

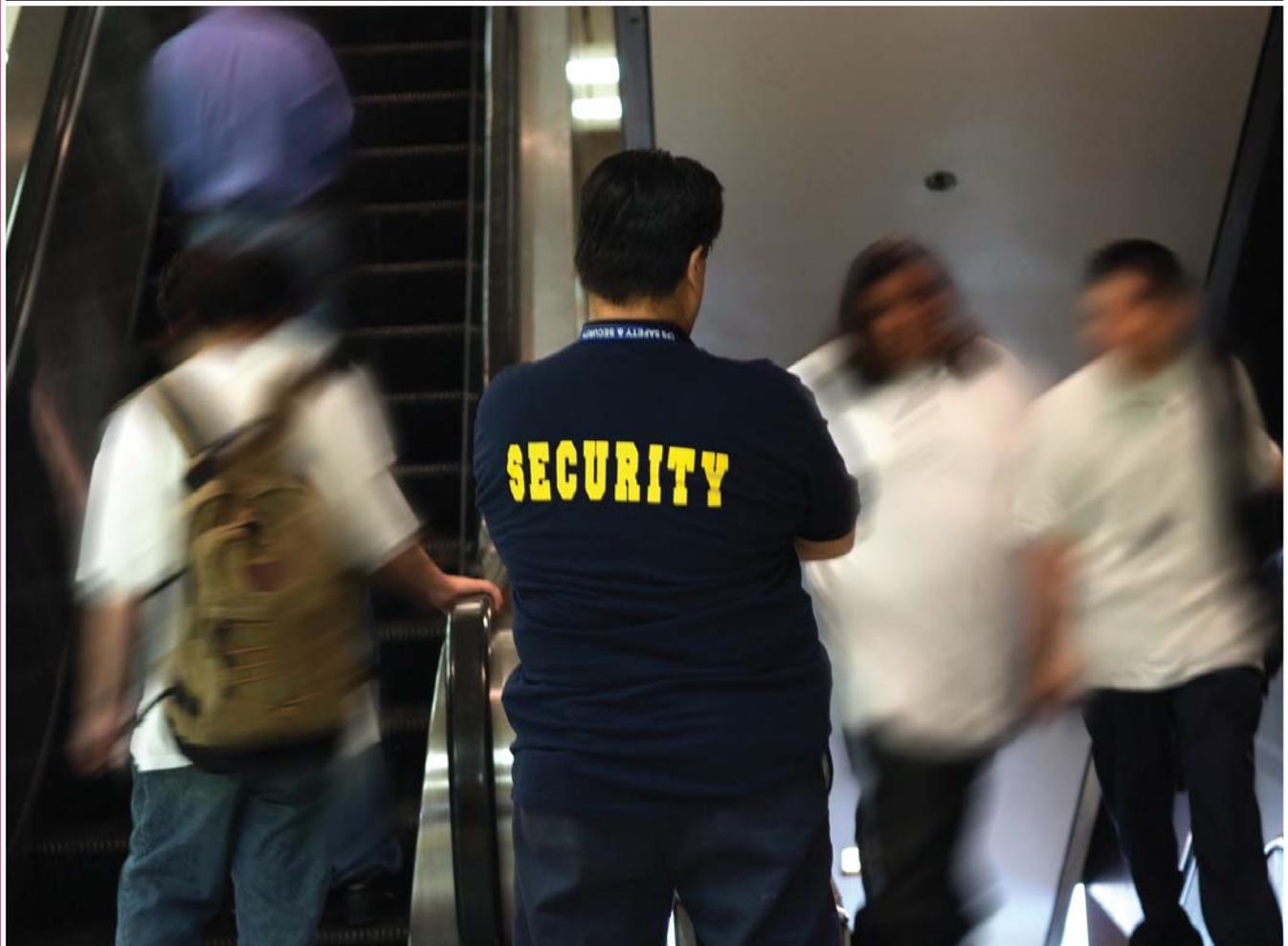
Catalyst CHICAGO

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OCTOBER 2007 INDEPENDENT REPORTING ON URBAN SCHOOLS

SAFE HAVEN?

A *CATALYST* ANALYSIS FINDS VIOLENCE IS ON THE RISE
IN A THIRD OF SCHOOLS. TEENS SAY NEW STRATEGIES WOULD HELP.



Up Close: Hearst turns to data to improve teaching. PAGE 16

Be transparent, listen to kids



Deputy Editor Lorraine Forte

Imagine yourself as a teenager living in one of the city's tough neighborhoods. In a fairer, more ideal world, when you got to school, you'd be in a sanctuary where, at least for the day, you could escape the troubles of the community, broaden your horizons and prepare for a better future.

Yet for too many teens, and even younger schoolchildren, schools aren't the sanctuaries they should be.

Chicago Public Schools posted a heartening decline in school violence last year. But a third of schools, according to our analysis of CPS incident reports, still have significant problems with fights, gang activity and other conflicts. That doesn't bode well for improved learning at these schools. Who can expect kids to concentrate on algebra or biology when they are nervous that a fight is going to break out in the lunchroom or hear gang slogans exchanged in the halls as a prelude to an after-school clash?

Making further inroads on violence needs to start with transparency. Right now, there's no way to determine whether principals are accurately reporting serious incidents to central office so extra resources can be deployed to help out. And parents have no easy way to find out what's going on at their schools. That has to change. Parents and the public have the right to know what's happening inside schools, and schools that aren't reporting incidents—or are racking up police calls that never get reported to the district—need to know that such reporting is a must, not an option.

CPS has a chance to be a leader on this front. The federal No Child Left Behind Act is intended to help parents sort out the safe schools from the unsafe, but Illinois' criteria are so weak that parents can't rely on it. By providing accurate data on incidents of violence to the public, CPS has a chance to show it's not afraid of tough scrutiny—and might even generate momentum for improvement in schools that need help the most.

The district also should listen to kids. They know the problems firsthand. Arne Duncan and his top deputies should take the suggestion of a student leader who recommends surprise visits to find out the real deal in schools and get past the dog-and-pony shows that are staged for planned visits. More counseling for troubled kids and strategies such as peer juries are called for, too. Metal detectors and security guards may be an unfortunate necessity at some schools in the roughest neighborhoods, but they don't take the place of programs that will do more than impose surface calm.

Finally, a word about teaching. As one principal told us, some school violence is, in the final analysis, due to lack of classroom management

and poor instruction. Interesting, relevant lessons won't keep every unruly student from picking fights. But dull classes, especially in high schools, don't help curb violence either. Kids who are bored are more likely to cause trouble than those who are busy and engaged.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next March, a CPS-Chicago Teachers Union committee is set to unveil a new teacher evaluation process that will replace the current one. In addition to coming up with sound criteria for identifying and supporting the best teachers and helping struggling teachers to improve, the committee ought to take to heart the suggestions of Tim Daly, president of The New Teacher Project: Stop giving seniority raises to unsatisfactory teachers and make sure performance, not just seniority, is a factor that determines which teachers will lose jobs due to budget cuts. These changes would keep schools from losing strong newcomers and give the evaluation process some sorely needed heft.

CLARIFICATION: In the September issue, we stated that the Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching are presented to CPS teachers. However, the awards are presented to 10 teachers every year in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will counties, not just Chicago.

ABOUT US: Editor-in-Chief **Veronica Anderson** is on sabbatical until mid-November. Deputy Editor **Lorraine Forte** will serve as editor-in-chief during her absence.

SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Making school a sanctuary

Despite a districtwide decline, violence is up in some schools. Students and others say tougher security measures alone won't solve the problem. CPS is spending \$14 million this year on an anti-violence initiative.

COVER STORY: PAGE 6

PARENTS WANT THE REAL STORY

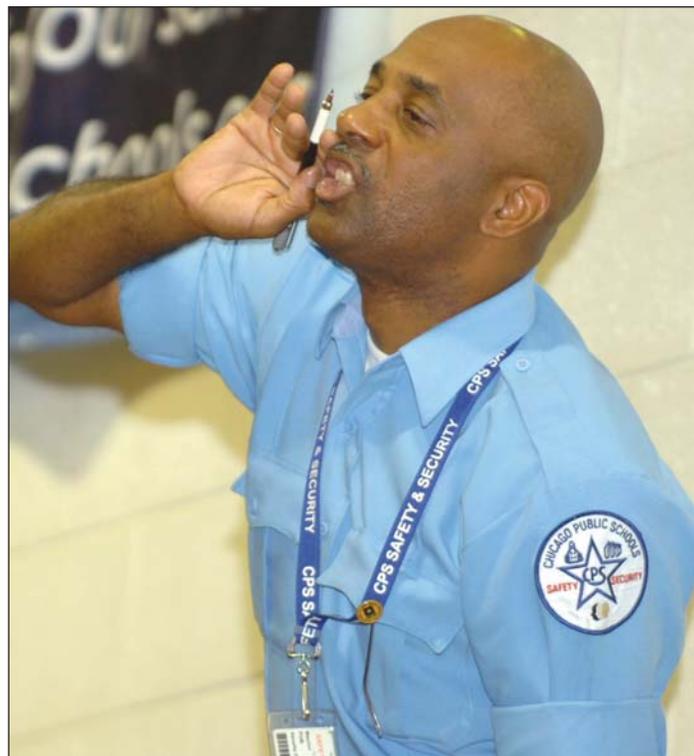
CPS has yet to make school-level data on serious incidents widely available, and the data that are available aren't always accurate. **PAGE 12**

STATE SETS MEANINGLESS STANDARD

No Chicago public school has ever been designated as dangerous under No Child Left Behind because the state's criteria don't tell the whole story about school violence. **PAGE 14**

TEACHING ALTERNATIVES TO FIGHTING

Elementary school principals say incentives for positive behavior, a home-like environment and conflict-resolution skills help defuse problems. **PAGE 15**



JOHN BOOZ

CPS security guard Maurice Poole yells out the answer to a question during a citywide school safety training session.

ON THE COVER: Tight security measures are in place at Clemente High, but school administrators says kids also need to feel connected to the school. **PHOTO BY JOE GALLO.**



JOHN BOOZ

Alicia Garret, a student at Hearst, wins a school award for achieving the biggest gains in her class on 4th-grade reading tests. **See story, page 16.**

DEPARTMENTS

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UPDATES Page 20

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- Reading curricula narrowed to two
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ON OUR WEB SITE

Go to the *Catalyst* Web site, www.catalyst-chicago.org, for news and resources on Chicago school reform, including:

- Spanish translations
- Reform history news highlights

Notebook

Q&A with ...

Laura Potts Langdon

Facing History and Ourselves teacher

TIMELINE

Sept. 4: IMPACT falters

CPS' new \$60 million computer information system, Instructional Management Program and Academic Communication Tool, causes chaos on the first day of school. Students miss classes and disappear from rosters. M. Hill Hammock, the district's chief administrative officer, says the system simply is overwhelmed, a problem that may recur on a few "peak demand" days each year, such as the last day of school. Despite the system crash, CPS later claims a 93 percent first-day attendance, up slightly from last year.

