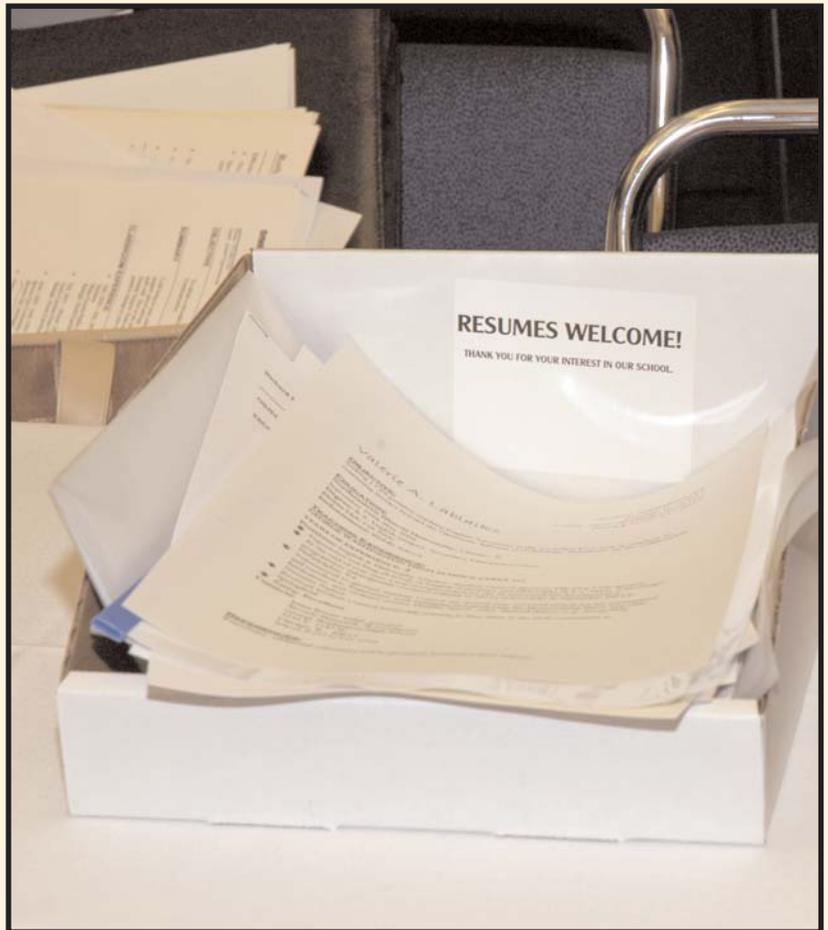


## YOU'RE HIRED!

**MORE CPS TEACHERS ARE BEING RECRUITED FROM PROGRAMS THAT FOCUS ON PUTTING CAREER-CHANGERS ON A FAST TRACK TO CERTIFICATION**

**CHICAGO LOSES MOST TEACH FOR AMERICA TEACHERS** *PAGE 10*



**Start-up high schools reinvent the traditional model** *PAGE 15*

**CPS corners market for tutoring under No Child Left Behind** *PAGE 22*

# Chipping away at LSCs



Veronica Anderson

**L**ocal school councils—Chicago’s grand experiment to put the power and authority for changing schools into the hands of parents, teachers and community leaders—took more hits this summer. The Chicago School Development Cooperative quietly shut its doors at the end of August after five years of recruiting and supporting council members, and advocating a grassroots reform agenda.

In June, Mayor Richard M. Daley announced a plan to create 100 new schools—a mix of charter, contract and small schools that are not required to seat elected councils. Under the Chicago School Reform Act, councils have legal authority to hire principals, and set priorities for spending discretionary funds and for their schools’ improvement plan.

But the real erosion of local power began long before this summer. It’s been a steady slide that began 10 years ago when Daley took control of the district.

Of course, Daley, Schools CEO Arne Duncan and others who view councils as obstacles to improving schools are too smart to challenge

Unlike LSCs, so-called transition advisory councils seat members who apply to and are chosen by the School Board, which in turn may adopt the councils’ recommendations, but is not obliged to do so. The first time these councils were convened was two years ago, when CPS first tried its close-and-reopen strategy to jumpstart reform at two elementary schools.

Grand Boulevard Federation Director Greg Washington, who was on one of those councils, notes the process is “much more inclusive” now than it was then. The advisory council he sits on to help convert DuSable High School into small schools has reviewed proposals and

change will render many local school councils lame ducks. LSCs at schools on probation lose all of their decision making authority to the School Board. Last year, councils at 83 schools held that status; more are likely to join their ranks when this year’s probation list is released later this month.

“I’m agnostic on LSCs,” Duncan says. “I just want great schools. I want kids to learn to read. I want some competition.”

However, you’re not likely to get great neighborhood schools if you pay only lip service to the neighborhood. What happens when a transition advisory council recommends something that the board does not want to do? What recourse does a community have to replace a weak principal at a neighborhood school that is on probation? If schools are to be centers of their communities, shouldn’t they grow out of that community?

There are still hundreds of local school councils that are a positive force at their respective schools. They stand as examples of what shared responsibility for public education can produce. But that’s of little solace when the district’s latest stab at school improvement ignores such contributions and continues to chip away at councils’ influence instead of welcoming them as partners.

**“I’m agnostic on LSCs. I just want great schools. I want kids to learn to read. I want some competition.”**

*Schools CEO Arne Duncan*

them directly. The last public official who committed that political blunder was soundly defeated. Instead, they are using the 1995 amendments to the reform act and district policies to sidestep councils or replace them with weaker substitutes that would gather the community’s input for schools slated to close and reopen under Renaissance 2010, the 100-school plan.

interviewed applicants. Yet he is skeptical about what role the advisory councils will play after the school is reopened. “It’s not clear to me what the scope of authority would be for advisory boards,” he says.

Also affecting LSCs’ power is a recent change in the CPS accountability policy, which raised the bar schools have to meet to escape being deemed failures. A side effect of that

**ABOUT US** Kudos to **Charles Whitaker**, the assistant professor at the Medill School of Journalism who copyedits Catalyst Chicago in his spare time, for winning the Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence Award, which recognizes Northwestern University faculty for outstanding performance.

## ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION

# A new breed of teachers

Chicago schools are hiring more teachers from alternative certification programs, most of them for hard-to-fill specialties such as math and special education. In exchange for picking up tuition costs, the district requires most teachers hired out of alternative programs to commit to a three-year stay. A new study will try to answer the question of whether these teachers do a better job of raising student achievement, and CPS is beginning to track retention rates among the various programs. **COVER STORY: PAGE 6**

### CPS ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Basics on the nine programs the district has partnerships with. **PAGE 9**

### TEACH FOR AMERICA ON HOT SEAT

More than half of recruits from national program quit after two years. **PAGE 10**

### EXPERIENCE HELPS CAREER-CHANGERS REACH MANLEY STUDENTS

New teachers' maturity, job background are pluses at West Side school. **PAGE 12**

### NO CONSENSUS ON PROS, CONS

Experts say research on alternative programs is limited and inconclusive. **PAGE 14**



JOE GALLO

Prospective teachers line up at the CPS teachers fair held in July at McCormick Place.



JASON REBLANDO

Summer music class keeps one new high school's students on track to graduate in three years. See story, page 17.

## DEPARTMENTS

### UP CLOSE Page 15

- Four schools on new course

### RESEARCH Page 18

- School districts often use top-down approach to improve instruction

### UPDATES Page 22

- CPS corners tutoring market but runs risk of losing it all
- New leadership shifts union focus
- Board closes 8 child-parent centers, converts some to Head Start

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### ON THE WEB

Catalyst is going to redesign its web site to make it more useful, and we want your feedback. Go to [www.catalyst-chicago.org](http://www.catalyst-chicago.org) and take two minutes to complete an online survey. Help us help you!

# Notebook

## Q&A with...

### TIMELINE

#### July 26: Tests Cut

To save some \$6 million, students will no longer take state tests in social studies or writing beginning in 2005, state education officials announce. Because the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires testing only in reading, mathematics and science, legislators elected to stop the tests to help pay for the \$154-per-pupil increase in state funding for local school districts. But some education experts express concern that cutting the tests will result in fewer resources and less classroom time being spent on the subjects.

#### Aug. 2: Crackdown

Citing poor academic performance at their schools, the School Board fires principals at Cregier Multiplex, Fenger High and Bouchet Elementary. Several others reportedly agree to quit, but the board does not name them. Some 20 principals are given new plans for improving their schools. The leader of the local principals' group says principals are being "scapegoated" and criticizes the board for failing to inform local school councils. A CPS spokesman says the actions were "an employee performance evaluation."

#### Aug. 10: More taxes

In response to a less-than-expected increase in state per-pupil funding that left the district with a \$45 million deficit, Schools CEO Arne Duncan announces a 2.4 percent increase in school property taxes. The increase will raise \$40 million, but more cuts will have to be made throughout the year to make up the remaining \$5 million. The district's total budget reaches \$5 billion and targets more money toward early childhood, reading and dropout prevention. Critics later question whether the budget is as lean as CPS claims.

### ELSEWHERE

#### Miami: School shakeup

Supt. Rudy Crew plans an overhaul of 39 failing schools, according to the Aug. 17 *Miami Herald*. The plan includes 10 more days in the academic calendar, an extra hour in the school day, smaller classes and more training for teachers. Crew will have to negotiate with labor unions to implement the plan, but if the unions resist, Crew could take advantage of state Board of Education rules that allow districts to suspend union contracts in order to improve poorly performing schools. The director of United Teachers of Dade County says teachers who want to leave the 39 schools should be allowed to do so.

#### California: Funding lawsuit

The state has agreed to pay more than \$1 billion to settle a class-action lawsuit charging that poor children were denied adequate

textbooks, trained teachers and a safe school environment, according to the Aug. 11 *Los Angeles Times*. The proposed settlement, which is subject to approval by a judge, would require the state to spend \$1 billion to improve 2,400 low-performing, deteriorating schools. The state will also pay nearly \$139 million for new textbooks this fall.

#### Kentucky: GED program

A GED program for struggling students could result in schools dumping low-achieving students who might drag down test scores, according to the Aug. 12 *Lexington Herald-Leader*. Aimed at students who are still in school, the program requires that students take state tests and have their scores included in their school's scores. But critics argue that requirement can be sidestepped because a student could complete the GED program, then be pushed to drop out before the end-of-year state tests are given.

### IN SHORT

**"I don't want competition, selective enrollment, a neighborhood lottery. Education should not be a game where I cross my fingers."**

*Fuller Elementary LSC member Brenda Perry at an Aug. 24 press conference where activists spoke against Renaissance 2010, which favors charter and contract schools.*

#### Executive Director Greg Washington, Grand Boulevard Federation

Grassroots activists, parents and local school council members have pounced on the Chicago Public Schools' Renaissance 2010 and Mid-South plans, accusing the School Board of sidestepping community input before deciding to shut down dozens of schools and reopen most as charter or contract schools, without LSCs. Greg Washington, who was on the planning team for Mid-South, talked with Consulting Editor Lorraine Forte about what's wrong—and what's right—with the board's plans.

#### Are activists satisfied with CPS' response to their concerns?

They should stop implementation of the plans until they can engage the community more meaningfully.

#### Arne Duncan has said there isn't going to be a final plan for Mid-South schools.

That's bad. I and other people put a lot of time and energy into planning, and it was our understanding that the outcome would be a specific plan. Now, it's too bad it had to wait until the community was gentrifying. But the original Mid-South concept of linking housing, community development and education is real exciting and offers a real opportunity for schools to become much more integrated with the community. And I hope that is not lost in the Renaissance 2010 plan. I don't see that concept as part of that at all.

#### What do you want the board to do to create trust with community groups?

LSCs, parents, teachers, and principals should be involved in the development of policy from the beginning. Another suggestion involves the way new schools are selected. I was on the Williams Transitional Advisory Council and I'm also on the DuSable Small Schools Advisory Council. At Williams, we went to different cities to see best-practice schools. There were surveys and focus groups. But that was all after-the-fact. The most important decision, choosing the schools, had already been made. DuSable's small schools process has been much more inclusive. We reviewed the proposals, went on visits to other cities and interviewed the planning teams. The community came to meetings and asked questions. We don't have decision-making authority. But in other small-schools conver-



JASON REBLANDO

sions CPS followed the recommendations of the advisory council.

#### What else could the board do?

There should be a co-chair [of the advisory council] who is a community member so there's some feeling of ownership. Second, let the community get its own experts and get a second opinion about the effectiveness of the theories of instruction and curriculum. And the advisory council needs to have an ongoing role after the schools are open.

#### The new schools the board wants to create will likely have advisory boards. What's wrong with that?

Local school councils are mandated by state law and have certain legal authority. It's not clear to me what the [legal] scope of authority would be for the advisory boards.

#### How can the district ease the transition for kids at schools that are closing?

I've been told that there are children who started out at Einstein, which was closed, transferred to Donoghue, which was closed and then transferred to Doolittle West, which was closed. Now they have to go somewhere else. That kind of mobility is certainly not good. And when DuSable High stopped accepting freshmen, students had to go to Phillips, creating problems with gangs and turf issues. The board needs to be much more thoughtful about the sequence of closing schools, the stability of children and community issues like gangs and transportation.

