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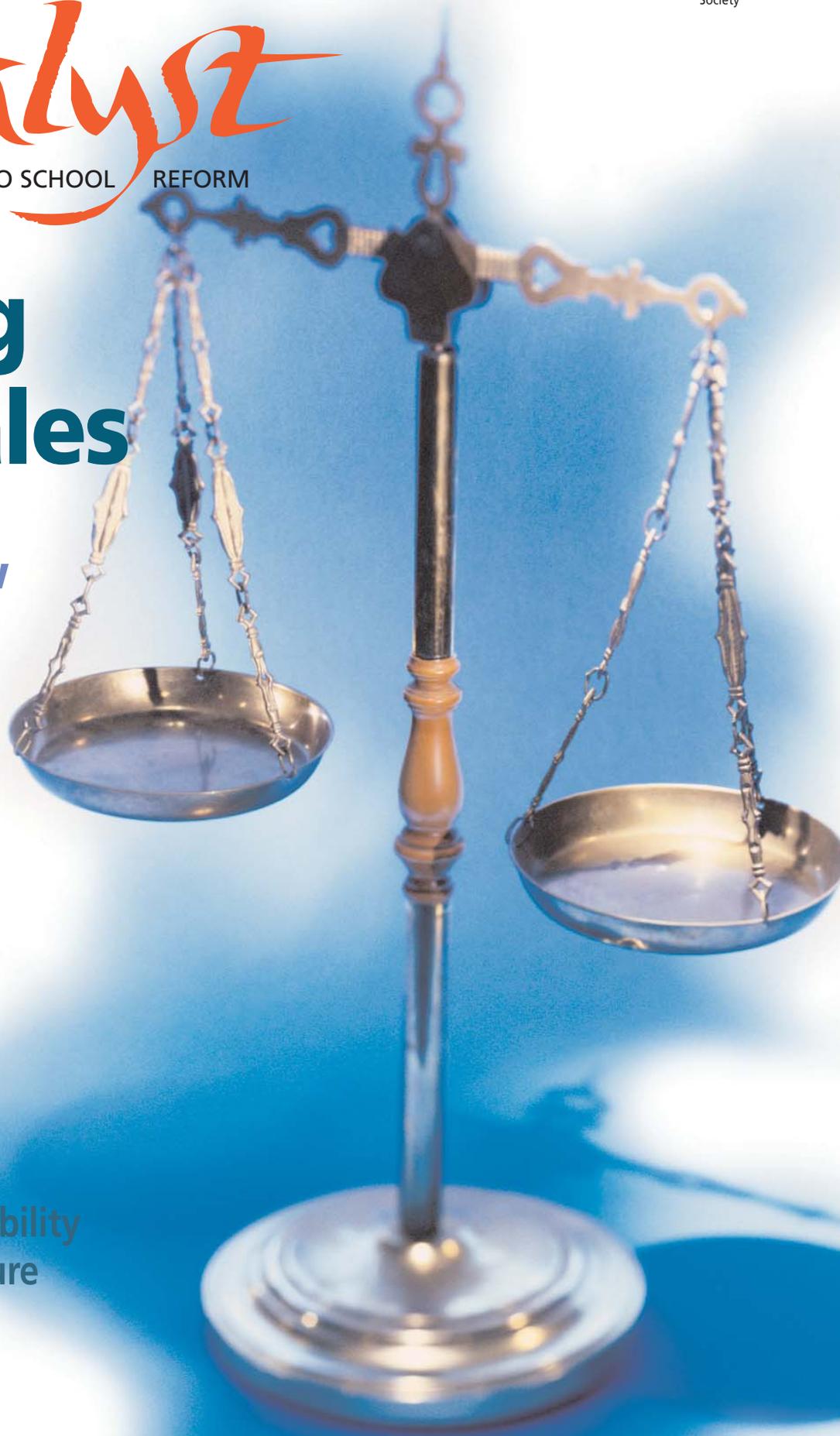
Catalyst

VOICES OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM

Tipping the scales

Elite high
schools slow
to admit
special ed
students

In Updates:
New CPS accountability
system puts pressure
on all schools



Balancing the scales for special ed

Four years ago, special education students, parents and advocates won a civil rights victory when the School Board agreed to stop illegally segregating disabled students into self-contained classrooms and separate schools. A federal court order gave the district until January 2006 to reduce the amount of time that disabled children spend outside regular classrooms and to enroll them more evenly throughout the district.

Now—with only three years left to meet the federal court goals—local researchers have found persistent inequities that show clearly there are more civil rights battles to be won.

According to the Consortium on Chicago School Research, disabled high school students have been increasingly segregated in the most academically troubled schools. Austin High School is at the top of the list. There, 40 percent of this year's incoming freshmen are in special education. Faculty and other staff at Austin told *CATALYST* Senior Editor Elizabeth Duffrin that the school's limited personnel and financial resources make it virtually impossible to serve so many special education students. "It's like triage—you have to prioritize which kids are having the most difficulty," says Austin's one full-time social worker.

At the other end of the list is Northside College Prep, where special education students make up only 3 percent of the student body, and most other selective enrollment high schools. A year ago, CEO Arne Duncan challenged principals at such high schools to accept more disabled freshmen, setting a goal of at least 14 percent. A couple did—King and Jones college preps came within striking distance of 14 percent. But most elite high schools didn't make it. Whitney Young lost ground with only 4 percent of its incoming freshmen class in special education, down from 8 percent a year ago.

Some adults in the elite schools argue that accepting students who are not prepared academically to handle the curriculum does a disservice to special and regular students alike. However, sending those special education stu-

dents to schools with overwhelmed and sometimes weaker faculties is far worse.

The fallout has a disproportionate effect on black students, who are more likely to be referred into special education than are whites, Latinos or Asians. Black students are the only group that is overrepresented, comprising 51 percent of all high school students, but 61 percent of special needs teens in 9th through 12th grades. Such inequity has a ripple effect well after high school. A staggering 75 percent of disabled black students are unemployed two years out of high school compared to 47 percent of disabled white students, according to a policy summary for the book "Racial Inequity in Special Education."

The school system has made a special investment in its elite schools. It gave them special facilities, highly regarded teachers and students who have the parents or motivation to see that they get a first rate education. The least that these schools can do in return is take on their fair share of the hard work of educating students with special needs. If that means modifying their programs, so be it.

But that's not enough. As *CATALYST* reporting has shown repeatedly, about a dozen Chicago high schools get saddled with the most difficult-to-reach students and, as a result, have the hardest time maintaining a solid faculty. It's time for these schools to get the same attention, creativity, leadership and resources that went into Northside and high schools like it.

Kymara Chase, a professor of education at DePaul University, suggests, for example, hiring more general teachers to lower class sizes at low-performing high schools that don't have the reputation to attract enough special education teachers. Another idea is to admit more disabled children into accelerated elementary school programs. One mother says that's why her disabled daughter was accepted at Northside.

CEO Duncan and Deborah Lynch, president of the Chicago Teachers Union, have this high school challenge on their agendas. Local school councils and community organizations should take vocal note of whether they meet it.



Veronica Anderson

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Catalyst

VOICES OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM

VOLUME XIV NUMBER 4
DECEMBER 2002

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2001, 1998 Sigma Delta Chi for public service
1998 Chicago Association of Black Journalists
1998, 1993 Peter Lisagor Award,
Best Newsletter
1999, 1995 Peter Lisagor Award, Reporting
2001, 2000 Peter Lisagor Award, Public Service
2000 Peter Lisagor Award, Online Reporting

2001 Peter Lisagor Award, Editorials
1997 International Reading Association
1996 Education Writers Association
1997, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1993 Distinguished
Achievement Award; 1994, Best Newsletter,
Educational Press Association of America

Tippling the scales

Special ed enrollment grows more lopsided



by Elizabeth Duffrin

This fall, 40 percent of the freshmen entering Austin High School on the impoverished far West Side are designated special education students—the highest rate in the city.

Further north, Northside College Preparatory High School enrolled only seven disabled students into 9th grade, a mere 3 percent of its freshman class.

It's a stark contrast illustrating a disturbing trend. As the number of disabled students in Chicago's public high schools rose in recent years, they became increasingly segregated in the most troubled schools. The district's efforts to more evenly distribute special education students have fallen short, and its promotion policy contributes to further concentrating disabled teens in certain schools.

Half of the high schools that enrolled more than 20 percent special education students a year ago have an even higher percentage enrolled this year. Every general high school whose special education

enrollment exceeds 20 percent is on probation, according to a *CATALYST* analysis. In many of those schools, special education teachers are in short supply and social workers are overwhelmed with cases.

However, Northside and other selective-enrollment high schools are screening out those special education students who challenge high schools the most, including some whose test scores are high enough for them to apply.

"The disparity is unconscionable," says Deborah Lynch, president of the Chicago Teachers Union. "It's a recipe for academic disaster for special ed and regular ed kids."

Special education covers students with a wide range of physical, emotional or mental disabilities. Among them, most are diagnosed with learning disabilities, which are unrelated to intelligence, but can result in difficulty with reading, writing and calculating.

When special education students make up a large percentage of a class—at Austin, some classrooms have had over 30 percent—they get less help than they need, and their regular-ed class-

mates suffer a slowed pace of instruction, Lynch observes.

"We have schools for students who perform and schools for students who cannot," remarks Kymara Chase, director of DePaul University's School Achievement Structure.

Under a federal court order, the district is required to even out special education enrollment at general high schools, bringing it to within 5 percentage points of the district average—16 percent this year. The order is part of a broader 1998 agreement that settled the Corey H. lawsuit, which accused the school system of illegally segregating disabled kids into separate classrooms and schools. (See related story, page 12.)

But by fall 2001, the rate of incoming freshmen in special education still varied widely, ranging from 4 percent to 33 percent. The 9th grade average is 19 percent.