Sept. 8: Home visits

CEO Arne Duncan, School Board President Rufus Williams, other district officials and community volunteers go door-to-door in the Englewood community encouraging students who did not show up during the first week of class to enroll in school. Students who did not show up at Clemente, Crane, Faragut, Harper, Hubbard, Kelly, Phillips, Schurz and Senn high schools also get visits. Each of those schools reported high numbers of dropouts and poor attendance in the 2006-07 school year.

Sept. 11: Payroll glitch

PeopleSoft, CPS' new \$17 million payroll system, wreaks havoc on checks for employees and retirees. Some retirees are being underpaid by \$800 a month while more than 1,600 recent retirees are receiving estimated pension payments and may not get actual pension payments until November. No retirees have been paid for their unused sick days, and about 1,200 June retirees are owed a total of more than \$35 million. CPS acknowledges the snafu and blames it on technical issues related to the start-up of a new system.

"Choices in Little Rock," a social studies curriculum developed by the non-profit education organization Facing History and Ourselves, examines a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement: the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Ark. Unlike traditional history courses, in which students memorize dates and events, this curriculum asks students to make connections between the choices young people faced in the past and those faced by students today. This year, Facing History will train more middle school teachers to teach the Little Rock course. Potts Langdon, an 8th-grade social studies teacher at Ames Middle School in Logan Square, talked to writer Yvon Wang about the impact of the curriculum on her students.

Why did you start teaching Facing History and Ourselves?

The CPS social studies curriculum was vast and textbook-oriented—it was more about breadth than depth. The Facing History curriculum combines social studies, literature and the humanities. It made me understand that teaching isn't about these little disparate pieces—it is about teaching a whole idea and creating learning opportunities for children to make the connections on their own.

What is one of your classes like?

We talk about personal and social responsibility. A student at my school was an innocent bystander who was killed by gang violence. It's important for us to have the kids understand that's not normal, that we have to take a stand against violence to change it.

How do students react to Facing History?

Some kids do not necessarily participate as much in skills-based, let's-read-the-graph, let's-look-at-the-chart lessons. Especially with young boys, but then all of a sudden they're the ones raising their hands, asking questions. For example, in "Choices in Little Rock," there are primary source documents about the Jim Crow laws. You could open up the textbook and read it in paragraph form, but it's a whole different thing to look at those documents and have [students] say "Wait, are you serious that there was a sign that says 'No Negroes, no Mexicans, no dogs?'"

ELSEWHERE

Texas: Recovering dropouts

A new law will give school districts an incentive to re-enroll young adult dropouts by helping to defray the costs of educating them, according to the Sept. 14 *Houston Chronicle*. Districts will receive \$30 per day for every student between the ages of 21 and 26 who re-enrolls in school. The state now provides that same level of funding for students under 21. Texas now has the highest upper age limit in the country for public schools students. In Chicago, the limit is 21.

Utah: Online testing

The state may scrap the use of standardized tests, including the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, in favor of online, so-called "adaptive" tests that would be designed to better gauge students' progress and learning needs, according to the Sept. 8 *Salt Lake Tribune*. Students in grades 2 through 12 would take the tests at least three times a year, and teach-

ers would get test results more rapidly through the online system. Students would also have to take the ACT and college and career readiness tests. The plan was developed by the state schools superintendent and a group of state educators.

New Orleans: Battling truancy

The Recovery School District has hired 10 truancy officers and opened a truancy center to help get children back into school and keep their attendance up, according to the Sept. 8 *Times-Picayune*. Police will sweep neighborhoods to pick up children who skip school and take them to the new center, which is staffed with a social worker, counselor and youth advocates from the juvenile court system. Children who are not registered at any school will be automatically added to the enrollment rolls. Just 60 percent of students attended the first day of classes; since then, attendance has increased to about 70 percent.

IN SHORT

"I know you are working hard, but what you are doing is not working."

David Gilligan, chief officer for high schools, to high school principals at an Aug. 24 meeting at Kenwood. On the same day, newspapers reported high school test scores had declined from last year.



JOHN BOOZ

How do you reconcile the broader education of Facing History with the pressure for students to perform well on tests?

You have to integrate them. When we did the unit on Little Rock, the kids wrote their response journals, did presentations, had discussions. It's not very test-driven. But at the end of class, they would answer questions—"Can you tell me what the Jim Crow Laws were?" If they do one question a day, they'll be confident when they're tested.

Do you see a change in the kids who've taken Facing History courses?

The kids come in knowing a lot about the civil rights movement. Then they start to make connections between our civil rights movement and the Holocaust or [the genocide in] Darfur. They'll say, "Whoa, this didn't happen only in America."

What is the greatest change you've seen?

They're more tolerant. They begin a journey some people don't start until young adulthood, where they examine who they are, who they're becoming, their prejudices, the prejudices of the world where they come from, and why [those prejudices exist]. Once they become aware that it exists and they're a part of it, they can also be aware and change it, be more conscious of their actions.

Is it difficult to connect with the students?

One of the first things they read is a story about conformity and identity called "The Bear that Wasn't." It's about a bear that wakes up in a factory, and people tell him he's not a bear—he's a silly man wearing a fur coat. By the end of the story, he believes it. At first the kids say, "I'm not a baby, why am I reading this?" But then they start to see how society can influence your actions or behavior. Someone will say, "What if those people in the factory had told the bear it could be anything?" ■

ASK CATALYST

Why are there such differences between the libraries in schools and why do some not have librarians?

Anonymous parent, North Side Parents Network

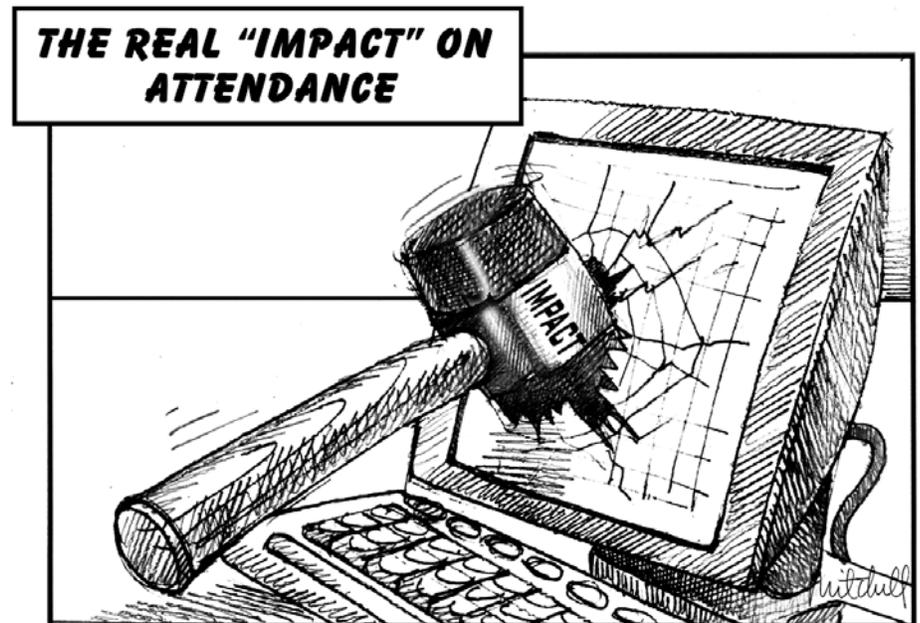
There is no dedicated funding in the CPS budget for libraries. CPS uses a staffing formula to allocate staff positions that can be split between a part-time physical education teacher and part-time librarian, says CPS Library Director Paul Whitsitt. It is up to the principal to decide how much discretionary money to commit to the library and how much time a staff member will spend running it. Many principals rely on parent organizations to raise money for the library, while others expect librarians to apply for outside grants. The district offers a matching grant of up to \$5,000 for schools that spend some discretionary money or raise funds, but requests for grants far outstrip the money available, Whitsitt says. Last year, about 200 schools split \$850,000 in grant funds, and Whitsitt expects funding will be about the same this year. The district is about to invest in a centrally automated library system, he adds, to let officials know which libraries need more books and eventually allow libraries to share their resources.

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

MATH CLASS

The United States ranks last in preschool enrollment among all other G-8 countries, according to a recent report by the National Center for Education Statistics that used data from 2004. Nearly 100% of 3- and 4-year olds were enrolled in preschool in France and Italy, and 75% or more in Germany, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom. In the U.S., the percentage of youngsters enrolled in preschool was only 53%. (NCES did not obtain early childhood data for the Russian Federation, another G-8 member.) Not until children reached the age of 6 in the U.S. were more than 90% enrolled in formal education.

FOOTNOTE



KURT MITCHELL

Making school a sanctuary

By Sarah Karp

Clemente High junior Reginald Reese has learned an invaluable lesson that's not part of the curriculum: how to avoid fights and other trouble that he says occur nearly every day at school.

For a while, Reese admits, he hung out with gang members and almost became part of the problem at the West Town school, which has one of the highest rates of school violence in the district. But Reese says he got bored, decided to do something constructive with his life and joined a church-based group called Walk By Faith Mission.

Still, Reese knows he must walk a fine line to avoid alienating rival gang members at his school. "I am cool with both sides, so no one bothers me," he says.

Across town, junior Doug Thurman at Sullivan High doesn't face the same ever-present level of simmering tension as Reese, since Sullivan has one of the lower rates

Violence rose last year in a third of schools, a *Catalyst Chicago* analysis finds. Students and others say the district needs strategies to head off conflict, not more metal detectors and security guards.

SCOPING OUT SAFE SCHOOLS

The National School Safety Center gives these recommendations to help parents determine whether their child's school is safe:

- Ask children if there are any areas at the school that they avoid.
- Observe how well the school controls the grounds around the building.
- Check to see if the school has a policy for screening visitors.
- Ask about the school's supervision plan for before and after school.
- Ask to see school crime data. In Chicago, parents can visit www.chicagocrime.org to find police reports of incidents by address.
- Talk to police about their relationship with the school administration.
- Observe whether the school is orderly and clean.

For more information, go to www.schoolsafety.us

of violence in the district. But Thurman says trouble nevertheless brews on an ongoing basis, especially if gangs are feuding, and he does everything he can to avoid run-ins, staying away from the fray and never leaving school

alone. Many students at various schools say walking home or to the bus stop is the most dangerous part of their day.

Last year, Thurman says the school climate improved when math teachers took it upon themselves to stand in

BY THE NUMBERS, 2006-07

- CPS spent **\$54.4 million** on school security.
- Citywide, high schools had **5.5** violent incidents per **100** students, while elementary schools had **2.5** violent incidents per **100** students.