#### Do you agree that when schools have been failing for years, sometimes it's best to start over from scratch?

I've heard that to change the culture and image of the school, you need to remarket it. That does not necessarily mean closing the school. There should be other strategies. ■

## ASK CATALYST

**More students enter high school having already earned high school credits, and find that there are no suitable courses available for them senior year. How can we provide advanced courses to students who are too few in number to make up a full class?**

*Norman Gelfand, LSC Chair, Von Steuben High School*

Illinois Virtual High Schools ([www.ivhs.org](http://www.ivhs.org)) offers a full high school curriculum including Advanced Placement classes, says Edward Klunk of the Office of High School programs. Participating schools have a student mentor to oversee the program.

CPS also pays for qualified high school juniors and seniors to enroll in a course at any of 12 local colleges. For more information on the College Bridge Program, talk to a guidance counselor at your school.

E-mail your question to [askcat@catalyst-chicago.org](mailto:askcat@catalyst-chicago.org) or send it to *Ask Catalyst*, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60604.

## MATH CLASS

Chicago Public Schools will receive an extra **\$40.4 million** in federal Title I poverty funds this year, bringing in **\$291 million**, an increase of **17 percent**, according to a report from the Washington, D.C.-based Center on Education Policy. The report explains how the No Child Left Behind Act sparked changes in Title I's funding formula, benefiting high-poverty districts like Chicago. First, Title I now uses annual, rather than biennial, Census Bureau updates of the population of low-income children, making the formula more accurate. Second, the formula is now weighted in favor of children in high-poverty cities, which means that each such child counts more than a child in a low-poverty city. **44 percent** of districts that receive Title I funds will get more money, while **56 percent** will receive less. To read the full report, go to <http://www.ctredpol.org>.

## FOOTNOTE



KURT MITCHELL

# A new breed of teachers

By Debra Williams

**I**n March, Chicago Public School officials predicted that a third of new teachers for the coming 2004-05 school year would be hired from alternative certification programs, a figure that CPS said would be more than double the number hired from such programs in 2003-04.

Most alternative programs are aimed at career-changers, and Schools CEO Arne Duncan called such programs “extremely valuable,” touting the benefits of bringing experienced professionals into the classroom where they could have a positive impact on students’ lives.

But the prediction fell short. By late August, only 25 percent of all new teachers hired were from alternative certification programs, according to CPS data.

Even so, for the past five years, the number of teachers from alternative programs has been growing steadily, from 140 in 2000 to 417 this year. Chicago’s hiring trend is part of a national one. School dis-

tricts in California, Texas, New Jersey and New York are relying more and more on alternative programs as a hiring pool. The percentage of Chicago’s hires from alternative programs is about the same as that of Los Angeles, Houston and Newark, and higher than New York and Miami, says Emily Feistritzer, president and CEO of the National Center for Alternative Certification in Washington, D.C.

## **SURGE OF INTEREST**

The hiring surge is just one sign of the district’s growing interest in alternative certification. CPS now has partnerships with nine alternative programs, most of which take one to two-and-a-half years to complete and put participants into the classroom while they earn their teaching credentials. Another partnership with

Rockford College in Rockford, Ill., is in the works, but the school’s alternative program is sending 14 elementary bilingual teachers to CPS this fall.

In addition, CPS now has an office called Routes to Teaching, created by Duncan almost two years ago to manage the partnerships and coordinate hiring from alternative programs. Director Toni Hill explains that alternative programs previously had to work with several departments. “Now, they are all getting the same message and have one place to call to resolve issues and concerns,” she says.

And last year, CPS instituted a requirement that teachers hired through alternative programs commit to stay for three years after completing coursework and obtaining certification. If they do not, they must reimburse the district for tuition costs.

**Chicago is hiring more teachers from alternative certification**

**programs. But a crucial question remains about whether these**

**programs produce high-quality teachers who can raise achievement.**

## **RESEARCH IN THE WORKS**

But while CPS increases its hiring from alternative programs, research on their effectiveness is limited. Experts say that those studies that have been done are inconclusive and often not well-designed (see story on page 14).

However, one noted expert says there’s a larger issue than simply whether alternative certification is better than traditional four-year training from a school or college of education.

“One is not better than the other, if you look at what it takes to prepare a teacher,” says Barnett Berry, executive director of the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C. “There are horrible alternative certification programs and terrific programs. There are horrible



JOE GALLO

**Job candidates** look over materials and applications at the CPS teachers fair held in July at McCormick Place. By mid-August, the district had hired some 1,700 teachers, 25 percent of them from alternative certification programs.

college of education programs. There are terrific ones. It is not a question of alternative certification vs. traditional programs. It is high quality vs. low quality. “

CPS will try to determine the effectiveness of programs it partners with by launching a major study this fall. With a \$45,000 grant from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), CPS and the University of Illinois at Chicago will begin the first phase of a study examining how well alternative-certification teachers are performing in the classroom and the quality of training programs.

“We don’t know much nationwide about these programs,” says Steve Tozer, a professor of education at UIC who is overseeing the study. “And in Chicago, we don’t know how these programs work and the steps they are

taking to produce quality teachers.” Among the questions the study will seek to answer, he explains, is whether teachers are receiving adequate support from trained mentors and whether they are teaching in hard-to-staff schools.

“One of the arguments we hear for alternative programs is that they are meeting needs that are not being met otherwise,” says Tozer. “So we want to see if they are. These are not hostile questions. It is just that we don’t know much about what these programs are contributing to the picture.”

The first part of the study, expected to be complete by spring 2005, will examine how alternative certification programs operate and how well they meet staffing needs. In addition, using a sample of 30 classrooms, researchers will measure teacher attrition and

instructional quality.

The second part of the study will focus on the critical question of achievement, measuring student test-score gains over a year’s time. It will compare students whose teachers were trained in alternative certification programs with students whose teachers came from traditional programs. CPS and UIC have not yet obtained funding for this second phase.

Janet Knupp, president of The Chicago Public Education Fund, says the district deserves credit for planning the research study. The Fund has raised over \$18 million to support several education initiatives, including three alternative programs: Teach for America (in Chicago), the Golden Apple Teacher Education (GATE) program and the Academy for Urban School Leadership.

“Now they are taking the next logical step and plan to look deeply and find out which ones are really quality programs,” says Knupp.

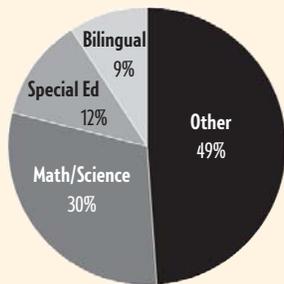
### FILLING IN THE GAPS

While the question of quality is up in the air, there is one plus about alternative certification: The programs appear to be helping the district solve its teacher shortage problems. The majority of teachers hired through alternative certification are filling slots in math, science, special education, bilingual education and other subjects for which the district has a chronic shortage of teachers.

“The universities were not producing enough teachers in the areas we need,” explains Hill. She estimates that 50 percent of all math and science teachers hired in the district for 2004-05 are from alterna-

## HIRING HELPS SHORTAGE

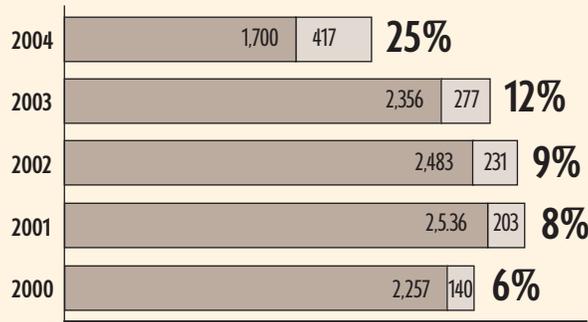
Many teachers from alternative programs teach subjects in shortage areas.



Source: Catalyst analysis of CPS data. "Other" includes foreign language, physical education and elementary education.

## CPS RELIES MORE ON ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION

Over the past five years, Chicago has hired an increasing number of teachers, many of them career-changers, from alternative certification programs.



tive programs, up from 45 percent last year. However, final hiring figures for math, science and other shortage areas will not be available until the end of September.

"The big positive [of alternative programs] for school districts is you recruit for where the demand is great," says Feistritz.

Former Fenger High Principal Phyllis Hodges turned to alternative certification programs when she could not find the special education teachers her school needed. She hired four.

"They are very effective teachers and two of them are pursuing additional certification in math and English," says Hodges. "They are real serious about this."

## UNEQUAL SUPPLY, DEMAND

At a CPS teachers' fair this summer, half the 300 resumes Manley High Principal Katherine Flanagan received were from social studies teachers. (For more on Manley, see story on page 12.)

"There were droves of them," says Flanagan, who questions why colleges do not do more to dissuade education majors from getting credentials to teach subjects that already have a glut of candidates.

Hill says her office has had

mixed results when asking colleges and universities to guide students into teaching careers in high-need areas.

Private universities have mainly been unresponsive. "Some of them have said, 'Hey, these kids are paying big money, they should be able to take what they want,'" Hill says.

Public universities, she adds, have been more receptive.

"We do try to steer them to shortage areas. We have more kids than we can handle in the elementary education program," says Chris Sorensen, the dean of the College of Education at Northern Illinois University. "We are encouraging special education, but a lot of students have their hearts set on teaching small children. It is very difficult to convince them to do anything other than that."

NIU has 1,200 students studying elementary education, compared to only 600 studying special education. Sorensen says counselors do not have contact with most elementary education majors early in their college careers—when it would be easier to steer them down another path—because 60 percent of them are transfer students from community colleges.

When students cannot get in the elementary program because of the glut, some parents have even called the school to ask if they are aware of the teacher shortage, Sorensen says. "I tell them, 'Yeah, but it's just not in elementary education.'"

NIU began trying another approach three years ago, pairing students studying elementary education with those studying special education. The groups do joint classroom observations, take some courses together and talk about what they're seeing.

"We've had some kids switch majors because of this program," says Sorensen. "It has helped to change the perspective of the elementary ed student."

## CPS CALLS THE SHOTS

Alternative programs have been a growing source of teachers in shortage areas. But the district, which pays partner colleges and universities between \$2,000 and \$12,000 for each candidate who wants to work in CPS, also looks to these programs to find teachers who have a strong interest in teaching children in low-income communities.

"These people will be going into the neediest classrooms. They are not going to the Whit-

ney Young's or the Walter Payton's," Hill explains, referring to two of the district's selective-admissions high schools.

Hill's office also looks for male, bilingual and minority teachers. About half of teachers in CPS are minorities, according to state school report card data, but data from the Department of Human Resources shows that some schools still need minority teachers in order to comply with the faculty integration requirements found in the federal desegregation consent decree. Only 23 percent of CPS teachers are men.

Chicago launched Illinois' first alternative certification program, Teachers for Chicago, in 1991. The partnership brought together CPS, the Chicago Teachers Union, the Golden Apple Foundation and area colleges, but it was discontinued three years ago in part because it was structured for schools with at least three teacher vacancies, leaving out schools that were interested in participating but had fewer job openings.

With the exception of Teach for America and the Golden Apple program, any applicant to an alternative program who wants to teach in CPS must apply through the district, not the school. "We are the customers, so we do the screening," Hill explains. "If we think these people suit our needs, then they go to the university to be admitted. The universities have never said no to anyone we've sent to them."

Since last year, each candidate has been paired with a mentor from GOLDEN, the district-wide mentoring program for new teachers.

Previously, teachers on the alternative certification track did not get a mentor until they finished their program. But the district real-

ized that, as novices, the new teachers needed help with classroom management and day-to-day tasks such as keeping grade books, marking attendance properly and planning lessons.

### PRINCIPAL BECOMES SUPPORTER

Once they are in the classroom, advocates say teachers from alternative certification programs are just as capable as those from traditional routes.

One advocate is Principal Patricia Johnson of Kershaw Elementary in Englewood. When Johnson was working as a teacher at Tilton Elementary in West Garfield Park, she didn't think much of teachers from alternative certification programs.

But Johnson discovered that the now-defunct Teachers for Chicago program would send teachers to schools with three or more vacancies and persuaded her principal to give it a try, since Tilton had problems filling teaching positions because of its location in an impoverished community.

"At that point, I thought they would be better than nothing," Johnson recalls.

But once they were on board, she was surprised to discover that the newcomers were competent. In fact, Johnson was so impressed that she later became a coordinator for Teachers for Chicago.

"Before, I was certainly biased because I came from a college of education," says Johnson, who attended Illinois State University. "But that experience made me take a second look at alternative certification programs and change my perspective of teachers that come from them."

To contact Debra Williams, call (312) 673-3873 or e-mail [williams@catalyst-chicago.org](mailto:williams@catalyst-chicago.org).

# CPS alternative certification programs

The alternative certification programs CPS works with are geared primarily toward career-changers who teach while taking education coursework at local colleges and universities. The programs also enroll candidates who are not planning to work in Chicago. Here's a snapshot of how each of nine programs works with CPS. For more details, go to [www.catalyst-chicago.org](http://www.catalyst-chicago.org).