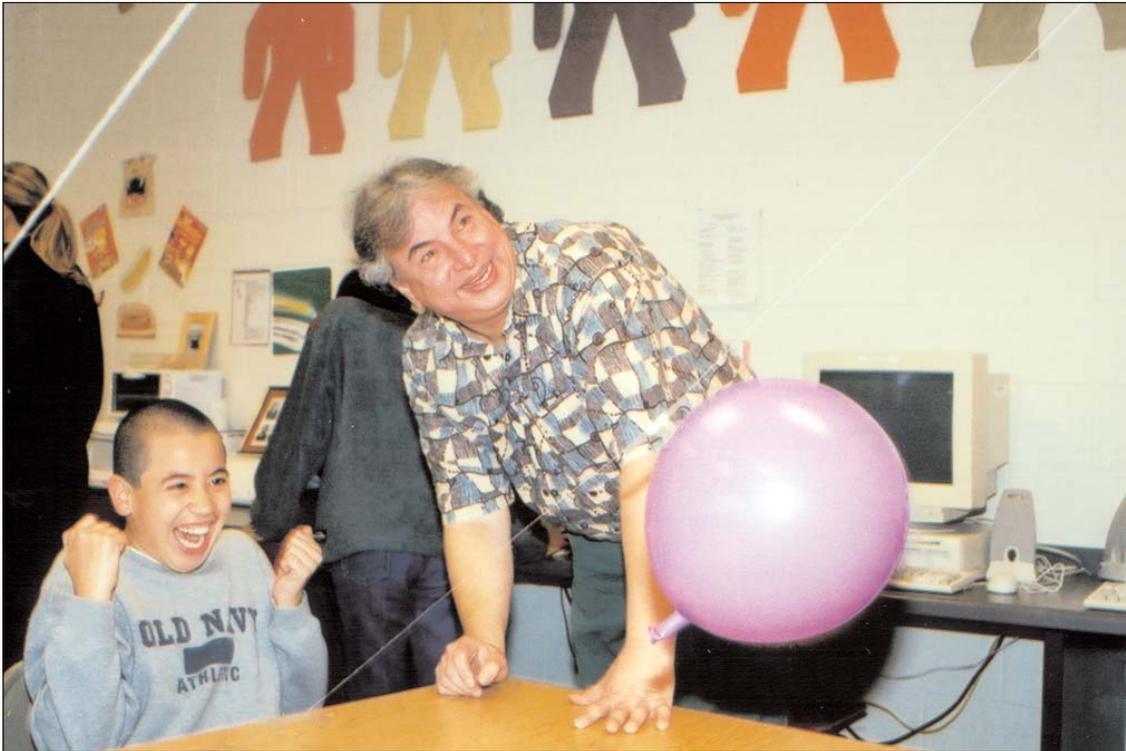
CEO Arne Duncan dispatched a memo to high school principals urging them to accept more special education students. "Principals must take appropriate steps to ensure that the September 2002 entering 9th grade class has an enrollment of at least 14 percent students with disabilities," he wrote.

The letter was intended to be a mandate, says Sue Gamm, the School Board's chief of specialized services. But some principals apparently didn't read it that way. Sixteen high schools, including all eight selective-enrollment schools, failed to meet the minimum.

"We targeted that number; obviously

"The disparity is unconscionable. It's a recipe for academic disaster for special ed and regular ed kids."

Deborah Lynch, president, Chicago Teachers Union



Daniel Centeno, one of 10 profound mentally handicapped students at Northside College Prep High School, laughs out loud as air escapes from a balloon and drives it up a string. Special education teacher Christopher Pellikan designed the lesson to show the class how jet engines propel a plane.

we didn't meet that number," says Principal Joyce Kenner of Whitney Young High. Her incoming freshmen class dropped from 8 percent special education a year ago to 4 percent this fall.

'Inventing the wheel'

Chicago is likely not alone in having a persistent imbalance in the distribution of special education students; Los Angeles is facing a similar lawsuit. But because of the court order, Chicago is the only urban district that's being forced to fix it, district officials say.

"We're inventing the wheel," says Gamm. "There is no city [where] I can look to see how this is done."

Complicating CPS's efforts is a decline in high school enrollment while the number of special education students grew through 2001. As a result, the percentage of special education students in high schools rose.

This shift in student populations dramatically impacted 11 South and West side neighborhood high schools, including Austin, according to a study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research. On average, the percentage of incoming freshmen with disabilities at these schools rose from 16 percent in 1993-1994 to 30 percent in 1999-2000.

The study also contends that the

board's 1996 promotion policy contributed to the concentration of disabled students in those high schools by retaining in elementary school more general students. Also, students who repeated a grade were more likely to be placed in special education programs by the time they reached high school, or drop out before making it there.

Screened out

Three selective enrollment schools—Jones, Payton, and Lane—managed to raise their freshmen special education enrollment this year. Lane admitted the most special needs freshmen, a total of 63, while King, a new selective high school with 13 percent disabled freshmen, edged closest to what the court order requires.

Selective high schools have a relatively small pool of high achieving special education students to draw from. To be eligible to take an entrance test, students must have 7th-grade math and reading test scores that are near or above average. General education students are more likely to meet this requirement. Only 16 percent of mildly disabled 7th graders scored average or better in reading last spring compared to half of their non-disabled peers.

Still, selective schools are rejecting

some special education students who qualified for the admissions test. Students who are admitted generally score far above average. "Would it be fair to take a child who is at a regular level or a remedial level into an honors program for which they're ill-prepared to succeed?" says Sue Boeck, Northside's special education coordinator.

Already, the School Board has taken a number of additional steps to boost the percentages at selective-enrollment schools.

Beginning this fall, special education students who score below the cutoff in math or reading to be eligible to take entrance exams will be allowed to take those tests if one score is high enough to make up the difference. (A wide variance in achievement in two subject areas is a mark of learning disabilities, says Gamm. "There's less to accommodate for when you're at least proficient in one of the two areas.")

Also, for the first time, special education applicants who are rejected may appeal to principals and the CPS Office of High School Development. But the schools themselves will have the final say about admitting a special education student. Yvonne Williams, CPS's special education director, says the system decided not to force students on schools because schools do a better job serving special needs students they have chosen.

"If you have to take a child who has a disability, wouldn't you rather take one that's gifted?"

Dawn Boers, parent of a special needs child

Too many, too few

This year, the incoming freshmen classes at the following high schools have the highest concentrations of special education students in the district. All of the schools are on probation for low test scores.

Austin	40 %
DuSable	35
Harper	31
Orr	31
Manley	31
Robeson	30
Phillips	30
Englewood	30
Corliss	29
Carver	28*

These 16 high schools failed to meet the district's 14 percent minimum for incoming freshmen with special needs.

Northside	3 %
Young	4
Lane	5
Payton	8
Brooks	8
Westinghouse	10
Simeon	10
Von Steuben	10
Richards	10
Lindblom	11
Hope	11
Lincoln Park	11
Curie	12
Jones	12
King	13
Dunbar	13

*Bowen High ties for 10th place if students who enrolled in two autonomous small schools based in the building are excluded from total enrollment.

Note: Special education centers, charter schools and alternative schools are excluded.

SOURCE: CPS Office of Specialized Services, October 2002

To entice more special education students to apply to selective enrollment high schools, CPS will mail applications for those schools to every parent whose special education student has qualifying test scores. Selective schools have been directed to beef up their own recruiting efforts as well.

Some of them—namely Northside, Lane, Jones and Brooks—have already begun to do so. *CATALYST* checked in with guidance counselors at a dozen high-achieving elementary schools last month and found that four had been contacted by these high schools and encouraged to refer their better scoring special education students.

"I do sense an effort," observes counselor Dana Fairchild of Sheridan Magnet in Bridgeport. "There is more of a push this year to get special ed students."

A numbers game

Much of the effort is aimed at students with high test scores or those with such severe disabilities that they can legally be taught in separate classes, which avoids the challenges of mixed classrooms, which are abundant in lower performing high schools.

Each selective high school has at least one of the so-called self-contained classrooms. Lane Tech and Northside admit students with severe-profound mental handicaps. Payton enrolls a few autistic children and Brooks has one classroom for students diagnosed as trainable mentally handicapped.

It's easier for schools with accelerated curriculum to enroll special education students who don't have to be integrated, says Williams.

Meanwhile, general high schools are left to cope with the challenges of tailoring their curriculum for students of widely varying abilities. "Many of our classrooms have such a variety of learners, we need extra support already, even without special needs students," says DuSable High Principal Carol Briggs.

Selective high schools are now more

likely to consider admitting special needs children with high test scores. Dawn Boers says in 1998 she got the runaround from Lane Tech once school officials learned that her son, whose 90th percentile test scores got him admitted, has a learning disability. "There were a 101 reasons not to send your child to Lane," she recalls being told.

With the Corey H. settlement, gifted special education students were suddenly "hot commodities," she says. "If you have to take a child who has a disability, wouldn't you rather take one that's gifted?"

One LSC member reports that his principal has no intention of complying with the court mandate to admit more disabled students. Several months ago, Principal Keith Foley told Lane's local school council that he intended to keep special education enrollment at 5 percent, says LSC Chair Michael Ulreich.

Ulreich, whose learning disabled daughter is enrolled there, worries that admitting more disabled students "would change [Lane] from a magnet school to an ordinary school."

Foley denies that he has capped special education enrollment at 5 percent and declines to discuss his recruiting goals. "I'm not going to answer that right now," he says.

Leveling the field

Meanwhile, the district is helping neighborhood high schools attract more high achievers, who usually enroll in better schools elsewhere in the city, leaving special education students behind.

Most such schools have been outfitted with the kinds of selective magnet programs that top students demand. Yet such programs don't bring in nearly enough students to balance the outflow. Austin's one magnet program, International Baccalaureate, attracted 58 freshmen this fall, but the school would have needed another 352 general-ed students to bring its 9th-grade special education percentage down to the district average.

The district has also attempted to persuade parents of special education children in high-concentration schools to send their children to schools elsewhere. In recent years, CPS has dispatched a team to discuss high school options with parents of 8th-grade special education students. They learned that parents of special needs students often did not want them to leave the neighborhood.

Fixing the problem

Long-term, CPS is looking to reduce the number of students needing special education by dealing with their problems sooner. Students are often mistakenly diagnosed as having a learning disability when they are just poor readers, experts say. CPS sees its efforts to improve early reading instruction as a remedy.

Experts say that sometimes, a simple academic or other adjustment could alleviate the need for special education referral. In this regard, CPS is convening groups of schools to teach them strategies that can solve some learning and behavior problems.

Even now, though, CTU President Lynch believes that Duncan should better enforce his own mandate for minimum special education enrollments. “If a number of principals didn’t follow that directive, what is Arne Duncan going to do about it? He’s their boss.”

Dave Peterson of the Chicago Principals and Administrators Association suggests tackling the problem by providing overburdened schools with extra resources. “Are the kids getting the services they need? That’s the first thing you need to ask. It doesn’t matter where the kid [attends school].”

One parent suggests that the district require accelerated elementary programs to take more special needs students. That would expand the pipeline of disabled children who are qualified to apply to selective enrollment schools, says Anne Sullivan, whose disabled daughter attended a classical elementary school and later enrolled at Northside College Prep.

One reform advocate believes radical change is in order. Magnet high schools should scrap academic criteria and admit students on the basis of a lottery, says Donald Moore of Designs for Change. Such schools would then be forced to provide a wider variety of programs that would more easily integrate special education students, he explains.

Moore points to the basic inequity between Northside and Austin high schools. “The problem is that the best teachers and the most resources are focused on the students who already have the most going for them.”

Intern Alexia Elejalde-Ruiz contributed to this story.