MOST VIOLENT HIGH SCHOOL:

- Manley, East Garfield Park—**24** incidents per **100** students

MOST VIOLENT ELEMENTARY:

- Medill, Near West Side—**40** incidents per **100** students

the halls after the bell rang and sweep them of students.

"It is good that the violence has decreased," says Thurman, a student in the honors medical program at Sullivan.

Other students report a host of different ways they



JOE GALLO

Leonard Kenebrew, principal of Clemente High, watches as students put their bags through the metal detectors that guard the front entrance of the school. The West Town school has one of the highest rates of violence in the district.

avoid trouble. Some teens leave school early when rumors surface of an impending after-school brawl; some keep to themselves; others simply dread going to school.

While Chicago's media spotlight has focused on the killings of students outside schools, less attention has been focused on what happens inside schools. On one hand, the climate at many schools is improving: School violence fell 10 percent last year across the city.

"That's a double-digit decline," CEO Arne Duncan says. "It is going in the direction we want it to be."

But *Catalyst Chicago's* analysis of reports of violence inside schools last year found that, despite the overall decline, almost a third of schools—153 of 585—have experienced a 20 percent increase or more in the

rate of serious fights, gang activity and other violence. Most are high schools, but some elementary schools are also experiencing problems. (See story on page 15.) As a result, many students must walk a fine line to avoid potential clashes, teachers are reluctant to work in rougher schools and education is jeopardized by the distractions of conflict and tension.

"We can get to nothing else until we get to safety," says Julian High Principal Therese Johnson.

Comparing school violence in Chicago to other large districts is virtually impossible because districts and states simply don't report violent incidents accurately, says Ronald Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center.

"Our view is that what gets

reported is just the tip of the iceberg," he says, echoing others who say lax reporting is a problem. The federal No Child Left Behind Act is supposed to provide more transparency regarding school safety, but so far, has fallen short of that goal in Illinois. (See stories on pages 12, 14.)

Even one instance of fighting or other violence can shade the way students perceive a school, Stephens adds. "A single incident of bullying is too many. A single homicide is one too many."

SAFETY ON THE SURFACE?

School quality is intricately intertwined with the ability to maintain a calm climate that is conducive to learning, Duncan emphasizes. To that end, CPS has focused on providing schools with security personnel and equipment, to the

tune of about \$54 million each year. Parents want to see that investment, says Andres Durbak, director of the Office of Safety and Security.

In addition, some of the toughest schools now have dynamic principals charged with improving the climate, Duncan adds. "They will be visible and will work hard to make sure that students are engaged and feel as though the staff cares about them."

But students, education advocates and parents worry that the district is creating a superficial level of safety by putting cameras in the hallways, police officers at the doors and kicking out troublemakers. They have pushed the district to embrace deeper reforms that help young people deal with their anger, see the error of their ways and repair the hurt caused by vio-



JOE GALLO

Police cars are as common as school buses outside of some Chicago public schools. CEO Arne Duncan points out, however, that school violence fell by 10 percent last year across the city.

lence. The district is beginning to take steps in that direction.

“They have to look at what ticks kids off and what aggravates them,” says Nelida Torres, a parent member of POWER-PAC, an advocacy group brought together by the grassroots group Community Organizing and Family Issues. “They have to look inside the students, instead of just at the surface.”

Schools in tough neighborhoods need to be especially cognizant of securing the building and grounds and having a system to check visitors’ IDs, says Stephens. But districts also need to provide information for principals and school staff about the best ways to deal with specific problem behaviors, and should consider instituting alternatives such as peer juries and student panels to provide recommendations about school safety.

Rick Perrotte, coordinator of safety and security for the Chicago Teachers Union, says CPS has been aggressive about addressing school violence but is sometimes stymied by principals who don’t report violations of the Student Code of Conduct (as district policy stipulates). Lack of resources is also a problem, he says.

“If they don’t call, it builds a climate of danger,” Perrotte says. “Some schools are out of control, but because the principal is not reporting it, it looks like there are no problems.”

‘LIKE PRISON’

Charlotta Stewart, a senior at Harlan High in Roseland, says that safety problems made her want to avoid school, although a new, get-tough principal has made the school less hectic. But Stewart isn’t so sure the changes are positive.

“It is like prison,” Stewart says, a common refrain heard from teenagers who complain

Threats to school staff lead to police reports

that metal detectors, security officers, police and other signs of tight security may make schools safer, but also less welcoming.

At Harlan, the first thing students see when they arrive in the morning is one or more police cars parked outside. Inside, they see signs admonishing them not to bring guns through the door. Sometimes, gruff security guards holler at them to keep moving as they try to get through the metal detector before their class starts; if it beeps, they have to stop. Once in the hallway, cameras keep a constant watch on students.

"Take off your shoes, take off your belt, remove your cell phone," says Stewart, explaining what students hear as they enter.

But while security staff look for small infractions, bigger ones can be brewing, some students point out. Kentrell Petties, a senior at Julian High who was injured last May in the Blair Holt shooting that made front-page headlines, says administrators didn't notice that a group of boys were causing trouble at the school before the incident.

"All the students knew there was trouble," Petties says, explaining that he feels administrators were too busy making sure students weren't wearing hoodies or carrying cell phones to notice and confront the problem.

Julian's Principal Johnson, however, says students don't always see the big picture. Checking for hooded sweatshirts and cell phones might not seem to be a big deal to a student—until a knife is hidden in a hood or a cell phone is used to set up an assault of a student at the end of the school day.

"The one or two students often ruin it for everyone," Johnson says.

Outside Mather High, a security guard reports that a student handed a knife to a friend during a gang disturbance. At Julian High, some teenagers who were furious at a school policy banning hooded sweatshirts get into an argument with security guards, leading to one student's arrest for assault. At Medill Elementary, a student pulls out a black gun and points it at a classmate. Officials later learn the weapon was a BB gun.

These are just a sample of the incidents of school violence reported to police during October 2006. Chicago Public Schools officials say October is the most violent month of the school year, and the numbers bear that out: Police filed 678 reports about incidents in schools or on school grounds. *Catalyst Chicago* obtained 50 of those reports.

Except for one sexual assault, the most serious incidents were cases of aggravated assault or battery, in which students verbally threatened or physically struck teachers, security guards or other school staff.

Rick Perrotte, coordinator of safety and security for the Chicago Teachers Union, points out that teachers and other staff are protected employees, just like police officers and firemen, and the teachers' contract requires schools to call police any time a teacher is hit or even threatened.

In one such case at Englewood's John Hope College Prep, a young man who was told not to eat potato chips in the lunch line hollered at the lunchroom worker who scolded him, saying, "I am going to kick you in the face." In other cases, teachers were slapped, struck by a thrown pencil, and hit and scratched after asking a student to leave the bathroom.

Perrotte and CTU spokeswoman Rosemaria Genova say there's good reason to get the police involved, even if the incident seems relatively insignificant: A student's problem behavior often gets worse as time goes on.

"First, it is a pencil, but then next time it is a garbage can, then next time it is a chair," Genova says.

Perrotte adds that bringing in police gives teachers extra documentation of problems if principals do not report incidents to central office.

'HE SAID, SHE SAID'

Most commonly, the reports obtained by *Catalyst* document simple assault and battery cases stemming from fights between students. Principals say that few of these fights are gang-related brawls; usually, the incidents are "he-said/she-said" affairs that get out of hand. A case in point was a scuffle at Chicago Vocational, in which two brothers got into a fight with a few girls, one of whom picked up a chair

Meanwhile, Stewart and other students brought together by the Mikva Challenge, a non-profit that encourages

civic engagement by teens, recommended in a report released just this August that schools do a better job of getting students

to understand and buy-in to school rules. They also suggested that principals develop so-called 'peace councils,' where

WHEN POLICE INTERVENE

A review of police records from October 2006 shows most of the reports from schools or on their grounds are simple assaults and batteries, usually involving students fighting or threatening each other. Cases in which a student physically attacked or verbally threatened a teacher, security guard or other staff are usually classified as aggravated assault or aggravated battery.

TYPE OF INCIDENT	# REPORTED
Assault and battery	424
Robbery, theft, burglary	119
Criminal trespass, damage, mob action	56
Weapons violations	24
Other	55
TOTAL	678

Source: *Catalyst* analysis of police reports from www.chicagocrime.org

and struck one of the young men in the back.

Interim Chicago Police Superintendent Dana Starks notes that just because a police report is made doesn't mean an incident is severe. Officers respond to what the victim and the school staff want, and usually a report is filed in response to a request.

Andres Durbak, chief of the CPS Office of Safety and Security, says that during his tenure he has worked hard to make sure that the police department and schools work collaboratively. However, he notes that police and school administrators have somewhat different perspectives on incidents. Police try to determine if there is evidence of a crime and often respond to victims' needs, while schools are trying to determine whether students violated the Code of Conduct.

But even minor incident reports should be taken seriously if they show a student is trending toward violence, notes a September report by the National Association of Attorneys General. The report was the result of work by a school and campus violence task-force of 27 attorneys general, including Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan.

The report notes that before many incidents of major violence, such as last year's shootings at Virginia Tech, the perpetrator was involved in minor incidents. But because information wasn't shared, authorities didn't notice the students' violent tendencies until it was too late.

Sarah Karp



JOE GALLO

CPS spends \$54.4 million on school security annually. Metal detectors, police, security guards and cameras in the hallways are among the tools the district uses to stem the tide of school violence.

staff, students and administrators come together to talk about their problems.

The Mikva group criticized zero-tolerance policies that principals use to kick out troublemakers. Stewart and Thurman say that as their schools moved on the road to getting better, a lot of students were forced to leave.

A *Catalyst Chicago* analysis of expulsion data shows that the number of expulsion hearings fell 30 percent last year, and the number of students actually expelled was cut in half. (See related story on page 14.) But some question whether the decline is the result of principals pushing problem students out and avoiding the lengthy expulsion process.

Stewart believes that's the case at Harlan, and notes that while the inside of the school may be safer, the streets are not. Once students leave school, they have to deal with out-of-school teenagers who cause trouble.

"They are all on 95th Street waiting for us," says Stewart. "Those [kids] have nothing to do all day than wait for us."

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Members of the parent group POWER-PAC and the Mikva student group argue for CPS to do more to teach young people how to resolve conflict without fights.

POWER-PAC took a trip to Minneapolis last year to visit schools that were using restorative justice, a concept that focuses on counseling wrongdoers and meting out punishment that fits the infraction. Peer juries are one example.

Lynn Morton, a parent and member of the group, says she was blown away. They walked into a school without metal detectors or a security desk, yet it was calm.

Safety without security guards

Some parents and educators worry that too many security measures create a scary, prison-like environment in schools. But others argue that such tactics do keep students from bringing weapons inside and let them know that wrongdoing will not be tolerated.

