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Case #, if applicable		Accession #			
Collection/Record Group	Clinton Presidential Records	Series/Staff Name	Drye, Elizabeth		
Subgroup/Office of Origin	Domestic Policy Counsel	Subseries			
Folder Title	Sylvan Learning Systems	OA Number	10456	Box Number	1

Description of Item(s) VHS tape: Sylvan Learning Systems - School Support Services Composite Tape 12/95, Segments of Nightline, Chapter 1 Video, Baltimore results '95, Chicago's Truch Feature

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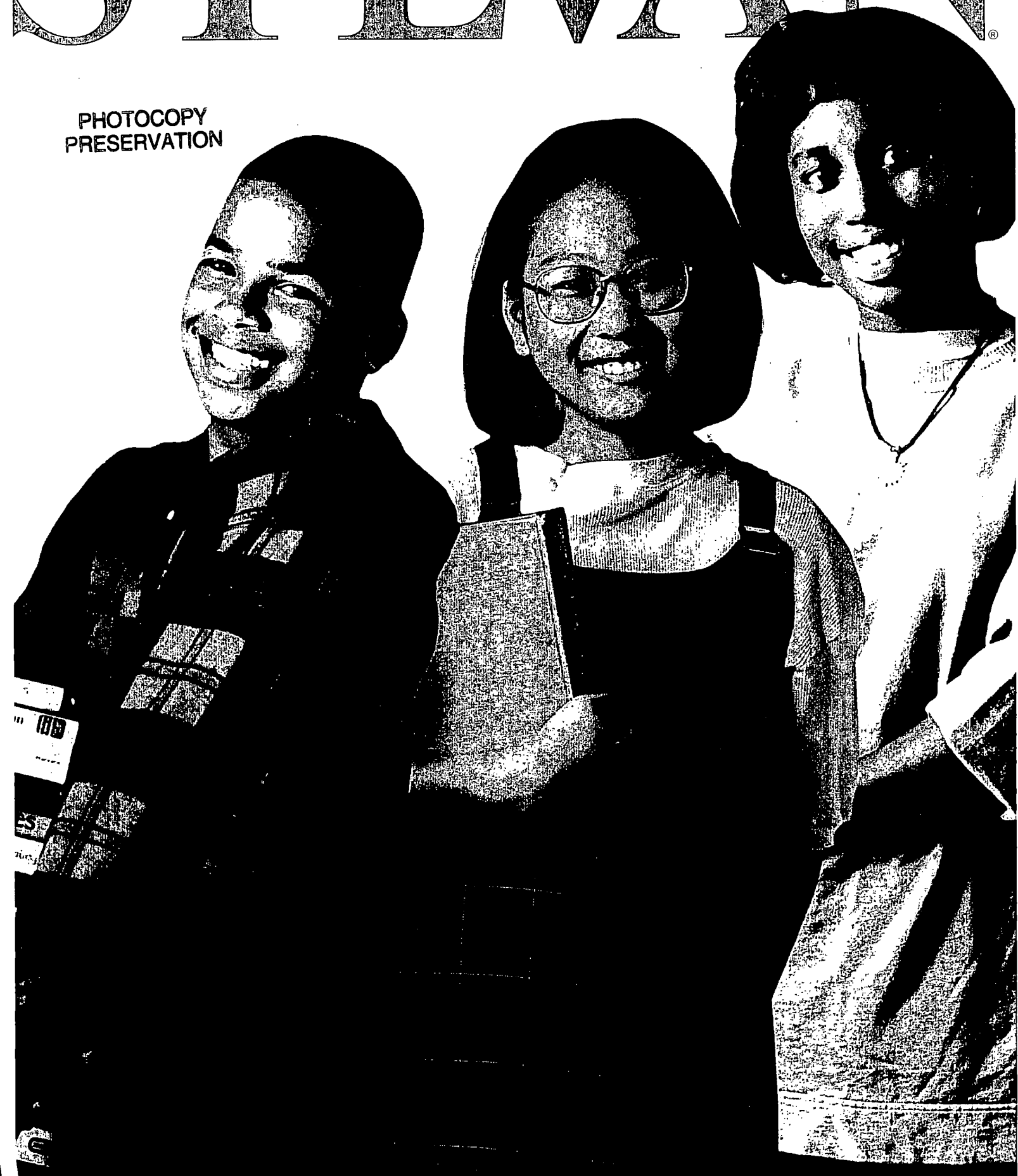
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Date of Tranfer 2/11/2014

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PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



Results
are just the beginning.



SYLVAN
LEARNING
SYSTEMS, INC.

PHOTOCOPY
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Felton "Buddy" Johnson
Vice President
Public Education Services



**SYLVAN
LEARNING
SYSTEMS, INC.**

One Bridge Plaza, Suite 400
Fort Lee, NJ 07024
(201) 592-5054
(201) 592-7720 FAX

9135 Guilford Road
Columbia, Maryland 21046
1-800-627-4276, Ext. 8230

Public School Partners as of Fall 1995

Baltimore City Public Schools:

William Paca Elementary, Pimlico Middle School (2 Centers), Lake Clifton High School (2 Centers), Elmer Henderson Elementary, Greenspring Middle School, Madison Square Elementary, Thurgood Marshall Middle School, Robert Coleman Elementary, Arnett J. Brown, Jr. Middle School, Thomas G. Hayes Elementary, Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School, Harford Heights (3 Centers), Elementary, West Baltimore Middle School, Pimlico Elementary, Lombard Middle School, Gilmore Elementary, Booker T. Washington Middle School, George Kelson Elementary, Garrison Middle School, Guilford Elementary, Diggs-Johnson Middle School, Brehm's Lane Elementary, Calverton Middle School, Langston Hughes Elementary, and Highlandtown Middle School

Baltimore County Public Schools:

Grange Elementary

Dorchester/Talbot County (MD) Public Schools:

Hurlock Elementary, Maple Elementary, Sandy Hill Elementary, Easton Elementary

Washington, DC Public Schools:

Anacostia High School, Ballou High School, Eastern High School, Coolidge High School

Prince Georges County (MD) Public Schools:

CHOICE Middle School Program

St. Paul (MN) Public Schools:

Longfellow Elementary, Hazel Park Middle School, Highland Park Elementary, Battle Creek Middle School, Highwood Hills Elementary

Broward County (FL) Public Schools:

New River Middle School, Lauderdale Lakes Middle School

Pasadena (TX) Public Schools:

Jackson Middle School, Southmore Middle School

Chicago (IL) Public Schools:

Gage Park High School, Sullivan Elementary School, Carver Primary School, Donoghue Elementary School, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, Frederick Von Schiller Elementary School, Sojourner Truth Elementary School, William Harper High School, Fenger Academy for African American Studies, Austin High School

Program Highlights

To realize learning success with every student, Sylvan's reading and math programs incorporate the following aspects of the education process:

Climate

Sylvan improves the learning climate for students by developing learning centers that are **safe, clean, colorful, exciting, and motivating**. Sylvan provides all technology, furniture, materials, and cosmetic improvements in order to develop an appropriate climate.

Individual Diagnostic Assessment

Sylvan assesses each learner **individually**, utilizing a battery of tests, to gain information about students' functional learning levels. Following the assessment process, an individual educational plan is developed for each student. This plan guides the development of the learner to the desired end point.