Screening special needs students

Two selective enrollment high schools—Whitney Young and Payton College Prep—accepted 5 percent or less of disabled students who requested special accommodations on the entrance exam, such as extra time taking the test. More special education students applied to these schools but CPS did not track their applications or acceptance rates.

	#Special ed applicants	#Special ed accepted	% Special ed freshmen
Brooks	25	2	8
Jones	58	12	12
King	10	2	13
Lane	76	22	5
Lindblom	6	1	11
Northside	64	9	3
Payton	70	3	8
Young	77	4	4
Total	386	55	7

SOURCE: CPS Office of High School Development

Disabilities by type

Learning disabilities—an inborn difficulty processing certain types of information—are the most frequent cause of special education placements nationwide. Disabilities vary widely and are not related to intelligence, though they may result in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or calculate.

	CPS high schools percent	enrollment
Learning Disability	70	11,291
Educable Mentally Handicapped	11	1,856
Emotional/Behavior Disorder	8	1,319
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	4	693
Speech/Language	1	204
Physically Handicapped	1	188
Hearing Impaired	1	163
Brain Injury or vision impairment	1	160
Autism	< 1	137
Other Health Impaired	< 1	124
Severe/Profound Mental Handicap	< 1	63
TOTAL		16,198

SOURCE: CPS Office of Specialized Services, December 2002

Visit us online

Links to articles on high school special education and a full listing of special education enrollment rates by high school are available on our web site at www.catalyst-chicago.org. Additional CATALYST articles on high school enrollment patterns can be found in our December 2001 issue, which is also available online.

The haves and the have nots

Austin High School and Northside College Preparatory High School are polar opposites in many ways, and special education is no exception. Austin enrolls more special education students than any other high school in the district; Northside has the fewest. *CATALYST* Senior Editor Elizabeth Duffrin researched both to find out how the lopsided distribution affected each school.

Northside College Prep:

Top of the line

Enrollment

Total	982
Special ed	3%

At Northside College Prep, special education students barely make a ripple. About a third are severely handicapped and, therefore, taught in a classroom by themselves. Most of the rest have learning disabilities but also high test scores.

Between the low special education enrollment and the school's glowing reputation, Northside had no problem filling all three of its special education teaching slots. Last year, 16 qualified candidates applied for one opening.

"I've been fortunate because a lot of teachers want to teach at Northside," remarks Sue Boeck, the school's special education coordinator whose own credentials are exceptional. She once-trained school staff citywide on best practices in special education.

The 10 children with severe or profound mental handicaps study in a bright, spacious first-floor classroom staffed with four aides and a teacher, Christopher Pellikan, who has 18 years experience and a master's degree with special education certification. He once won a teaching award for the undergraduate education courses he taught at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Pellikan's classroom is equipped with three computers and an abundance of art supplies, which he solicited from local businesses. A garden lies just outside the window. Students tend it in the warmer months.

As a whole, these students have little interaction with their college-bound peers. The highest-functioning boy joins

them for a rock wall-climbing class in the school gym. Some students in the general program eat lunch with Pellikan's class and earn community service credit.

Northside's other 22 students with disabilities take courses in one of the school's three tiers: honors, advanced placement, and college level. Their standardized test scores are above the 70th percentile, with some scoring above the 90th, which is where most Northside students score. Of those 22 students, five have physical problems, three have anxiety or depression, and 14 have learning disabilities.

Those with learning disabilities work closely with teacher Theodora Vosnos, who has a masters degree in special education. Two students see her daily in a resource class. A few who need minimal support see her for 30 minutes a week to get help with problems like organizing class assignments.

Vosnos also team-teaches three English classes and a freshman social studies class with subject-area teachers. Each of those classes enrolls three to five special education students in a class of up to 30.

Difficulty with written expression is the most common learning disability at Northside, reports Vosnos, who coaches disabled and non-disabled students through the writing process—from brainstorming to proofreading.

State monitors praised Northside's special education program as "exemplary," but made note of its exceptionally low enrollment. To bring its special education enrollment up to CEO Arne Duncan's 14 percent mandate, Northside would have to enroll another 22 special education freshmen.

Principal James Lalley says doing so would mean admitting students with average or below average test scores. "It would put them in an awkward position academically," he says.

Austin High:

Overloaded, understaffed

Enrollment

Total	1,227
Special ed	28%

Austin High is "stretched to the limit."

That's what a team of special education program monitors from the state concluded after visiting the school last May. More than one in four Austin students is in special education. Five openings for special education teachers remain unfilled, and one social worker handles the school's entire caseload. Students are not getting the help they need, the state monitors determined.

Most special education students at Austin are integrated into regular classes for part of the school day. But last spring, the school lacked enough special education staff to cover team-taught classes, according to the state report. General classroom teachers had to cope with a myriad of learning and behavior problems that they were not equipped to handle.

"What makes special education effective is when it's personal and one-on-one," observes Steve McIlrath, chair of Austin's math department. When a class of 28 students has as many as 10 special education students, "it becomes difficult to do the job and do it well," he says.

The school's one full-time social worker, William Lively, says he works with 130 special education students and counsels other students who are struggling with personal problems like homelessness, abuse and grief. "It's like triage," he says. "You have to prioritize which kids are having the most difficulty."

Schools like Austin need extra resources, insists Kymara Chase, a DePaul University education professor who works with Austin and other schools on academic probation. When struggling schools can't attract enough special education teachers, the district could pay for more regular teachers to reduce class size, she suggests. In terms of teacher allocation, "the lowest [performing] school in the city is treated just like Northside Prep," she remarks. "There's no equal education here."

Elizabeth Duffrin

Schools struggle with federal law

by Elizabeth Duffrin

CPS high schools are falling behind elementary schools in complying with federal special education law, state and local school board officials say.

In 1998, a federal court gave the School Board eight years to get schools on track with the law. At the halfway point this year, "It's reasonable to be concerned about the lack of progress at the high schools," says Sharon Soltman, the attorney who sued the district 10 years ago on behalf of special education students.

High schools are more resistant to serving special education students in regular classes, says Christopher Koch, director of teaching and learning at the Illinois State Board of Education. Federal law requires they do so to the extent that a student can benefit.

Some teachers flat-out reject the notion of inclusion, according to reports from state monitors who check on schools' progress. "I teach gifted students," sniffs one teacher at Chicago Military Academy, a selective high school in Bronzeville. The gap in student ability levels in high school is larger, notes Kathleen Gibbons, a CPS attorney specializing in special education.

Another problem for high schools, Koch explains, is traditional instruction. High school teachers are more comfortable lecturing to students than they are with other techniques that would help students with learning disabilities. Some of those strategies—presenting material visually or using hands-on activities—can be effective for all students, he points out.

Yet another issue is children with behavior disorders, who are more difficult to deal with in high schools compared to elementary schools. "Students are older, they're bigger, they're more threatening," he notes.

And high school teachers are less likely to have common planning time to collaborate on ways to address students' behavior and learning problems. State monitors found only one high school had scheduled enough planning time, Northside College Prep, where teachers worked a longer day for no extra pay.

"A culture change is needed," Koch

insists. "I can sit here and tell [schools how to comply], but actually changing the way that teachers interact with students and each other—that's a big one."

Koch heads a state team that is monitoring Chicago schools for compliance with Corey H. Koch's team has visited more than 20 CPS high schools over the last two years. After a preliminary report, schools write improvement plans and have two years to carry them out.

Initial state inspections over the last two years indicate several areas where high schools must improve to pass final state inspections, which begin next spring. The following are some frequently noted problems:

Instructional supports: Classroom teachers must provide special education students with the academic supports outlined in their individual education plans (IEPs), which are crafted by teams of specialists and teachers who consult with a child's parent. Supports called for in the plan include checking in to make sure students are working on classroom exercises or having students repeat instructions in their own words.

Among the high schools visited by state monitors, most are not providing adequate academic supports for special education students in regular classrooms. In some cases, special education staffers are not sharing IEPs with regular teachers. Other schools are short staffed, and regular teachers were on their own in classes meant to include a special education co-teacher. Co-teachers do not have planning time to discuss student needs. Nearly all faculties request more training.

Behavior Management: A number of schools neglected to write and follow management plans for students with behavior disorders. At Westinghouse High, for instance, such plans were not in place for disruptive special education students, who were frequently suspended instead. Also, Westinghouse teachers seldom conferred with students or parents before students were suspended. Instead, "students were simply escorted from classrooms to 'the dungeon room,' where they were required to stand on

one 9-by-9 inch tile for the rest of the class period or the school day," according to school staff interviewed for a May 2002 state monitoring report.

Grading: Under district policy, special education students are graded on how well they have met the goals in their IEPs. For example, a child might be expected to master central concepts but not details. Teachers are often unaware of this policy, however. Some said they graded students on effort instead. At Kelvyn Park High, a teacher told monitors that she gave all her special education students A's to "boost their egos." Sampling student files at each high school, monitors found special education students were failing at what they considered to be unacceptably high rates.

Tracking student progress: Schools are required to document academic progress for each student in special education. When students with disabilities fail classes, schools are expected to discuss providing additional support services, but they rarely did so. For instance, 25 percent of special education students at Payton College Prep failed two or more classes in the first marking period of 2001-02, but the school did not document that it considered any change in services.

Parent Communication: Parents were frequently absent at meetings regarding their child's IEP because schools failed to notify them. By law, parents should receive 10 days advance notice. At Kelvyn Park, the state found some parental notifications dated the same day as the meeting they were expected to attend.

Transition plans: By age 14, each special education student is entitled to a transition plan that outlines goals for work, living arrangements and further schooling after graduation. Plans are supposed to include input from parents and students, but schools frequently neglected to do the plans at all. Special education teachers at one high school told state monitors that transition plans were guidance counselors' responsibility. Counselors at the same school insisted that they had never heard of transition plans. ●

Model inclusion at Mather High

by Elizabeth Duffrin

So far, only one Chicago public high school, Mather, has been cited for its “superior” efforts to comply with federal special education law.

Mather, a North Side school with an enrollment of 2,000, began redirecting students with disabilities into regular classrooms in 1997, a year before the Corey H. settlement compelled all high schools to do the same. Locally, Mather also pioneered pairing core subject teachers with their special education colleagues to co-teach mixed classrooms.

Federal court monitors who visited Mather in the spring of 2000 found that special education students were “remarkably engaged” in co-taught classes and that many had posted above average gains in reading. Faculty had meticulously identified extra supports for each special education student.

Reforms at Mather were working, they concluded, “because of a collective gut level instinct that it was the right thing to do.”

This year, 14 percent of Mather’s 2,000 students are in special education; only 15 percent of disabled students are in self-contained classes.

Overcrowding, school culture and leadership put Mather higher up the learning curve for special education reform than most general high schools.

Where other schools resisted opening up regular classes to disabled students, Mather included as many as possible—out of necessity. Segregating them would have required extra classrooms that the school couldn’t spare.