School officials, activists, students and parents do have other ideas about how to make schools safer without more metal detectors and security guards. Here's a sampling:

- **Adopt a restorative justice approach to discipline.** Currently used by Cook County's juvenile justice system, this approach emphasizes showing misbehaving students the hurt that they've caused and developing a punishment that has them repair the damage; for instance, by returning or paying for stolen items. Peer juries, currently used in 43 schools, are an example of restorative justice. Also, some schools use 'peace circles,' where students talk out their conflict. CPS policy encourages schools to use restorative justice for non-violent offences.
- **Hire more counselors, social workers and psychologists.** Principals, students and administrators all agree that schools need more staff to work with angry, troubled students. But in a district as large as Chicago's, providing more such staff on a system-wide level is costly.
- **Offer more activities for student engagement during and after school.** Many argue that students who love to come to school and are excited by what they do there won't cause trouble. Extracurricular activities—whether band or football, drama or chess—keep students engaged. An added bonus: these programs also keep children busy after school, during the hours when many of them are unsupervised and get in trouble. The district recently announced plans to spend an additional \$14 million on these programs.
- **Reward positive behavior and offer character education.** Several schools in Chicago have grants for programs to reward good behavior. Sometimes students or classes earn points or tickets that they can use for prizes, such as a pizza lunch. Some schools also have teachers do lessons on how to be respectful and responsible toward others.

"Kids didn't bum rush the halls, kids weren't disrespectful, the atmosphere was serene," she says.

POWER-PAC and other groups successfully pushed CPS to adopt a discipline policy that promotes the use of restorative justice. Hand in hand with that, they also wanted—and won—a move away from zero-tolerance. Now CPS policy encourages schools to use restorative justice practices to deal with non-violent offences.

Morton started a Peace Center at her son's elementary school. Instead of serving suspensions out of school, students serve them at the Peace Center, where Morton helps supervise and counsel children on how to change their ways.

Other schools, such as Dyett High in Washington Park, which had an outbreak of fighting among girls last year, use "circles" in which the students involved come together and talk out problems.

Christine Agaiby, restorative justice manager at Alternatives Inc., a non-profit that trains students and teachers on using restorative justice principles and peer juries, says such strategies don't take much money (especially compared to what the district spends on discipline) but do require commitment.

"It works if the principal and teachers at the school believe in it," Agaiby says. "It does not work if the adults don't trust it, if they just think it is some hippie crap."

CONNECTING KIDS TO SCHOOL

Principals say making schools safer requires a balance between programs that engage students in positive behavior and equipment and security staff that keep troublemakers out.

Clemente Principal Leonard

Kenebrew, who has worked at Simeon and South Shore, believes it's important to have adequate equipment and security personnel. But he stresses that getting students invested in school is also crucial. "This is for you," Kenebrew says he tells students.

With that in mind, Kenebrew held a pep rally for the football team last year, the first in many years at the school. The event was important to bring the school together, he says, adding that he even performed a little dance to show his excitement. A school newspaper and school summits on various topics are also in the works.

Jerryelyn Jones, former

principal at Curie and now Area 24 instructional officer, says two things made her school safer: hiring off-duty police officers in place of security guards and instituting a strict discipline policy.

But Jones says she made sure the school offered plenty of after-school activities and insisted that all students have a major, such as drama or International Baccalaureate, to keep them more invested in school.

"When I first came here, there were students with majors and then those in the regular program," Jones says. "The students in the regular program often felt left out and caused problems. Though the

school is big, with majors, all kids feel connected."

Mikva students point out that schools need more counselors, social workers and psychologists who can get to the root of the problems. The district provides just one counselor for every 350 students, a ratio that is far higher than what is recommended by experts. Psychologists and social workers spend most of their time handling issues that arise with special education students.

Curie High junior Dmitri Westbrook passionately made the case for increasing counseling staff during a presentation by Mikva students to high school principals a week before school started.

"I don't have an interactive relationship with my counselor," Westbrook said.

Lack of funding keeps the district from reducing the caseloads of counselors, psychologists and social workers, Duncan says. But the district is working to provide more after-school and extracurricular programs, and Duncan announced at a press conference in mid-September that the district had secured \$14 million in grants to pay for them.

Not only do these activities keep students excited about school, they also keep them from hanging out in the afternoon on the streets, where danger might lurk, Duncan says.

The need for the school district to do something was driven home at a recent press conference by Ron Holt, the father of Blair Holt. "Schools don't make these problems. Students come to school with these problems," he said. "But if we don't deal with them, they become our worst nightmare."

Contact Sarah Karp at (312) 673-3882 or e-mail karp@catalyst-chicago.org.

Parents want the real story

Under CPS policy, violent incidents should be reported to central office. A *Catalyst Chicago* analysis finds that's not always the case.

By Sarah Karp

On numerous occasions last school year, Sonya Jacobs' daughter Ashley Charles called from Crane High to tell her mother she'd heard rumors of an impending fight and feared for her safety.

Jacobs, whose son was murdered four years ago, was not about to risk having her daughter caught in the middle of a brawl. So every time she got a call, Jacobs dropped everything to pick Ashley up, sign her out of class and hustle her back to the safety of their second-floor apartment.

The scenario happened so many times that Ashley failed her final-period class and Jacobs became increasingly nervous about the school. While Jacobs' daughter could have been exaggerating, playing on her mother's heightened sensitivity to get out of school early, Jacobs had no easy way to get solid information about the level of violence at Crane.

"I want to get her out of there," Jacobs says. "I don't feel comfortable with her there."

Jacobs says she feels the school's staff have been mostly dismissive of her concerns.

Solid information about violent incidents, police involvement and discipline would help parents navigate some of these issues, says Nelida Torres of POWER-PAC, a parent advocacy group brought together by the non-profit Community Organizing and Family Issues.

"It would be key for parents to be able to figure out if learning is happening or if principals and teachers are spending all their time doing this other stuff," she says.

For Jacobs and other parents, finding out whether their child's school is a safe haven can be difficult. CPS has yet to make school-level data on serious offenses, including incidents that sparked calls to the Chicago Police Department, widely available to parents and the public.

GOING UNREPORTED

At 14 high schools, calls to police about assaults and other violence have gone unreported to central office, despite a CPS policy that requires schools to report all violations of the Student Code of Conduct. For a list of the 14 schools, go to www.catalyst-chicago.org.

And the district has no way of verifying whether principals report violations of the Student Code of Conduct to the Office of Safety and Security, as they are supposed to do.

Indeed, Jacobs' story is evidence of this two-fold problem. Her worries about security at Crane are backed up by police reports, but the reports submitted to CPS by the school paint a rosier picture.

Last school year, police were called in 113 times to respond to violent incidents at Crane, yet administrators reported only 47 incidents to CPS, according to a *Catalyst Chicago* analysis of police reports and CPS incident reports for the 2006-07 school year.

Crane is not the only school with lax reporting: At 13 other high schools, police reports about violent incidents outnumbered school-generated reports made to CPS.

CEO Arne Duncan says he knows the district has had problems with underreporting of violence in the past, but adds that he feels schools have gotten better in recent years.

Ultimately, Duncan says, "I want the truth, so we can deal with the situation."

A NEIGHBORHOOD PROBLEM?

At Crane, police reports show that in all but three of the 39 weeks that school was in session, at least one assault, battery or theft took place inside the building or on the grounds of the West Side school. During 14 of those weeks, three or more incidents took place—virtually

one every school day.

Crane's Principal Richard Smith did not return phone calls. David Penn, the dean of students, declined to address the issue of what is reported to the central administration. However, Penn maintains the school has been calm for a while, though the surrounding neighborhood can be treacherous.

Penn notes that the school serves young people who may be members of four different gangs. At the end of the school day, the school's entire security force empties out of the building and surrounds it.

"I would say that 85 percent of the problems outside the school are not caused by Crane students," he says.

Penn says school administrators have worked hard in recent years to get students involved in after-school programs, and to send a message that bad behavior won't be tolerated.

Across town at Corliss High School in Pullman, the situation is similar to that at Crane. Corliss administrators reported only 41 incidents to CPS, but police reports show officers responded to 115 calls about violence inside or on the school's grounds.

Corliss Principal Anthony Spivey says he has no idea what the police write reports about, but that he follows CPS policy to "the greatest extent."

Spivey says he does not know how students and teachers feel about the safety environment at his far South Side school. "We hope to provide a safe environment..." he says. "I will tell you this—we don't have children shot or stabbed. The question is, is the city a safe place?"

SCHOOLS WORK WITH POLICE

Andres Durbak, director of the Office of Safety and Security, says that since there is a broader range of incidents that should be reported to CPS than to police, school reports should outnumber those reported to police.

However, presented with *Catalyst's* data to the contrary, Durbak says he could see some situations in which a police officer would make a report and the school would not feel compelled to call it in.



JOHN BOOZ

Andres Durbak, chief of CPS' Office of Safety and Security, (left) talks with a security guard at a citywide training. Durbak says training should help school staff contain incidents so police won't need to be called. In most cases, schools should report more incidents to the district than police.

Principals are required to report to Safety and Security every time a student violates the Student Code of Conduct. Durbak focuses on the violations in categories 4, 5 and 6, which are the more serious offenses, such as gang activity and fights in which someone is injured.

Theophilus Tines, the dean of boys at Harlan High School, notes that he works in concert with police. At Harlan, school incident reports surpassed police reports.

"I call the police in if I think they should be involved," he says. "They don't do much in the building without me knowing."

Durbak says he monitors the school reports to see which schools are having significant problems in order to provide help if needed. So if schools aren't reporting incidents accurately, they risk not getting extra support.

"We try not to make it punitive," Durbak says.

SURPRISE VISITS

Still, Chicago Teachers Union officials, as well as a group of student leaders, say they believe that principals in many schools under-report.

Assaults and batteries in schools happen more frequently than reported, according to CTU officials. What gets reported depends on the principal's philosophy, they say.

"Some principals are aggressive," says Rick Perrotte, who works on safety issues for the CTU. "Others don't follow through."

Prosser High senior De'Rell Bonner, who served as the student representative on the School Board last year, recalls that he saw the reports of violent incidents in schools. Often, the summaries didn't jibe with what he heard from students, especially students at Crane, which his cousin attended.

Bonner worked this past summer with a group of students at the Mikva Challenge, a non-profit organization that promotes civic engagement among young people, to come up with recommendations for how to make schools healthier and safer.

Spurred by what they see as a disconnect between what principals report to administrators and the truth of what's going on, the students suggested that district leaders make surprise visits to schools.

When visits are planned, suddenly

there's toilet paper in the bathrooms and the halls are swept of students during class time—two things that don't happen when a visit isn't in the works, Bonner says. "We think people like Arne Duncan would benefit from seeing the schools on regular days."

CPS has invited the students to make presentations to principals and security guards and have expressed interest in some of the students' ideas. But administrators have not committed to unannounced visits at schools, says Hillary Reser of the Mikva Challenge.