Direct Individualized Instruction

Sylvan programs utilize a direct-instruction ratio in reading and mathematics of **no more than** three learners to one teacher. Sylvan programs are planned individually for each learner by specially trained Sylvan personnel, and are based upon the **mastery learning approach**. All learners participate in an oral/aural vocabulary program designed to enhance their ability to learn.

Motivation

Sylvan utilizes a motivational program that is designed to improve self-esteem and to create the desire to succeed within each learner. This approach, which brings learners into the planning/implementation cycle, is central to the success of our students.

Technology

Sylvan utilizes computer technology within the program environment. This feature enables learners to have additional time on task related to their instructional programs.

Portfolio Management

Sylvan staff have consistent and ongoing dialogue with each student's classroom teacher in order to maintain continuity of programs for all learners enrolled in the Sylvan Learning Center. This process is enhanced through the use of **individual** portfolios that are designed to monitor the progress of each learner.

Parental Involvement

As part of the Sylvan process, Sylvan schedules parent conferences every six to eight weeks to keep the parents, or significant other adults, involved in the child's learning. In addition, Sylvan provides training for parents to assist them in supporting their child's learning at home.

Summer Sessions

Sylvan recommends and provides optional summer sessions that ensure more time on task opportunities and a continuous learning cycle for the learners involved with the various programs.

Guaranteed Results

Sylvan programs include a guarantee of progress for each individual student. Guarantees are tailored to meet state and local requirements and take into consideration the entry performance levels of students.

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF DOMESTIC POLICY

CAROL H. RASCO
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

To: Carol Eliza

Draft response for POTUS
and forward to CHR by: _____

Draft response for CHR by: _____

Please reply directly to the writer
(copy to CHR) by: _____

Please advise by: _____

Let's discuss: _____

For your information: _____

Reply using form code: _____

File: _____

Send copy to (original to CHR): _____

Schedule ? : ☐ Accept ☐ Pending ☐ Regret

Designee to attend: _____

Remarks: _____

*What happened at mls -
- Strong signal from POTUS
- Interest in program*

Douglas L. Becker
President & Co-CEO



SYLVAN
LEARNING
SYSTEMS, INC.

9135 Guilford
Columbia, Maryland 21046

(410) 880-8703
(410) 880-0023 FAX

APR 16 1996

Seeing Seeley Riley
Fin - pen. Kg
T Doug Becker

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
4-11-96

Chase

Big supporters
Saw Seeley Riley & Fi

So what happened at
meeting - what was
shown as follow up,
push program

BK

Maurice Sykes, deputy superin-
tendent of N.C. schools, said

the work, your grades are constantly

proud of their achievement

The Washington Post

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 1994

Trying to Catch Up On Their Reading

Tutors Find What Students Miss

By DeNeen L. Brown
Washington Post Staff Writer

Not being able to read when you are in high school means that when the teacher calls on you to read aloud, you know you are going to mess up, and you stumble over small words, and your classmates giggle, and you get angry, and you want to fight.

This is what it means for Jerome Brown, 17, a 10th-grader at Anacostia Senior High School.

Not being able to read when you are in high school means you may have been held back so many times that you are still in the 10th grade while your friends are graduating and going to college, and you know you are going to have to catch up just to get a job.

This is what it means for Ronald Hodge, 17, a student at Anacostia.

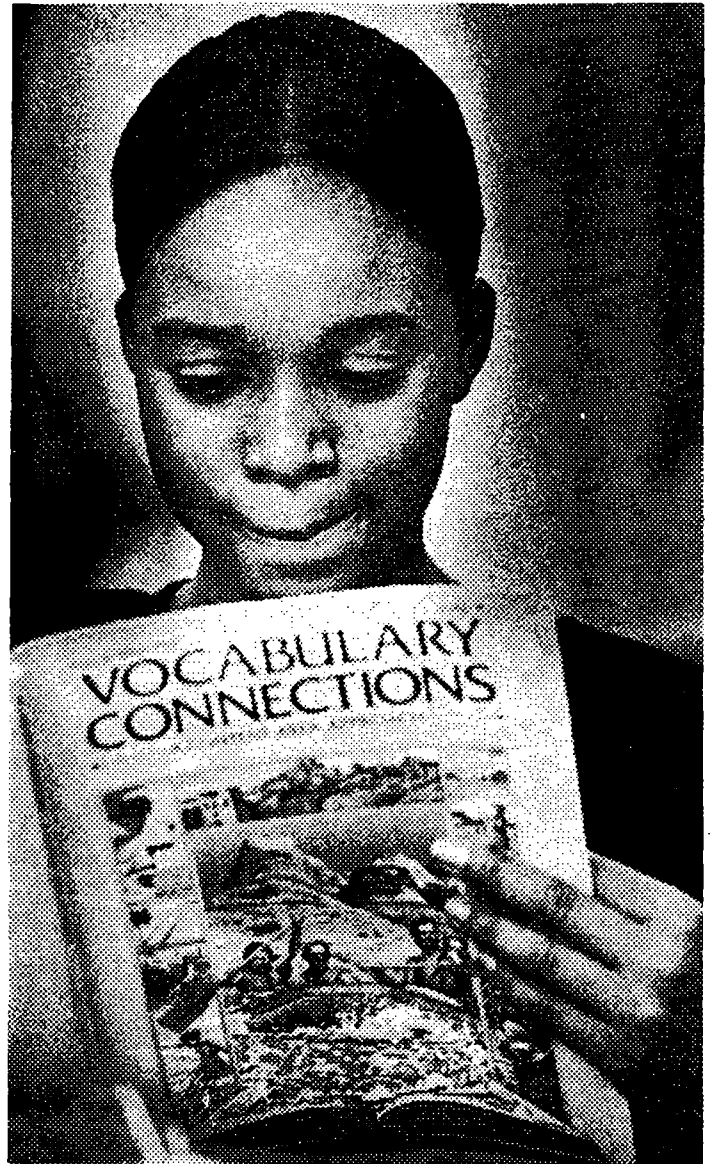
Brown and Hodge are among the hundreds of D.C. students who slipped through the cracks over the years, going to school but never learning how to read competently.

They are among about 600 D.C. students enrolled with a private tutoring firm that the school system hired to help high school students who are reading far below their grade levels.

Superintendent Franklin L. Smith had said that Sylvan Learning Center, which will be paid about \$700,000 for its first year of work for the city, would test students this year and begin tutoring students in the fall. But Sylvan officials say their programs have been running since April at Anacostia, Ballou, Eastern and Coolidge senior high schools and will continue for eight weeks this summer.

The students' progress will not be formally tested until August.

Smith said he hired the 15-year-old company, which has opened learning centers across the country, including in Baltimore schools, because he was concerned that students were graduating from D.C. high schools without knowing how to read well.



BY JUANA ARIAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Nicole Dewitt studies in the Sylvan reading class at Coolidge High School in Northwest Washington.

"All I'm trying to do is teach people to read," he said.

In the Sylvan Learning Center operation at Coolidge Senior High School in Northwest Washington, students sit quietly, working at tables. Sylvan renovated the room, painting and installing computer worktables and new lights before it began working with students.