Since teachers didn’t have their own classrooms anyway, they more easily made the transition to co-teaching, says Principal John Butterfield.

Peter Zimmerman, the school’s special education coordinator, names other advantages: Mather is neither an elite school unaccustomed to dealing with special needs, nor an inner-city school overwhelmed by the number and severity of them.

A longstanding program for physically handicapped students also smoothed the way for later reforms, he believes. In the late 80s, the district asked Mather, an accessible one-story school, to accept physically challenged students from other neighborhoods. Initially, some staff feared for the students’ safety in overcrowded hallways, but soon they noticed that the presence of these students calmed the hallway rush. Teachers, likewise, grew accustomed to handling special needs, such as allowing extra

travel time between classes.

The diversity of Mather’s student population—some 30 languages are spoken there—also made teachers more flexible than they might have been otherwise, Zimmerman adds. “As multi-cultural as we are, it can be a very difficult place to work if you’re not a tolerant person.”

Despite Mather’s tolerant culture, school leaders anticipated resistance to co-teaching. “We spent a lot of time winning people over, ... [or] at least neutralizing them,” Butterfield explains. “If you dump it on people all at once, you’ll turn [them] off.”

Staff eased into co-teaching with a district program called “Education Connection,” which provided \$110,000 in grants. Some money paid for substitute teachers so that small groups of teachers could attend all-day retreats. A nearby bank lent its conference room, where teachers met to discuss the mechanics of sharing a class, and even to practice teaching lessons together.

A stroke of luck helped to snare the first Education Connection grant. One of the school’s assistant principals, Sandra Fontanez-Phelan, had been the district’s special education director—she stepped down for personal reasons—and she urged the school to pursue the \$10,000 planning grant.

Under Fontanez-Phelan’s leadership,

Mather was the only high school whose grant application was accepted for 1997-98 without revision. A team of teachers and administrators met throughout that school year to plan the expansion of inclusion and co-taught classes.

The following school year, when the School Board began awarding \$100,000 implementation grants, Mather was first in line. The additional money paid for two years of staff training and materials. Much of that money went for math instruction since that subject incurred the highest failure rates. For example, it bought supplemental materials like geometric blocks and software for co-taught math classes. It also paid for workshops for the special education teachers who didn’t have a background in math.

In 1997-98, Mather opened 14 co-taught classes, which grew to 27 the following school year. From the start, Butterfield made his expectations clear. He told the faculty that inclusion was the law and co-teaching would be the school’s practice from now on, teachers say.

“An administrator saying that forcefully makes all the difference in the world,” Zimmerman insists. “If that message had come from me, frankly, they wouldn’t have taken it seriously.”

A soft sell

As facilitator, Zimmerman took a soft-sell approach. In staff development, he and other trainers avoided the word “inclusion.” “When you say ‘inclusion,’ ... people get upset,” he notes. While Mather would be including more disabled students, they emphasized that those with severe disabilities might join other students only for gym or music.

Instead, they enumerated the benefits of co-teaching. Outside consultants provided training, but some of the most effective staff development came from teachers themselves, says Zimmerman. Panels of successful co-teaching teams shared their experiences with the staff—“to show them, ‘Hey, this can work. There are people out there doing this. It is not something to be afraid of,’” he explains.

With co-teaching, students benefit from having both a teacher with content expertise and one with a repertoire of



At Mather High School, Diane Bryniarski and special education teacher Peter Zimmerman co-teach a mixed biology class. On this day, Zimmerman works one-on-one with special education students; on other days he will lead the lesson.

strategies for reaching hard-to-teach students. Further, all struggling students get extra attention, not only those in special education.

While the subject area teacher would take the lead on content, the special education teacher was not to function as a teachers' aide. Most had some background in a core subject, so they could teach some lessons to a small group or to the whole class, which would free their partner to circulate.

Co-teachers who volunteered to make presentations to their colleagues didn't gloss over the rough spots, says Fontanez-Phelan, now principal of Kelvyn Park High. When she first arrived at Mather as a special education teacher, she and a fledgling English teacher teamed up to give co-teaching a try. Their message was, "There are personality issues. There are misunderstandings [such as]: 'What did you mean by that? I was teaching a lesson [and] you jumped in too many times! You interrupted me!'"

The key to making it work, they explained, is to sit down and work through the details: Who does the grading? What should the standards be? How will you handle student discipline?

In its original plan, Mather crafted a process for handling the inevitable conflicts between co-teachers. For example,

teachers wrestling with a problem could appeal to a department chair for help.

Conflicts ranged from one teacher refusing to grade the other's papers, to complaints about the other teacher chewing gum in class, Zimmerman says.

To keep such conflicts to a minimum, co-teachers were carefully paired based on preferences they cited in a survey Zimmerman developed and uses to this day to organize each year's class assignments.

The preparation and planning paid off. Some teachers who say they were wary of co-teaching soon grew to like it. "I noticed grades were going up, [student] motivation and enthusiasm was going up," says science teacher Armando Villanueva. He attributes that to the extra one-on-one attention that a second teacher provided.

English teacher July Cyrwus says that special education staff taught her respect for each child's potential and persistence in overcoming difficulties. Before she co-taught, she gave up on children too easily, she says. "It was, 'Well, I've done everything I can, it's really not my problem anymore, it's the special ed teacher's problem.' Now, it really is my problem because that child is my student," she says.

Even so, some teachers remain lukewarm about co-teaching, says Butterfield. Some special education teachers,

for instance, would prefer to lead their own classes rather than take a supporting role in the general education rooms. But those teachers are the exception rather than the norm, he adds.

To keep co-teaching running smoothly, administrators carefully screen teaching applicants. "We ask them what they know about inclusion? How do they feel about co-teaching?" says Assistant Principal Betty Martinez. Those who react negatively are turned away, Butterfield says.

Some goals remain elusive, however, Mather staff agree. For one, co-teachers need common planning periods, but as at other high schools, scheduling them is often unworkable. Instead, some teachers meet during a weekly staff development hour.

Ideally, all regular classes with special education students would be co-taught, but the School Board does not allot enough special education positions. Some regular teachers have a special education teacher with them two or three days a week, while others do without assistance.

Butterfield says the court monitors estimated Mather needs an additional seven positions to cover every class that needs a co-teacher, bringing its special education staff to 23. "Well, good luck on that one," the principal remarks. "We'll do it with what we have right now." ●

Who is Corey H.?

Ten years ago, a school reform group teamed up with a university legal clinic to sue Chicago Public Schools and the state for illegally segregating special education students. Corey H. is one of several children with disabilities named in the lawsuit brought on behalf of all the city's special education students. In 1998, CPS settled the lawsuit before going to trial, agreeing to send more special needs children back to neighborhood schools and into general education classrooms.



Q. What law did the school boards break?

A. The lawsuit charged the city with violating the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which requires students to be educated in the “least restrictive environment.” The state board of education was sued for failing to enforce those mandates.

Q. What does “least restrictive environment” mean?

A. It means that disabled students must be placed in regular schools or classrooms unless they would be unable to progress academically, even with extra supports.

Special education students are entitled by law to receive support that matches their needs.

In a regular classroom, for instance, students who have difficulty understanding spoken instructions may need to see diagrams. Likewise, students with reading disabilities may need help taking notes or extra time to take a test.

In some cases, regular coursework would be supplemented with an extra daily “resource” class for small group instruction, usually in math or reading. Children with more severe disabilities, on the other hand, would remain in a special education class all day, joining peers for music or gym. Some with serious emotional or mental handicaps would be enrolled in special schools, a decision made with input from teachers, specialists and their parents.

Q. So where did the school boards go wrong?

A. For decades, disabled students in Chicago's public schools were routinely segregated in special education schools

and classrooms with little or no consideration for how they would fare in mainstream settings. In 1994, about half of CPS students with disabilities spent most of the day in regular classes, according to attorney Sharon Soltman, who sued the board on behalf of Corey H. and other special ed plaintiffs. Nationally, the percentage was in the high 70s, she reports.

CPS was excluding children with disabilities from regular classes “on a massive scale,” she says. “And the state was not monitoring and enforcing federal law.”

In January 1998, the Chicago Board of Education settled the Corey H. lawsuit and agreed to help schools comply with the law. Under federal court order, the Illinois State Board of Education must monitor the district's progress.

Q. What do schools need to do now?

A. Schools are expected to include special education students in regular classrooms unless they can justify the need to place them in a more restrictive setting. To accommodate this mandate, special education teachers in many schools are teaming with regular education teachers to “co-teach” integrated classes of disabled and non-disabled students. Ideally, co-teachers plan lessons together and adapt them to meet student needs.

Schools have always been required to keep detailed records of every special education student's progress and the services—counseling or tutoring, for example—they are receiving.

Q. Are schools getting any help to comply with the law?

A. Each year, an additional 80 schools

are eligible to apply for extra money for staff development from either CPS or the state. Much of the training is aimed at raising teachers' awareness about disabilities.

The state picks 50 schools each year for its program. A team from the state school board spends about three to five days at a school inspecting records and interviewing staff. Afterward, the school must write an improvement plan that addresses shortcomings identified by the state. It receives up to \$64,000 over two years for staff development.

CPS selects 30 school applicants a year for its program, called, “Education Connection.” Principals and teachers first assess their schools' needs, write improvement plans and apply for grants up to \$110,000 over three years. Some of the money can be used to buy materials for co-taught classes.

“If you have resistant teachers, the state board is better because it's mandated change,” explains Kathleen Gibbons, a special education attorney for CPS. “They give you the outline for what had better be in your plan.”

Q. Are schools making progress?

A. Most are behind schedule, and many blame bureaucratic roadblocks. For instance, for a year the state delayed approving 50 school plans, then approved them all in one day, according to Gibbons. Court monitors overseeing Education Connection schools have not been consistent in judging plans acceptable or unacceptable, she adds. Schools get frustrated rewriting plans, she says, and sometimes give up on reapplying for grant money.

Judge Joseph Schneider, the court monitor for Corey H., disagrees. “The

reviews by the monitors office are appropriately rigorous," he says. "The standards for review are the same."

Schools are also behind on the paperwork, and those put in charge say they can't keep pace with demands. Figuring out how to spend a \$50,000 grant while teaching five classes is an "unrealistic, overwhelming responsibility," complains one special education coordinator.

Q. Has the Corey H. settlement made any difference?

A. School staff seem to have a clearer understanding of the least restrictive environment mandate, says Christopher Koch, who oversees state board Corey H. monitors. "That doesn't mean they all accept it," he adds. In schools the state is monitoring, high school staff is more resistant, he finds, and further behind on meeting the mandate. (See related story, page 9.)