## ASSOCIATED COLLEGES OF ILLINOIS

**CPS TEACHERS, 2004-05:** 14

**AREAS OF CERTIFICATION:** High school mathematics and science

**TRAINING:** 36 credit hours of courses, summer student teaching and a teacher residency in a Chicago public school for one year.

**CONTACT:** Chris Johnston, 312-263-2391, ext. 21.

**WEBSITE:** [http://www.acifund.org/progs\\_tdp/ACI\\_Classes.pdf](http://www.acifund.org/progs_tdp/ACI_Classes.pdf)

## NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

**CPS TEACHERS, 2004-05:** 85

**AREAS OF CERTIFICATION:** Math, science, world languages, elementary education and bilingual education.

**TRAINING:** One year of coursework and a teacher residency in CPS.

**CONTACT:** Mary Ann Corley, 312-261-3132

**WEBSITE:** [www.firstclass.cps.k12.il.us](http://www.firstclass.cps.k12.il.us)

## ACADEMY FOR URBAN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

**CPS TEACHERS, 2004-05:** 66

**AREAS OF CERTIFICATION:** Elementary education

**TRAINING:** A one-year program that includes coursework and a teacher residency in CPS.

**CONTACT:** Jane Moore, 847-947-5192

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.ausl-chicago.org/index.html>

## FIRST CLASS SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

Formerly Facilitating Accelerated Certification for Educators (FACE)

**CPS TEACHERS, 2004-05:** 50 (from the University of Illinois at Chicago and colleges that are members of the Associated Colleges of Illinois)

**AREAS OF CERTIFICATION:** Special education

**TRAINING:** Includes 30 weeks of student teaching and coursework and a two-year teacher residency at a CPS school.

**CONTACT:** Sharon Grant, 847-619-8831

**WEBSITE:** [www.firstclass.cps.k12.il.us](http://www.firstclass.cps.k12.il.us)

## GOLDEN APPLE TEACHER EDUCATION (GATE)

**CPS TEACHERS, 2004-05:** 41

**AREAS OF CERTIFICATION:** Elementary and secondary math and science

**TRAINING:** In collaboration with Northwestern University, the program includes eight weeks of summer teacher training and a year-

long residency in a CPS school, with additional coursework.

**CONTACT:** Nellie Quintana, 312-407-0006,

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.goldenapple.org/gate.htm>

## UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS MIDDLE GRADES MATH AND SCIENCE

**CPS TEACHERS, 2004-05:** 27

**AREAS OF CERTIFICATION:** Math and science

**TRAINING:** A 15-month program that includes summer coursework and a year-long residency at a CPS school.

**CONTACT:** Carol Mitchener, 312-996-8590

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.uic.edu/educ/mathsci/>

## TEACH FOR AMERICA

**CPS TEACHERS, 2004-05:** 75

**AREAS OF CERTIFICATION:** Math and science and elementary education

**TRAINING:** Five weeks of summer training, which includes coursework and four weeks of student teaching in either Houston, New York or Los Angeles.

**CONTACT:** John White,

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.teachforamerica.org/chicago.html>

## UNITE (URBAN IMPACT THROUGH EDUCATION)

**CPS TEACHERS, 2004-05:** 10

**AREAS OF CERTIFICATION:** Elementary education

**TRAINING:** Program is a part of the Inner City Teaching Corps, which works in collaboration with Northwestern University and the Golden Apple Foundation. Training includes eight weeks of summer courses and student teaching, and a year residency in a CPS school with additional coursework

**CONTACT:** Matthew Smith, 773-265-7240

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.ictc-chicago.org/>

## CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY

**CPS TEACHERS, 2004-05:** 35

**AREAS OF CONCENTRATION:** physical education

**TRAINING:** Summer teacher training and a two-year teacher residency in a CPS school.

**CONTACT:** Larry Sandler, 773-995-2072

*Compiled by Mary Gallery*

# Teach for America on hot seat

**CPS concerned about attrition rate of a noted national program**

By Debra Williams

**F**ewer than half of the teachers hired in Chicago Public Schools through the national program Teach for America stay on the job for three years, the commitment required of teachers in other alternative certification programs.

Data from Teach for America show that 43 percent of its teachers who started in CPS in 2001 stayed on the job in 2004. Of those who started in 2000, 39 percent stayed for a third year.

Those statistics raise concerns for CPS, which is looking to cut teacher attrition and is planning to track the retention of teachers in all its alternative programs. As a result, district officials have asked Teach for America, which recruits graduates from some of the country's most prestigious colleges and universities, to come up with ways to improve its long-term retention.

Toni Hill, director of CPS' Routes to Teaching office, praises the program but cautions that the district may have to "re-evaluate" its partnership if retention does not improve. She explains that the district agreed to Teach for America's standard two-year commitment when it began partnering with the program four years ago. CPS now reimburses Teach for America \$4,500 per teacher to cover training costs; the district hires about 75 teachers each year.

## TEACHERS HAVE CAREER OPTIONS

"Teach for America candidates are outstanding," says Hill. "They have high GPAs, have participated in extracurricular activities and come from the best schools. The problem is retention. We want teachers who will stay."



JOHN BOOZ

Recent college graduates Ariel Beggs (left) and Shay Fluharty attend an orientation session for new Teach for America recruits. Fluharty, hired to teach Spanish at Harper High School, may eventually leave teaching for law school.

Principals voice similar concerns. "These people are really good—well-trained, highly motivated—so they leave to pursue advanced degrees or positions in other fields," says Principal James Breashears of Robeson High in Englewood, who, during the past two years, lost five of six Teach for America teachers. "That's the downside, that they have so many possibilities. It's hard to keep them."

Indeed, Shay Fluharty, a new teacher from Florida who will be teaching Spanish at Harper High in West Englewood this year, says she does not envision staying in the classroom.

In five years, Fluharty says, "I'm going to either [enroll in] law school or become an activist for reforms and help make changes outside the classroom."

Executive Director John White of Teach for America's Chicago office says the program will work on boosting retention and strengthening its partnership with CPS.

"There is more work to be done," says White. Teach for America will come up with a plan for recruiting a more stable pool of teachers who will remain in the district beyond their two-year commitment, he adds. "We've done this in other places [Houston and Los Angeles] and will do this in Chicago."

Experts also point out that Teach for America is not designed to turn out career teachers. Still, White says, "Nationally, over the course of 15 years, 60 percent of Teach for America teachers remain in public education—40 percent as teachers, 20 percent as leaders in administrative capacities."

Teach for America's main purpose, he adds, is to "recruit top college graduates to work in under-resourced schools, and produce a crop of young leaders who are committed to a life-long fight for equal opportunity." In Chicago, some alumni have started schools, are National Board-certified, and have become leaders in the district, White says.

# Critics: No solid evidence that Teach for America boosts achievement

Teach for America alums created KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) schools, a nationally growing chain of charter schools aimed to get students to college. Last year, two KIPP schools opened in Chicago.

“Teach for America does not set [retention] as a goal,” says Daniel Humphrey, the associate director of the Center for Education Policy at SRI International, an independent nonprofit research organization. “They view their program not as one to deal with teacher shortages but as a leadership program.”

## KIDS NEED STABLE TEACHERS

However, Barnett Berry, president of the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality in Chapel Hill, N.C., questions that approach.

“Is this program for children, or for the bright kids to have something to put on their resumes when they apply for law school? Kids need teachers who will stay and build a stable faculty,” Berry says. “This is a problematic cycle: new teachers, under-prepared teachers, high turnover, unstable faculty and inconsistent improvement.”

Berry adds, “We know that any school improvement effort worth its salt is going to take at least five years to take hold, and will take teachers to move the process and programs in the right trajectory.”

Along with cutting attrition, CPS wants Teach for America to provide more teachers in shortage areas and make participants who will be working in Chicago more accessible for training in the district during the summer. Currently, Teach for America trains all its teachers at institutes in Houston, New York and Los Angeles. The program is considering creating another institute in Chicago.

Teach for America’s training includes observations of experienced teachers in the spring and a five-week summer program that includes classes in curriculum planning, lesson planning, student assessment, classroom management and literacy development.

Some educators say the training fosters poor retention because it does

In June, Teach for America received a flurry of media attention when a national study was released that showed students taught by the program’s teachers did better in math than students taught by other teachers at the same schools and in the same grades.

Teach for America contends that the report proves its teachers are having a positive impact on students in the toughest schools. But critics, pointing out that both sets of students scored very poorly, note that the gains made were marginal and do not provide solid evidence that the program produces effective teachers.

“There are no differences in reading [scores]. There was only slight difference in math and that difference was miniscule,” says Barnett Berry, president of the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality in Chapel Hill, N.C. “The bottom line is neither the Teach for America teachers, nor the other teachers, were adequately prepared to serve these children.”

In fact, the math gains were equal to what would be expected from an additional month of instruction, according to the report from Mathematics Policy Research in Princeton, N.J. Test scores for students taught by Teach for America teachers rose from the 14th percentile in the fall to the 17th percentile at the end of the year. Students of other teachers scored in the 15th percentile in the fall and remained there at year’s end. Researchers used standardized test scores for 1,893 elementary school students in seven high-poverty districts: Chicago, Baltimore, Houston, Los

Angeles/Compton, Mississippi Delta (two districts) and New Orleans.

John White, executive director of Teach for America’s Chicago office, dismisses the criticism.

“The gains made may be abysmal to less than abysmal. But anything that demonstrates strong academic achievement should be praised, replicated and enhanced,” White says.

## DISCIPLINE A SERIOUS PROBLEM

The study also included a survey in which a third of Teacher for America teachers reported serious problems with physical conflicts between students or general misbehavior such as talking in class. In comparison, only 17 percent of other teachers reported serious problems with fights while 23 percent reported serious problems with misbehavior.

“If you read the reactions to this study, you’re going to see, depending on people’s political perspective, ‘Teach for America works’ or ‘Kids in urban districts are getting the short end of the stick.’ Both of these are probably true,” says Daniel Humphrey, associate director of the Center for Education Policy at SRI International, an independent research institute based in Menlo Park, Calif.

The real issue, Humphrey explains, is that assigning first-year teachers to difficult classrooms in dysfunctional schools—which is what Teach for America does—is not good no matter what route a teacher has taken to enter the profession.

*Debra Williams*

not prepare graduates for the difficulties of teaching in low-achieving, underserved urban and rural areas.

“These are bright, dedicated kids who want to do good, so why not prepare them?” says Berry. “You are putting under-prepared teachers in classrooms and they leave before they learn to teach. And some would probably be really good, but they don’t get to find out.”

Principal Constance Means of Barton Elementary in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood agrees that training needs to be beefed up. “You don’t get the same experience student-teaching for one summer in the Bronx. Student teaching should be a year for everyone.”

A major concern is classroom management skills. A national study found that teachers from the pro-

gram were more likely to report problems with student disruptions and physical conflicts than their colleagues in the same schools.

Despite the drawbacks, principals who have hired Teach for America participants report positive results.

“They have lived up to expectations and then some,” says Principal Leonard Kenebrew of South Shore High, who adds that his Teach for America teachers have great content knowledge and creativity.

At Grant Elementary on the Near West Side, Principal Doris Hobson Staples says three Teach for America teachers “started with me as a new principal and it was a wonderful experience. The students loved them.” Two of the three quit after two years, but Staples says, “I would hire from the program again.” ■

# Experience helps career-changers reach Manley students

By Debra Williams

**E**arl Williams' parents were both teachers. But when he chose a profession, Williams decided not to follow in their footsteps and stayed clear of education. Instead, he earned a degree in engineering and accounting.

Years later, however, Williams took an opportunity to tutor at a junior college—and discovered that he really enjoyed the very task he had vowed to avoid. “I got the bug,” Williams says with a laugh. “I got such a good feeling from tutoring.”

That experience spurred him to enroll two years ago in National Louis University's program for alternative

teacher certification. Williams earned a math certificate and landed a position teaching freshman algebra at Manley Career Academy. Now, he is one of eight teachers from alternative programs at the West Side school, which has 58 classroom teachers.

Manley Principal Katherine Flanagan says teachers from alternative programs, who are typically in their late 30s to early 40s and have substantial work experience, bring several pluses to the table. Like Williams, many have math or science backgrounds and can fill teaching slots in hard-to-staff subjects. “I get the fewest resumes for math and science,” Flanagan says.

Years of work experience outside

education gives career-changers an advantage when it comes to showing students how to connect academics to real life, Flanagan says. And working through alternative programs has served to ease the stress of hiring by adding an extra layer of candidate screening, she adds.

