leonard Dominguez, who says a representative broached the idea with him not long ago. “I suspect there might be some kind of talks,” he says. Such an approach is being tried in Massachusetts, where Boston University stepped in to manage the failing Chelsea Public Schools in 1989.

The most radical idea comes from School Board President Sharon Grant, who is promoting a pilot project to turn over a number of schools to a private firm. She told CATALYST she has “a couple of local school councils” lined up to participate.

Grant says she and others at Pershing Road already have met with officials of the New York-based Edison Project, a brainchild of entrepreneur Chris Whittle; as yet, she adds, there is no concrete plan or timetable. Grant says she has not met with representatives from Education Alternatives Inc., the other leader in the school privatization movement.

The local media spotlight focused briefly on private management of schools when Mayor Richard M. Daley told reporters in early October that the School Board ought to consider “privatization” to improve schools and keep middle-class families from fleeing the city. His comment came several days after a vote by the Hartford (Conn.) School Board to turn over management of their entire school district to Minneapolis-based Education Alternatives Inc., known as EAI. (See story on page 28.)

It wasn’t clear from Daley’s remarks what he had in mind; and Dominguez says the mayor was merely “putting stuff on the table” for discussion. But he adds, “We’ve still got a third of Parent/Community Council, who opposes any form of privatization. “He’s now clearly in favor of it.”

Deanes is hoping the issue plays a big role in the 1995 mayoral campaign. Announced mayoral challenger Joseph Gardner criticized Daley’s remarks, saying they “send tremors through the ranks, and we have enough of a morale problem [in the system] as it is.”

In Springfield, any move toward privatization would score points with suburban and Downstate legislators, who generally are scornful of Chicago school management and school unions.

That’s a big part of Grant’s rationale for promoting a pilot project. “We’ve got the General Assembly breathing down our backs, a $290 million deficit—and that’s without a raise for teachers,” she points out. “When you go to the General Assembly, the only way you get things to move is to put things on the table.”

“If this will impact on student

“We’ve still got a third of schools not responding to reform. What do we do with those?”

—Leonard Dominguez, deputy mayor

schools not responding to reform. What do we do with those? Do we just forget about them?”

Critics expect Daley to keep pressing the issue, since he has been an obvious fan of privatization. Under his tenure, parking ticket collections, abandoned car towing and other city services have been turned over to private companies, and next year’s proposed city budget calls for more of the same.

“I don’t think he’s [Daley] going to dance around the issue any more,” says James Deanes, an African-American school activist and head of the achievement, we need to try it,” Grant continues. “We’re rejecting something out of hand just because it hasn’t been tried.”

Despite the support of Grant and likely support of Daley, a pilot project is far from a certainty. For one, Edison is looking to move into states that have charter-school legislation, “and that hasn’t passed in Illinois yet,” notes Deborah McGriff, former superintendent of Detroit Public Schools and now an Edison senior vice president. In general, such legislation relaxes state regulations and paves the way for charter schools to
waive union contract provisions.

Local school councils at pilot schools would have to buy into the idea, too. But as long as councils are given a choice, Grant and others contend, such a project would not be anti-reform.

Critics maintain, though, that for-profit companies shouldn't be given the opportunity to make even the tiniest inroad into the system. Even if councils give their approval, "that's taking advantage of people who don't understand the complexity of the issue," says Deanes. "We don't have the luxury of experimenting with our children. Reform hasn't been given a chance to work, with the resources needed in place."

Private companies would use pilots as a "loss leader" to get a toehold in the system, then bite off more and more pieces, warns Chicago Teachers Union spokesperson Jackie Gallagher.

Sheila Castillo, executive director of the Chicago Association of Local School Councils, or CALSC, also is skeptical. "With them, it's not what makes good educational sense, but what makes financial sense," she says.

If the board is considering a pilot project for failing schools, Castillo and others say, it should look to the Reform Act first. The act gives subdistrict offices the power to intervene in failing schools, but so far, that hasn't happened. If schools and the subdistricts turn to private management, says Castillo, that's OK. "But it's important to follow that process."