At one table, a teacher and a student look for the main idea in a short story about a fox, a bluebird and a duck. At another table, a teacher goes over sounds

Firm Offers Attentive Approach to Help D.C. Students Catch Up on Reading Skills



BY JUANA ARIAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Inez Turner, left, works with Marcus Mills during a Sylvan reading class at Coolidge High in the District.

with a 10th-grader in a blue and green polo shirt. The teacher holds up flash-cards, and the girl reads, "At cat . . . F, at . . . at fat . . . fat cat . . . cat . . . bat . . ."

Students are selected for the program by English teachers, counselors and principals. Sylvan then tests each student to identify reading problems. Sylvan officials say they do not test for learning disabilities, and students with such disabilities are not referred to the program.

Paula R. Singer, vice president of corporate center operations for Sylvan Learning Systems, said Sylvan, is better able to help students than are regular classroom teachers because of the low student-teacher ratio in its programs.

"Working with a 3 to 1 ratio, you can look in someone's eyes and see whether they got it. It's tough when you have 31 students" in a regular classroom, Singer said. "We can tell why they are scoring the way they are. We can see what is missing. We can prescribe in a surgical fashion what a student needs."

Singer said that just because students are selected for the reading

program does not mean that they are not intelligent. In many cases, such students have gaps in learning because they have changed schools several times or missed a reading lesson and never caught up.

"If youngsters have gaps, the higher and higher they move up, the gaps start catching up to them," Singer said.

Last year, achievement test scores of D.C. students, already below the national norm in most grades, continued to drop, falling sharply among juniors and seniors in reading, language and spelling.

At Anacostia, the median 11th-grade reading score on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills was 21; at Coolidge, 34; at Eastern, 37; and at Ballou, 26. The national norm on the standardized test is 50. Only five of the city's 19 high schools had reading scores above the norm among 11th-grade students.

D.C. school spokeswoman Karen Hinton said student illiteracy is a national problem, citing a federal report that shows that one of every four fourth- and eighth-grade students does not meet standards and

that more than 30 percent of 12th-graders fail to meet national education goals.

"We are targeting students so they can go out and get jobs and support themselves once they get out of high school," Hinton said. "This isn't just a D.C. problem."

Many tutors and literacy program officials who work with D.C. students or D.C. graduates say they are surprised by what the D.C. students do not know.

"Kids don't understand what they don't know," said one tutor who did not want to be identified. He said the school system seems to be so concerned with lifting the students' self-esteem that students miss out on many of the basics because teachers don't want to fail students.

Viveca Teuber, executive director of the Washington Literacy Council, said that two of every 10 people who come to the council are graduates of D.C. schools. The council offers tutoring for adults with poor or no reading skills.

One junior high school English teacher, who did not want to be

identified, said it is easy for students who don't know how to read to get passed to the next grade level. Many students who don't read well attach themselves to good students or avoid reading aloud in class.

"Their listening skills are excellent," the teacher said. "Usually, non-readers are the best listeners. This is how they get what they need to do."

The teacher said it is difficult even for English teachers to pick out students who don't know how to read well. "There have been children I did not find out until later in the year that they could not read," the teacher said. "They avoid tests. . . . They don't come that day, or they have to leave the room."

Maurice Sykes, deputy superintendent of D.C. schools, said several factors contribute to students' ending up in high school without adequate reading skills. Some lack verbal skills because they were never read to at home. There is a high mobility rate among D.C. students, some of whom move three or four times a year and miss out on lessons as they switch schools. In addition, students are not routinely tested for competence as they pass to the next grade level, Sykes said.

Sykes said the school system plans to establish "gates," or assessments, at grades 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9.

"There will be no student who will move beyond that gate unless they have shown mastery of skills to move to the next level," he said.

Sykes said the school system also is developing a systemwide reading curriculum that would alleviate the problem of students missing lessons when they change schools in the District.

Decory Williams, a ninth-grader at Coolidge, said he doesn't know what happened in his case. All he knows is he made it all the way to the ninth grade without knowing how to read well, and it frustrates him that he got this far without anybody noticing a problem.

"I think it's ridiculous that I'm 14 years old and I still have to go home and sound out syllables," he said, cupping his hands and clapping with each beat as he sounded "out el-e-ph-ant." "You know the way you learn syllables in grade school? Well as you got older, the syllables got longer. The words got harder."

"You miss out on a lot because other kids are getting the work," he added. "But as other kids are getting the work, your grades are constantly dropping. And your parents are on you because of your grades, and you try to explain it's because the teacher won't slow down, and they say it's because you are not paying attention."

The students who are enrolled in the Sylvan Center at Anacostia High School said they are proud to go there. There is no stigma attached to the program. In fact, they said, their friends want to know how to join them in a learning environment where the teachers pay close attention, give them treats, don't seem irritated when they don't understand and congratulate them for every step of progress they make.

"This program gives you confidence. It's fun to learn like this. If you do good, they give you awards," said Korin Williams, 14, a ninth-grader who said she needed to work on syllables and understanding main ideas from stories. "They give you this little piece of paper, and it says so-and-so did good in this subject. Your parents are so proud of you."

Tarenia Rogers, 15, a 10th-grader, said the program gives her something to look forward to when she goes to school. "It's like a job," she said. "When you come in here and work, you get paid." When students score well or complete assignments, teachers reward them with tokens that can be used to buy products such as beads, basketballs and T-shirts at the Sylvan "store," a display counter that stands in one corner of the classroom.

Ada Sullivan, Sylvan's director of education at Anacostia, said the program had helped some students' self-esteem. Students who walked in with their heads hung low now leave proud of their accomplishments.

Jerome Brown said that because he reads slowly, he used to read only when he had to.

"The only time I read was at school," said Brown, who said he had few books at home. "I try not to read big books because it takes me so long." Because of the reading problem, he said, he misses out on reading books his friends have read, such as "The Autobiography of Malcolm X."

Brown said that before he started the Sylvan program if a teacher asked him to read something aloud, he would tell her to ask someone else. "Some teachers say read it or fail, and I would read it," Brown said.

If his classmates laughed, "I would say something about their mother."

Now, he has no problem reading aloud. He picked up a brochure to illustrate his skill.

He read it without missing a word.

in seen him
in - pen-ky
1 Doug Becher

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

4-11-96

now

Big supporters
Saw say they
Saw what happened at
meeting - what was
around so following
from program

Bx

E X E C U T I V E O F F I C E O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

01-May-1996 11:24am

TO: Carol H. Rasco

FROM: Elizabeth E. Drye
Domestic Policy Council

CC: Gaynor R. McCown
CC: Jeremy D. Benami

SUBJECT: POTUS inquiry re. Sylvan Learning Systems

Per your suggested follow-up to POTUS note, I've spoken with Frank Holleman and Terry Peterson at Dept. of Educ. about Sec. Riley's mtg. with Sylvan Learning Systems and about possible follow-up.

As you know, Sylvan is a for-profit, private company. It offers basic skills and test preparation tutoring in learning centers throughout the country. The company's public school work is a smaller but growing part of the business.

Frank and Terry report that Riley's meeting with Sylvan President Doug Becker went well, and that the Department is favorably impressed with Sylvan's work in the public schools. They praised the company's flexible approach and willingness to accomodate teachers' and unions' concerns. But the Department cannot endorse Sylvan's public school work, since the results have not been independently evaluated.