Meanwhile, Jacobs is still not convinced that Crane is a secure place for her daughter. During the first week of school, she tried unsuccessfully to register her in a different school. But when nothing came through, she wound up back at Crane.

On Monday, Sept. 10, she walked her daughter to Crane. Once again, she saw the police cars, which she says sit at all four corners of the block, all the time. Rather than ease her concerns, she says the squad cars add to her sense that Crane is dangerous.

"I have to make do with what I have," she says. ■

State sets meaningless standard

Using expulsion data to determine whether Illinois schools are dangerous gives only a partial picture of problems in schools

By Sarah Karp

Under the Illinois criteria for designating a school as dangerous under No Child Left Behind, not one CPS building has ever received the label, even though numerous campuses have problems with violence year after year.

In fact, like most states, Illinois has never designated any school as dangerous under NCLB, which requires states to provide information on which schools have safety problems so parents can choose whether to send their children there. But rather than use incident reports—as the U.S. Department of Education suggests—Illinois education officials use expulsion data. The department criticized the use of such indirect criteria in a recent report.

Expulsions tell parents and the public only a small part of the story about what is going on in schools, according to a *Catalyst Chicago* analysis of CPS expulsion and enrollment data for the last three school years.

Take, for example, Manley High School in East Garfield Park. Andres Durbak, director of the CPS Office of Safety and Security, pinpoints Manley as a school that struggles with safety. Indeed, for each of the past five years, Manley has had an average of 153 violent incidents—about 18 incidents per 100 students, far above the district average of 5.5 incidents.

But based on expulsion data, Manley didn't come close to earning the label as an unsafe school. To be classified as unsafe under state guidelines, a school must expel at least 3 percent of its students for violent or weapons offenses for two consecutive years.

In 2005 and 2006, almost 3 percent of Manley's students were sent to expulsion hearings, but less than 1 percent were actually expelled. Hearings do not automatically lead to expulsion. In some cases, the hearing officer decides there's not

enough evidence to warrant kicking a student out; in other cases, the student is sent to Project SMART, a nine-week alternative program that teaches decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Since 2004, five Chicago schools expelled at least 3 percent of their students, but none did it for two consecutive years, according to *Catalyst's* analysis.

TOO MANY DEFINITIONS?

Illinois is not alone in having ineffective criteria. Last year, only 46 schools from five states were labeled dangerous under NCLB, a figure that doesn't jibe with information on crimes and surveys of conditions at schools, according to an August report from the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Education. That report also warns against using disciplinary measures, such as expulsions or long-term suspensions, because schools often just send problem students to alternative programs.

Ronald Gidwitz, who was chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education in 2002, says he doesn't remember much discussion about the NCLB criteria and maintains that parents know when schools are having problems.

"They know because their children tell them," he says.

A committee that developed the criteria thought using expulsions was fairer than using incident reports, says Myron Mason, who chaired the committee and now is the state board's interim division administrator for federal grants and programs.

Committee members reasoned that principals wouldn't report accurately if they knew the numbers were going to be public. In contrast, state policy requires expulsions be approved by a superintendent, and a violence-related expulsion must be accompanied by a police report.

"They were afraid that there were too many definitions of an 'incident,'" Mason says.

ALMOST DANGEROUS

These schools expelled 3 percent of students in one of the last three school years, but fell short of the state's NCLB criteria for being designated as dangerous, which requires 3 percent expulsion rates for two consecutive years.

- BEST High at Bowen campus
- Global Visions at Bowen campus
- Tilden Achievement Academy
- School of Technology at South Shore
- Austin High (now closed)

Nationally, education advocates are split on whether more should be done with NCLB's unsafe school provision.

Jack Jennings, the executive director of the Washington D.C.-based Center on Education Policy, says threats and bullying are more of a problem than violent incidents in most schools. Instead of focusing on a label, schools should have anti-bullying policies and programs, he says.

Mary Fulton, a policy analyst for the Education Commission of the States, notes that few advocacy organizations have paid much attention to the provision. That might be due to the concern that academically struggling schools are more likely to be designated as dangerous.

"That would be a double whammy," she says.

Still, Fulton believes the criteria should be tightened up when NCLB is reauthorized so parents will know when a school is having problems. And rather than being punished, the schools should be given help.

"It really can't be dismissed when a school is a tough place to be and a tough place to learn," Fulton says.

In New York, the 27 schools identified as persistently dangerous each got \$100,000 to improve school safety, as well as extra support.

According to the inspector general's report, schools designated as dangerous or put on state watch lists "tend to show dramatic decreases in violent incidents the following year." ■

Teaching alternatives to fighting

By Kimberley Driscoll
and Sarah Karp

Yeah, yeah, I am a Four, I'm a Mafia." When Edward Ferguson, an 8th-grader at Ella Flagg Young Elementary in Austin, hears talk like this, he knows what to expect next. Kids are "representing" their gangs as they pass in the hallways, and the back-and-forth is often the prelude to a fight, either in the hall or outside after school.

"It scares me," says Ferguson, who admits that he has felt pressured to join a gang. "People have gotten beat and seriously hurt."

Ferguson says he has found a way to cope by joining a church-based group called Walk By Faith Mission, where the pastor fortifies him with the inner strength to try to be different. But his story illustrates how problems with serious fights and gang activity inside schools disrupt education for elementary students, as well as their older counterparts in high schools.

Principals of elementary schools with high rates of violence say that helping young children learn to resolve conflict without fighting is key to curbing the problem.

In general, elementary schools reported far fewer violent incidents last year, such as serious fights and gang activity, than high schools. At 183 elementary schools, administrators reported fewer than five incidents.

But at 62 elementary schools—or about 15 percent—the incidence of violence was more than six for every 100 students last year, higher than the district's average. At 25 elementary schools, the rate was in the double-digits.

One such school is Penn in North Lawndale, where the rate was 13 violent incidents per 100 students. Sherryl Moore-Ollie, the school's new principal, says that it's important to know the background of the children to understand why fights and other incidents occur. Many of Penn's students are in foster care or living with relatives because their parents are on drugs or in prison. Almost all



JOHN BOOZ

Walk By Faith Mission Pastor Rosetta Dotson gets kids involved in learning games instead of learning to fight. She recruits kids from her West Side neighborhood to join the program. Here, she works with Antwone Elax, left, Devon Phillips and Hasan Pinklyn.

the students are poor.

"These kids bring a lot of baggage with them," Moore-Ollie says.

Dorothy Susan Naughton, the principal at Holmes in Englewood, observes that many children "don't get attention at home and they come to school and act out."

Yet neither principal believes the situation is hopeless. Moore-Ollie points out—and the data back her up—that the climate at Penn has improved. Five years ago, the school posted 20 incidents per 100 students.

Moore-Ollie, who was assistant principal before assuming the principalship, says that administrators turned the school's situation around by pushing teachers to deal with minor issues in the classroom and send only those students with more extreme behavior problems to the office.

Once in the office, she and other administrators don't hesitate to call the police if they feel such a call is warranted. "This sends a message to other students—that violence will not be tolerated," Moore-Ollie says.

Gwen Walters, assistant principal at

Wentworth in Englewood, says that her staff is trying to stem violence with a system of incentives called Positive Behavior Support.

Students are rewarded for good behavior, rather than punished for negative behavior. The state supports the program by providing schools with a network of coaches and information about best practices.

Moore-Ollie and other principals say they work to make their elementary school a home-like environment where students can trust teachers.

Naughton, who has been principal at Holmes for three years, says she hired a dean of students who has focused on developing more extracurricular activities, such as junior ROTC and ballroom dancing. Last year, the staff took students on a trip to a nature preserve in the south suburbs to bond with each other and with teachers. Naughton also spearheaded an effort to have students trained as peer mediators to deal with conflicts.

"We want kids to learn how to talk to each other instead of using their fists," Naughton says. ■

Success by the numbers

How one Southwest Side school built a data wall, lost half its teachers and is leading the charge to use data-driven instruction

By John Myers

Like the airplanes landing at nearby Midway Airport, noisy students cram into Hearst Elementary School's auditorium on June 7 to celebrate the end of a different kind of journey, the completion of another school year. Rewards large and small, from MP3 players to \$10 gift certificates, go to those who essentially traveled furthest—the students with the highest marks or biggest gains on standardized tests.

Those scores are the centerpiece of Principal Reginald Miller's "data wall" of classroom-level test scores—good or bad—posted in large, color-coded charts just outside the main office. In Room 215, for example, just four out of 14 students met reading standards on one of last year's benchmark tests.

This mix of incentives and transparency is at the heart of a turnaround effort at Hearst, a low-income, predominantly African-American school that has languished on probation. Miller, now in his second year as principal, is pushing a data-driven system that features new curricula, professional development and a reshuffling of teachers' preparation periods.

Focusing on students' performance data helps teachers be lifelong learners, says Miller. "But there's a risk. You have to be working with people you trust because you're going to be putting out your dirty laundry."

His willingness to post classroom-level data so openly may be unique in Chicago Public Schools, perhaps even detrimental to staff morale, but it ultimately reflects CPS objectives to push schools to

PUSHING THE DATA APPROACH

So far, the Math Benchmark and Learning First reading assessments are the linchpin of CPS' push to use data to improve instruction. Given three times a year, the tests offer schools quick feedback on their students' readiness for the Illinois Standards Achievement Test.

Moving forward, district officials want to make test results more accessible to teachers and principals through its \$60 million IMPACT online information system. CPS also is asking schools and teachers to look closely, in light of the test results, at students' written work.

Here's how CPS plans to develop the IMPACT system this year:

- Distribute Math Benchmark and Learning First data. Schools will continue to get hard copies of reading test results
- Link test data to state learning standards
- Build a tool for teachers to use to upload lesson plans and link the plans to the appropriate learning standards
- Develop a request for proposals for a grade-book component
- Assemble an instruction guide for the Chicago Reading Initiative

For more information about data-driven instruction, go to www.catalyst-chicago.org.

use data to improve instruction.

"That message has surely filtered down, not just to the principals, but the teachers, too," says Rebeca de los Reyes, Area 11 instructional officer, who oversees Hearst.

Hearst also reflects a national trend, one spurred by ever-mounting pressure

to raise performance on standardized tests under No Child Left Behind. The federal law requires 100 percent of students to meet state standards by 2014, and has touched off a race to figure out how best to turn assessment data into better instruction.

Experts add a warning: Don't "teach to the test." Schools need to think of "data" in the broadest sense and continually work at refining their assessment, they say, instead of burning up teaching time on test-taking strategies and drill-and-kill study.

GROWING PAINS

Miller, a former teacher with a background in chemical engineering, turned entrepreneur and dabbled in the restaurant business before returning to education. Because of his scientific and business background, Miller has emphasized the use of test data and a strong incentives system.

But that emphasis strained his relations with teachers. Many bristled at the posting of their students' test results on his data wall, and 18 of the school's 35 teachers have since left Hearst.