Overall, she adds, "Someone needs to give some serious thought to the upside and the downside [of privatization], or no one will be able to say, 'Yes, we looked at that, and it won't work.' It's going to keep rearing its head until someone can say it's the right way or the wrong way to go."

No guarantees

Inge Fryklund, the Finance Authority consultant who is preparing the report on privatizing custodial services, says she has "no preconceived notions" about the best way to go. But, she notes, "The school system does things in-house that no other business does. Law firms, brokerage houses—they don't keep janitors on staff." (Fryklund, a former city parking administrator, brought in private companies to overhaul parking-ticket collections.)

There have been rumblings since spring that such a shift might be in the works. In April, Finance Authority Chairman Martin Koldyke called for privatizing the board's facilities department, after consultants KPMG Peat Marwick and Washington, Pittman & McKeever issued a report criticizing board spending on maintenance and operations.

Using data from the board and an annual survey by American School & University magazine, the report noted that Chicago spends $739 per student, while the national average is $478 and the regional average is $449. But, as the June issue of the newsletter Substance points out, that's not a valid comparison; regional and national averages are skewed downward because the vast majority of school districts are smaller and have fewer problems and lower costs than Chicago.

"It would only make sense to compare Chicago to other large urban school districts," says Fred Hess, executive director of the Chicago Panel on School Policy. Three years ago, Hess's organization suggested to former Supt. Ted Kimbrough that the board eliminate in-house trades positions, such as carpenters and electricians, and allow schools to hire private contractors. The savings, if any, he said, "should be spent on better service."

If the school system is looking to save money, privatization is not a sure bet. Contractors can—and often do—overbill their customers, says Jarvis Williams, president of Service Employees International Union Local 46, whose members include 4,600 board custodians. In recent years, audits of School Board spending confirm the practice; one audit found $7 million in overcharges to the board's facilities department.

Fryklund has not completed estimates of any possible cost savings. But "given all the deferred maintenance [throughout the system], every school building needs something. Any money that can be saved should be given back to those schools," she says, to pay for any needed improvements.

Union battle lines

Privatization doesn't guarantee efficiency, either. The School Board uses private bus companies to transport students, but the Finance Authority report found "significant opportunities" to cut transportation costs by reorganizing bus routes and student pick-up schedules.

If Fryklund recommends private maintenance, battle lines are certain to be drawn by the blue-collar unions. But it's unclear how much support they might get from the teachers union. (Up until the early '80s, blue-collar unions crossed CTU picket lines.)

"As a union person, I would hate to see union jobs lost," says the CTU's Gallagher. "But I think there is going to have to be some look-and-see on all our plates."

There's also opposition brewing in some sectors of the black community:
"It's the same reason some [blacks] were against reform, because of suspicions that it was just a ploy to move out a mass amount of black folk," says activist Deanes.

About 80 percent of custodial workers are black; if their positions are eliminated, "their career ladder would be decimated," Williams notes. For maintenance employees, the usual route of advancement is from custodian to fireman to engineer.

To minimize the impact on minority employees, Grant suggests that custodial workers be given assistance in starting their own small businesses. "There is a way to do it so that you don't hurt people," she insists.

The business community and some local school councils are likely to applaud private custodial service as a route to more local control and better service.

"I think there are specific pieces of running a school that drive [LSCs] crazy because you have no control over it," says Castillo of CALSC. "Maintenance is probably the biggest."

That same goal, however, could be achieved by giving principals direct authority over all the workers in a school, Deanes observes. "If people aren't doing the job, you don't change the job, you change the person."

Williams contends custodians are unfairly blamed when schools aren't spotless; he faults the board for failing to keep up with heavy maintenance, making it harder and more time-consuming to keep schools clean.

Meanwhile, there seems little chance that a private firm will take over central office, not to mention the entire district. Reform is showing glimmers of real progress, and the business and philanthropic communities are investing substantial time and money in "reengineering" administrative functions.

"We've gone the route of local control," notes John Ayers, president of Leadership for Quality Education.

"Let's not throw the baby out with the bath water. We've got a process here that's working."