At Sylvan's request, the Department is considering supporting an independent evaluation of Sylvan's public school programs. The study would take 1-2 years, so we would not have a basis on which to judge Sylvan in the short term, but it could be mutually beneficial for Sylvan and policymakers in the longer term.

Terry Peterson just forwarded background materials to us. Two pages highlight Sylvan's public school efforts. I suggest we send these pages to POTUS with a note saying that Dept. of Ed had a good meeting w/Sylvan and is in discussions with them about launching an evaluation effort, but that the Administration does not have data it needs to embrace the program yet. We could also offer to look for opportunities to highlight Sylvan program without endorsing -- e.g. through site visit by Riley or other principal.

I'll bring Terry's material to you before lunch. Thoughts?

E X E C U T I V E O F F I C E O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

01-May-1996 11:40am

TO: Elizabeth E. Drye

FROM: Carol H. Rasco
 Domestic Policy Council

CC: Gaynor R. McCown

CC: Jeremy D. Benami

SUBJECT: RE: POTUS inquiry re. Sylvan Learning Systems

I don't need the materials as I would simply end up putting them in a stack....I agree a cover memo to POTUS that references his comment on a recent note to me and then attach the two pages is the route to go. Please have that memo prepared for my sig.

Thanks.

- Sylvan is for profit business
- Ads recruit individual kids
- Some school districts hiring them to contract for X number of low performing kids - funded out of Title I - get them to X level - in reading or math. Performance based - don't get paid unless they meet criteria. Say they have 85% performance record.
- Baltimore -
 - Don't take over whole school or displace existing teachers.
 - Have had one fight in Minnesota w/ teachers' union. Will lose some of Minn. teachers

Mr. Terry ^{political}
~~Person~~ Peterson - Secy's Policy Council -
 St. Asks Secy to look at whether the
 Secy could lend his name to
 one on one teaching - find out what
 he can do - set up a series

of accomplishments.

- Striving to work w/ learning disabled kids.

"turn key"

- don't pay ^{teachers} as much as normal —
but have more part time
options. —

Ferry will send
① calling p13 by fax
② materials by mail

Jerry Peterson — 4/23/96

- met w/ them
- heard good things about what they're doing
- looking at options, might want to consider their using basic skills performance.
- For profit corp. → on this we say about then gives them an edge.
- May be able to put an assessment in place
 - ~~at~~ - tailor make program for school
 - more flexible
 - others are more after-school effect
 - low cost - less studied
 - "canned" program — seems to be working.
- Approached ~~them~~ — Dept of Educ — would be willing to do research/evaluation would take a while 7-8 school years.
- Doug Becker, President
Bueldey Johnson, V.P.

Outside rest prep

— Public Educ Series Div~~es~~ — Budaly Johnson
heads^{1r} up.

- Willing to work in schools - tailor programs
- Willing to work at all times

Question: Do you support the use of for-profit firms, such as Education Alternatives and the Edison Project, in managing public schools?

Answer: I judge all educational initiatives according to how well they can help children learn and get dollars into the classroom. I support the creation of a wide array of innovative options in the public schools -- charter schools, magnet schools, and schools-within-schools -- when they raise standards, involve parents, get technology into the classroom, etc.

The management of public schools by private, for-profit management firms is a recent experiment. Both Hartford and Baltimore have ended their contracts with Education Alternatives, Inc (EAI), the largest for-profit school management company in the United States. But a few communities around the nation have given contracts to the Edison Project to manage a handful of schools; EAI and others continue to seek school management contracts.

Like all local efforts to improve public schools, this approach should be subjected to tough, rigorous analysis about its ability to promote high-quality teaching and learning.

KEY QUESTIONS AND ISSUES COMMUNITIES SHOULD CONSIDER. This approach:

- Can't be an abdication of local responsibility. Sustained commitment by parents, teachers, and the entire community are critical foundations for the success of any school, whether managed by a principal, teachers, or a private firm. Hiring a management firm is no panacea; a community should not assume that it can simply turn over responsibility for schools to one firm, and expect schools to improve.
- Must preserve public schools. Public schools managed by private firms remain public. Like other public schools, they still may not charge tuition, they still must be open to all students, and they still are accountable to school boards or other institutions representing the public.
- Must promote community's educational goals. Communities considering private firms should ask what are our educational objectives for children, and what is the plan to achieve those objectives? How does hiring private firms to manage schools fit into & enhance this plan? Have we considered other alternatives, (including charter schools, site-based decision-making) and decided this approach is right for our community?
- Must provide clarity about finances, governance, and accountability. Communities should ask what rules will govern the activities of a private firm? Under what circumstances will the firm be paid, or not paid? If the firm is promising financial savings, what are the specific strategies intended to make those savings, and are these acceptable to the community? What links will be placed in the contract between performance and payment and decisions to continue a contract?
- Address for-profit issues early on. Communities should also ask, what are the benefits and drawbacks of involving a new constituency -- i.e., investors and shareholders -- in our schools? Will this provide new revenues for schools, and to what extent will obligations to investors (eg, long or short-term profits, dividends) interfere or help with obligations to the community and students?

*asked for \$15m in
ESEA for
charter schools, got \$6m*

Talking Points on

CHOICE, CHARTER SCHOOLS, AND PRIVATE CONTRACTING

- Purpose should be to invite innovation in more schools, particularly in schools lagging behind. The **GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT** invites the redesign of education at all levels to help more students meet challenging standards. Charter schools and public school choice can be part of the redesign plans. Some school districts are experimenting with private contracting.
- All of these new approaches are worth exploring, but they must:
 - focus on improved teaching and learning;
 - move more resources into the classroom, not into the bureaucracy;
 - be publicly accountable for achieving high standards; and
 - be open to all types of children -- not leave behind some schools with more poor, disabled and disadvantaged children.
- While working on public school choice, charter schools, and private contracting, it is very important to not lose sight of the overall purpose of public education -- it isn't about educating a few kids in a few select schools -- it is about providing many more children with challenging instruction to reach world-class standards. Well thought out public school choice, public charter schools, and private contracting might be one part of this effort, but many other parts are also needed, such as:
 - High expectations and world-class academic and occupational standards;
 - Better preparation and selection of teachers;
 - Greater parent involvement;
 - New student assessments and a challenging curriculum that match the world-class standards;
 - School-community/business partnerships and adult mentors and tutors individually helping students;

- Strong, participatory school principals and leaders;
- Classroom friendly technology; and
- Extend learning time, where appropriate, better early childhood education and after-school enhancement and enrichment programs for children and youth who need and desire them.

TALKING POINTS FOR PRIVATIZATION/EAI
October 6, 1994

-- The Administration supports innovation at the local level. This may include public school choice, charter schools, or privatization.

-- Since privatization ^{in part} in public schools is a recent development, there is not much data or history. Thus, it is difficult to take a position.

-- When a local community is considering privatization, it is critical to get assurance up front that the company's goal will be to improve student achievement -- and that profit is not the motive.

-- These companies have received the most attention:

EAI - Educational Alternatives, Inc. - Baltimore and Hartford, CN (See Oct. 5 Washington Post clip)

The Edison Project (Whittle Co.)

-- The Baltimore EAI partnership has generated controversy. (See attached clips.) Briefly, the AFT charged that EAI violated the civil rights of special education students. Specifically, EAI was accused of firing special education teachers to save money and then placing students who need special assistance in regular classrooms.