## 'I TELL THEM DON'T GIVE UP'

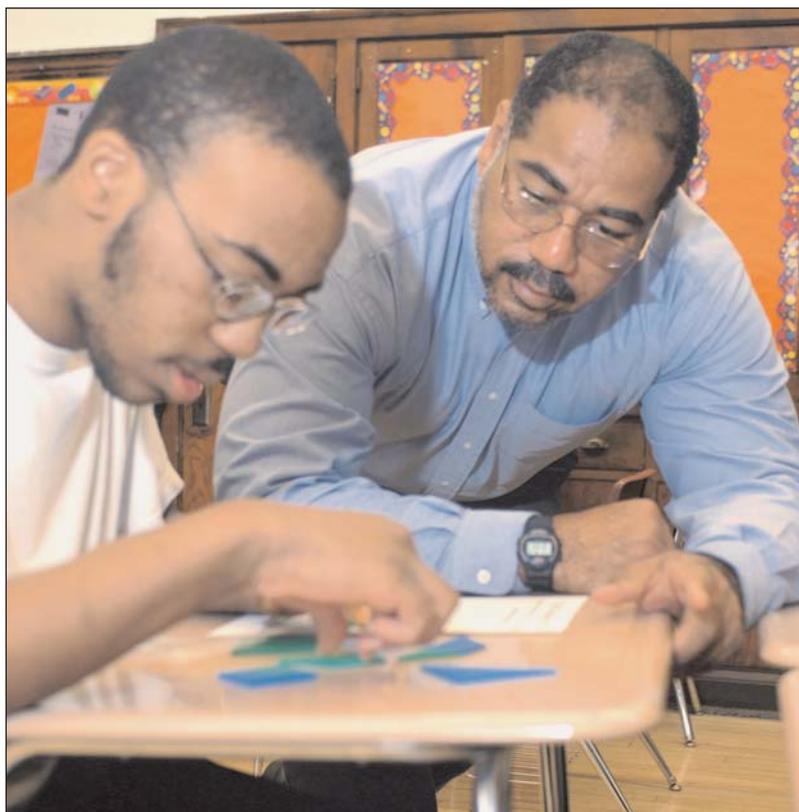
Williams, who is 44, explains how he uses his life experience to guide his students and show them how to work harder. His students, noting Williams' extensive knowledge of math and the multiple degrees he holds, at first questioned whether he was telling the truth about being a former CPS student.

But Williams, who attended Lindblom High and earned his bachelor's degree from DeVry University, told them that he, like many of them, struggled in high school until he learned to work harder and identified his style of learning. Williams uses that experience to help students discover their learning styles.

“I was a visual learner. I need that to make learning come alive for me,” says Williams. “Some of my kids struggle with the same kinds of things. But I tell them they can come to understand math, just like I did. I tell them as long they don't give up, they have a chance.”

Science teacher Felix Egharevba, who also earned his certification through the National Louis program, says working as a physician helps him teach his students how what they learn in the classroom works in real life.

“I have practical experience and know the theoretical aspects, so I pull it all together when I teach,” says Egharevba, who stills puts in two days a week as a family practitioner at West



Teacher Earl Williams, who completed an alternative certification program at National Louis University, works with Manley High School student Anthony Blackhouse.

JOHN BOOZ

Suburban Hospital in Oak Park.

## STREAMLINED HIRING

Flanagan's introduction to alternative certification programs came through Barbara Radner, director of the Center for Urban Education at DePaul University, who sent her a special education teacher through a program called Facilitating Accelerated Certification for Educators (FACE). FACE (now called First Class) is a joint program of the University of Illinois-Chicago, Roosevelt University and the Associated Colleges of Illinois. Its goal is to produce certified teachers in special education, another shortage area.

Flanagan later hired others from the now-defunct Teachers for Chicago, which operated as a partnership among CPS, the Chicago Teachers Union, the Golden Apple Foundation and local teachers colleges. When Teachers for Chicago shut down, she continued to work with Golden Apple.

"I went from one program to another. It was a good way to do it," Flanagan says. "It is such a struggle to interview a lot of people. Plus, I knew these interns got great support and I thought I could take them, supplement what they were getting and create great teachers."

Officials from the programs also took the extra step of calling to ask about vacancies.

"Fred Chesek would call and say 'I've got two math and science teachers, do you want them?' and I'd tell him 'yes,'" she says, referring to the former coordinator from Teachers for Chicago.

Flanagan is up-front with teachers about the challenges of teaching at Manley, whose students face problems of poverty, crime and gangs on a daily basis. She tells teachers they must push and prod students to perform their best, and explains to career-changers that teaching is very different from working in the business world.

"I tell them there is no piped-in music here, and no air conditioning," Flanagan says.

Williams agrees. "This is the longest and hardest job I've ever worked. I put in more hours here than I did at the corporate level," he



JOE GALLO

At a CPS teacher fair, Principal Katherine Flanagan interviews candidates to teach an influx of freshmen expected to enroll from the Austin High area. Austin is being shut down.

says. "I know I work 40-plus hours. There is no way to do everything in the six-hour day."

## LEARNING TO MANAGE STUDENTS

While career-changers have the benefit of maturity and work experience, that is no guarantee they will be able to handle unruly students. As with virtually every new teacher, managing a classroom is often a big hurdle.

Egharevba says although he learned a lot at National Louis about some essentials—such as assessment, evaluations, curriculum development and modifying lessons for students with special needs—he was at his wit's end about how to get his classes under control.

"I have an accent and the kids took advantage of that," says Egharevba, who is from Nigeria. "I just stood up in a staff meeting one day and said, 'If anyone has had my kids, I need help.' For the first week, everyone came into my classroom and helped me. It took about two weeks for me to gain control. My advice for new teachers: Don't act like you know everything, don't be afraid to say you need help."

Flanagan says she tells all new teachers, " 'Don't smile until Christmas.' I also tell them you can't be nice. We are not missionaries. You have to be tough."

To help new teachers develop

classroom management skills, Manley began a program last year in which veteran staff show newcomers what to expect by role-playing as problem students.

The veterans chew gum in class, talk back to the new teachers and turn their backs on them while they talk. To defuse situations, teachers may learn to ask a disruptive student to step out in the hall for a talk or use other methods to defuse situations.

Egharevba has learned how to manage his students and decided to stay beyond his program requirement.

"I think if [teachers] have a good experience in a school, find a school that is nurturing and get the professional development they need, they will stay," says Flanagan. Word about the school's supportive environment reached one teacher from the FACE program and spurred her to apply for a job at Manley.

Indeed, Flanagan says Egharevba has stayed despite being courted by other schools because of his background and experience as a science teacher and a doctor.

"I asked him, 'How did they find out about you? I'm not going to let you out of this building,' " she says with a laugh.

Williams, too, says he is not interested in leaving. "I like what I'm doing and I don't see changing anytime soon," he says. "I'll stay for as long as they will have me around." ■

# No consensus on pros, cons

Research on alternative certification is limited; critics say programs provide too little classroom training

By Elizabeth Duffrin

Chicago and other school districts are increasingly relying on fast-track alternative certification programs as a source for new teachers.

Research on whether teachers from alternative programs help or hurt student achievement is inconclusive. But some educators charge that such programs often put under-prepared novices in the most challenging schools.

"They end up teaching the most diverse children, who have the most dramatic learning needs," contends Barnett Berry, president of the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. "They are not the teachers who are landing in front of the easy-to-teach children."

Still, the number of teachers from alternative programs continues to climb. Nationally, the number of alternative teaching certificates jumped from 15,000 in 2000 to 30,000 in 2003.

In Illinois, teachers from alternative programs are a small but growing part of the teaching force. In 2002-03, the state issued 491 licenses to teachers trained in alternative programs, up from 24 in 1998-99.

## ONLY ONE SUMMER IN CLASSROOM

Alternative programs typically offer only a summer's worth of training before sending teachers into the classroom. Once on the job, teachers are mentored by an experienced colleague while continuing work toward their education degree during evenings or weekends.

Skeptics say that a summer's worth of in-classroom training is not enough. Advocates, however, dismiss the value of traditional preparation through colleges of education, which usually require a semester of student teaching.

Student teachers usually end up "teaching 5, 10, 15-minute lessons under the supervision of another teacher," says E.D. Toth of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Alternative

training is a better experience, he adds, because novices "have full responsibility for a classroom and a master teacher [observing]."

## ACHIEVEMENT, RETENTION IN QUESTION

One point on which experts agree is that research hasn't resolved the debate, because most of it isn't very good. For example, some studies measure the academic performance of students whose teachers were trained in alternative programs without considering the impact of students' backgrounds, even though most alternative-certification teachers are in high-poverty schools.

"Good studies are really expensive, and it's difficult to get the amount of money you need to design and carry out good studies," remarks Michael Allen, program director of the Teaching Quality Policy Center of the Education Commission of the States in Denver. Allen researches alternative certification programs.

Research has also not answered the question of retention. Some studies say teachers from alternative programs are more likely to quit than teachers from traditional programs. Other studies conclude that they leave at comparable rates.

But some studies suggest that programs that help teacher aides earn a teaching credential produce teachers who are less likely to leave, according to Daniel Humphrey, associate director of the Center for Education Policy at SRI International, a nonprofit research institute based in Menlo Park, Calif. Aides are often from the same community as the children they work with and have a stronger commitment to the job, he explains.

Another challenge to researchers is to account for the wide variation in programs. Some alternative programs are more intensive than most traditional ones. In Chicago, the non-profit Academy for Urban School Leadership offers career-changers a \$30,000 stipend to spend 10 months in classroom training under a master teacher.

Programs run by the Massachusetts Department of Education and the New York City Teaching Fellows now provide some student-teaching experience, according to Linda Darling-Hammond, professor of education at Stanford University. "Serious programs eventually figure out that it's important to give people more support in learning to teach."

But researchers also note a countervailing trend toward more streamlining. Earlier this year, Georgia dropped the requirement that teacher candidates train in a classroom. Texas did the same for grades 8 to 12. As a result, alternate-route teachers in those two states can now begin their careers with passing grades on standardized tests and a bachelor's degree in their subject area.

## TEST PREPARATION ONLY?

Florida and Idaho, have signed on with a federal program that would replace advanced preparation with a battery of tests and requires prospective teachers to have only a bachelor's degree in a related subject area. The initiative is run by the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence.

"It's not unlike any rigorous tests that an accountant would take to become a CPA or an attorney would take for the bar exams," argues the American Board's Randy Thompson, vice president of marketing and government relations. He acknowledges that the group has no research to show that their tests predict teacher success.

Allen of the Education Commission of the States argues that policies governing teacher certification should be grounded in more rigorous research. "Our culture is cavalier when it comes to results," he says. "We tend to rely on perceptions rather than hard data."

Meanwhile, says Emily Feistritzer of the National Center for Alternative Certification in Washington, D.C., "[We're] way past, 'Is it a good idea or not?' It's the way states are producing a large number of teachers." ■

# Four schools on new course

## New schools eschew traditional high school model for a more radical approach

By Maureen Kelleher

Remember the good old days of high school? Cliffs Notes, study hall, doodling while the geometry teacher droned on about congruent triangles. How about wading through a sea of hundreds, or even thousands, of students seven periods each day to get to class on time?

Well, forget it, reformers say. High schools, as we know them, don't work. They aren't teaching students the skills or knowledge that employers and colleges will require. Nor are high schools guiding teens to make wise choices about their futures. Too many students are failing courses, falling behind and, eventually, leaving high school without a diploma.

A recent study by Johns Hopkins University found that between 2000 and 2003, more than half of the students at most Chicago neighborhood high schools dropped out or did not pass enough classes to graduate in four years. Only four CPS high schools hit or exceeded the state average of 80 percent of freshmen moving up to senior year on time.

Radical new ways of doing high school are beginning to take root in Chicago Public Schools. In some of the latest start-ups, academic classes don't start until the afternoon or are largely scrapped and replaced by independent projects and internships.

Despite the new schools' unique characteristics, a common recipe for a new mold of high school is emerging. Create small schools with personal environments. Design curricula based on real-world experience. Demand high standards to graduate. And more recently, compress the time frame for earning a high school diploma, or, if students complete a fourth year, mix in college credits and perhaps an associate's degree.

Research indicates that shrinking school size, and more importantly, the number of students each teacher sees daily, cultivates a climate where students and teachers know and respect one another and leads to better discipline, teaching and learning.

Donald Pittman, chief officer of CPS high school programs, estimates the average neighborhood high school enrolls 1,200 students, more than double the district-defined optimum of 500 students for small high schools. Also, the average high school teacher teaches 150 students a day; however, teachers at some of the newest high schools work daily with as few as 15.

Size alone will not remake high school. Reformers suggest revamping curricula to put students in the driver's seat, making them solve problems, give presentations and apply what they know in the real world, not just on standardized tests. To tackle the intractable problem of senioritis and better bridge the gap between high school and college, a small but growing group of schools have moved beyond courses offering both high school and college credit, to accelerated programs leading to joint completion of a high school diploma and an associate's degree.

### FIXING BROKEN PARTS FAILS

So far, CPS' attempts to improve its high schools by fixing broken parts have not worked. In 1997, the district unveiled a plan to renovate high schools system-wide by raising standards and holding them strictly accountable for student achievement. Over the next several years, test scores improved, but researchers attributed the increase to elementary schools better preparing students for high school. The plan also required high

schools to give students more personal attention, but it failed to address school size or course loads.

Meanwhile, high school startups, mostly charters, were experiencing some success. Perspectives and North Lawn-dale College Prep, both of which opened in the late 1990s, have done a better job than neighborhood high schools in preventing students from dropping out, keeping them on track for graduation and getting them into college.