"It wasn't pretty," remembers math and science specialist Elizabeth Anthony. She says she tried to convince teachers that the data wall "formed a baseline" to measure their ongoing efforts, not an indictment of past work. Still, teachers left en masse.

Miller has plowed ahead, hiring only new teachers who he says were willing to embrace his data-driven approach.

The results so far seem to support the effort. Test scores went up in every grade level and subject last year, with one caveat: Scores among special education students remained flat and kept the school from meeting annual yearly progress goals.

That's a shortcoming Miller hopes to address with another round of reforms and even greater attention to data.

To get the job done, much of the heavy



JOHN BOOZ

Principal Reginald Miller of Hearst shows off his “data wall”—large charts of student achievement data broken down by classroom. The public posting of data plays a major role in the school’s overhaul and has proved controversial with teachers.

data lifting will fall on Anthony, Hearst’s data specialist.

Last year, with help from her area math coach, Anthony learned to open data files in Microsoft Excel and sort results by classroom and subject. She suspects Miller will ask her to run similar reports using student demographic data this year, especially as the school targets its lagging special education students.

But figuring out how to sort and graph test data is just the beginning of a long process of data mastery, according to Kathryn Parker Boudett, co-editor of “Data Wise” and an expert on data-driven instruction. She and other Harvard researchers spent years working with Boston Public Schools to fine-tune data gathering and the processes that make it useful to teachers.

“Teachers get pretty glassy-eyed if you tell them that 42 percent of their students passed a test,” says Boudett. “The thing that we’ve found most powerful is just looking at the actual student work produced every day.”

Schools that want to be data-driven need to expand their idea of what data is, she adds. By getting teachers to look at a student’s written work, especially if it’s buttressed by test data that can tie the discussion to state standards, the chances for a fruitful conversation multiply, she says.

Assessing student work “is what makes them teachers. It allows them to draw on what they know best,” Boudett says.

Eventually, the Boston schools that Harvard worked with found opportunities for teachers to visit classrooms and watch one another teach. That helped teachers reflect deeply on their own instruction, Boudett says, and it put a second set of eyes into classrooms during group activities.

It takes time to analyze data. But by turning teachers’ attention to state test scores and students’ written work, Boudett says, the faculty meetings that used to dwell on scheduling and discipline problems all but disappeared in Boston. Instead, teachers began having meaningful conversations about what matters most: student learning and using data to understand and improve it.

MORE THAN TEST SCORES

Many of the changes Miller has planned for Hearst this year dovetail with Boudett’s suggestions.

This year, teachers will merge two of their four preparation periods into one 90-minute block that will be used for data-intensive, grade-level meetings. Miller also has focused professional development on the data-analysis process, requiring his teachers to read “Collaborative Analysis of Student Work,”

another book aimed at helping teachers make sense of student assessment data.

Hearst also will look more closely at students’ written work, a priority CPS has set for schools districtwide.

Students “have to be able to write in complete sentences [about] what they did and how they did it. It’s not just a ‘Yes,’ it’s a ‘Yes, because...’” says Anthony.

Looking back, she says last year’s data push was ultimately about Miller setting expectations. Teachers also had to master new math and reading curricula, which have better built-in assessment activities, according to Anthony.

Learning how to parse the Illinois Standards Achievement Test data, as well as the results from the district’s new assessments in math and reading proved beneficial but took time, Anthony notes.

Ideally, she says all students would have been placed into groups based on the questions they missed on the tests. Anthony planned to do pullout tutoring with each student, but there were too many.

In the end, she took a triage approach, tutoring only the students who were most likely to pass the ISAT with a little boost—those students who scored between 40 percent and 50 percent (the ISAT passing score) on the Learning First and Math Benchmark tests. She narrowed her job further by focusing on the standards the students most often missed.

The effort may not measure up to the “Data Wise” ideal, which calls for a more holistic analysis of student work, but it did lay the groundwork for Hearst’s more ambitious plans for this year: using Anthony’s reports to help teachers think about specific learning standards as they review students’ written work.

That has at least one of the new teachers excited. Kisha McNulty, an 8th-grade math teacher, expects the school’s focus on assessment and data analysis will help her be “reflective as a teacher.”

‘DATA WISE’ DISTRICT

De los Reyes says schools in Area 11 have taken slightly different approaches to the same task: Focus on student work, especially written work, and organize teachers into regular grade-level meetings to analyze it. “That’s data,” she says.

Her schools are following the district’s game plan by digging past test data and into writing assessments. CPS has tried to

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Viewpoints

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Koldyke wrong about LAUNCH record

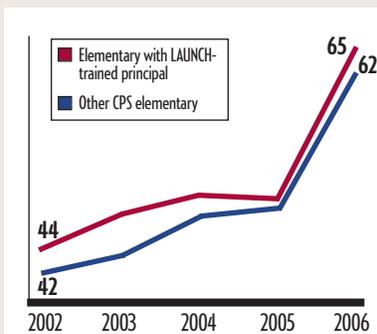
In the September 2007 issue of *Catalyst Chicago*, you published a guest column from Martin “Mike” J. Koldyke, retired founder of Frontenac Co. In his comments, Mr. Koldyke waxed eloquently about the evolution of his involvement with school transformation in Chicago. Many of his points are well-taken. However, there was one statement made by Mr. Koldyke that we found extremely troubling. In his attempt to extol the accomplishments of the Academy for Urban School Leadership, he asserts: “Then there was LAUNCH, the principal training program. It was not very effective and needs to be revitalized or replaced.” Webster’s dictionary states that the word *assert* “implies stating confidently without need for proof or regard for evidence.” In our opinion, that is, unfortunately, exactly what Mr. Koldyke did. And we respectfully and adamantly disagree! Let the facts speak for themselves.

Now in its 10th year of existence, LAUNCH has trained 242 individuals for leadership in Chicago Public Schools—more than any other district-supported program. Factoring in the 44 retirements, there are presently 107 principals, 41 assistant principals, two area instruction officers, 37 central and area office administrators (including the deputy to the chief executive officer and the officer of teacher recruitment) and 11 school-based teacher leaders who can proudly say that they are a part of the LAUNCH Urban Network.

Quantity is not the only area in which the numbers reflect LAUNCH’s excellence. A close examination of the 2007 ISAT data for the Chicago Public Schools will show that factoring out the performance of the LAUNCH-led schools would negatively impact the much-celebrated rate of academic growth for the district. Moreover, as more principal prep programs came on the horizon and inevitable comparisons began to be made among them, it was only logical

HOW LAUNCH SCHOOLS PERFORMED

Percent meeting or exceeding standards on the 3rd-, 6th- and 8th-grade ISAT composite.



Source: Chicago Principals and Administrators Assoc.

that we focus more specifically on our own performance data. For example, in 2002, we began to track the performance of schools led by LAUNCH principals assigned between 1998 and 2002. In comparing the test scores of those schools from 2002 through 2006 to the scores of all other schools, we identified a clear trend reflecting LAUNCH schools outperforming the others. The data also show that LAUNCH-led schools had higher scores than those led by principals trained by the New Leaders for New Schools program.

LAUNCH has always prided itself on training its Fellows to enthusiastically assume the mantle of leadership at any level. Currently, 10 out of the top 35 elementary schools are led by LAUNCH-trained principals, including three in the top 10. Additionally, the No. 1 and No. 2 high schools in the state—Northside College Prep and Payton College Prep—are now led by LAUNCH-trained principals, after national searches and rigorous selection processes were conducted to replace retiring administrators.

Conversely, when CPS needed highly

trained, uniquely qualified, courageous and relentless leaders to undertake the job of “turning around” some of our city’s most challenging school environments (Earle Elementary and Harper High), LAUNCH-trained leaders stepped to the front of the line. They are leaders that CEO Arne Duncan himself describes as “superstars.”

Moreover, the district’s record first-day attendance was bolstered by Bronzeville Scholastic High School, at 99 percent. That school’s principal just happens to be a 1999 graduate of the LAUNCH Program. And one of Chicago’s highest performing charter schools, Alain Locke Charter Academy, boasts a principal who completed the LAUNCH program in 2001.

Mr. Koldyke defines success as being reflected in “people who [will] make a real difference.” Well, LAUNCH-trained leaders ARE making a difference, both qualitatively and quantitatively, at every level across this city. From that perspective, the LAUNCH Program has been and continues to be a success.

Moreover, we agree with Mr. Koldyke that “there must be an initiative that is capable of training 40 or 50 principal candidates each year.” However, it takes resources and real commitment from all stakeholders to support this type of broad vision. Hopefully, his leadership and passion will inspire others to provide the necessary support to make this a reality. Until that happens, LAUNCH will continue to move forward with smaller numbers (16 this year) but with the same commitment to developing the highest quality of compassionate, visionary and relentless leadership to serve the children and the communities of Chicago.

Clarice Jackson-Berry
President, Chicago Principals and Administrators Association

Joan Dameron Crisler
Managing director, LAUNCH

Community schools should be priority

Recently, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Chicago Public Schools CEO Arne Duncan jointly announced an expansion of “community schools” and other coordinated after-school activities as a way of creating safe havens for Chicago’s children. (See story on page 22.) Though community schools do provide safe environments for students beyond the regular school day, they provide so much more for students and their families, enabling kids to succeed at school and beyond, and strengthening communities.

Community schools happen when a school decides to reach out beyond its school walls and engage the local community in assessing student and family

needs, then working together to meet these needs and achieve common goals. One common program strategy of community schools is an extended day, before and after school, one that is enriched with robust academic, arts, athletic, health and other engaging activities. This is not day care at the school. Rather, it is structured, supportive, engaging and enriching time that develops the whole child—academic, mental, physical and social.

Chicago’s community schools have had impressive results in their first few years. They have closed the achievement gap among students, raised standardized test scores, improved overall student behavior and increased student participa-

tion in the classroom. Grades have increased and children are healthier. Parents also have received invaluable training and resources at their children’s schools, through adult-centered programming.

When we combine the strengths of a community, its residents, its families and schools, great things happen! Safe havens are created, and while they are there, children are enriched so they can succeed at school and life. The time is now for the community school initiative to become not only a Chicago priority, but a statewide one as well. All Illinois children deserve this chance.

*Suzanne Armato, executive director
Federation for Community Schools*

CPS has made progress in teacher hiring

Thank you for printing an excerpt of *Catalyst Chicago’s* interview with me in your September issue. You continue to shed valuable light on the issues of teacher quality that are central to The New Teacher Project’s mission.

One aspect of our conversation that did not come across clearly in the printed interview is the extraordinary progress Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has made in recent years on teacher hiring and transfer. Chicago is one of a handful of districts in the country that has eliminated forced teacher placement, which results in dissatisfaction among teachers and principals alike. In Chicago, a teacher

is placed at a school only when the teacher and principal both agree. As a result, Chicago teachers are happier with the transfer process than teachers in any other district TNTP has studied. It is a great credit to the collaboration between CPS and the Chicago Teachers Union, and an example for other districts to follow.