The board's perennial fiscal problems are reason enough not to consider districtwide privatization, says the CTU's Gallagher. "For any system that is consistently hundreds of millions of dollars in debt, it makes no sense to say we're going to turn it over to a for-profit company."

In the end, says Deanes, "There is no cure-all [to improve education] except hard work. The grass is not greener; the sky is not bluer where there's privatization."

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**Edison Project maps 10 steps to better schools**

More computers, a longer school day and no vocational education are among the hallmarks of the Edison Project, which has given up its initial strategy of creating schools from scratch in favor of managing public schools.

"Many educators, mayors and so forth urged us not to invest money in [new] buildings, but instead to spend money on teacher training and other improvement," says Deborah McGriff, a former Detroit school superintendent who is now an Edison senior vice president.

Also, when Edison was launched, there was a Republican administration in Washington D.C. that was pushing school vouchers, which would have been a boon to its initial plans.

Edison's approach is based on 10 principles:

**Better Organization** Schools are divided into smaller "academies" based on grade level (for example, the elementary academy includes grades 3-5). Teams of teachers are paired with groups of students and stay with them while students are in each academy.

**Better Use of Time** The regular school day is 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for kindergarten through 2nd grade, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for 3rd grade and up. An optional before-school program begins at 7 a.m., an after-school program runs from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The school year is 210 days, compared to the 180-day national average. A summer school program runs for six weeks. The extra time gives students two additional years of schooling by the time they graduate, Edison contends.

**Challenging Curriculum** Tracking and vocational education is eliminated, and art, music, dance, drama and foreign language instruction are offered at every grade level. The goal is to give every student a solid grounding in five areas: humanities and the arts, math and science, character and ethics, practical arts and skills and health and fitness.

**Improved Teaching** These include cooperative learning, Socratic seminars, hands-on activities and direct instruction.

**Assessment for Accountability** Portfolios, projects and Advanced Placement exams are used, in addition to state-required achievement tests.

**Professional Teaching Environment** All teachers receive personal computers. Two hours of planning time is built into the school day, and faculty can advance through four levels: resident, teacher, senior teacher and master teacher. When Edison first steps in, teachers receive six weeks of staff development before school begins; ongoing training is held throughout the year.

**Technology** Each student's family is given a home computer that is networked with the school. Classroom computers are hooked into a nationwide network that allows them to communicate with other Edison schools and access various education databases. Extensive educational software is used.

**Partnership with Parents** Families meet with teachers at least four times a year for in-depth discussions on the Quarterly Learning Contract, which spells out the goals and responsibilities of each student, family and school.

**Partnership with the Community** Edison designs 75 percent of a school's curriculum, while the school designs the rest to fit community interests. Students are involved in community service projects, and each school has a family social worker.

**An Adequate Support System** Teachers and principals make most decisions, with support from other schools in the network.

Edison requires a school district to pay, for each child, the national average of per-pupil spending—currently $5,982, according to the Council of the Great City Schools.

Edison currently has plans to open schools in Michigan; Wichita, Kans.; Texas; Massachusetts; and Dade County, Fla., says McGriff.

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**Lorraine Porte**
Private management cropping up in other cities

by Lorraine Forte

A small but increasing number of school boards are considering private management. Here's a snapshot of efforts in four cities.

HARTFORD, CONN.

"We are absolutely convinced that the current way of operating our schools does not work and cannot work."

That's what Hartford School Board member Edward J. Carroll said after the board voted 6 to 3 to turn over management of the city's 32 schools to Minneapolis-based Education Alternatives Inc., known as EAI, for five years. The district is now the first in the country to be wholly managed by a private firm. (In Minneapolis, the president of a consulting firm now serves as superintendent, but does not control the district's budget; educational tasks also remain under the control of school officials.)

EAI must honor the district's existing union contracts but has the right to renegotiate those contracts when they expire.

Controversy is still swirling around the deal, however, according to articles in the Hartford Courant. City attorney Pedro Segarra refused to sign the EAI contract, contending the agreement is illegal without his signature. He said that if the school district moved to pay EAI, the city would withhold the school system's money.

The board contends it has the legal right to sign contracts without city approval, and warned that it will seek to secede from city control and file a lawsuit against the city to obtain the funds.