-- When a community chooses privatization, it is important that the community remains involved with the schools and closely monitors the situation to ensure that the best interests of students are served.

*Always had some
privatization
Not a process*



APR 29 1996

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

April 26, 1996

NOTE TO CAROL RASCO

FROM: Terry Peterson

RE: SYLVAN LEARNING

As you requested, we enclose herewith are a promotional packet and a video from Sylvan Learning Systems describing their after-school/summer reading and math programs and their in-school contract work with various school systems.

Secretary Riley and I had a very good meeting with Doug Becker, President and co-CEO of Sylvan, and "Buddy" Johnson, Vice-President of Public Education Services.

We are also enclosing two sets of principles we use to develop talking points to discuss any of the new ideas in education like privatization, contracting, etc. The difficult part in discussing any of these innovations is that some individual programs will work and some won't and some of the individual companies or leaders involved will be good and some will not. However, most often, there is no objective evaluation data available to make an honest assessment of the various approaches and comparisons.

We plan to talk again with Sylvan to explore the availability of activities in which the U.S. Department of Education can be involved that would be helpful to each of us given our principles. For example, we may explore with them their openness to external evaluation (e.g., in Title I schools) of their reading and math results.

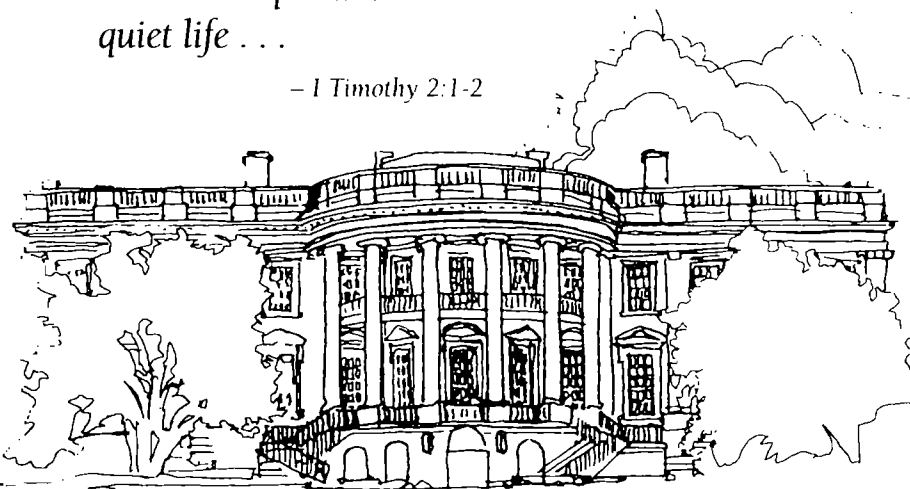
Please call us if we can be of any additional help.

PRAYER FOR THE PRESIDENT

Please join
Mrs. Shirley Dobson,
Dr. E.V. Hill and
Mr. Pat Boone in
Prayer for the President
Wednesday, May 1,
5:00-6:00 p.m.
in Lafayette Park
across from the White House

*Urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions
and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of
all men, for kings and all who are in
authority, in order that we may
lead a tranquil and
quiet life . . .*

- 1 Timothy 2:1-2



EDUCATION WEEK

American Education's Newspaper of Record

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Sylvan Makes Quiet Inroads Into Public Schools

By Mark Walsh

Chicago

The Sylvan Learning Center stands out as the only classroom at Sojourner Truth Elementary School with four walls.

Truth School, in the shadows of the Cabrini-Green public-housing project here, was built in the early 1970s when open classrooms were the fashion. But those noisy, wide-open spaces can make concentration difficult, especially for children of drug-addicted parents and other disadvantaged students.

So when 7-year-old Dion Lockett files into the new Sylvan classroom, the shy 2nd grader finds a quiet place where he can focus on reading. A place where there are only three pupils for every teacher.

At Truth and 10 other Chicago public schools where Sylvan has set up remediation centers for disadvantaged students, education privatization is turning a new page.

Sylvan Learning Systems Inc. signed a \$1.9 million-a-year contract last summer with the now-defunct Chicago school board, and this month reached a sepa-

rate agreement with the district to train high school students as tutors.

Expansion Plans

The moves here are the latest in a two-year push by the Columbia, Md., company to expand into public schools. Sylvan has also made quiet inroads in Baltimore, Washington, and seven other districts around the country.

While other attempts by private companies to win a piece of the public education pie have stirred up swarms of angry teachers and suspicious residents, Sylvan's low-key approach has attracted little notice.

"Sylvan seems to fly below the radar as far as critics of privatization are concerned," said Walter G. Amprey, the superintendent of the Baltimore schools.

The company, best known for its private learning centers where parents pay hundreds of dollars to bring their children up to speed, signed its first contract with a public school district in Baltimore in 1993.

There, a separate privatization effort involving Minneapolis-based Education Alternatives

Inc. has resulted in a lengthy battle over the merits of private management that came to a head last week. (*See story, page 1.*) But, because Sylvan is not trying to take over public schools outright, teachers unions and other privatization critics have been more receptive to its role.

"Many of the concerns we have with EAI we just don't have with Sylvan," said Linda Prudente, a spokeswoman for the Baltimore Teachers Union.

In its public school contracts, Sylvan has tapped federal Title I remedial-education money to serve children whose parents cannot afford \$35 or more per hour for after-school assistance.

Growing Opportunities

The company now has 29 "centers" in 25 Baltimore public schools, and has expanded in the last two years to eight other districts: Baltimore, Dorchester, and Talbot counties in Maryland; Broward County, Fla.; Chicago; the District of Columbia; St. Paul, Minn.; and Pasadena, Texas.

Sylvan readily acknowledges that the public schools represent a potentially lucrative but barely

tapped market. The company had revenues of \$47 million in fiscal 1994, with about 14 percent coming from contract services in public education.

"Our capacity to grow and expand is unlimited," said Felton M. Johnson, Sylvan's vice president for public education services and a former superintendent of one of New York City's 32 community school districts. "Sylvan is looking at becoming the largest supplier of services to the public schools."

When companies such as EAI, the Edison Project, and Alternative Public Schools Inc. start talking to school districts about managing entire schools, critics sharpen their knives. But Sylvan's form of service appears more benign to many educators.

"I think when people realize we're not there to take over, they start to embrace us," Mr. Johnson said.

Paul Vallas, the Chicago district's chief executive officer, stressed that local schools make the decision to contract with Sylvan. "I'm pleased that principals are spending their Title I money that way," he said. "I think the

Continued on Page 12

Chicago Pact Is Latest Sylvan Move To Expand Into Public Schools

Continued from Page 3

Sylvan program has proven to be successful."

This month, the Chicago schools tapped Sylvan for a separate effort to train tutors for the district's "10,000 Tutors" program. The company will open tutorial academies to train high school upperclassmen and college students to work with incoming high school freshmen. That contract, which is separate, is worth as much as \$5 million over three years.

"This is a low-cost way to broaden the reach of the Sylvan system," Mr. Vallas said.

Reading Gains

At Sojourner Truth Elementary School, the decision to apply for the Sylvan center was made by Principal Pernecie Pugh and her local school council. Such governing boards for each Chicago school, made up of parents, community members, and the principal, have flexibility on issues such as how to spend Title I money.