Since then, the district has embraced more radically innovative strategies for high school. Newcomers such as Big Picture Company, Advantage Academy and Spry's Community Links are exploring new ways to turn the traditional high school model on its head.

Questions remain, however, about whether small and innovative models can be taken to scale. Hopkins researchers doubt districts have enough money or personnel resources to open lots of small high schools. Also, pioneers such as Big Picture Company have not been around long enough to establish much of a track record.

Reforming high schools, particularly when aiming to close the achievement gap, is a worthy goal, but traditional models will be difficult to shake, warns Larry Cuban, a professor emeritus of education at Stanford University who has researched the history of high school reform efforts. Traditional high schools, with their comprehensive academic and extracurricular offerings, are tied to cultural images of adolescence. "That's what keeps comprehensive high schools going," he says. "Imagine getting rid of sports and the prom."

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# No bells, no classes, no letter grades

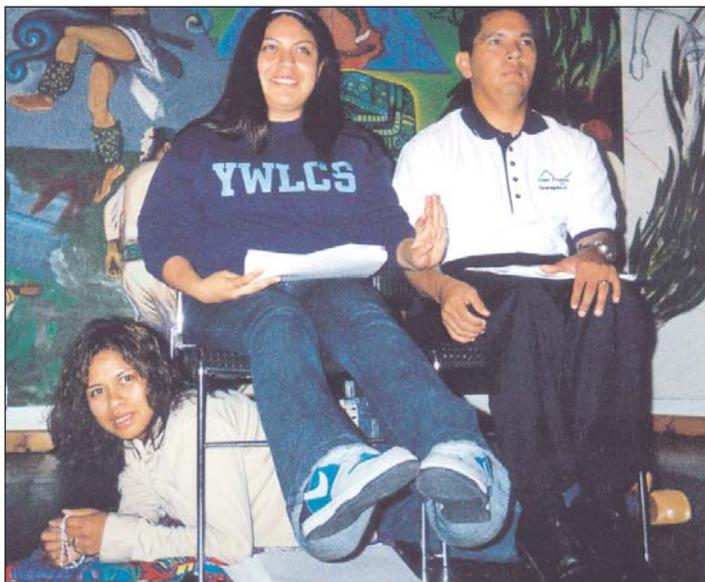
By Maureen Kelleher

Sixteen-year-old Roman Molina learned a lot last year that most high school freshmen don't. He learned to wear a suit and tie and schmooze at business meetings. He learned to give an hour-long presentation and take hard questions.

"I learned to take responsibility for myself," he says. "I acted mature."

Molina learned these things through a combination of self-directed, coached study and working two full days each week with a mentor at The Resurrection Project, a community development organization in Pilsen. The unusual program is actually his unconventional high school's curriculum. Big Picture High School in Back of the Yards intentionally breaks down the traditional separation between school and the outside world, blending classroom learning with out-of-school internships. It is one of three schools in the city modeled after Big Picture.

The school's motto, "personalized learning, one student at a time," reflects the philosophy of the model's founders, two noted New Hampshire educators who teamed up with the Annenberg Institute to design the prototype Big Picture high school in Providence, R.I. The first graduates of that school, known as The Met for Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, all were accepted to college, though some chose not to go.



MAUREEN KELLEHER

Big Picture sophomore Raquel Sarai Martinez (center) is the star of a play about undocumented immigrants produced by Latinos Progresando, which invited her to join the board after she completed an internship.

Big Picture gets high marks from education experts for motivating students by making learning relevant and for its emphasis on building personal relationships with students.

However, some question whether students pick up the high-level skills they need for college entirely through internships and projects. "It may be you really do need an algebra class to learn algebra," says Michael Cohen, president of Achieve, a think tank in Washington, D.C., that advocates raising state standards and accountability and preparing all students for college.

Also, a recent evaluation says Big Picture and other new schools funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, need to pay more attention to classroom instruction and connect student assessments to standardized test scores.

Despite these concerns, Big Picture is expanding rapidly and nationally. As the Met's first graduates walked across the stage in 2000, the Gates Foundation donated \$3.5 million to Big Picture to replicate the schools elsewhere. Currently, Big Picture operates 23 schools across the country; two of them are in Chicago.

## TEACHING HIGH-LEVEL MATH A PROBLEM

Two of the new schools—one in Back

of the Yards, the other in the Williams Multiplex on the Near South Side—have been open for a year. Students at both schools have personalized learning plans that guide their in-school projects and outside internships.

At Back of the Yards, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are devoted to in-school activities. Students begin and end their days in conference with their advisors (who are certified teachers), first to agree on what work to do on their independent projects, then to report back on how much was accomplished. In between, students work on their projects, and participate in physical exercise, independent reading and group lessons like reading Elie Wiesel's Holocaust memoir, "Night," and discussing it. Tuesdays and Thursdays are reserved for internships, where students are assigned to work with a mentor who, in turn, keeps in regular contact with the students' advisor.

Teaching math through projects and internships is challenging, Principal Alfredo Nambo admits. "We need to work harder on that." A consultant from Big Picture headquarters is helping advisors here incorporate math into projects and lessons.

Molina's experience illustrates both

*Continued on page 25*

## BIG PICTURE HIGH SCHOOLS

### BACK OF THE YARDS

4946 S. Paulina Ave.

ENROLLMENT: 30 freshmen, 30 sophomores

OPENED: September 2003

### WILLIAMS MULTIPLEX

2710 S. Dearborn St.

ENROLLMENT: 30 freshmen, 30 sophomores

OPENED: September 2003

### CITY AS CLASSROOM CHARTER

2750 S. Blue Island Ave.

ENROLLMENT: 45 freshmen

OPENED: September 2004

# A hybrid of tradition and vanguard

Community Links in Little Village is a blend of established reform—such as small class size and block scheduling—and more experimental strategies to improve high schools.

While its fundamental coursework adheres to CPS' traditional format, Community Links delays the start of its school day for sleep-deprived adolescents, and Principal Carlos Azcoitia promises students they will graduate in three years and be accepted into college.

Last year, 30 freshmen started their day at 11 a.m. with an hour of gym and Junior ROTC leadership training. They spent the next two and a half hours earning service learning credit and pocket change working as classroom aides at Spry Elementary, where Community Links is housed. From 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., they attended academic classes in core subjects, organized on a block schedule so that English and algebra alternated daily with science and social studies.

For students to graduate a year early, they must attend three years of summer school to earn the necessary credits in art, foreign languages and other required electives. "They don't have time to fail,"



JASON REBLANDO

Sophomore Ivan Crespo composes a tune during summer school at Community Links High School, where students take classes year round to be eligible to graduate a year early.

## COMMUNITY LINKS HIGH

2400 S. Marshall Blvd.  
**ENROLLMENT:** 35 freshmen, 30 sophomores  
**OPENED:** September 2003

Azcoitia says. Those who do will have to spend an extra year to make up the work.

That's fine with the students. "We can go to college right away," says sophomore Edgar Ortiz, who is look-

ing at another decade of school to realize his goal of becoming a doctor.

Students say Community Links' small size was a big draw. "There're no outsiders here," says freshman Crystal Avila. "We're all in it together."

The late start time didn't hurt. "It's a big advantage," says Avila, noting that she has extra time to rest and meet with teachers before class to get extra help.

Maureen Kelleher

# Early college gives a leg up for job market

Secondary schools have long offered courses that count for both high school and college credit. A cutting-edge extension of this practice is early college high school, where students simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an associate's degree.

This summer, Chicago Public Schools matriculated its first early college program in partnership with DeVry University. Advantage Academy admitted 125 high-achieving juniors

## ADVANTAGE ACADEMY\*

3300 N. Campbell  
**ENROLLMENT:** 125 juniors  
**OPENED:** July 2003

\*Classified as a branch program of Lane Technical High School

from across the city, who, in two years, will earn a diploma and an associate's degree in network administration.

In August, students completed coursework in techni-

cal math and computer applications at DeVry's North Center campus. Beginning this fall, teachers from nearby Lane Tech will travel a few blocks to DeVry to teach high school classes in the mornings; college courses will continue in the afternoons. The plan is for Advantage Academy students to finish high school requirements by next summer, and then devote senior year to college-level work.

The opportunity to learn a

marketable skill attracted students like Veronica Paniagua, who left Curie High School for a chance to get credentials that could help her earn money for college. "Now I'll be able to afford school without a loan or help from my parents," she says.

Praise for early college programs, which aim to better bridge the gap between high school and college, is tempered by questions about rig-

Continued on page 25

# Research

## School districts often use top-down approach to improve instruction

Study finds mid-level district staffers ignore the expertise of principals and teachers

By Jeff Kelly Lowenstein

**M**id-level school district staffers play a vital role in communicating district initiatives to schools. They design materials, train school faculties, and monitor their progress. But according to a recent study, most central office workers use a top-down approach that overlooks the experience of school-level educators.

A survey of district staffers in Chicago, Milwaukee and Seattle found two-thirds believe that they could help schools improve instruction without substantial input from principals and teachers.

"There is a lot of expertise in the schools. To ignore what principals and teachers know is foolhardy," says Diana Lauber, managing director at Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, the nonprofit group that directed the study. Principals are more likely to implement district reforms if they feel part of the process, she adds.

Researchers also found that mid-level staff inundated principals with paperwork that distracted them from focusing on classroom instruction.

Cross City's research team interviewed 82 cabinet- and mid-level district staff and 185 school leaders during the 2001-02 and 2002-03 school years. The research was led by Patricia Burch, an assistant professor of education policy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and in consultation with James Spillane, an associate professor of learning sciences, human development and social policy at Northwestern University.

During the investigation, researchers asked mid-level district staff to describe their work with schools, and then analyzed their responses for evidence of an authoritative or collaborative approach.

For instance, "authoritative" managers might emphasize their role in monitoring schools to ensure the timely submission of data. "Collaborative" managers talked more about helping schools interpret the data to improve classroom instruction.

But Burch warns against concluding from the study that a collaborative orientation is always good for schools and an authoritative orientation is bad.

"In complex organizations such as districts, some combination of the two is often necessary and welcomed by busy school leaders," she says. "Unfortunately, in the districts we studied, this balance did not exist. An authoritative orientation was the norm."

Through a CPS spokeswoman, Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan and Chief Education Officer Barbara Eason-Watkins declined to comment on the study until they have read it.

### INEFFICIENCY A PROBLEM

*Catalyst* spoke with nine CPS principals to get their reactions to the report. Arline Hersh, principal of George Armstrong Elementary in Rogers Park, was not surprised to hear that principals in the study preferred a collaborative approach. "It's like asking, 'What do dogs like better—being patted or hit by a stick?'"

Most of the principals who spoke

with *Catalyst*, however, say they feel supported by mid-level district staff. Several cited the inefficiency and inaccessibility of central office workers as a larger problem than authoritarian attitudes.

CPS Operations and Academic Standards departments were two that several principals identified as difficult to reach. *Catalyst* contacted those departments for comment, but neither returned calls.

Some principals felt that central office inefficiency stemmed, in part, from the high staff turnover during the Duncan administration.

Sandy Traback, principal of Chavez Elementary, finds herself repeatedly explaining to new staff how to schedule deliveries of classroom materials to her school, which operates on a year-round schedule that is different from most. That chore detracts from the time she can spend on improving instruction, she says.

Many principals who spoke with *Catalyst* concurred with the study that mid-level staff often produces excessive paperwork for schools.

In 2002, Eason-Watkins announced an initiative to curb paperwork for principals. An administrator in her office would approve correspondence with schools to eliminate duplicate requests from different departments. More recently, she created web sites to post announcements and cut down on the number on faxes and letters principals receive.

Principals give the effort mixed reviews. Loretta Brown-Lawrence, principal of Leland Elementary in Austin, says the web sites for the chief education officer and the Board

of Education have improved communication while reducing redundant paperwork.

But other principals were less positive.

Carlos Azcoitia, principal of both Spry Elementary and Community Links High School in Little Village, says the administration needs to make all the information it sends to schools “shorter, to the point and simple.” Azcoitia held high administrative posts under CEOs Paul Vallas and Duncan, serving most recently as deputy education officer before returning to Spry in 2003.

Azcoitia says the Duncan administration has helped improve instruction in the schools with its district-wide reading initiative. But he maintained that the system remains focused on compliance. “We are not driven by school needs and what really makes a difference in the school.”

Other principals agree, according to Lauren Allen, senior program director for Cross City. Five in Chicago whom she interviewed for the study said Duncan did a better job than Vallas in providing resources to improve instruction and holding schools accountable for doing so. But they still found central office out of touch with the needs of individual schools. Principals were saying, “If you are going to be about building [instructional] capacity, listen to us, hear what we have to say, know what our needs are,” she recounts.

## AIOS GET HIGH MARKS

In September 2002, Duncan and Eason-Wakins launched a new effort to help schools carry out district initiatives to improve instruction. They divided the district into 26 areas, each with its own area instructional officer (AIO). AIOs serve as mentors for principals, and among other responsibilities, lead classroom “walkthroughs” at schools to provide feedback on instruction. (See *Catalyst* September 2003.)