Likewise, Chicago deserves praise for its efforts to improve new teacher hiring. In the last few years, CPS has increased the size of its applicant pool and the rigor of its selection process. In 2006, just 12 percent of candidates received positions. The Chicago Teaching Fellows program (which is run in partnership with TNTP)

is attracting hundreds of career changers to teach high-need subjects like math, science and bilingual education.

School districts are too often criticized for their shortcomings and too rarely praised for taking courageous steps to address the real and complex problems they face. Clearly there remains much work to do in Chicago on issues like teacher evaluation. But as we think about school districts that are earnestly engaged in the hard work of improving teacher quality, it is obvious that CPS is among the leaders.

*Timothy Daly, president
The New Teacher Project*

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EXTRA! EXTRA!

Ren 2010 part of contract talks

Chicago Teachers Union kicks around plan for more charters

By John Myers

Chicago Teachers Union and Chicago Public Schools officials say they spent a significant amount of time negotiating over charter schools and Renaissance 2010 during talks in August.

Yet only one provision—the formation of a new committee to look into new models for performance schools—directly addresses the controversial program.

Behind the scenes, however, the union's opposition to charters appears to be changing.

For one, the School Board's lead negotiator, Charles Rose, says the union agreed to work with CPS to increase charter schools. Plans for a signed pact, however, were dropped.

Meanwhile, CTU President Marilyn Stewart recently sent a letter to Steve Barr, founder of the unionized Green Dot charter schools in California, asking for a chance to visit the group's Los Angeles schools and, as Barr puts it, "kick the tires."

Green Dot is currently working with New York City's teachers union (also an American Federation of Teachers affiliate, as is the CTU) on a bid to open a jointly run charter school in the Big Apple. Some charter insiders speculate a similar move may take place in Chicago.

"That's news to me," Barr says.

In a written response to questions from *Catalyst Chicago*, the union said: "There is an understanding between the Board and CTU to explore ways to place teacher-led, unionized schools at the forefront of educational reform in Chicago. What the CTU supports is a return to the type of unionized charter schools envisioned by the former AFT President Albert Shanker, where teachers have a real voice in education reform."

One state legislator who works closely

with the union says she suspects CTU leaders, pleased with their new contract, will be more open to charter expansion.

"I do believe there will be more discussion," says Rep. Monique Davis (D-Chicago).

Davis says she will not try again to push legislation capping the number of charter campuses. A campus-cap bill she pushed last year died in the House.

At this point, however, little about future charter legislation is clear.

Senate President Emil Jones Jr. (D-Chicago), a leading advocate of charter expansion, says he's not aware of renewed efforts by CPS to increase the number of charters.

Last spring, he spearheaded negotiations with the CTU and its statewide affiliate, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, which resulted in a proposal for 15 new CPS charters. The legislation died amid end-of-session budget negotiations in August, which coincided with union contract talks.

PRESSURE FROM OUTSIDE?

In a written response to questions about Green Dot, the CTU said: "President Stewart is interested in exploring the Green Dot model that is improving schools in California. Our sister Union in New York has written a proposal with Green Dot to open a union charter school in the near future. CTU officials will be visiting Green Dot schools in the coming months to determine if the Green Dot model would be effective in Chicago."

CTU's interest in Green Dot may be a result of pressures emanating from the larger union movement, according to John Ayers, vice president of strategic partnerships for the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and a long-time observer of union-charter politics.

Ayers says the Service Employees

EDUCATION REFORMS

The new Chicago Teachers Union contract, approved Sept. 10, includes these provisions aimed at reforming schools:

- National Board certified teachers get a \$1,750 pay hike.
- A new teacher evaluation process will be implemented, based on the recommendations a joint district-union committee will make in March 2008.
- Elementary schools that now qualify for part-time guidance counselors will, in year three of the contract, receive full-time counselors. Counselors are now guaranteed a private place to meet with students.
- A flat-rate hourly wage for after-school teachers (\$37.50) will save the district money and allow it to expand such services.
- The Fresh Start peer mentoring program was extended through 2012.
- A committee to explore lengthening of the school day and year was established.

International Union, whose members are the working-class parents who often need better schools and want more charters, has pressured local teachers unions to work with charter school advocates. In fact, he suggests that SEIU's recent efforts to start a local "parent union" in Chicago, essentially an organizing tool to boost parents' impact on school policy, could be a first stab at pressuring local decision makers to craft unionized charters, not just in Chicago but also in some of the region's working-class suburbs.

SEIU representatives were not available for comment.

Springfield correspondent Aaron Chambers contributed to this report.

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

Reading curricula narrowed to two

CPS insists on standardizing material because too many schools offer too many options

By Debra Williams

This fall the district has launched an initiative to standardize reading curricula in hopes of curbing the negative impact of mobility on reading instruction and achievement.

The initiative has begun with 150 elementary schools that volunteered to be part of the first cohort. Over the next three years, 150 schools will be added annually, adopting one of the two reading programs the district has selected.

"We are doing this to create some cohesiveness [in teaching]," says Xavier Botana, chief officer for instructional design and assessment. Schools in the federally funded Reading First program under No Child Left Behind are not required to participate because that program has its own curriculum. The district has not yet decided whether schools in the Autonomous Management and Performance Schools program will participate.

The new program takes the Chicago Reading Initiative a step further by prescribing curricula that the district adopted after a pilot program last year. The Reading Initiative focused on teacher and principal training and included a mandate for two hours of daily reading instruction for students but schools were free to choose their own instructional materials. As a result, curricula varied from school to school and sometimes even within schools, so reading instruction lacked continuity from one grade to the next and even across grade levels.

Using too many different curricula makes it hard for teachers to collaborate or receive the same professional development, says one expert.

"Six hundred schools were using 700 different things," says Timothy Shanahan, former director of the Chicago Reading Initiative and now director of the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois-Chicago. "You could find nine different programs in one school because teachers were allowed to choose what they wanted."

Under this new plan, schools will

choose instructional materials for kindergarten through 5th grade from one of two publishers: Harcourt or Scott Foresman (see textbox). CPS chose the curricula based on a survey of teachers following a pilot program last year. Teachers reported these two publishers were the most useful out of the six the district piloted; for instance, by providing ample teacher training or more material for struggling readers.

Schools also will receive assessment materials, online resources, small school libraries, training from CPS literacy coaches and professional development provided through publishers. The curricula will mirror the goals of the Chicago Reading Initiative, which aims to improve reading performance in four areas: word knowledge, comprehension, writing and fluency.

In recent years, the district has launched other efforts that have scaled back schools' power to choose their own curricula, including the Chicago Math and Science Initiative and the High School Transformation Project. Both require participating schools to choose curricula from a limited approved list.

NOT THE WHOLE SOLUTION

CEO Arne Duncan justified the new reading program at the School Board meeting in March by explaining that, given the district's high student mobility, "having a more consistent curriculum is an important strategic initiative."

Shanahan says the move is a good one, but it won't completely solve the learning problems created by student mobility. Students who move from school to school still may have to adapt to a new curriculum.

"It will cut down on the amount of variance, but it won't cut it all the way. You still will have different programs," says Shanahan. "What might help is if schools that are close [to each other], where kids shuffle back and forth, buy the same curriculum. Let the faculties of the schools get together and choose the same one. Then, when a child moves, he will be ready to deal with it."

Before rolling out its own program,

TWO CHOICES FOR READING

Beginning this fall, elementary schools will be required to select one of the following two programs for kindergarten through 5th-grade reading instruction. Both are compatible with the Chicago Reading Initiative, which emphasizes four reading skills: fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and writing.

- **HARCOURT STORYTOWN**—A new pre-kindergarten through 6th-grade program that includes fictional narrative passages, poems, plays and fantasy fiction, as well as non-fiction news articles, biographies and research materials.

- **SCOTT FORESMAN READING STREET**—A pre-kindergarten through 6th-grade curriculum that touts itself as "the first reading program to be aligned with No Child Left Behind and Reading First." It includes fiction, expository articles, biographies, poems and online reading.

Curricula will include textbooks, supplemental resources and training supplied by the publishers. CPS will provide literacy coaches.

CPS looked at school districts in San Diego, Boston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., and New York that implemented similar plans and saw reading performance improve, says Botana.

Two years ago, the district launched a pilot program involving 60 schools and six publishers: Hampton-Brown, Harcourt, Houghton-Mifflin, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, Scott Foresman and RA/McGraw-Hill. Each publisher partnered with 10 schools for two years.

After the pilot, CPS surveyed each principal and 300 teachers to find out which curricula were the most useful. They also conducted focus groups with special education coaches, bilingual lead teachers, reading coaches, librarians and other literacy experts.

Woods Academy in Englewood participated in the pilot and used the Harcourt

Continued on page 22

Plan to expand community schools

By Ed Finkel

Chicago Public Schools will expand its community schools effort over the next year with an infusion of \$7.5 million from CPS and between \$700,000 and \$800,000 from Chase Bank.

Funding for the schools became a question mark this year, when three-year grants from the Campaign for Community Schools ran out. The Campaign primarily raised funds from private sources to seed the community schools, which also receive money from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

The last-minute reprieve will allow CPS, which has become a national leader in the community schools movement, to keep all 110 of its community schools and add 40 more. Meanwhile, a new non-profit called the Federation for Community Schools is taking up the task of lobbying for more public funding on behalf of the effort, which provides extended-day academic and social opportunities through partnerships with community organizations.

The new CPS funding, which was painted as part of a districtwide anti-violence initiative announced in September, came as a relief to those schools that were set to lose their Campaign grants. Some school officials had feared they might have to scale back or close their programs. That won't happen now that \$2 million of CPS' funds will be specifically targeted to those schools, says Havilah Darnieder, program associate with the Federation for Community Schools. The

successor organization to the Campaign, the Federation will focus on lobbying the public sector for ongoing funds.

Erica Harris of CPS' Office of Extended Learning Opportunities insists those schools' programs were never in jeopardy. "We are continuing the public match of \$50,000 for those schools, and we will be picking up the \$50,000 that used to be the private match."

Five of the 40 new schools already have been chosen, Harris says: Cameron in Humboldt Park, Haley in Roseland, Lloyd in Belmont Cragin, O'Toole in West Englewood and Marquette in Chicago Lawn. (These schools have had extended-day programs but were not officially part of the community schools initiative.) The other 35 schools will be chosen by late November and programs are expected to begin next September.

The Federation hopes its lobbying efforts will convince state legislators to provide long-term funding, although state money for community schools was "gutted when everything came to a standstill down in Springfield," says Suzanne Armato, the Federation's executive director.

The group also plans to lobby the Illinois State Board of Education, which has had an unfunded item in its budget since 2002, to put dollars toward CPS and other districts.