MILWAUKEE, WIS.

Union opposition and rigid state laws killed an effort, spearheaded by Supt. Howard Fuller, to turn over some schools to a private firm.

Fuller and proponents saw the move as a way of bringing more innovation to the district. In January, the board gave Fuller the go-ahead to negotiate with the New York-based Edison Project. Fuller and a group of administrators, principals and other leaders met with Edison and EAI, but chose Edison for the venture.

In August, however, Edison withdrew from the negotiations, citing union opposition and saying the state's charter school laws (which would have governed the venture) were too rigid.

Fuller and other proponents have vowed to continue their efforts, including pushing for new legislation that would establish charter schools as separate entities within a district and allow them to negotiate their own union contracts.

Baltimore, MD.

Until the Hartford deal, the most closely watched school privatization experiment in the country was in Baltimore, where EAI took over nine of the city's 178 schools in 1992.

In May this year, the American Federation of Teachers released a 71-page report that sharply criticized the venture. Among the report's charges: that test scores and attendance rates fell in EAI schools, while increasing citywide; that EAI cut teacher aides and other staff, replacing them with interns at lower pay; and that EAI cut special education services.

But Baltimore Public Schools spokesman Nat Harrington contends the AFT unfairly used data from the first year of the venture to paint a false picture of mismanagement. "We're seeing a much different picture now," he adds. "Any large-scale change will cause disruption in a system."

Harrington blames the local teachers union for contributing to the chaos and the decline in test scores. When some teachers left the nine schools, substitutes had to take their place, disrupting the pace of instruction, "and you know that if you have one or two classrooms that score low on tests, it brings your whole school down," he says.

Each classroom in the nine schools...
now has computers, Harrington says, and teachers are now getting intensive staff development—"that's what makes the whole thing work." Only those teacher aides who did not hold a bachelor's degree were replaced by interns who are required to have a degree.

Extensive maintenance was done on the schools during the summer of 1992 by Johnson Controls-Facility Management Services. "They made those buildings sparkle from top to bottom," Harrington reports. Union custodial workers were given the option of taking non-union jobs with Johnson Controls or being transferred to other schools.

As for the criticisms involving special education, Harrington claims that "some schools had 25 to 30 percent of kids in special ed, and that's way too high."

The board has not compiled data to refute the AFT's report—and doesn't intend to. Harrington's standard reply to critics is: "Come visit our schools. Don't read what numbers others say, don't read what we say. Come see for yourself."

Education reporter Curtis Lawrence of the Milwaukee Journal did just that, as the battle over privatization in Milwaukee was heating up. His conclusion: that EAI was "doing good things, but nothing that some of the more innovative schools here [in Milwaukee] aren't doing." Meanwhile, the University of Maryland is due to begin an independent evaluation of the project soon.

94, math scores are up in classes where teachers received special training, and the entire K-12 curriculum is being overhauled by a group of teachers, principals and university faculty. More parents are participating in a literacy program sponsored by the district.

Still, problems remain. After declining briefly, the annual dropout rate increased 5 percentage points last year—to 13 percent. And while more students are taking the SAT, scores remain very low. Elementary attendance rates are up somewhat, but attendance at the district's only high school declined from 82 percent in 1988-89 to 78 percent in 1993-94.

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Schools to share $20 million pot

by Michael Klonsky

A $20 million pot has been opened for staff development, under Supt. Argie Johnson's Three-Tier Process for School Improvement.

Half the money will come from the School Board's 1993-94 surplus. Schools will receive $250 for every teacher and $10 for every student.

The other half will come from money the board is obligated to spend under its desegregation program. Only "racially identifiable," that is, segregated, schools will be eligible for this money, which will be distributed on the basis of a school's enrollment, its relative need for improvement and the amount of desegregation money it has received in the past. Schools could receive from $30,000 to $100,000 over the next three to five years.

Regardless of the source, schools must spend the money to shore up weaknesses that they identify in a new program of self-assessment, scheduled to begin this month for the 119 schools that are up for a state accountability review next school year.