Because the positions were new when the study was conducted, Cross City was unable to say whether

## RESEARCH SUMMARY

**WHO CONDUCTED IT:** Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, in collaboration with Patricia Burch, assistant professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison and James Spillane, associate professor, Northwestern University.

**WHO THEY STUDIED:** 82 cabinet- and mid-level district staff and 185 school personnel in Chicago, Milwaukee and Seattle.

**WHAT THEY FOUND:** Most mid-level district staff believe they can help improve teaching without much input from principals and teachers. But school staff was more likely to seek help from central office workers who listened to them and respected their expertise.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Redefine the roles of mid-level central office staff so that they spend more time collaborating with school staff and less on monitoring them for compliance.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Go to the Cross City Campaign web site at [www.crosscity.org](http://www.crosscity.org). To order the full report, call (312) 322-4880. The report costs \$15 plus shipping.

they improved communication and collaboration between schools and central administrators. But Lauber says, “We would be optimistic.”

Principals who spoke with *Catalyst* were close to unanimous in praising the accessibility of their AIOs. That sentiment held true even for principals who had difficult interactions with some or all of the district departments. Indeed, in many cases, principals appeared to make a distinction between their AIO and other central office staff.

Kenneth Hunter, principal of Prosser Career Academy, credited the guidance he received from AIO Richard Gazda for the gains his students made on the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) scores last year. “I can attribute it to real leadership and support from Rich in particular, then from central office,” says Hunter, whose students gained between 7.2 and 14.8 percentage points in the five subject areas tested.

Deborah Clark, principal of Skinner Classical Elementary, a magnet school, says she valued the feedback she received during the AIO walkthroughs. “It was absolutely wonderful to look at the school through the eyes of an educated outsider who knows what they’re looking for,” Clark says.

But not all school leaders found the walkthroughs as valuable. South Loop Elementary School has had one walkthrough for each of the two years that Pat Baccellieri has been principal. “The first walkthrough was real collaborative,” he says. “The second one was more prescriptive.”

## SHIFT FOCUS TO SUPPORT, AWAY FROM MONITORING

Cross City suggests that districts are more likely to improve teaching when they collaborate with school staff rather than direct them. According to the study, principals and teachers reported that they were more likely to seek help from central office staff who listened to them and respected their expertise.

Cross City recommends that teachers and principals be part of the planning process for any new school reform policy. The report also calls for redefining the role of mid-level district staff to focus more on supporting schools and less on monitoring them.

To understand the complexities involved in changing instruction, district staff needs to spend more time in schools, according to Cross City.

But Azcoitia of Spry adds that visits alone are insufficient to understand teachers’ and principals’ work lives. “You have to show up, roll up your sleeves and work in the office or substitute for a class,” Azcoitia says.

Principals need to understand the challenges that district staff face, too, says Hunter of Prosser Academy. His own stint in the Office of Accountability not only helped him forge relationships with district staffers, it allowed him to understand the difficulties they encounter in gaining the trust of principals and teachers.

“The hardest job in the world is to come from central office [into a school],” Hunter says. “No matter what you do, it’s always an intrusion.” He adds that approaching school staff with respect was integral to building supportive relationships.

*Jeff Kelly Lowenstein is a Chicago writer. E-mail him at [editor@catalyst-chicago.org](mailto:editor@catalyst-chicago.org)*

# Viewpoints

## LETTERS TO CATALYST

### Teachers union delegate cites 'misgivings' about CTU principal survey

**A**s a member of the Chicago Teachers Union and a staunch union supporter, I have serious misgivings concerning the CTU Principal Performance Survey, since it represents such a poor vehicle for transmitting the views of teachers and paraprofessionals toward their educational leaders.

Knowing firsthand the conditions at my school, it was obvious that some of the responses were without foundation and totally ridiculous. Also, considering the fact that 66 percent of teachers and paraprofessionals system-wide did not even bother to fill it out, it speaks volumes about how unreliable this survey was, even though supporters of it maintain that a response rate of 34 percent is valid.

Many of my colleagues in the union probably did not respond because they were either too busy doing their jobs or were relatively satisfied with the conditions in their schools. On the other hand, those dissatisfied will tend to be the most vocal, and such surveys represent an opportune time for them to take anonymous potshots at the principal.

One of the major problems is that principals are forced to make many unpopular decisions in order to implement many of the mandates issued by the Chicago Board of Education, the Illinois State Board of Education and the federal government as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act. As a result, there is probably an inclination to shoot the messenger. Ironically, there is also the possibility that the least-demanding principals might have received the best ratings.

Indeed, just like the teachers, principals are under the gun. Faced with pressure from all sides regarding test scores and standards; charged with running their schools, supporting teachers and paraprofessionals, monitoring the budget; and engaged in all sorts of mundane and important managerial tasks, a union survey, including a grade ranging from an A to an F is unquestionably seen as a threat by principals. Since the union, by its very nature, is an adversary to management, anything that is emitted from it is going to be suspect.

This is not to say that principals should not be held accountable or evaluated. The question is whether the union should be perceived as playing a role. In a system composed of over 600 schools, the union, like the board, is a distant bureaucracy, and because there are other avenues that are open for teachers and paraprofessionals, it is probably better for the union to forego these controversial surveys and stay out of the principal evaluating business. At the local level, school personnel can make their opinions known through their union delegate, and a strong delegate can be very effective in communicating concerns and alleviating problems as long as the principal is willing to listen. For those not

willing to listen, grievances can be filed and they will eventually come to the attention of the union leadership and the principal's boss, the area instructional officer. Teachers can also voice their opinions through the teacher-dominated Professional Problems Committee and the Professional Personal Leadership Committee, which are committed to improving schools.

Most important to advocates of school reform are the local school councils. LSCs represent the ideal forum for evaluating a principal's performance. Currently, there are two teachers who have permanent seats on the LSC. Through them, the joys and frustrations of teachers and paraprofessionals can be heard. There is also nothing preventing school personnel from contacting members of the LSC on their own or coming to the LSC meetings to voice their opinions. Finally, just before renewing a principal's contract there is nothing to stop an LSC from conducting its own tailor-made survey.

Indeed, mechanisms are already in place to keep principals accountable and it is important for all the parties at the local level to utilize the powers that they have at their fingertips to address the issues at hand. Evaluation of principals should be a local responsibility, which means that the union's role in such matters is not only superfluous, but a waste of valuable time and resources.

*Larry Vigon  
Union delegate, LSC teacher  
representative  
Von Steuben High School*

# Who counts as a minority?

The June 2004 issue offered an interesting article on AP classes offered in CPS high schools. It is obvious that AP and IB are taking hold within CPS and I am glad to see that. However, your slant on the lack of opportunities for minorities is misleading. When I took a look at our school improvement plan, I noticed the racial breakdown of CPS: white, 9 percent; black, 50 percent; Hispanic, 37 percent; and other, 4 percent.

Clearly, whites are the minority. Why does this article give the impression that minorities are being left out of the AP programs? The only way you could've come to this conclusion is by looking at schools that have a large white enrollment and/or by looking at magnet schools.

Perhaps you should take a look at the racial breakdown of CPS. I never see positive articles in *Catalyst* about schools that have a majority white enrollment. There is

much more available to schools with a large minority population in terms of grants and federal dollars.

*Maureen T. Fitzgerald  
LSC, Byrne Elementary*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The point of our story was to explore whether black and Latino students had equal access to and representation in Advanced Placement and other rigorous courses offered by CPS. Among our findings, for instance, was that blacks were underrepresented among AP test takers, whites were overrepresented and Latinos were proportionately represented. As it is used in our story, the term "minority" refers to blacks, Latinos and other groups that are not the majority of national population. Minorities tend to be concentrated in urban areas and urban school districts, as you correctly note is the case for CPS.*

# Retention, social promotion both hurt

I really enjoyed your May 2004 article about retention. I am an educator and although I do not agree with total retention, I do not support passing students who cannot master the material. If we pass them on without knowing the lessons, then their diploma is meaningless. If we retain them, we hurt them socially. High school should be a five-year

process [during which] students learn at their own pace.

Our education systems are old and antiquated. Our students do not need 10 weeks off in the summer; they are not farming anymore. Teachers do not need all of that time off either. In Chicago, the average salary for a teacher is over \$55,000, with a starting salary of about \$36,000. That's for 40

weeks of work, at 6 hours per day. Their corporate counterparts are not as fortunate. Others make that amount for 50 weeks at 8 hours per day. End tenure and watch scores rise. In other fields, employees have to produce to keep their jobs, but not teachers.

*Marvin Payne  
Education analyst  
Chicago Students First*

# Some Asian students need 'extra push'

As an Asian American, a board member of Passages Charter School and a Chicago Public School student several decades ago, I read with great interest the [June 2004] article on the achievement gap. However, no mention was made of Asian Americans. The graph on page 8 shows that the percentage of Asian-American AP test takers is higher than the percentage of Asian-American CPS students.

However, it would be interesting to do further investigation of Asian-American CPS students with a breakdown by family income.

Asian Americans suffer from the model minority stereotype when, in fact, there is a great disparity in income and education. There is a substantial group of low-income Asian-American students who also need the extra push for challenging courses. Please do not overlook these fellow minorities in the conversation about access to high-quality public school education.

*Jean Choi  
Wagreich & Choi LLC*

# AVID another district 'quick fix'

After reading the June 2004 *Catalyst* story on the AVID program, a few questions came to mind. Did anyone tell you the history of AVID? AVID came into existence in California at least 24 years ago when minority students had fewer opportunities to pursue talented and gifted programs. Today, CPS College Bridge offers students an opportunity to enroll in dual-credit courses at area colleges and universities. The Illinois Virtual High School provides students—not necessarily the elite students—with the opportunity to become distance learners by taking classes online. Those classes include AP courses. CPS Practical Nursing admits qualified students who only need to post a cumulative grade point average of 2.0. Two CPS programs—Chicago Police/Firefighter Training Academy and Gallery 37 Advanced Fine Arts—open doorways to a broad group of students.

Importing programs that were founded for a dramatically different population 20 years ago is the quick-fix approach that has been used for the past nine years. Most quick-fix programs last two to three years and then CPS stops funding them. The students are guinea pigs. Long-term goals? They do not exist.

Now, to diminish the failures of the past nine years, 100 schools will be closed and refitted for a new round of show-and-tell. And while the politicians and wannabe educators play, generations of students are denied a quality education. Students are graduating from CPS high schools with skill levels at 6th-grade or 7th-grade, not the 12th-grade level that their high school diploma certifies they have achieved. Has anyone challenged that?

*Adam Jasmick Jr.  
Counselor  
Brooks College Prep*

## CPS corners tutoring market but runs risk of losing it all

Following a turbulent first year, private tutoring companies take a back seat in competition for \$45 million in federal funds

By Alexander Russo

Putting it charitably, last year's effort to provide the tutoring required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was a rocky learning experience.

The sign-up letter the School Board sent parents read like a legal document and didn't go out until just before school started. Some of the private tutoring companies couldn't find enough teachers or classroom space. In many cases, tutoring didn't start until January, February or even later. In many schools, children never got the tutoring that their parents had picked.

In the wake of these difficulties, the Chicago Public Schools put new administrators in charge, improved the sign-up process and tried to bring some order to the competition for students.

It also transformed its role from that of a tutor of last resort—one aimed mainly at bilingual and special education students—to the largest tutoring provider in the city, an unanticipated and, to some, unwanted development. The move raises questions about the amount of choice parents are getting and the quality of tutoring.

Meanwhile, the accountability provisions of NCLB have put the future of the CPS program in doubt even as it expands. In July, the Department of Education notified CPS that the district had fallen

short of annual test score goals in 2003, according to Karen Craven, spokesperson for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). If CPS fell short again in 2004—which it won't know until winter—it becomes a district "in need of improvement" and, as such, may use only outside providers for NCLB tutoring, according to federal regulations.

State and federal officials already are discussing what would happen then, according to Craven. One possible option, according to an insider who asked not to be identified, would have CPS transfer control of its program to another legal entity.

Regardless, CPS is forging ahead. "We haven't been told that we can't be a provider," says Erica Burroughs, CPS tutoring program manager. "It would be irresponsible for us not to go forward."

In contrast, New York City has decided not to run the risk of having its program discontinued. Rather, it is now aggressively placing its students with outside vendors.

Elsewhere in Illinois, another nine districts have sought and received permission to mount their own tutoring programs.

### 'CAN'T WAIT FOR PARENTS'

A year ago, CPS was slated to serve about 450 of the 15,000 children who had signed up for the free tutoring, since parents overwhelmingly had chosen private providers such as Sylvan Learning (now

Catapult Learning), EdSolutions and The Princeton Review.

By spring, however, CPS was serving almost 50,000, having signed them up itself after getting parents' permission. This brought the total to about 64,500.

This year, CPS is on track to serve some 72,000 children, or more than 80 percent of the estimated 90,000 students it expects to receive the service under NCLB. The entire program will be paid for with \$45 million in federal Title I dollars.