"In the past, I took state and federal [remediation] dollars and I bought extra teachers to reduce class sizes," said Ms. Pugh. "For five years we did that, and it wasn't working."

Virtually all of Truth's 484 students in kindergarten through 3rd grade come from Cabrini-Green, a massive public housing project notorious for its gang violence and squalid conditions.

Ms. Pugh points with pride to results of a recent state-mandated test showing a 21 percent gain in the number of Truth School 3rd graders who met state standards in reading.

Nonetheless, the school still ranks far behind most others in reading, and many of its students have already been targeted for remedial help.



In Robert Spicer's 3rd-grade class, 17 out of 23 students attend hourlong Sylvan sessions twice a week. Mr. Spicer, a 22-year-old teaching rookie, has an all-boys class.

"The best thing for these young brothers is that they get a good foundation in reading," he said.

Reward System

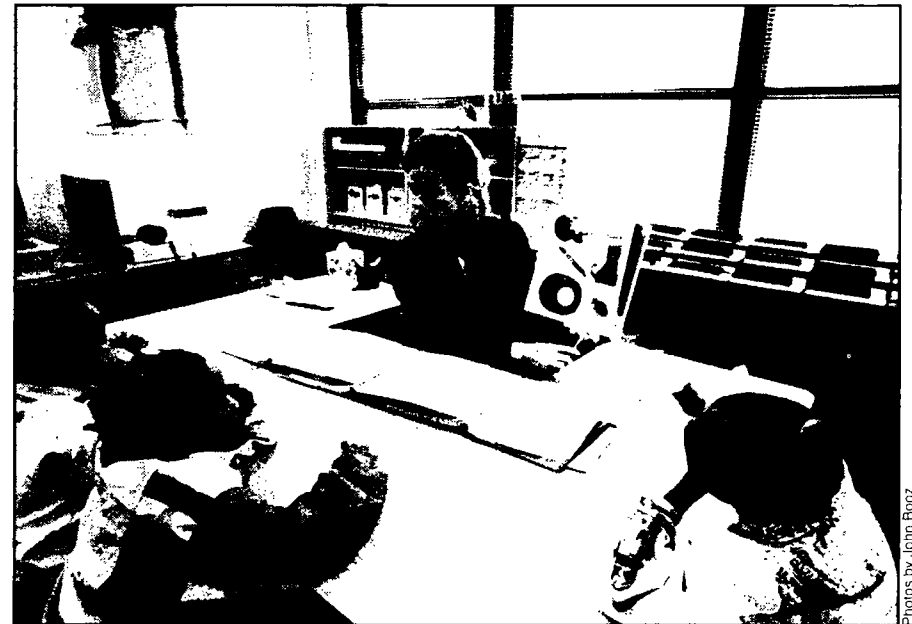
Inside the Sylvan center on the third floor, where Dion Lockett reads a book about colors, the center looks like other Sylvan locations, with its maroon carpeting, racks of books, and a row of personal computers. The quiet youngster said he enjoys coming to the center to work on his read-

ing with a tutor.

Grimy, translucent windows let in some sunlight, but keep out distractions from the bleak neighborhood outside.

At one of Sylvan's U-shaped teaching tables, where instructors can work closely with three students at once, Dortha Edwards, Tatiann Farley, and Fashionette Finley are reading a short book with teacher Elke Bunner. Occasionally, Ms. Bunner dispenses blue poker chips to the students, which they save up to trade in for trinkets and toys at the "Sylvan store," a bookcase found in each center.

The use of motivational tokens and rewards in education has



Towering over Pernecie Pugh, left, the principal of Sojourner Truth Elementary School in Chicago, is the Cabrini-Green housing project, home to virtually all her students. Looking for a more effective way to spend federal and state remedial-education funds, Ms. Pugh was impressed by Sylvan's school centers in Baltimore. Above, using one of Sylvan's trademark desks, designed for three students and one teacher, Elke Bunner can give her full attention to her students.

Photos by John Booz

long been controversial. Critics argue that such methods fail to instill in children an intrinsic desire for learning.

But the company sticks by its methods. "Rewards are a fact of life and part of our society," said Sylvan's Mr. Johnson.

A Strong Start

While Sylvan is new this year in Chicago, early results from centers at Baltimore schools look promising.

Last summer, the district released results of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills showing that students in Sylvan programs gained 8.7 normal curve equivalents—roughly the equivalent of a

percentile—in mathematics and 2.7 NCES in reading.

Students who had spent 50 or more hours in the Sylvan programs throughout the 1994-95 school year showed even stronger gains.

"It's a very good educational bargain," said Mr. Amprey, the Baltimore superintendent. He added that he appreciates Sylvan's guarantee of free extra remediation for any students who do not show a minimal increase in performance.

"There is so much available to middle-income families" at private centers, he added. "It's nice we are able to offer this to our low-income youngsters."

Test Results

Sylvan Contract Education Services, School Year 1994 - 1995

Baltimore, MD (Grades 1 - 5)

(CTBS on grade level testing/Students with 50 hours or more of instruction)

Math Ave. 11.6 NCE Gain

Reading Ave. 3.2 NCE Gain

Dorchester County, MD

Grades 1 - 3 (CTBS on grade level testing/Students with 50 hours or more of instruction)

Reading Ave. 2.4 NCE Gain

Grades 11-12 (Maryland Functional Test: a state graduation requirement)

Math 100% Pass Rate

Washington, DC (Grades 9 - 12)

(Preliminary Results from CTBS Functional level testing/Students with 72 hours or more of instruction)

Reading

- 71% showed positive Grade Equivalent Gain
- 40% showed positive Grade Equivalent Gain of 2.0 or better
- 18% showed positive Grade Equivalent Gain of 4.0 or better

Pasadena, TX (Grades 6 - 8)

(CAT Functional level testing/Students with 72 hrs. or more of instruction)

Math Ave. 11.4 NCE Gain

Reading Ave. 12.4 NCE Gain

(TAAS-Texas Assessment of Academic Skills: a state-designated, criterion-referenced test)

Math 9.9% Ave. Gain

Reading 11.4% Ave. Gain

Definition of Terms

NCE: The Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE), a type of standard score, provides a relative comparison of an individual's test score to the scores of a large reference group. NCEs are identical to percentiles at 1, 50, and 99; unlike percentiles and grade equivalent scores, NCE scores can be aggregated for statistical analysis. NCE scores also allow results from different tests to be compared.

GE: Grade Equivalent Score: a student's score is the average score of a given grade taking the same test; it cannot be averaged. *Note: Grade equivalents do not represent the skill level at which the student can successfully perform; grade equivalents are norms, not standards; grade equivalents cannot be compared across subjects or grade levels.*

Functional Level Testing: Obtains the most reliable diagnosis of a student's mastery of objectives and the most accurate estimate of that student's academic standing.

Criterion-referenced test: Measures the mastery of a category of objectives; yields both comprehensive and specific diagnostic information for program planning and evaluation.

Norm-referenced test: Performance related to a norm group.

Sylvan gets high marks

Amprey lauds school experiment

By Mike Bowler
Sun Staff Writer

Baltimore's "other" experiment in school privatization got a glowing second-year report card yesterday, and school Superintendent Walter G. Amprey vowed to continue \$9 million in contracts with Sylvan Learning Systems, despite a \$27 million district budget deficit.