Some special education schools have initiated partnerships with general schools to comply with the terms of the settlement. General education students at the elite Northside College Prep, for instance, visit Vaughn Occupational High to mentor special needs students in a cooking class. "Children with disabilities do much better when they have non-disabled peers to model," Gibbons explains. "And non-disabled peers need to learn tolerance and acceptance of people who are different."

The district has not yet compiled data on whether more special education students are included in regular classes, but Gibbons says she has observed greater inclusion on numerous school visits.

Q. What happens if schools don't comply with the terms of the settlement?

A. In January 2006, the court will rule on whether CPS has fulfilled its agreement. Attorneys for both sides say they do not know what penalties the court might impose for non-compliance. Gibbons speculates that a school could be subject to further court monitoring until problems are corrected. In extreme instances, a judge could find a principal or other school official in contempt of court and impose fines or even jail time, although that is unlikely, she adds.

Elizabeth Duffrin

High schools bear brunt of teacher shortage

by Leslie Whitaker

WANTED: *High school teachers qualified to work with learning disabled, mentally retarded, hearing and visually impaired, emotionally disturbed, and other special needs students. START DATE: Yesterday.*

Special education teachers constitute the single biggest shortage in Chicago's public schools, and high schools are suffering the most.

Overall, high schools have about one unfilled position per school while elementary schools have one unfilled position for every two schools. Specifically, the district's 93 high schools have 110 vacancies; its 504 elementary schools have 264.

The shortage is especially acute for 11 high schools in the poorest communities, where as many as 30 percent of students qualify for special education services, according to a study that analyzed 1999-2000 enrollment. At Austin High—where 40 percent of freshmen enrolled this fall have learning or other disabilities—five of 21 positions are currently filled by substitutes.

"It's a genuine crisis," says Chicago Teachers Union President Deborah Lynch, herself a former special education teacher. "Special ed is the subject with the highest rate of under-prepared teachers," she contends.

Among the district's 3,930 special education teachers, 40 percent lacked full certification to work with disabled students, according to a *Chicago Tribune* analysis of data collected by the state. Learning-disabled students comprise the largest group in special education, with nearly 65 percent of this year's 17,190 special education students.

High schools with shortages have some options for filling the gap. Principals can fill these slots with general education teachers who are taking classes required for special education certification. They can also pay qualified special education teachers to work extra peri-

ods. "It depends on what the staff is willing to do," says Yvonne Williams of the CPS Office of Specialized Services.

Nationally, demand for special education teachers has been on the rise for a decade. The number of students classified as learning-disabled is up more than 10 percent, partly due to more aggressive testing and identification. Over the past 25 years, the number of special education students has grown steadily and now accounts for 12 percent of the national school population, up from 8 percent in 1976.

Chicago isn't the only place where supply has not kept up with demand. The American Federation of Teachers estimates that last year up to 60,000 special ed positions nationwide were filled by uncertified teachers. By 2010, jobs for special education teachers are expected to grow as much as 35 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Chicago is no different than anywhere else," insists Sue Gamm, who oversees CPS Specialized Services. In fact, special education jobs accounted for

Stricter law likely

The federal law governing special education is up for renewal next year. Legislation has not yet been introduced, but schools are likely to see stricter hiring rules for special education teachers, according to one special education lobbyist.

Just as the No Child Left Behind Act requires all core-subject teachers to be fully certified by 2005-2006, the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) likely will require all special education teachers to be fully certified, speculates Myrna Mandlawitz, a lobbyist and special education consultant in Washington, D.C.

She says that would be putting the cart before the horse since colleges aren't generating enough special education teachers. She says it would be better to offer incentives to attract more teachers to go into this field.

Elizabeth Duffrin

43 percent of all unfilled teacher positions statewide at the beginning of the school year.

Recent growth in the city's special education student population may have been spurred by the CPS mandate against social promotions. A study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research found that "higher percentages of elementary school students were identified as eligible for special education services after they failed to pass the system's promotion gates in the third, sixth, and eighth grades."

That may account for some of the rise in freshmen special education populations at the high school level—16.4 percent in the 1999-2000 school year, up from 11.5 percent in 1993-94. The finding worries Robert Gladden, one of the report's authors. "A key question is 'Why are so many kids being classified, and is it doing them any good?'" he says.

While it searches for an answer to that question, CPS has to do what it can to fill special education vacancies. To widen the applicant pool beyond city limits, CPS suspended the residency requirement for one year and five teachers were hired as a result. Another 28 have applied this year, and will be hired if the board suspends residency another year.

CPS also has offered free training to general education teachers who are willing to work in special education positions as substitutes. In September, a judge ruled that all regular education teachers must do 20 percent of their recertification work in special education; special education teachers must take 50 percent.

Such stopgap measures don't begin to address issues that are discouraging new or seasoned teachers from entering the field, and are even driving away those who are already there. Lynch hears a litany of complaints. "Mounting paperwork, lack of support, packed schedules, and high concentration of special needs kids in neighborhood schools" are but a few, she says.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs), a detailed outline of goals and services tailored to fit a child's needs, are a major source of contention. Teachers must write one for each special education student, but recent revisions that include local, state, and federal requirements have added dozens of entries to the already lengthy document. The paperwork—which special education teachers contend is more time-consuming to fill out than ever—has become so trouble-

some that the Illinois Council for Exceptional Children, a leading advocacy group for special education students, plans to launch a study.

"Veteran teachers are feeling they just can't do everything," says council President Bev Johns, who is particularly worried about the tide of special education teachers who are leaving the field in favor of regular classes. With the overall teacher shortage in the city's public schools, it's easy for special education teachers to switch back into general education, say locals in the field.

Tough work

Meanwhile, special education teachers say their jobs are tough. They are tapped to provide instruction in self-contained classrooms (all special ed students) and to support special education students who have been mainstreamed into "regular" classes. At the high school level, wearing those two hats can be a mental challenge as teachers work with students tackling subjects that range from auto mechanics to advanced algebra.

Recently, some high schools are divvying up subjects among special education teachers, giving them the luxury of specializing. Last year, Ana Maria Luhan, a special education teacher at Bogan High, taught classes in Spanish, her area of expertise, and worked as a resource teacher for special education students taking chemistry. Luhan says her knowledge of science improved markedly, but she is far happier this year teaching only Spanish.

Another huge task is meeting the needs of students who differ markedly in abilities and needs. In teaching vocabulary and verb conjugation, for instance, Luhan finds that songs help the musically-inclined students, while visually-oriented learners may pick up more from graphic organizers. "You are constantly trying to come up with different strategies to get the same material across," she explains.

Bonnie Ulich, a specialist for the deaf and hard-of-hearing at Prosser Career Academy, works with Colombian immigrants who do not understand English or sign language. In addition, she works with special needs children who are also dialysis patients, and others who have multiple, severe handicaps. "They're complicated kids," Ulich says.

High school special education teach-

ers have the added responsibility of preparing their students for life after graduation. Providing career guidance and emotional support can be critical for their students' future success, they say.

Ulich says many special education students come from families who are poorly informed or unrealistic about their children's job prospects. She tries to prepare them for the working world by teaching students how to take public transportation, pushing them to get eye exams and encouraging them to sign up for job-training programs. "You have to do it," she says. "If you don't, no one else will."

Contract talks

Not surprisingly, paying teachers for the time they spend filling out paperwork is among the recommendations that the teachers union is bringing to the table at the upcoming contract talks. Union reps also will raise the issue of adjusting class size in general classes where special education students are included by a number that takes into account the severity of the disability. (One severely retarded student, for instance, may count for two general education students.)

Among newly minted teachers, interest in special education has fallen off significantly. Between 1975 and 2000, the number of teachers in Illinois who graduated with a bachelor's in special education dropped by nearly 60 percent. At the same time, special education master's degrees were down close to 50 percent.

While the department of special education at Northeastern University has more applicants than slots, the school cannot expand its pipeline, says David Yasutaki, department chair. "Our resources are limited." This year, 40 undergrads are enrolled in the program.

The department just finished revamping its curriculum to meet new standards for certification that allow graduates to work with a wider range of disabilities. The change, made in accordance with the Corey H. settlement, will make graduates more marketable, but also "makes the program more difficult because there is more material to cover," he says.

Because the shortage in special education teachers has spread to the suburbs, Yasutaki adds, more of his graduates are choosing to work in schools outside of Chicago.

Leslie Whitaker is a freelance writer.

Catalyst

Briefing page:

High school special education

"We have schools for students who perform and schools for students who cannot."

Kymara Chase, professor of education, DePaul University

The problem

Special education students in Chicago are disproportionately enrolled at low-performing high schools on the West and South Sides. These schools are overwhelmed and often unable to provide students with the services they need.

Conversely, selective high schools are admitting relatively few special needs children despite mandates from the district and federal court to do so. In fact, such schools are attracting top performing students away from neighborhood schools, which are then left with a concentration of special education students.

This fall, special education enrollment in CPS high schools ranges from 3 percent to 40 percent of incoming freshmen.

Findings

✓ Elite high schools admit the fewest special needs students. Eight percent or fewer of this year's freshmen at Northside, Whitney Young, Lane, Payton and Brooks are enrolled in special education.

✓ Schools with high concentrations of special education students are more likely to be on academic probation. All general high schools where more than 20 percent of students are in special education are on academic probation, accounting for two-thirds of those on this year's list, according to a CATALYST analysis.

✓ High school special education students became increasingly segregated during the 1990s, according to a recent study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Between 1993 and 2000, the percentage of incoming freshmen with disabilities at 11 high schools on the South and West sides rose from 16 percent to 30 percent. The schools are Austin, DuSable, Englewood, Gage Park, Manley, Orr, Phillips, Robeson, South Shore, Tilden and Wells.

✓ The Consortium study also contends that the board's 1996 promotion policy contributed to the concentration of disabled students in those high schools by retaining more general students. Also, students who repeated a grade were more likely to either be placed into special education programs, or drop out before making it to high school. The policy resulted in a double whammy for neighborhood high schools: More special education students were in the enrollment pipeline, and the number of students in the general program plummeted.

Remedies underway

The district expects elite high schools to actively recruit special education students; many have begun doing so. Also, the School Board created a more flexible admissions policy for students with special needs to make it easier for them to apply to selective high schools.

Most under-performing high schools

now have magnet programs and advanced placement courses to help them attract top scoring students. School officials are also working to reduce special education referrals by training elementary school staff to try other strategies to solve learning and behavior problems. Often, poor readers are mistakenly identified as having learning disabilities. The board sees improving early reading instruction as a remedy.

Resources

⇒ The Consortium's study, "Changing Special Education Enrollments: Causes and Distribution Among Schools," by Shazia Rafiullah Miller and Robert M. Gladden, is available online at www.consortium-chicago.org/publications/p54.html. For information call: (773) 702-5428.

⇒ The CPS Office of High School Development will answer questions for parents of special education students who want to apply to selective magnet high schools. Contact Angus Mairs at (773) 553-3540.