Along with the school choice option, the tutoring requirement is one of the most controversial elements of NCLB. A remnant of the private-school voucher option that the Bush administration proposed as an escape hatch for students in struggling schools, the tutoring requirement (officially called supplemental educational services or SES) gives parents at eligible schools the right to select their children's tutors from state-approved providers that may include private, for-profit and even faith-based providers.

Last year, there were 11 state-approved tutoring options for CPS students, including CPS. This year, there are 28.

Detractors labeled the requirement the "Sylvan amendment." However, the program is proving to be more of a boon for CPS than for any of the private tutoring companies.

Following weak signup results last fall, district officials developed and unveiled their own \$20 million Academic After School Program in December and January. Eventually, it would serve almost 50,000 students in 231 schools.

"We can't wait for parents to sign up any longer," explained CEO Arne Duncan.

In May and June, CPS started ramping up for an even bigger program this year. It urged principals to recruit as many children as possible before the school year ended. About 15,000 signed up then, and another 1,000 signed up during the summer.

Initially, 361 schools were to get the tutoring option. The total has since been revised to 343 and may be revised again as official test scores are released.

In late July, CPS also unveiled a revamped selection system that lets principals decide which private companies will be allowed to provide services to their children on site.

"We're trying to give parents more choices earlier on and to make them more concrete," Duncan explained. "And we're trying to make sure those options are real."

### LIMITING CHOICE

However, some advocates question whether parents are getting the choice that the law intended. Those who have signed up thus far have received virtually no information for making an intelligent choice. The district-generated signup form used last spring didn't list specific private providers like Sylvan or EdSolutions as options, but rather offered only a generic "private tutor program" to be named later. Further, CPS got the coveted first-place listing.

The current signup form being used at some schools doesn't list any on-site tutoring providers other than CPS, and a brochure produced by CPS lists fewer than half of the approved providers.

All but 2,600 of the 16,000 who have signed up chose CPS, according to CPS.

"It's not sufficient to offer [only] some kind of tutoring to those kids," says Donald Moore, executive director of Designs for Change. "They have a right to private tutoring, which is what the law promised them, and they should receive it."

So far, though, neither state nor federal education officials have objected to the CPS limitations.

It remains unclear whether parents will be able to reconsider their choices in the fall. Some providers say they have been told parents are "locked in." CPS officials say that parents can change until Oct. 8, though they will be limited to the on-site providers that their schools' principals have approved, to off-site options

(if they have their own transportation) and to online options (if they have their own computers and Internet access).

The programs differ in a number of ways, including schedules, curricula, teacher preparation, instructional methods and where the tutoring takes place. Some programs are provided off site. Some use teacher aides who work under the supervision of certified teachers. CPS has produced a brochure that describes some of the programs for this year.

Last year, average class sizes ranged from about 12 with some private providers to 20 in the CPS program. "At that size, why do they even call it tutoring?" asks Madeline Talbott, head organizer for ACORN Illinois, a community advocacy group. CPS is aiming for a maximum of 15 this year.

While all programs generally use teachers who have taught or are teaching in CPS, some critics, such as Derrick Harris of the North Lawndale Local School Council Federation, question the practice of using teachers at the schools found wanting under the strict NCLB standards to provide "outside" tutoring required by NCLB.

However, CPS officials report that students, parents and tutor coordinators ranked the CPS program favorably in surveys about last year's service. CPS is working on an evaluation that will break down the impact by provider.

Recently, Duncan said he thought the tutoring helped raise test scores this year.

Indeed, some parents prefer that their children get tutoring from familiar teachers at a familiar school.

Alma Duarte, a parent at Cardenas

Elementary School, was pleased with the tutoring the school gave her 3rd-grade daughter Jessica last year. "It was good," she says. "She knew the teachers and the school."

And many CPS schools have extensive experience providing tutoring. "We've learned how to make things work for our parents and students," says Sylvia Ortiz, principal of Cardenas. "They want our tutoring."

### CPS UNDER SCRUTINY

The extensive CPS program has won the district both praise and scrutiny at the U. S. Department of Education. "We're impressed with how aggressive Chicago has been about getting the word out to parents and not waiting for schools to become eligible," says Mike Petrilli, deputy director of the Office of Innovation and Improvement, noting that several other urban districts, including New York City and Los Angeles, have become major providers, too.

"We're watching [these districts] closely to make sure that there's a fair playing field," he adds.

Even private companies acknowledge that CPS is well positioned to deliver services efficiently. "It's centrally supported, it's well known, and it's got an established infrastructure," says Gary Solomon, vice president of educational partnerships for The Princeton Review, one of the 28 approved providers.

The district also stands to benefit financially: The fewer parents who sign up for outside tutoring, the more federal money stays inside the school system. At the school level, the more parents who sign up for CPS-provided tutoring, the more after-school jobs principals can control and the less intrusion from private tutoring companies. In effect, parents choosing CPS tutoring are generating additional federal funding for their schools, just as they do by signing up for free- and reduced-price lunch.

CPS officials report that other after-school programs, such as After School Matters, are continuing at roughly the same funding levels as before, and that the new tutoring program is not replacing any old programs, which would violate federal law.

### TIPS FOR PARENTS

To find out if your child's school is required to offer tutoring, contact the school or call the CPS Office of After School and Community Programs at (773) 553 3590.

**COST TO FAMILIES:** Free

**SIGNUP DEADLINE:** Oct. 8

**CHOICES:** At a school or tutoring center, or at home via computer

**PROVIDERS:** 28 but not all at every school

**SCHEDULES:** 2-4 hours per week for 20 weeks; after school or on weekends

**SPACES AVAILABLE:** About 74,000

**SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE:** 343 (tentative)

To download a brochure on Supplemental Education Services and approved providers, go to: [www.cpsafterschool.org](http://www.cpsafterschool.org)

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# New leadership shifts union focus

**After a protracted battle to be seated, CTU President Marilyn Stewart begins her term firing a noted teacher quality expert**

By John Myers

**W**ith the new leadership finally in control of the Chicago Teachers Union, a wave of political firings leaves in doubt where the union stands on teacher leadership in school reform.

Among the 18 union employees who resigned or were fired during newly installed President Marilyn Stewart's first days in office were Allen Bearden, director of the Quest Center, and the coordinators of the union's so-called partnership schools—both signature ventures of Stewart's predecessor, Deborah Lynch.

"You surround yourself with like ideas, goals and visions," says Stewart, who promised teachers she would shift the union's priorities from school reform to frontline member services. She tapped Carlene Lutz, a union veteran who until recently tended to bedrock professional development programs such as teacher recertification and lane placement, to temporarily supervise Quest Center.

Meanwhile, Bearden supporters say his vision will be missed and relationships with funders and School Board insiders will have to be re-established. Already, his firing has jeopardized the release of a major grant for a joint union-School Board program to prepare teachers for National Board Certification.

This summer, as the union battled over election results, the Chicago Community Trust temporarily froze the \$740,000 grant, a practice the foundation employs when new leaders take control. Those funds will be released if Stewart and the School Board agree to commit enough resources to the program, says Trust spokeswoman Jennifer Jobrack.

Stewart, who says she's fully committed to the program, met with the Trust in late August to discuss the grant. However, the grant remains frozen pending talks with board officials, and neither party will comment on Bearden's firing.

The dismissal clearly surprised some in the philanthropic community. "Allen's capability to work under varying union leadership ... was admirable," says The Chicago Public Education Fund President Janet Knupp, noting that Bearden had worked under three administrations of union leadership.

Teachers who earned National Board Certification under Bearden's tutelage are particularly strong supporters. Victor Harbison, a nationally certified teacher at Chicago Vocational Career Academy, wants to petition the union to reinstate Bearden.

"When [Lynch] lost, I thought, 'So what, what's the difference?'" Harbison says. In less than a week, the Stewart administration "showed me the difference."

Bearden, however, says it's over and he will not contest his firing. He recently accepted a position at the University of Illinois at Chicago to work on teacher quality issues.

## QUEST CENTER 'BLOATED'

Stewart charges the Quest Center was "bloated" and defends firings as a move to streamline administration, not wipe out teacher leadership initiatives.

Yet, her decision to reduce the number of partnership schools coordinators casts additional doubt on her support of such programs.

Last year, Lynch negotiated a two-year deal with the board for the union to oversee reforms at 10 failing schools in lieu of them closing.

Though most of the schools made progress, three were consolidated this spring due to low enrollment.

Marc Wigler, a former teacher who has experience facilitating Success For All, the reading reform program in place at four partnership elementary schools, was tapped to replace the two outgoing coordinators. However, the other partnership schools are using different reform models, and outgoing coordinator Martin McGreal says the two high schools will need more intensive support this year.

Wigler says he is not yet sure how he will manage partnership schools. However, he insists that the union will support the effort and may hire an additional facilitator.

Meanwhile, Stewart hired four new field representatives to handle contract enforcement, and downsized union staff by seven positions.

She also hired several administrators who worked for former CTU President Thomas Reece, another move that drew ire from detractors.

Lynch toppled Reece in 2001, charging his administration mishandled union funds and caved to various School Board demands. Stewart, who heads the remnants of Reece's party, distanced herself from his administration on the campaign trail.

Back on board at the union are Pam Massarsky, previously recording secretary under Reece and now a legislative consultant; Gail Koffman, former director of field representatives, now a grievance consultant; and Larry Poltrock, who returns as general counsel after directing Stewart's legal affairs in the contested election.

Stewart defends those picks as the right mix of experience and expertise—qualities, she says, that are needed as the union tries to reorganize quickly after this summer's drawn-out scrap over alleged voter fraud.

To contact John Myers, call (312) 673-3874 or e-mail [myers@catalyst-chicago.org](mailto:myers@catalyst-chicago.org).

# Board closes 8 child-parent centers, converts some to Head Start

This fall, CPS converts eight child-parent centers, viewed as the gold standard among early childhood programs, into state-funded pre-kindergartens or Head Starts.

CPS officials say the move will free up \$4.7 million in federal Title 1 funds for the district's reading improvement initiative. Critics charge the district is penny pinching a high-quality, nationally-recognized preschool program.

The School Board shut down a third of its 23 child-parent centers, citing declining enrollment. However, Barbara Bowman, chief officer of early childhood education, says she is unable to provide enrollment figures. The child-parent center model requires extra staff to work with parents and the community; those positions were eliminated, along with head teachers and some clerks. In total, 24 positions were cut, in addition to the clerks.

Previously, some child-parent centers provided staff to help students transition to elementary school, but those supports were cut three years ago.

The shuttered programs are: Wadsworth, Cockrell, Doolittle West, Stockton, Johnson, Olive, Dumas and Mason. Early childhood education advo-

cates estimate that these centers served about 430 preschoolers, at a price tag of \$11,000 per child.

Fifteen other child-parent centers programs will remain open. Bowman notes that as neighborhoods undergo demographic shifts and gentrification, declining enrollments would lead to rising costs. However, she says there are no plans for further closings.

Principal Robert Pales of Henson Elementary, which operated the Olive Child Parent Center, says services will not be cut and Henson faculty will assume the responsibilities previously handled by the four Olive staffers who were let go.

Yet some activists question whether youngsters will receive the same quality of instruction. Child-parent centers, which provide two years of preschool and one year of kindergarten, focus on early literacy skills and require parents to volunteer the equivalent of four hours a week.

Teacher quality is an issue as well. While child-parent centers and state pre-kindergartens require teachers to hold both a bachelor's degree and a Type 04 early childhood education certificate, Head Start only requires two years of college.

*Mary Gallery*

**DEVRY** *continued from page 17*

or. Michael Cohen, president of Achieve, calls early college models "promising" but asks whether students will be able to tackle college-level work when they have not yet mastered high school material.

The issue has already been raised at Advantage Academy, where college instructors had to ratchet up a technical math course that students complained was reviewing basic algebra skills they already knew.

## GAINING MOMENTUM

Early college programs are sprouting up around the country, but no one is keeping track of how many exist.

University of Chicago and University of Illinois at Chicago are considering early college programs, and Olive-Harvey Middle College and Triumphant Charter School offer a program to earn associate's degrees through City Colleges of Chicago.

So far, only 34 freshmen and sophomores are enrolled. It targets kids who are low-income, minority students and have trouble in school. Helen Hawkins, founder of both schools, says that four freshmen have already passed a college English course. The next goal is passing college-level math. "When that happens you'll hear me shouting."

*Maureen Kelleher*

## BIG PICTURE *continued from page 16*

how weak entering freshmen's math skills can be and how projects and internships can improve them. Over the course of his 10-week internship with the Resurrection Project, Molina went from being unable to read a measuring scale on a floor plan to teaching a fellow student to use Excel spreadsheets.

"I understand numbers more," he says. He credits his mentor, Cesar Nuñez, for relentless pushing and making him develop budgets for a summer basketball league. Nuñez also had Molina borrow a math textbook and work through problems.

Another student picked up research and writing skills during an internship

with a pediatrician who needed a brochure on the health benefits of breastfeeding to give to new moms. The student also learned a bit of chemistry by studying the composition of breast milk and how it differs from infant formula. "It's a real project that somebody is going to use," advisor Mayra Almaraz notes.