From 1994 to 1995, students in seven elementary schools with Sylvan tutoring labs showed larger gains in mathematics than students citywide and those in the nine privately managed "Tesseract" schools, company and school officials said.

In reading, Sylvan students narrowed the gap between themselves and students citywide, while advancing at about the same rate as Tesseract students.

"This is one of the silver bullets," Dr. Amprey said during a news conference at Harford Heights Elementary School on East North Avenue. Turning to Douglas L. Becker, the 29-year-old president of Columbia-based Sylvan, Dr. Amprey said, "Doug, you and your company have kept your promise."

Sylvan won its first contract with city schools in 1993 and has expanded to 25 schools. The program offers each student two hours of intense tutoring each week in the poorest schools, using computers and a pupil-teacher ratio of 3-to-1. Funds for the experiment, for which Sylvan has a set of three-year contracts, come from Title I, the main federal program for poor children.

Mr. Becker said 85 percent to 90 percent of the 3,000 city students in the program exceeded the federal goal of a 2-point gain on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. "This means that 10 to 15 percent of the students will receive free instruction per our guarantee," he said.

Dr. Amprey said Sylvan students have "outdistanced" those in the Tesseract schools managed by Education Alternatives Inc. of Minneapolis. But he warned against making "invidious comparisons."

"Generally speaking, Sylvan may be a greater success because it's so much more concentrated," the superintendent said. "EAI manages whole schools. It's got so much more to contend with."

Mr. Becker said Sylvan is revising its reading program in view of the poorer results in that part of the national achievement test.

"We've brought in a national expert on reading instruction, and we're concentrating more on vocabulary development," he said.

Data released at the news conference showed score increases, not actual scores. Actual Sylvan scores are well behind citywide scores, according to figures provided later yesterday. For example, average Sylvan reading scores this year were 29, up

SYLVAN: Progress lauded

From Page 1C

2.7 points, while students citywide scored 45, down a point from 1994. The national norm is 50.

William Cartt, a testing expert for the city, said the Sylvan scores are "in the neighborhood of other Title I schools. But you have to remember that these schools were chosen because they were most in need of help." Other Title I students are taught by city teachers, using city curricula.

Denise Gore, a Harford Heights

parent who attended the news conference, said she was worried that her 9-year-old son, Darnell Hopkins, would not be accepted again by Sylvan this fall as a fourth-grader. "He's a quiet, shy kid," Ms. Gore said. "Sylvan opened him up to be a different child."

School officials acknowledged that budgetary restrictions limit the program to about 150 students in each school, but Goldye J. Sanders, the Harford Heights principal, said no decision has been made in the case of Darnell.

The Washington Post

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 1994

Trying to Catch Up On Their Reading

Tutors Find What Students Miss

By DeNeen L. Brown
Washington Post Staff Writer

Not being able to read when you are in high school means that when the teacher calls on you to read aloud, you know you are going to mess up, and you stumble over small words, and your classmates giggle, and you get angry, and you want to fight.

This is what it means for Jerome Brown, 17, a 10th-grader at Anacostia Senior High School.

Not being able to read when you are in high school means you may have been held back so many times that you are still in the 10th grade while your friends are graduating and going to college, and you know you are going to have to catch up just to get a job.

This is what it means for Ronald Hodge, 17, a student at Anacostia.

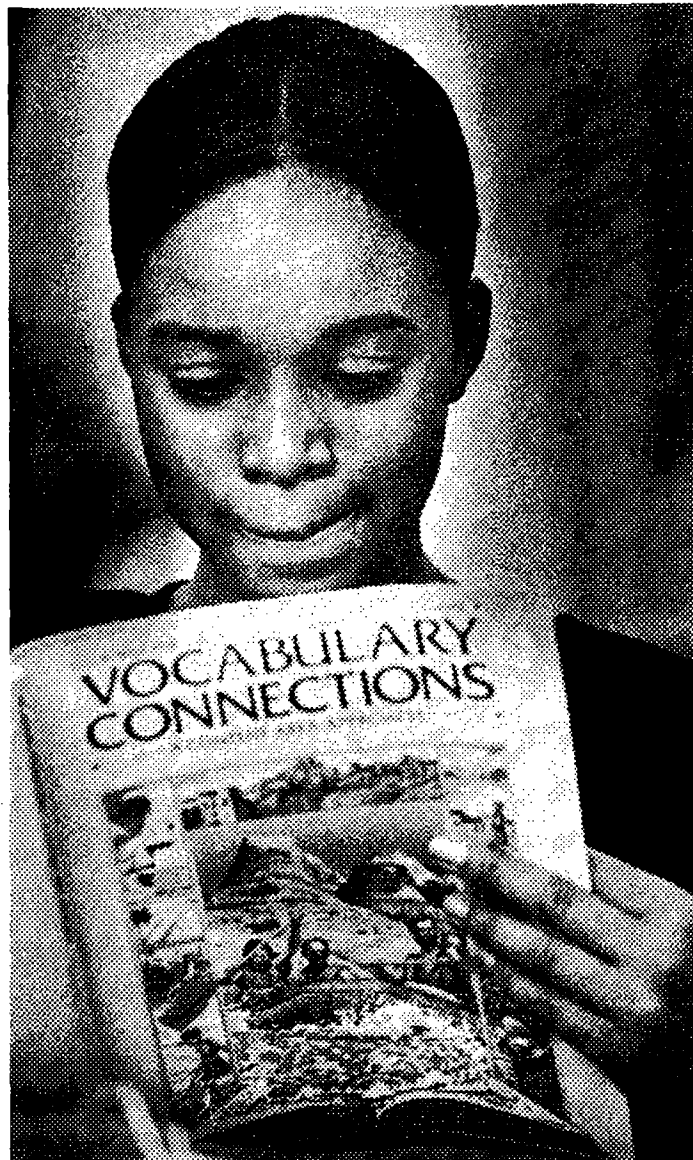
Brown and Hodge are among the hundreds of D.C. students who slipped through the cracks over the years, going to school but never learning how to read competently.

They are among about 600 D.C. students enrolled with a private tutoring firm that the school system hired to help high school students who are reading far below their grade levels.

Superintendent Franklin L. Smith had said that Sylvan Learning Center, which will be paid about \$700,000 for its first year of work for the city, would test students this year and begin tutoring students in the fall. But Sylvan officials say their programs have been running since April at Anacostia, Ballou, Eastern and Coolidge senior high schools and will continue for eight weeks this summer.

The students' progress will not be formally tested until August.

Smith said he hired the 15-year-old company, which has opened learning centers across the country, including in Baltimore schools, because he was concerned that students were graduating from D.C. high schools without knowing how to read well.



BY JUANA ARIAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Nicole Dewitt studies in the Sylvan reading class at Coolidge High School in Northwest Washington.

"All I'm trying to do is teach people to read," he said.

In the Sylvan Learning Center operation at Coolidge Senior High School in Northwest Washington, students sit quietly, working at tables. Sylvan renovated the room, painting and installing computer worktables and new lights before it began working with students.