⇒ Council for Disability Rights, a Chicago non-profit, has an online guide to special education for parents at www.disabilityrights.org.

⇒ Designs for Change is a resource for information on disabled students' rights and best practices for educating them. Call Elliott Marks at (312) 236-7252, ext. 242.

⇒ The South Austin Commission recently formed a special education committee to address the concerns of parents, teachers and community members. For information call Theresa Welch at (773) 287-4570.



Nancy B. Jefferson School

Detention center school off probation

by Maureen Kelleher

Three years ago, the school that serves youth at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center got a letter from central office saying that it had been put on probation for low test scores.

The staff was shocked. "I could never understand that," says special education teacher Deborah Woods. Since the student body turns over rapidly, there's no way that an annual test can reflect what's happening with instruction, she notes.

However, in the hands of a determined new principal, probation gave a boost to the instructional program at Nancy B. Jefferson Alternative School. So did a reduction in crowding at the detention center. In recognition of this improvement, central office took Jefferson off probation in November, though

its test scores remain low.

Darla Swanson-Byers of the Office of Accountability, who worked with Jefferson during probation, praises Jefferson for creating an innovative curriculum and surpassing other public schools in keeping accurate records on special education students. "I'm very proud of them," she says.

"I think they're moving in the right direction," agrees Peter Leone, director of the National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice. "It's a lot better than a lot of other places."

A world apart

At any given time, almost 500 young people aged 10 to 18 attend Jefferson while awaiting trial on charges ranging from petty theft to murder. In the course of a year, 7,200 students pass through its classrooms on the second floor of the detention center. Most are around for only a few days to a few weeks.

At 8:30 each weekday morning, students arrive by elevator from the residential floors above. Escorted by guards, they file into single-sex rooms.

"Most of these kids haven't been in school for years," says social studies teacher Anna Uliassi. "If they had been, they were getting kicked out, and that's why they're here."

Students *CATALYST* interviewed say Jefferson is less challenging academically than their home schools were, but they also admit that education isn't their top priority. "We're locked up, you know. It's not really like a real high school," says Victor, 17, who attended a Southwest Side high school before Jefferson. "I don't want to be here."

Uliassi says her goal with these transient, distracted students is to keep them "in the school mindset while they're here." She hopes to show them that they

can accomplish something in school and maybe to get them back on track.

Judith Adams, a longtime social worker at Jefferson, became principal in February 1999. She moved quickly to reorganize the school, assigning students to groups by their academic level rather than age and assigning each group to a specific group of teachers. When students were assigned to classes by age, she says, their wide range of academic levels made it hard for teachers to reach all of them.

When the probation letter arrived, she says, "I called and questioned it." Central office then sent a second letter, saying the school was on probation "because we lacked coherent curriculum and certified teachers, these kinds of things."

With the designation confirmed, Adams moved quickly again. First, she worked with center officials to correct logistical problems that ate into the 300 minutes of instruction that the state says schools must provide students each day.

"We have to make sure we get them down on time in the school," says Willie Ross, assistant superintendent of programs for the detention center.

Next, Adams went to central office to beg for certified high school teachers. At the time, most of her staff were special education teachers who lacked the credentials to teach high school. Central office responded by expanding the faculty with an additional 14 new high school teaching positions and by allowing Jefferson to convert some unneeded elementary teaching slots to high school slots.

Darlene McClendon, principal of Northside Learning Center and Jefferson's former probation manager, notes that Jefferson had asked for such help before. "When any school is on probation," she observes, "they are in the most positive place to receive the resources they need to achieve."

Adams puts teacher applicants



Cook County Juvenile Justice Center

through their paces, requiring them to observe a class and conduct a lesson on their own.

The biggest challenge, Adams says, is “hiring and retaining teachers who can separate the child from the incident” that landed him or her in detention. “I cannot retain a teacher who refers to kids as thugs and hoodlums. I need teachers who can see the intrinsic value of human life.”

Once Adams had new teachers in place, the faculty worked with the external partner that came with probation, American Educational Services, to build a new curriculum.

“We got together and said, ‘What matters to our students?’” says Mary Rebello, an English teacher who is lead teacher for the 9th-grade group. They came up with six topics: justice, interpersonal relations, drugs, money, education and peer pressure.

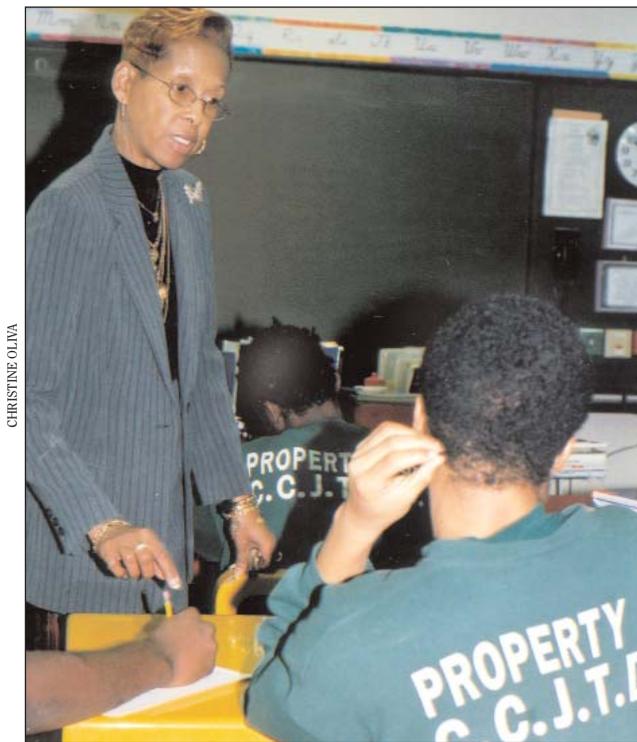
Teachers then crafted lessons around these themes. In a unit on justice, for example, elementary students might explore the consequences of a character’s actions, while high school students examine governmental structures and the judicial branch.

The themes have stood the test of time. In year three, teachers are still using the curriculum they created. In September, Anna Uliassi’s students read detective and mystery stories as part of a unit on justice. They also watched a video about a trial and wrote essays to support their opinions about the guilt or innocence of the defendant.

School librarian Shirley Reynolds says the new curriculum sparked a library renaissance. To make room for new books, she weeded out between 10,000 and 15,000 old ones, mostly donated by suburban libraries. “We had books on dieting donated from the Lake Forest library or the Winnetka library,” she recalls. “It wasn’t what students really wanted to read.”

Now, the shelves are lined with current, popular titles and relevant juvenile nonfiction, such as books on teen fathers or how different cultures deal with death. “Most of our books are based on our curriculum,” says Reynolds. “We have a lot of things that are relevant to the students’ lives. I have a book about young teenage fathers because a lot of the boys are fathers.”

But the most popular titles, she says, are books most kids like—“The Guinness Book of World Records,” books on



CHRISTINE OLIVA

Principal Judith Adams chats with one of the juvenile detainees at Nancy Jefferson School. Students at the detention center school, which is predominantly male, attend single-sex classes.

cars, and scary novels like those by Dean Koontz and R. L. Stine.

Special education

About 40 percent of Jefferson’s students are eligible for special education, and 60 percent of them attend regular classes. With the addition of certified high school teachers, Adams was able to assign more special education teachers to work in regular classrooms, providing extra help to the special education students.

She also was able to open more so-called self-contained classrooms for children with severe emotional and behavioral problems. In three years, the number of classrooms more than doubled, from four to nine. Adams badgered the county into building extra rooms for the purpose, says special education teacher Donielle Lawson.

“We are a group of people who take lemons and make lemonade,” says Adams. “Probation has ended up being a real gift.”

While Jefferson was working on its educational program, juvenile justice advocates were pushing for better living conditions at the detention center, especially relief of overcrowding. In the mid-1990s, representatives from the juvenile court and the office of Cook County Board President John Stroger developed a variety of alternatives to incarceration

for youth accused of crimes. These efforts have reduced the number of students in the detention center from 779 in early 1996 to fewer than 500 today.

More relief is on the way. In 1999, lawyers from the American Civil Liberties Union and the MacArthur Justice Center, a nonprofit, public-interest law firm affiliated with the University of Chicago, filed suit on behalf of detainees, complaining in part that overcrowding denied some young people access to Jefferson’s educational services. When the center’s population grew beyond its design capacity, staff did not always bring all the youth to school “because they knew we were maxed out,” Adams explains.

In October, attorneys on both sides announced that an agreement had been reached. Under it, county officials will develop plans to ease crowding further and improve access to education, among other reforms. Independent monitors will oversee progress.

Adams hopes the settlement will reduce the number of times students are pulled out of class to meet with attorneys. She also hopes it will push the county to make educating youth in detention a priority. “I’m hoping the kids will be encouraged by county staff to take the school more seriously,” she says. “If they tell the kids they should cooperate and take it seriously, they’re more likely to cooperate and take it seriously.” ●

Detention centers in Michigan, Delaware lead the way

Model education programs in juvenile corrections don't get built without a fight. In Wayne County, Mich., which includes Detroit, it took a U.S. Department of Justice investigation. In Delaware, it took a lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Though some consider the recent strides at Chicago's detention center and school good enough to put them on the national map, the Michigan and Delaware programs also have the advantage of new facilities and strong coordination between correctional staff and teachers.

In 1994, Justice Department investigators found overcrowding and no special education services in the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility. Under threat of a lawsuit, Wayne County asked the Detroit Public Schools to collaborate to provide services, but the school system declined. So the county created a charter school and contracted with a private firm in New Jersey, Innovative Educational Programs, Inc., to run it. In 1997, the Benjamin Carson Charter School swung into operation.

Recently, the county built a new detention facility, which includes seven gym areas, access to medical care and a mental health unit. Late last year, the school completed retooling its special education services, the last step the Justice Department required to forestall a lawsuit. Last May, Justice closed its investigation, saying it was satisfied with the reform.

Getting an immediate, solid handle on student needs was a key piece of that reform. When juvenile offenders arrive at Carson, they are placed in classes according to their performance on a standardized test, a writing sample and an interview. During the interview, students are asked whether they received special education services at their old school. If they say yes, they receive one to two hours of daily special education until their official papers can be obtained, says James Simonic, president of Innovative Educational Programs. About 20 percent of students at Carson require special education services.

At any given time, about 198 students attend Carson, with about 3,000



COURTESY OF TETRA TECH DELAWARE

The Ferris School for Boys—a maximum-security facility for convicted juveniles in Delaware—was designed to look like a school rather than a prison.

passing through its doors each year. The average stay is 13 days.

The staff includes three social workers, 11 teacher assistants and a teacher consultant who works with the faculty on modifying instruction for special education students participating in regular classrooms.