The self-assessment will focus on five areas associated with student achievement, including the quality of learning experiences and partnerships with parents and the community. At this point, it's unclear what role test scores and other hard data will play. It is also unclear how schools' future performance will be reviewed.

It is Johnson's hope, though, that this still-evolving school accountability program will be accepted by the Illinois State Board of Education as a replacement for the state's accountability program.

"We want a waiver because we have a better process than theirs, which is mainly a paper shuffle," says Karen Carlson, program director for Leadership for Quality Education, one of the reform groups working with Johnson.

The city and state seem to be taking different tactics, however. Chicago is looking for evidence of "best practice" in curriculum, instruction and school operation; Illinois is looking for progress toward state learning goals.

Meanwhile, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory is developing a database of resources, teams of experts are being assembled, and 12 schools that have been successful in particular areas will become learning sites for other schools.

Schools will be free to decide what kind of help they want, though.

Olivia Watkins, assistant superintendent for training and development, is overseeing the Three Tier Process, which has changed radically since Johnson first proposed it last January. Initially, Johnson had emphasized test scores and planned to put schools into one of three categories, with those in the bottom tagged for some kind of centrally-directed intervention.

Now, the plan doesn't even have three tiers. And the issue of "remediation," or action on the most troubled schools, has been handed to Pat Harvey, Johnson's executive assistant.

Here, too, it's unclear what's going to happen. Under the Reform Act, subdistrict superintendents may, with the approval of subdistrict councils, intervene at schools that are not following their school improvement plans. During five years of reform, there has been no such intervention, and Johnson has indicated she believes central office should act.

However, some school reformers, including Parents United for Responsible Education (P.U.R.E.), are resisting any remediation, for fear it will turn into reprisals against schools that are at odds with their subdistrict superintendents.
COMINGS and goings

MOVING IN/ON Gretchen McDowell, co-chair of the education committee of the Beverly Area Planning Association and a long-time PTA official, has been named to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Richard Laine, executive director of the Coalition for Educational Rights, has been named associate superintendent for finance and administrative services for the Illinois State Board of Education.

AT PERSHING ROAD The School Board has hired former U.S. Attorney Antonio Valakas to assist in investigating records subpoenaed by the Cook County State's Attorney's office in connection with a probe of the board's facilities department, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.

GOLDEN APPLE Dec. 2 is the deadline to nominate Chicago-area high school teachers for the 10th annual Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. Ten nominees will be chosen for the award and will receive a $2,500 grant, a paid sabbatical at Northwestern University, and a computer. To receive a nomination form or get eligibility requirements, call (312) 407-0006 or write the Golden Apple Foundation, 8 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 700, Chicago, IL 60603-3318.

BIG APPLE New York School's Chancellor Ramon Cortines chose Barry Sullivan, former chair of First Chicago Bank, as his chief operating officer, riling New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in the process. Sullivan had worked on economic development for Giuliani's predecessor Mayor David Dinkins, whom Giuliani defeated. Coming to Sullivan's defense in the Oct. 7 issue of New York Magazine, Chicagoan John Ayers, president of Leadership for Quality Education, said: "Barry Sullivan is in his own lane." Ayers also tells of Sullivan's leadership in getting corporations to support Chicago school reform. "Like Giuliani, he can be gruff and badger people to act. He did it in Chicago, and the city is better for the experience."

PROJECT SUCCESS Twelve Chicago service organizations and nearby schools will receive one-time grants of $15,000 to launch coordinated efforts to provide health and social services. The grants come from the state's Project Success.

The community organizations and their school partners are: Albany Park Community Center (Haugen, Valtu, Hibbard), Community Services West (school names not available), COMPRAND Youth & Women's Services (Henderson, Kershaw, Banerker), DuSable Cluster Initiative (Hartigan, Farren, Beethoven), Gateway Foundation (Coomley), Habilitative System Inc. (Heffernan), Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (Reavis, Fuller, Price), Loyola University Chicago, Graduate School (Gale), Ravenswood Community Mental Health Center (Field), Southeast Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center (Carver Primary, Carver Middle, White), Universal Family Connection (White), Westside Health Authority (Lewis, Heffernan).