## LOSING A TEACHER IS HALF OF FACULTY

The other year-old Big Picture high school at Williams suffered a set back mid-year when one of its two advisors left. "We will not open a school with two advisors any more," says Charly Adler, who worked with both schools last year as an academic coach for Big Picture schools. Instead, each will hire four advisors, which will also address a CPS

requirement that high schools employ teachers who are certified in four core academic subjects.

In August, a third Big Picture-inspired school, City as Classroom Charter School in Pilsen, opened its doors. Founder Lisa Arrastia notes the school will borrow heavily from that model—"We're doing the long-term internships and the projects"—but will also take cues from progressive, independent schools like Francis W. Parker, where she formerly worked.

CPS officials concede Big Picture is a radical departure for the district, and farther out on the continuum of high school reform. "Many people feel the only way to judge the model is to give it four years," observes Jeanne Nowaczewski, CPS chief officer of small schools. ■

### **U.S. Department of Education**

- \$8.9 million to CPS from the Magnet School Assistance program to create and expand magnet programs at five schools.
- \$1.2 million to CPS for the Connecting with American History Project, which provides professional development for 10th-grade history teachers to improve teaching skills and content knowledge. CPS partners are the Newberry Library, the Chicago Historical Society, the Chicago Metro History Education Center, the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago, and the DuSable Museum of African American History
- \$304,252 to the CPS Office of Specialized Services to support the PHASES counseling program for at-risk primary students, and expand it to 10 schools.

### **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity**

- \$30.6 million to the CPS Department of Capital Planning as reimbursement for the improvements and addition made to Goudy Elementary and for construction of the new Simmye Anderson Middle School.
- \$3,942 to Gale Community Academy for equipment and educational supplies.

### **Illinois State Board of Education**

- \$100,000 to the CPS Office of Language and Cultural Education to inform administrators and teachers about the new English-language proficiency standards and the ACCESS exam.

### **Chicago Community Trust**

- \$378,314 to the University of Illinois to evaluate the Advanced Reading Development Demonstration Project in select Chicago public schools.
- \$150,000 to North Lawndale College Preparatory Charter High School for professional development and instructional improvement.
- \$115,000 to Asian Human Services for the reading/language arts curriculum project at Passages Charter Elementary School.
- \$100,000 to Perspectives Charter High School for operating support.
- \$85,000 to Leap Learning Systems for expansion of early childhood teacher training.

### **Joyce Foundation**

- \$780,000 over two years to the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research to support research on

school reform.

- \$700,000 over two years to Action for Children to develop models for a comprehensive system of early childhood care and education for low-income and working families.
- \$600,000 over two years to the Center on Education Policy to continue its national study of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- \$514,666 over two years to the Council of Chief State School Officers to help states plan and implement strategies to improve teacher quality and create a more equitable distribution of teachers.
- \$400,000 over two years to the Community Renewal Society to document school improvement efforts and incorporate new features in Catalyst.
- \$250,000 over two years to the Ounce of Prevention Fund to expand the availability of high-quality early childhood education.
- \$200,000 over two years to the City Colleges of Chicago for the Child Development Studies Initiative to improve degree programs in early childhood education.
- \$200,000 over two years to the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to support implementation of the Early Childhood Career Lattice.
- \$200,000 over two years to National Louis University to educate policy-makers and stakeholders about the importance of having highly-qualified preschool program directors.
- \$200,000 over two years to Voices for Illinois Children to build support for early childhood education.
- \$150,000 to Neighborhood Capital Budget Group to work toward increasing community involvement with CPS in facility planning and design, and to coordinate education reform and urban revitalization.
- \$139,560 to Learning Point Associates for a survey (in conjunction with the Progressive Policy Institute) of teachers in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Ohio that will help policy-makers recruit and retain high-quality teachers in poorly-performing schools.
- \$110,000 to PURE (Parents United for Responsible Education) to assist local school councils, parents and community members with advocacy for school reform.
- \$100,000 to the CPS Routes to Teaching Program to support the Summer Fellows Program, which provides education majors with teaching internships under experienced teacher mentors.

- \$85,000 to the Illinois Facilities Fund to support a study on the economic impact of early childhood education.
- \$64,000 to the National Association for the Education of Young Children to develop a system for accrediting early childhood associate degree programs, including the program at City Colleges of Chicago.
- \$50,000 to the Wisconsin-based publication Rethinking Schools for a series of articles on teacher quality in high-need schools.
- \$35,000 to Young Chicago Authors to support a partnership with the Neighborhood Writing Alliance.
- \$20,000 to the Facing History and Ourselves Foundation to develop outreach materials for discussing race and discrimination in conjunction with the documentary "The Murder of Emmett Till," which will be made available for teachers to use in the classroom.
- \$10,000 to the Erikson Institute to support a project to improve curriculum-based assessment.
- \$10,000 to the Mikva Challenge Grant Foundation for the expansion of the Active Citizens project.

### **Woods Fund of Chicago**

- \$60,000 over three years to the Ounce of Prevention Fund to support Kids PEPP's leadership work on the Early Learning Council
- \$40,000 to PURE (Parents United for Responsible Education) for operating support for the Quality Schools for All project.
- \$30,000 to the Chicago Community Foundation (CCF), an outgrowth of the Chicago Community Trust, to develop public policy recommendations aimed at ensuring the inclusion of high-quality, comprehensive arts education in schools.
- \$25,000 to the Alternative Schools Network for Reconnecting Youth, which will focus attention on the problems of youth who have dropped out of CPS.
- \$25,000 to Mikva Challenge for activities related to engaging youth in public policy advocacy with their schools, communities and government.
- \$20,000 to West Town Leadership United for a school-based community organizing effort addressing issues of safety, immigration, affordable housing and education.

### **Polk Bros. Foundation**

- \$85,000 to Youth Guidance for the Comer School Development Program,

which fosters connections between parents, communities and schools.

- \$60,000 to Strategic Learning Initiatives for the Scaling Up Best Practice school improvement initiative in a group of Pilsen schools.
- \$40,000 to the Golden Apple Foundation for the Alphabet Bus initiative, which brings literacy programs to schools in Pilsen, Little Village and Heart of Chicago.
- \$30,000 to the Chicago Metro History Education Center for the Urban Schools Initiative.
- \$15,000 to the Cross-City Campaign for Urban School Reform for work in Chicago.
- \$10,000 to Project Exploration for Youth Development Initiatives, which brings science programs to low-achieving middle and high school students in CPS.
- \$7,500 to the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club for FunPlace activities programming.

### **The University of Illinois at Chicago**

- \$230,000 to the CPS Office of Human Resources to hire four CPS coordinators for an initiative to enhance professional development and student teaching in Areas 7, 8, 9 and 21.

### **Chicago Public Education Fund**

- \$48,000 to CPS for a graduate school summer intern program.

### **Children First Fund**

- \$881,612 over three years to the CPS Office of High School Programs to develop a comprehensive system for tracking the post-secondary experiences of CPS students in partnership with the Consortium for Chicago School Research. (The funding originated with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.)

### **GATX Corporation**

- \$72,300 to the Waterford Institute to expand Early Reading Program literacy software at two Chicago schools.
- \$15,000 to the Scholarship & Guidance Association for a partnership to provide educational home visits, mental health services and group support for teen mothers.
- \$12,500 to Whirlwind for a program to train teachers to implement arts-based curricula.
- \$11,500 to Civitas Initiative to distribute tool kits about early childhood education.

### **Girl's Best Friend Foundation**

- \$16,500 to the Advocate Charitable Foundation to support the Latina Girls Club at Lakeview High School.
- \$16,500 (renewable each year for three years) to the Coalition for Education on Sexual Orientation to support the safety and well-being of gay, bisexual and transgender students in Illinois schools.
- \$16,500 to the Mikva Challenge for the Young Women's Leadership Project to connect girls with public officials and community leaders.
- \$16,500 to UMOJA Development Corp. for Women of Destiny and Just US Girls I & II, leadership programs at Manley Career Academy.
- \$16,500 (renewable each year for three years) to Young Chicago Authors to expand GirlSpeak and integrate gender and feminist consciousness into the writing and performance program.
- \$16,500 to the Young Women's Empowerment Project, which connects girls and young women affected by the sex trade and street economy with support services.
- \$3,850 to Chicago State University for the PREP program to fuel girls' interest in math and science with experiments, trips to museums, and other group activities.

### **Gust Foundation**

- \$252,968 over two years to Audubon School to set up, staff, and provide supplies for a demonstration classroom for students with autism spectrum disorder.

### **Kellman Family Foundation**

- \$584,000 over three years to Kellman School to purchase computer equipment, software, and professional development for a school-wide student/staff laptop program.

### **Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance**

- \$1,650 to Wentworth School for equipment and supplies.

### **Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation**

- \$200,000 to four schools to renovate and stock school libraries.

### **Civic Life Fund**

- \$15,000 to the Grand Boulevard Federation to support efforts to improve neighborhood schools.

**Catalyst Chicago** is an independent publication created to document, analyze and support school improvement efforts in Chicago's public schools.

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**"CITY VOICES"** Consulting Editor Lorraine Forte hosts this public affairs program at 6:30 a.m. the second Sunday of the month on WNJA-FM, 95.5.

#### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Include the writer's full name, title and contact information for verification. Letters should be limited to 200 words and may be edited for space and clarity. Send them to the attention of the Editor.

**AT CLARK STREET** CLARE MUÑANA has been elected vice-president of the School Board. She has been a member of the Board since 1999. President MICHAEL SCOTT, who has held the position since 2001, was re-elected. ... AL BERTANI, chief officer of professional development, is leaving Chicago Public Schools to join the faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago. No replacement has been named... ROSALINA CASTILLO, director of the office of business diversity, is also leaving CPS to work as a construction manager at the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority. A replacement has not been selected.

**MOVING IN/ON** The Chicago School Leadership Cooperative shut down as of Aug. 31. The cooperative was formed in 1999 by 26 grassroots and school-reform groups. ANDREW G. WADE, the group's executive director, has joined the Ounce of Prevention Fund as early learning advocacy campaign manager. ... The director of the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, ANTHONY BRYK, accepted the position of Spencer Joint Chair in Organizational Studies for the School of Education and the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University. Bryk also served as professor of urban education and research and development director of the university's Center for School Improvement. ... The executive director of the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS), KATHLEEN HARRIS, is leaving the organization.

INCS is currently looking for a replacement.

**STEP-UP TO 3RD GRADE** For the first time, CPS 2nd-graders who needed extra reading help attended summer school this year at 17 schools where principals volunteered to host the program. Step-Up to 3rd Grade provided five weeks of reading classes for 800 students. Students' participation was voluntary, but 2nd-graders with lower scores on standardized tests of early literacy skills were targeted.

**PRINCIPAL CONTRACTS** HULON JOHNSON, principal of Bradwell, has retired. Assistant Principal RHONDA DABNER is interim. ... PHYLLIS HODGES, principal of Fenger, and ROBERT LEWIS, principal of Bouchet, will be reassigned (pending the results of a hearing) after their schools showed consistent poor performance on standardized tests. WILLIAM JOHNSON, former principal of Carver, is interim at Fenger, while JOHN THOMAS, former principal of Mose Vines, takes over as interim at Carver. At Bouchet, SHIRLEY SMITH, former principal of Carpenter, becomes interim. AIDA MUNOZ, former assistant principal at Carpenter, takes over as acting principal... Principal DYANNE DANDRIDGE-ALEXANDER of Cregier Multiplex, which includes Best Practice, Nia, and Foundations schools, was dismissed by the School Board. CLIFTON GOODEN is the interim at Best Practice. Principals for Nia and Foundations have not been selected... The following interim

principals have been promoted to contract principal: ADEL ALI, Pilsen; NATIVIDAD LOREDO, Juarez; GWENDOLYN MCCLINTON, Price; MARTHA MONROY, Cooper; SALLIE P. PINKSTON, Johnson; PAMELA RICE, Stevenson; MARIA SANTIAGO-PFIEFER, Boone; LATRICE L. SATTERWHITE, Tilton; MARY JEAN SMITH, Hendricks; JEANNINE M. WOLF, Lawndale... JOANNA THEODORE, assistant principal at Lenart, will replace contract principal LINDA MCCARTHY KLAWITTER in October... The following principals have had their contracts renewed: LILIANA EVERS, Funston; STEPHEN FLISK, Walsh; PATRICIA D. KENNEDY, Fuller; JULIE MCGLADE, Garvy; MILICENT RUSSELL, Lavizzo; JUDITH J. ADAMS, Nancy Jefferson.

**FULBRIGHT TEACHER** MARJORIE COOMBS, a teacher at Curie, was selected by the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program to teach in Senegal for the 2004-2005 school year. A teacher from Senegal, MAIMOUNA NDOUR FALL, will teach Coombs' French classes at Curie.

**NEW BOOK** WILLIAM AYERS, a professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the founder of the Small Schools Workshop, has written a new book, *Teaching toward Freedom: Moral Commitment and Ethical Action in the Classroom*. The book expresses Ayers philosophy of teaching and his hope that teachers will create an environment of freedom and equality in their classrooms. It will be available Oct. 1.

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