"It's a good strong program," says Phyllis Robinson, executive director of charter schools for the Wayne County Regional Education Authority, which supervises 65 charter schools in the Detroit area.

'Used to get jumped'

In 1990, the ACLU sued the State of Delaware over conditions at the Ferris School for Boys, a residential center for boys convicted of serious crimes in juvenile court. The suit charged that Ferris was overcrowded, life endangering and lacking in services and rehabilitative programs, including education.

In its 1999 annual report, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, a national association of state advisory groups, offered this quote from a former Ferris inmate: "There were no programs, no school. You just stayed in your room all day. I used to get jumped on in the unit."

In 1994, under a new governor, Delaware agreed to enter into a consent decree and rebuild Ferris from the ground up. The old Ferris, built for 48 inmates but often holding up to 90, was razed. The new building has room for 72 and could easily be expanded.

Ferris' new commitment to educating inmates shows in the building's design.

"When you drive by, you wouldn't know that it wasn't a school or a junior college," says architect Robert Maffia of Tetra Tech, Inc. "You'd never know it was housing the worst juvenile offenders in the state."

The building features translucent skylights to let in natural light and large security-glass windows in the residential areas and classrooms. The residential rooms look like dorms rather than prison cells.

Ferris also rebuilt its programs. Residential staff are now required to have college degrees. They work closely with the school to ensure continuity in discipline and education. At Ferris, students have daily, supervised homework time after school.

Students stay at Ferris for an average of six months. During that time, each of them has a treatment specialist who acts like a surrogate parent.

If they misbehave, their treatment specialists shadow them through classes, says Principal Dolores Allen-McIntyre. In most facilities, "They put [misbehaving youth] in lockdown. What message are we sending them? If you don't want to be here, you won't be in school." Ferris, she says, sends a different message. "You have a problem, but you need to be here."

The facility is now accredited by both the American Correctional Association and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. "Middle States was critical because we wanted a rapport established with the public schools," says Ferris Supt. Dianne Gadow. "Many of our kids go back to public schools."

Maureen Kelleher

Letters

Clarifying history, mission of community schools

We welcome *CATALYST*'s coverage of the community schools movement and thus wish to thank Catrin Einhorn for her article, "New law gives boost to community schools," in your September issue. In the interest of engaging *CATALYST* readers as allies in this movement, we wish to clarify a few points Ms. Einhorn made.

First, and probably foremost, the idea of community schools is not most essentially "to keep the schools open in the evening and on weekends, and offer courses and services to meet the community's needs." It is, rather, to increase community ownership of the public schools and to increase community investment in learning outcomes—to bring community resources into the schools to improve classroom outcomes and to make the school a center for the community.

Second, your article suggests that, while there is a 'long history' of support for community schools, the recent impetus for them comes from principals who have "used school reform to create alliances with community-based organizations." We beg to differ. While an increasing number of principals are indeed supportive of community schools, more often than not, community schools have been achieved through the initiative of community-based organizations, with principals often, at least initially, resisting the encroachment of the community on their domains.

Third, in focusing on the wonderful advocacy of Judy Dimon, your article failed to honor the very hard work of dozens of parent activists and community leaders who created the vision and the groundswell that have given focus and energy to the Campaign to Expand Community Schools. Just a few examples:

- Since 1969, Youth Guidance has provided services right in public schools to assist at-risk youth in developing academically, socially and emotionally; Youth Guidance programs are presently provided in over 60 Chicago Public Schools.
- Since 1985, the Ounce of Prevention



JOHN BOOZ

Fund has partnered with schools and the City in providing health clinics in public schools to assist young people with health and mental health problems that might otherwise precipitate school failure and dropout.

- Since 1994, CAPE has created partnerships among 30 public schools, 45 professional arts organizations and 11 community organizations to improve learning outcomes through arts-infused curricula.

- Several years before the Polk Bros. Foundation funded Brentano, Marquette and Riis schools, an incredible team of Latina and African-American parent leaders, with support from Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) and Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), opened a community school in Funston School. Quite shortly thereafter, parent leaders supported by these two community groups and the newly created West Town Leadership United (WTLU) opened over half a dozen more such community schools in Logan Square, West Town and Austin.

Fourth, your article suggests that program dollars for nonprofits are the key to the success of the movement, while focusing a lot of attention on using new private and public funds to support larger outside agencies like the Boys and Girls Clubs in community schools. Certainly, more and

better safe, structured, holistic in- and after-school programs are a needed and important part of a community school, and these programs require funding for qualified staff, facilities use, security and so forth. But the essence of community schools serves a dual purpose: providing widening educational opportunities for our students and their families, while at the same time building communities by developing community resources and relationships. This includes reaching out to community members and businesses, building parent partnerships in the school, involving youth in community issues, and the engagement of many other community stakeholders.

Expanding funds for nonprofit programs to build community schools are indeed welcome. Best practices reminds us, however, that an ongoing focus on building the "community" into community schools—through parent, youth and community organizing, leadership development, and community involvement—would be even more welcome in supporting this promising movement.

Our thanks, again, for Ms. Einhorn's article, and our thanks for this opportunity to expand on it.

*Sokoni Karanja
Executive Director,
Centers for New Horizons*

Portraits

Food for living

Teen learns business, life skills in a unique school program

By Debra Williams

When Brittani Gray arrived at the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences her freshman year, she became a fixture in the disciplinarian's office. The slightest incident set her off and she would blow up. She didn't think much of school and failed three classes.

"Brittani was in my office a lot," recalls Assistant Principal Martha Hamilton, formerly in charge of the school's disciplinary office. "She could have avoided a lot of stuff, but she'd open her mouth, and that was that."

But this year Gray is a senior who has made an amazing transformation. For the last three years, she has learned what it takes to start a business, and that experience has taught her how to temper her behavior and set goals and achieve them. In the process, she has discovered that school is an important stepping-stone to her future.

"She's like night and day," says Hamilton. "Now she's saying, 'I'm ready to go to college and I don't want to mess up my record.'"

"I've gone from the bottom of the barrel to being on the honor roll this year," says Gray. "I can't believe it

myself. I no longer see school as a chore; it's my ladder to my future."

Much of Gray's conversion comes from being part of Educated Eats, an entrepreneurial program for high school students at Chicago Ag that teaches business and entrepreneurial skills in a unique way. Students develop a natural food product and get it manufactured and on grocery shelves.

At the same time, students who participate gain confidence that allows them to change inappropriate behavior, boost grades and become leaders. They also see practical ways to use the writing and math skills they learn in traditional coursework. The program also encourages students to aim for college as proceeds from the product sales will fund scholarships.

"When you provide kids with these kinds of experiences, it changes the way they think of themselves, . . . the capacity for what they can do," says Sunny Fischer, executive director of the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, which helps fund the program.

"The essence of the program is entrepreneurial," says Rona Heifetz, founder and executive director of Educated Eats. "But I think youth development is the most important part of the program. There have been lots of opportunities to teach important soft skills—how to interact with people who are not your social peers, how to communicate and tap into resources that will benefit you. These are skills the kids will take away with them and have forever."

Seventeen students participate in the program, which began during the 1999-2000 school year when they were freshmen. It is modeled after a similar student-created program in South Central Los Angeles called Food from the Hood, which sells salad dressings to

major supermarket chains nationwide, including Whole Foods stores in Chicago.

Heifetz says she chose to replicate the program at Chicago Ag because the high school's unique combination of a traditional core curriculum with a focus on agriculture, finance and food science was a natural match. Also, the school's former principal, Barbara Valerious, was receptive to the idea.

Local funders, including the Driehaus Foundation, Chicago Board of Trade and Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, put up \$100,000 to pay for annual expenses such as business insurance, field trips and start-up costs.

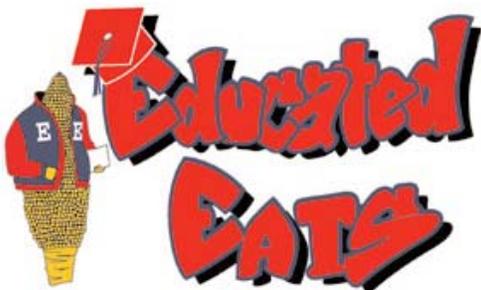
The students plan to have their product, a ready-to-eat natural caramel and cheese popcorn, on the shelves of Jewel Food stores this winter. Holiday popcorn tins are already available.

No easy task

When she started in the program, Gray says she thought the process of making and marketing a product would be quick and easy. "That first year, we thought we'd get a product, get it on the shelf and get money," she notes.

But Gray and the rest of her classmates discovered that developing a business is a time-consuming, detailed process. In the first year, the students started at the bottom by learning basic business skills, exploring the grocery and food industry and trying to understand what it means to run and control a business.

"We talked to people from Jays [Potato Chip Co.] and others in the food industry, we went to trade shows, food shows and snack expos," Gray recalls. "It was a little intimidating at first, but we soon



learned the food and business language.”

The students also developed team-building skills by creating five divisions with responsibility for manufacturing and pricing, marketing and publicity, distribution, finance and operations, and graphic design and packaging.

The opportunity taught Gray valuable lessons about how to work with others.

“I’ve never been good working with other people,” she explains. “I really didn’t want to hear other people’s opinions if they were not like mine. I ended up getting into a huge argument because someone’s idea was different.”

Gray eventually realized that an idea she opposed was similar to her own, only better. “That’s when I really started to listen to what other people had to say and respect other people’s opinion,” she says.

Since then, Gray has worked on each business team after she suggested the groups rotate responsibilities so that each student would be able to perform each task.

During their sophomore year, Gray and her peers conducted market research to identify potential snack food products and competitors. Initially, the students looked at salsa, hot sauce, smoothies, tortilla chips, popcorn and other products they believed fit their youthful image.

By her junior year, Gray and the group had selected popcorn because it was easy to produce and has a longer shelf life. They wrote a business plan and began looking for a food manufacturing company to make the popcorn. They also tended to other financial, distribution and marketing details.

“We put in a lot of work,” says Gray. “We didn’t know a business plan went into a business. We revised our plan 10 times, from tiny misspelled words to a total revision, and we’re still not done. We plan to have it finalized soon.”

Final phase

Now in her last year at Chicago Ag, Gray is working with her classmates on the final push to get their popcorn on supermarket shelves. Last month, the group designed packaging, determined popcorn bag sizes and set a launch date. They are also working on a name for the popcorn product. In addition, they delivered “sell sheets” or purchase orders for holiday popcorn tins to grocers, funders, friends and other potential customers.



JOHN BOOZ

Brittani Gray checks out the competition at a Jewel Food store and shows off an Educated Eats holiday popcorn tin. The young entrepreneurs’ popcorn will hit Jewel shelves this winter.

Doing the hard work to create and deliver a new food product has made Gray rethink choices she’d made in her personal life.