FUNDING EQUITY SETBACK The Illinois Appellate Court dismissed a lawsuit charging that the state's school funding system is unconstitutional because it relies too heavily on property taxes, creating wide disparities in funding among districts. The suit, filed by a group of 37 school districts, initially was dismissed in 1992 by a Cook County Circuit Court judge. The group plans to appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court.

ENTERING POLITICS A current and a former local school council member have entered the political arena as candidates on the Harold Washington Party ticket. Navonne Robinson, a parent LSC member at Curtis Elementary, is a candidate for commissioner of the Board of Tax Appeals; Herman W. Baker Jr., former chair of the Harlan High School LSC, is running for county clerk.

STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY "How teen moms can build strong families" and "How single parents can help teenagers regulate sexual feelings and behaviors" are among the topics for a upcoming symposium organized by Scholarship and Guidance Association. The symposium will be held from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Nov. 9 at the Congress Hotel, 240 S. Michigan Ave. For more information and to register, call the association at (312) 660-0305.

CONGRATULATIONS To Cora Wilson-Hawkins of Bethune Elementary, the Great Lakes Regional recipient of the National Council of Negro Women's 1994 Excellence in Teaching Award. Wilson-Hawkins was honored in September for her program targeting gifted youth.

GROUNDBREAKING Construction has begun on the second of five new schools planned for the Little Village neighborhood. The school, at 2700 S. Kostner, will accommodate 652 students. Estimated cost is $10.1 million. Another Little Village school is already under construction at 23rd and Western.

NEW NUMBERS Harvard University's Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, which is conducting a long-term study of violence, has a new phone number, (312) 879-0889. The contact person is Trisha Meldrin. The Field Foundation of Illinois has moved to 200 S. Water St., Chicago, IL 60606. Phone: (312) 831-0910.

LSC LINK The School Board's Office of Reform is publishing a newsletter that, answers LSC members' questions. Topics in Issue N-1 include school uniforms, advanced degree requirements, new LSC members. For more info, (312) 555-7725.

CORRECTION An article in the September 1994 issue reported that Steinmetz High School had not been selected for the Fifty Schools Project of the Coalition of Essential Schools. In fact, Steinmetz did not apply. CATALYST regrets the error.

Lynnette Richardson, Linda Lenz

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It's About John...

... and making a difference!

This is the third in a series of monthly columns about the T.I.M.E. Project, one of the Transformation Initiatives to improve student academic achievement in the Chicago Public Schools. T.I.M.E. (To Improve Management of Education) has a core team of people from the school system's workforce. Since June, the team has spent many long hours together mobilizing a project that eventually will make a major difference in the way administrative and support processes serve the city's 550 public schools. In September, the team lost one of its key members, John Kotsakis, who died suddenly. John embodied "making a difference," and his contribution to the T.I.M.E. Project is irreplaceable. His colleagues on the team are dedicating the entire project to his memory to remind all of us of the difference we can make in transforming our school system into the best it can be. Here, team members put their memories of him into words. Normally about T.I.M.E., this column is about John Kotsakis:

In June, I met him.
In July, I was amazed by him.
In August, I learned from his wit and wisdom, I became his friend and his advocate.
In September, I lost him.
I'll remember him forever.

Roger Quinn
Dist. Supervising Engineer, CPS

John, a member of the "A Team," charged with the responsibility of improving staffing services, confided in me before he left for vacation, "Manny, I trust that you'll make everything possible to have all of my teachers paid on time even if it takes work around the clock to do so."

J. Manuel Ortiz
Director, Dept. of Warehousing & Distribution, CPS

Many thoughts come to mind when I reflect on John. For example, I was always amazed at his ability to size up a situation in a few choice words, some of them not necessarily kind, but always accurate. Also, during meetings he would often quote some philosopher or historian to explain a concept relevant to our discussion. I always wondered how he had time to read as much as he did. His most Enduring behavior to me was his talent for drawing, which he used to capture the mood of a meeting, describe a concept or depict an idea. John's memory will be with me for a long time. And, I truly hope this project's accomplishments will be a positive memory of his life's desire to create a better school system for children.