"We hope not to be back at this same point because we're hoping to make inroads with policymakers to support community schools for a longer period of time," Armato says. "We'd like to get a more per-

manent solution for the funding problems, so we don't keep running into some schools being in danger of getting cut off."

She adds that data thus far—including ISAT scores, grades and discipline statistics—prove that the comprehensive opportunities offered by community schools result in real benefits to students.

"The case has been made. It will be our job to take that to policymakers and say, 'Here's the facts.' Hopefully, they'll be convinced," Armato says.

Chicago's schools probably will be OK this year and next, Darnieder says, but after 2009, a large number of schools are set to lose federal funds. "That will be the critical time again."

Darnieder notes that the federal government also is debating the issue. The Full Service Community Schools Act, currently in committee in both houses of Congress, would provide \$200 million per year nationwide.

If the feds come through with funding, community schools nationwide will have Chicago to thank for its leadership on the issue, says Marty Blank, staff director with the National Coalition for Community Schools, who says Chicago has the most extensive initiative in the country.

Blank says CPS' effort "represents a really important signal to other urban school districts that deep connections with communities are an important part of any school reform strategy."

Ed Finkel is a Chicago-based writer. E-mail him at editor@catalyst-chicago.org.

LITERACY *Continued from page 21*

series. The new curriculum has more instructional material for the "middle-of-the-road child and the struggling reader," says Principal Roslyn Armour. Harcourt also provided supplemental materials, such as workbooks, assessments and information on how to use the materials with computers, she says.

In addition, Armour adds, Harcourt trainers came in at least once a month to team teach with teachers. Sometimes, the trainers taught the lesson themselves.

Beryl Guy, principal at Hay Community Academy in Austin, chose Scott Foresman because "it had all the necessary components for a solid program."

"Every month, we had professional development," Guy says. "Sometimes we met off-campus at a restaurant and they helped us learn data—how to assess and what do with it. Everyone really liked that."

Ana Martinez-Estka, principal at Avondale Elementary in Avondale, says the cost savings provided by the district's bulk buying power is one of the best things about the

program. The district used its bulk buying power to negotiate a better deal for schools, and is picking up about 20 percent of the cost. Schools end up paying about one-third the usual cost, Botana says. (Schools buy their own textbooks and materials from funds allocated by the district.)

"Any time you buy new books, that's a lot of money," says Martinez-Estka. The school used the savings to buy a new math program.

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DATA *Continued from page 17*

ramp up its professional development to match, says Patrick Baccellieri, deputy officer in the district's new Instructional Design and Assessment office.

Baccellieri, former principal at South Loop Elementary, built a reputation as a savvy data analyst while piloting the school's transformation. Not satisfied with a simple once-over of ISAT data, he spent countless hours delving into the test and the specific state standards the various questions measured. The fruits: learning standards re-worded so South Loop's students could better grasp their meaning and prioritized so the teachers could focus on what Baccellieri said was most important.

Once he had thoroughly digested the ISAT, Baccellieri started breaking down his school's test data in ways that helped him communicate his instructional aims to his teachers. In fact, data became his preferred communication tool. He soon went beyond test scores, even charting out discipline referrals by the hour.

Surprising trends lurked in that data, too, including a huge spike in referrals just after lunch. Though teachers knew discipline issues were greatest at that time, they had never seen the problem's true magnitude—until Baccellieri's charts surfaced. Teachers clamped down and referrals fell dramatically.

Baccellieri, who joined Botana's group this summer, is essentially trying to replicate his South Loop plan across the district. To do it, CPS may get help from Harvard's "Data Wise" researchers.

This summer, Baccellieri and 11 other principals, teachers and administrators from CPS traveled to Brown University for a weeklong data summit sponsored by The Joyce Foundation. With guidance from Boudett and her team, Chicago and representatives from Milwaukee, Cleveland and Providence tried to determine best data strategies and learn from one another's efforts.

Chicago's approach has, to date, been largely about its new assessments, Learning First and Math

Benchmark. Both tests, given three times a year in quick exams (less than an hour), have provided much-needed measures in the year-long gap between ISAT tests. Results are returned to schools within two weeks and have helped schools better measure progress throughout the year.

Tying this benchmark data to a deeper analysis of written work marks the next assessment push, Baccellieri says.

"In the end, what's really critical is to help teachers understand what's important for 8th-graders to know and do, so they can move on and get a 20 or better on the ACT," he says. "And then [we must] go backwards and [ask] what does that mean for 6th grade? What does that mean for 3rd?"

To help get the data in the hands of teachers, the district also is rolling out a curriculum management tool built into its new \$60 million IMPACT (Instructional Management Program and Academic Communication Tool) student information system.

The ultimate goal is to have the IMPACT system tie the Learning First, Math Benchmark and ISAT data into one outlet where schools can see how the test questions connect to state learning standards and easily analyze test results by classroom, demographics or student.

Boudett says the "Data Wise" project has shied away from the technical front, given the plethora of tools available to help schools slice and dice data. She says it's important, however, to make sure teachers get the data quickly and easily, and that any software tools used make it easy to analyze the data by test question, classroom, learning standard and individual student.

For his part, Hearst's principal hopes that despite the early snafus, the IMPACT system will deliver and free up his math and reading specialist from the school's heavy data lifting and analysis.

"To the extent that you can get data back faster, the better you can make decisions to improve your school," says Miller.

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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" Deputy Editor Lorraine Forte hosts this public affairs program at 6:30 a.m. the second Sunday of the month on WNUA-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.

NEW PRINCIPAL PROGRAM **TEACH FOR AMERICA-CHICAGO** and the **HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION** have joined forces to recruit, train and place top Teach for America alumni as principals in some of CPS' lowest-performing schools. The prospective principals will be recruited into a special master's program at Harvard and then enter a one-year residency under the tutelage of a CPS principal. The program is expected to train 10 new principals a year. **THE CHICAGO PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND** contributed \$310,000 toward the program; the **PRITZKER TRAUBERT FAMILY FOUNDATION** donated \$115,000. CPS will pay the salary for fellows during their residency years. **JILLIAN KOTT**, director of alumni support for Teach for America-Chicago, will coordinate the effort.

AT CLARK STREET **ADELINE RAY**, formerly senior program coordinator for the district's Community Schools Initiative, is now senior manager for the initiative, taking over from **TAWA JOGUNOSIMI**, who has been named assistant to the mayor for education. ... **DAVID GILLIGAN** has been named chief officer for the Office of High Schools and High School Programs; **ABIGAYIL JOSEPH**, has been named academic enhancement officer. Both previously served as interims in the posts.

NEW AREA OFFICERS The following administrators have been named to head area instructional offices: **JERRYLYN JONES** (ousted as principal at Curie High in a case that prompted Mayor Daley and top CPS officials to call for more central office control over principal hiring and firing by local school councils), Area 24; **NORMA RODRIGUEZ**, previously a high school curriculum and instructional officer, Area 22; **PAUL ZEITLER**, former principal at Sheridan Elementary, Area 19;

CAROLYN EPPS, former principal at Canter Middle School, Area 13.

PRINCIPAL CONTRACTS The following interim principals have been awarded new principal contracts: **NADINE DILLANADO**, Mayo; **RICHARD GLASS JR.**, Gale; **SHONTAE HIGGINBOTTOM**, Avalon Park; **KURT JONES**, Libby; **DEREK JORDAN**, Powell; **ODETTE LANGER**, Barry; **KENNETH MCNEAL**, Bogan; **RICHARD SMITH**, Crane Tech; **RENEE THOMAS**, Woodson South; **ROSA VALDEZ**, Haugan; **HENRY WEST JR.**, Clark; **KRYSTAL REDEN THOMAS**, School of Technology at South Shore, and **FERDINAND WIPACHIT**, Phoenix Military Academy. The following principals have had their contracts renewed: **VELMA COOKSEY**, Wadsworth, and **ANGELICA HERRERA-VEST**, Ortiz de Dominguez. **PHILLIP PERRY** has been named interim principal at Curie.

TEACHING ENGLISH LEARNERS **MCGRAW-HILL EDUCATION** and **GATHER.COM** are sponsoring a video/essay contest to find the best instructional strategies for English-language learners. Teachers may submit a two-and-a-half-minute video or a 250- to 500-word essay at <http://teach.gather.com> demonstrating an effective teaching method. Deadline for submissions is Oct. 18. Teachers can vote for the finalists on that Web site. Two grand prize winners each will receive \$1,500 to purchase classroom supplies. Two runners-up each will receive \$500. Winners will be announced Nov. 14.

PARENTS' RETREAT The 15th Annual Youth Guidance Parent Leadership Retreat is scheduled for Nov. 9-10 at Oak Brook Hills Marriott Resort. The conference is designed to help parent leaders increase parent participation in schools as a way to improve student learning. Registration is \$325. For

additional information, call (312) 253-4900 or visit www.youth-guidance.org.

BILINGUAL ED COUNCIL **MIGUEL LLANAS**, a parent from Columbia Explorers, is the new president of the Chicago Multilingual Parents Council, which advises the district on the development, implementation and evaluation of its bilingual education programs. Other parent members and their schools are: **ROSA DIAZ**, Greeley; **PAULA SANDOVAL**, Falconer; **ESTELA PORTILLO**, Lowell; **MARLEN PARADELO**, Yates; **SANJUANA ANDRADE**, Cooper; **PATRICIA MARTINEZ**, Carson; **MARIA ALICIA AGUIRRE**, Peck; **SANDY BARBOSA**, Gallistel; **RAMIRO ARANDA**, Reilly; **ROMAN CENTENO**, Zapata; **MARIA PEREZ**, Holden. Community members are: **AMINA TAYLOR**, Areas 1, 2 and 19; **MARIA DEL CARMEN CASMIRO**, Areas 3, 4 and 6; **SAU YUNG LI**, Areas 7, 8, 9 and 21; **MARIA ROSA ALMAZAN** and **JAQUELINE ALDERETE**, Areas 10, 12, 13 and 22; **JUVENAL DUARTE**, Areas 11, 14, 15 and 23. CPS staff members on the council are: **JOSE TORRES**, area instructional officer, Area 14; **ANNA PISULA**, bilingual teacher, Oriole Park; and **DANIEL GUZMAN**, bilingual teacher, Zapata.

CHARTER CHANGES **THE ACADEMY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY** has moved from 4319 W. Washington St. to 2908 W. Washington St., where it is sharing space with Cather Elementary.... **ASPIRA-MIRTA RAMIREZ COMPUTER SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS** has moved from 2435 N. Western Ave. to 1711 N. California Ave. ... **CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL CHARTER-RALPH ELLISON CAMPUS** has moved from 8001 S. Honore St. to 1547 W. 95th St. ... **THE CHOIR ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL OF CHICAGO** has moved from 3737 S. Paulina St. to 3630 S. Wells St.

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