“I wasn’t putting anything into class, and I was getting nothing back,” she says. “Working in a team made me realize that my actions weren’t just affecting me, they were affecting others, mainly my family.”

Says Gray’s grandmother, Beatrice Gray, “I see a total change. She’s really grown.”

Indeed, this year Gray is taking an honors English class. “I didn’t have the best GPA, but I asked my teachers to stay on me and keep me on track,” she says. “Getting into that class was one of my goals and I made it.”

Gray says college has been her ambition all along, but Educated Eats exposed her to new career options.

“I wanted to be a nurse all my life because I have been raised around nurses,” she explains. “But I also like mar-

keting and business after being exposed to the program. Before, I’d never thought of business as a career.”

Gray found a college where she could pursue both: Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich., offers a bachelor’s degree in business and nursing. “I have a C average,” Gray says. “The school is considering me because my counselor talked to them.”

This spring, Chicago Ag’s young entrepreneurs will recruit and train next year’s new crop of students to take over the popcorn business. The successors may even launch a new product. Gray says it’s an easy sell.

“Even if we never make a dime, we leave with so much more,” Gray says. “I want to own my own business someday and now I know that I can.”

For more information about Educated Eats, contact Executive Director Rona Heifetz at 773-239-6800.

New CPS accountability system puts pressure on all schools

by Maureen Kelleher

Chicago's new school accountability system cures much of what ailed the old one, educators and activists agree. But it has a few bugs of its own, some contend.

The old system hinged on a single cutoff score on a single, nationally standardized reading test. The new one looks at both achievement levels and gains on a number of tests and, at the high school level, includes other factors, such as dropout rates.

"I certainly think it's positive that they are looking at gains and that they are rewarding schools for progress as opposed to simply punishing schools for lack of progress," says Donald R. Moore, executive director of the research and advocacy group Designs for Change. "We're disappointed they're still clinging

to the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)."

Under the old system, only the ITBS and its high school counterpart, the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP), counted. Under the new one, the high school test will change to the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE). Elementary schools will be judged on their better score on either the ITBS or the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), which is pegged to state learning standards.

"I'm afraid the system is so complex that schools will lose sight of the standards, and schools will try to figure how they can make gains on one of these tests in order to fall into a particular category," says Moore.

Julie Woestehoff, executive director of Parents United for Responsible Education, is concerned about the increased use of school corrective action plans.

Under the old system, only schools on probation were required to have one; under the new system, schools in the two categories above probation also are required to have one.

Woestehoff says that at probation schools, corrective action plans have not had input from local school councils. The expansion is "a significant diminishment of LSC authority," she says. "The law is pretty clear about

when corrective action plans should be put into place."

The new system's complexity also presents challenges to LSCs, Woestehoff says. She says materials central office sent LSCs to explain the new system "didn't seem to be very helpful." Though the new system does let LSCs know that meeting state standards is important, that's "not enough to give a good idea of where to turn and what to do next."

The following are the problems that testing experts and educators found in the old accountability system and how the new system addresses them:

ITBS makes a bad yardstick. In a 1998 report, the Consortium on Chicago School Research steering committee recommended that CPS not use so-called norm-referenced tests like the ITBS because they are not designed to measure attainment of specific learning goals. Rather, they reflect the current state of achievement nationwide and simply compare students to each other.

The new system is a purposeful nudge toward a measurement based on standards. "This was all very deliberate," says John Easton, director of research and evaluation for CPS and a director of the Consortium. "We wanted the ISAT in there because we wanted the multiple subjects, and we wanted to push people toward thinking about that test."

School officials have said they will abandon the ITBS once the state completes ISAT exams for all grade levels, 3 through 8.

There was no accounting for progress. When a single cutoff score was the sole accountability measure, faculty and students at especially distressed schools got

CPS expands school accountability

Old System

New System

Measures

Reading tests only

Reading, writing, math, science and social science tests

Elementary: ITBS only
High School: TAP only

Elementary: ITBS and ISAT
High School: Prairie State only

High School: dropout rates, 9th-grade course passing rates

Scope

No recognition of progress

Heavy emphasis on progress

Focus only on probation schools

Focus on all schools

SOURCE: Chicago Public Schools

no credit for progress. Schools above the cutoff score had no external incentive to improve.

There were no carrots. In the past, the accountability system had no rewards, save for the relative safety of getting off probation. Now, schools may win \$10,000 awards for exceptional progress, and those awards are available to schools at both the bottom and top of the achievement scale. In November, the 60 schools with the highest test score gains received \$10,000 awards.

There was no incentive to keep kids in school. Now dropout rates and the percentage of freshmen achieving sophomore standing are part of the accountability formula for high schools.

The system tended to skew instruction. In the past, only reading counted. Now math, science, writing and social studies count, since they are part of the ISAT and Prairie State exam.

Elementary school formula

Achievement Level	Progress Level		
	Improvement on ITBS and ISAT		
ITBS: percent at or above national norms OR ISAT: percent meeting or exceeding state standards	exceeds targets	meets targets	does not meet targets
Level I: 60% or above	Schools of Distinction	Schools of Excellence	
Level II: 40% - 59%		Schools of Merit	
Level III: 25% - 39%	Schools of Opportunity		Schools of Challenge
Level IV: Below 25% on both tests	Schools on Probation		

SOURCE: Chicago Public Schools

There was no push on higher achievers. The old accountability system meant little to schools whose students scored well above the probation cutoff. The new categories and incentives send a signal that higher achieving schools are expected to show progress, too.

Some students were left out. Under the old system, the test scores of special education students who took the ITBS did not count toward school accountability ratings. Now they will, which provides an incentive to schools to pay more attention to them. ●

Probation tally dips

Under Chicago's new accountability system, the number of schools on probation decreased by six, to a total of 76.

Last year, 53 elementary schools and 28 high schools were on probation. This year, the number of elementary schools on probation dropped to 46, while the high school total rose slightly, to 30.

For high schools, the School Board lowered the cutoff score that puts a school on probation. However, CPS officials say that the new test the system is using for accountability is more challenging than the old one was and therefore, they have not lowered the bar.

In recent years, high schools were placed on probation if fewer than 20 percent of their students scored at or above the national average in reading on the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP), a nationally standardized test. Now, high schools will be placed on probation if fewer than 15 percent of their students meet standards on the Illinois Prairie State Achievement Exam.

"The TAP was simply a high school reading test," says Phil Hansen, CPS chief accountability officer. "The PSAE is

much more difficult. It measures the high school learning standards [in four subjects] at the 11th grade."

The probation criteria for elementary schools also changed slightly. Before, elementary schools were placed on probation if fewer than 20 percent of their students scored at or above the national average in reading on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS). Now, they are placed on probation if fewer than 25 percent of their students meet standards on both the ITBS and Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). But schools that score better than 25 percent on one test or the other can escape probation.

CPS also changed slightly how it helps its lowest-performing schools. It has scrapped probation managers, who provided management support to principals. Instead, the Office of Accountability and the new area instructional offices will provide oversight and guidance. Last year, the board spent \$616,500 on probation managers at 91 schools, including 10 in their first year off probation. Probation schools will continue to get external partners and school business interns.

Probation is the lowest of six cate-

gories for rating schools. The categories and number of schools in each are:

- At the top of the scale, schools of distinction have mid-level to high student achievement and especially strong yearly gains on tests and, at the high school level, freshman passing rates in core courses. High schools of distinction also show declines in their dropout rates. (72 schools)
- Schools of excellence have high student achievement but lackluster gains. (74)
- Schools of merit have mid-level achievement and lackluster gains. (109)
- Schools of opportunity have low achievement but average or above-average gains. (65)
- Schools of challenge have low achievement and minimal, if any, gains. (151)
- Schools on probation have extremely low achievement. (76)

Maureen Kelleher

The CATALYST web site will provide direct links to lists of schools and their categories, as well as related explanatory material, once they are posted to the CPS web site. Log on to www.catalyst-chicago.org.

CTU DEALS PASS HOUSE The Chicago Teachers Union achieved an early-round victory Nov. 21 when the Illinois House of Representatives passed a bill, 105-8, that rolls back some restrictions imposed on the union's bargaining rights that have been in place since 1995. At press time, the bill was poised for consideration in the Senate, where sources predict it will face significant opposition from Republicans. An attached measure to double the number of charter schools in Chicago to 30 sweetens the deal, however. The union and charter school proponents favor the measure.

NO MORE INTERVENTION In October, the School Board removed five high schools from intervention status and placed them back on probation. The board conceded that the high schools—Bowen, Collins, DuSable, Orr and South Shore—had not resolved “the problems that caused chronic low student performance” but had made steps toward academic improvement. This year, the schools will each receive \$100,000, will be monitored by central office and will get reading and instructional supports from area instructional officers. ... The board also modified its intervention policy to spell out steps to monitor and support post-intervention schools. The policy stipulates that former intervention schools may be placed back on intervention, or even face closure, if their test scores slip too low or if they fail to get off probation within three years. The board had previously modified its

intervention policy last spring. (*CATALYST* web site May 2002)

MOVING IN/ON The Spencer Foundation has named economist **Michael S. McPherson**, president of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn., as president. He is a nationally known expert on the relationship between education and economics. His predecessor, Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, left Spencer in July to become dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. ... The School Board's Monitoring Commission for Desegregation Implementation, which evaluates the city's efforts to integrate its school faculties and students, has lost three of its commissioners. **Ellen Douglas, Ronald DeNard** and **Roxanne Ward** have left the commission for personal reasons, and were expected to be replaced by the February board meeting.



McPherson

PRINCIPALS The following acting principals have been awarded four-year contracts: **Bertha Buchanan**, Phillips High/Wells Prep; **Elizabeth Gonzalez**, Chase; **Shirley Woodard**, King. ... **Arthur Slater**, an Area 9, Region 3 director, and former assistant principal at Hyde Park

Academy, is the new interim principal at Kenwood Academy. ... In October, the board issued a warning resolution to **Eloise Shumpert**, principal of Wright, one of the schools being investigated for test cheating. Shumpert was not accused of wrongdoing, but board officials cited her for lax test security.

GATES GRANTS The Chicago High School Redesign Initiative has suspended its grant making and will focus its efforts on five new small high schools that it already funds at Bowen, Orr and South Shore. The new schools were created with grants awarded after the first round of requests for proposals. But none of the small schools proposed in a subsequent round were selected, and a date to accept third-round applications has not been set. The High School Redesign Initiative is supported by a five-year, \$12 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and \$6.2 million from local funders. ... In October, the Gates Foundation announced a \$4 million grant to create four small charter high schools in the city over the next three years. The Chicago Charter Schools Foundation, which already operates one charter school with six sites, plans to stagger school openings beginning fall 2003 through 2005.

Compiled by CATALYST staff

More Comings & Goings can be found at www.catalyst-chicago.org.



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