Cozette Buckney
Principal, Jones Metro High School

John wanted the best for the Chicago Public Schools and his work with the T.I.M.E. Project reflected this goal. His ideas, creativity, and sense of humor will certainly be missed and long remembered.

Ambra Beach
Acting Administrator to the Asst. Supt., CPS

John's contribution to the overall development of the professional community of Chicago Public Schools will be missed significantly. I will remember always his desire for his team to concentrate on the successes of this system, while "fixing" only those areas requiring repair.

Patricia McKenzie Jackson
Prof. Training and Dev., CPS

I shall always treasure the moments I spent in work and dialog with John — the man from Montana who blazed trails in Chicago for the betterment of education, its employees, students and communities. John, the T.I.M.E. Project team will carry forth your commitment, enthusiasm and ideals.

Jon Kirshbaum, Sr. Systems Engineer, CPS

If you have any questions, write the T.I.M.E. Project, c/o Jones Metropolitan High School, 606 South State Street, Chicago, IL 60605. Or call us at (312) 541-4068.

Adela Coronado-Greeley
Ambassador of Education, CPS

Jon Kirshbaum, Sr. Systems Engineer, CPS

If you have any questions, write the T.I.M.E. Project, c/o Jones Metropolitan High School, 606 South State Street, Chicago, IL 60605. Or call us at (312) 541-4068.

Catalyst/November 1994
Using ‘bingo’ to teach math

Teacher Phung Vo of McCutcheon Elementary School in Uptown has added a new twist to an old game, creating a variation of bingo to help teach math.

The game "makes reviewing of math concepts more fun," says Vo. The 4th- and 5th-grade students play it once or twice a week.

The game includes a collection of math problems and bingo cards with the answers. One student acts as a caller, reading the problem out loud; another writes the problem on the blackboard; and a third supervises the game. The first student who finds a line of correct answers on his or her card—and calls out "Bingo!"—wins the game.

Since many of Vo's students are from other countries and are just learning English, having a caller read the problem out loud helps them to understand the spoken language, Vo notes.

Students enjoy the game. Dung Nguyen, who was born in Vietnam, says it has also helped her learn to do math problems on her own. "Now I am waiting to learn algebra," she says.

Vo received a small grant from the Chicago Foundation for Education to pay for materials for the game, which has spread to four other schools: Gershwin, Thorp, Hartigan and Colman.

For more information, contact Phung Vo at McCutcheon, (312) 534-2680.

Mollison adopts teacher dress code

When students at Mollison Elementary School in Grand Boulevard complained about teachers being allowed to wear jeans while they could not, Principal Andrea Kerr decided it was time for a dress code for teachers, too.

"Some teachers needed some direction about appropriate dress," says Kerr. "We are professionals. We shouldn't be dressing like we're at home." For many children, she adds, "their teachers are the only professionals they see."

The code, adopted in 1993, bans jeans, T-shirts, big shirts and leggings. Male teachers must wear ties. In general, the dress code requires staff (except for the physical education teacher) to dress professionally, as in an office environment.

If a teacher does not abide by the dress code, Kerr pulls that teacher aside for a reminder. "That's it. I don't have anyone trying to try me," Kerr says.

The dress code is not a mandate, but most staff have complied with it, enhancing the building's professional atmosphere, says reading teacher Wilma Hansen. Kerr, she adds, has "done a superb job of getting the staff to see the importance of how they look to the children."

The school adopted a uniform policy for students in 1992 at the urging of the local school council. The uniform for boys is a white shirt and navy slacks; for girls, a white blouse and a navy jumper, skirt or pants. Both must wear dark tie-up or loafer shoes. Athletic shoes are prohibited except in gym class.

Kerr enforces the uniform policy by giving awards, on random occasions, to students who are wearing their uniforms. But encouragement from teachers is the best incentive, Kerr says. "We had to get teachers to value the children wearing their uniform just like they value them doing their homework."

Lynette Richardson

If your school has a suggestion for Bright Ideas, please send it to CATALYST/Bright Ideas, 332 S. Michigan, Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60604. Include a contact name and phone number.