At one table, a teacher and a student look for the main idea in a short story about a fox, a bluebird and a duck. At another table, a teacher goes over sounds

Firm Offers Attentive Approach to Help D.C. Students Catch Up on Reading Skills



BY JUANA ARIAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Inez Turner, left, works with Marcus Mills during a Sylvan reading class at Coolidge High in the District.

with a 10th-grader in a blue and green polo shirt. The teacher holds up flash-cards, and the girl reads, "At cat . . . F, at . . . at fat . . . fat cat . . . cat . . . bat . . ."

Students are selected for the program by English teachers, counselors and principals. Sylvan then tests each student to identify reading problems. Sylvan officials say they do not test for learning disabilities, and students with such disabilities are not referred to the program.

Paula R. Singer, vice president of corporate center operations for Sylvan Learning Systems, said Sylvan, is better able to help students than are regular classroom teachers because of the low student-teacher ratio in its programs.

"Working with a 3 to 1 ratio, you can look in someone's eyes and see whether they got it. It's tough when you have 31 students" in a regular classroom, Singer said. "We can tell why they are scoring the way they are. We can see what is missing. We can prescribe in a surgical fashion what a student needs."

Singer said that just because students are selected for the reading

program does not mean that they are not intelligent. In many cases, such students have gaps in learning because they have changed schools several times or missed a reading lesson and never caught up.

"If youngsters have gaps, the higher and higher they move up, the gaps start catching up to them," Singer said.

Last year, achievement test scores of D.C. students, already below the national norm in most grades, continued to drop, falling sharply among juniors and seniors in reading, language and spelling.

At Anacostia, the median 11th-grade reading score on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills was 21; at Coolidge, 34; at Eastern, 37; and at Ballou, 26. The national norm on the standardized test is 50. Only five of the city's 19 high schools had reading scores above the norm among 11th-grade students.

D.C. school spokeswoman Karen Hinton said student illiteracy is a national problem, citing a federal report that shows that one of every four fourth- and eighth-grade students does not meet standards and

that more than 30 percent of 12th-graders fail to meet national education goals.

"We are targeting students so they can go out and get jobs and support themselves once they get out of high school," Hinton said. "This isn't just a D.C. problem."

Many tutors and literacy program officials who work with D.C. students or D.C. graduates say they are surprised by what the D.C. students do not know.

"Kids don't understand what they don't know," said one tutor who did not want to be identified. He said the school system seems to be so concerned with lifting the students' self-esteem that students miss out on many of the basics because teachers don't want to fail students.

Viveca Teuber, executive director of the Washington Literacy Council, said that two of every 10 people who come to the council are graduates of D.C. schools. The council offers tutoring for adults with poor or no reading skills.

One junior high school English teacher, who did not want to be

identified, said it is easy for students who don't know how to read to get passed to the next grade level. Many students who don't read well attach themselves to good students or avoid reading aloud in class.

"Their listening skills are excellent," the teacher said. "Usually, non-readers are the best listeners. This is how they get what they need to do."

The teacher said it is difficult even for English teachers to pick out students who don't know how to read well. "There have been children I did not find out until later in the year that they could not read," the teacher said. "They avoid tests. . . . They don't come that day, or they have to leave the room."

Maurice Sykes, deputy superintendent of D.C. schools, said several factors contribute to students' ending up in high school without adequate reading skills. Some lack verbal skills because they were never read to at home. There is a high mobility rate among D.C. students, some of whom move three or four times a year and miss out on lessons as they switch schools. In addition, students are not routinely tested for competence as they pass to the next grade level, Sykes said.

Sykes said the school system plans to establish "gates," or assessments, at grades 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9.

"There will be no student who will move beyond that gate unless they have shown mastery of skills to move to the next level," he said.

Sykes said the school system also is developing a systemwide reading curriculum that would alleviate the problem of students missing lessons when they change schools in the District.

Decory Williams, a ninth-grader at Coolidge, said he doesn't know what happened in his case. All he knows is he made it all the way to the ninth grade without knowing how to read well, and it frustrates him that he got this far without anybody noticing a problem.

"I think it's ridiculous that I'm 14 years old and I still have to go home and sound out syllables," he said, cupping his hands and clapping with each beat as he sounded "out el-e-ph-ant." "You know the way you learn syllables in grade school? Well as you got older, the syllables got longer. The words got harder."

"You miss out on a lot because other kids are getting the work," he added. "But as other kids are getting the work, your grades are constantly dropping. And your parents are on you because of your grades, and you try to explain it's because the teacher won't slow down, and they say it's because you are not paying attention."

The students who are enrolled in the Sylvan Center at Anacostia High School said they are proud to go there. There is no stigma attached to the program. In fact, they said, their friends want to know how to join them in a learning environment where the teachers pay close attention, give them treats, don't seem irritated when they don't understand and congratulate them for every step of progress they make.

"This program gives you confidence. It's fun to learn like this. If you do good, they give you awards," said Korin Williams, 14, a ninth-grader who said she needed to work on syllables and understanding main ideas from stories. "They give you this little piece of paper, and it says so-and-so did good in this subject. Your parents are so proud of you."

Tarenia Rogers, 15, a 10th-grader, said the program gives her something to look forward to when she goes to school. "It's like a job," she said. "When you come in here and work, you get paid." When students score well or complete assignments, teachers reward them with tokens that can be used to buy products such as beads, basketballs and T-shirts at the Sylvan "store," a display counter that stands in one corner of the classroom.

Ada Sullivan, Sylvan's director of education at Anacostia, said the program had helped some students' self-esteem. Students who walked in with their heads hung low now leave proud of their accomplishments.

Jerome Brown said that because he reads slowly, he used to read only when he had to.

"The only time I read was at school," said Brown, who said he had few books at home. "I try not to read big books because it takes me so long." Because of the reading problem, he said, he misses out on reading books his friends have read, such as "The Autobiography of Malcolm X."

Brown said that before he started the Sylvan program if a teacher asked him to read something aloud, he would tell her to ask someone else. "Some teachers say read it or fail, and I would read it," Brown said.

If his classmates laughed, "I would say something about their mother."

Now, he has no problem reading aloud. He picked up a brochure to illustrate his skill.

He read it without missing a word.

Schools turn to tutoring



Mary Clare Horgan of Sylvan Learning Systems Inc. tutors a student at Gage Park High School, 5630 S. Rockwell Ave., Chicago.

Sylvan has students motivated

By Anne Bowhay
Staff Writer

There are days when 16-year-old David Driver heads out the door well before 7 a.m. School doesn't start for another hour, but he says he likes to get in extra time with his reading teacher.

"I get here about 7:05, 7:10, or I come down on my lunch hour," said Driver, a sophomore at Gage Park High School, 5630 S. Rockwell Ave., Chicago.

Motivated by the prizes he earns for good work, Driver says he also likes how it feels to "get 100s" on reading tests. Before tutoring, the teen says, he was nervous whenever a teacher asked him to read in front of the class.

"I was stumbling over words. I couldn't read straight through a story," he said.

Driver attends a Sylvan Learning Center located inside his Southwest Side school. It operates much like any of the privately owned Sylvan tutoring centers located in suburban shopping malls across the country, including Homewood, Oak Lawn and Tinley Park.

But unlike those Sylvan franchises — where parents pay rates of \$27 to \$39 an hour — Driver is able to get at least two hours of lessons each week, at no charge to his family.

CONTRACT:
The Chicago School Reform Board has a deal with Sylvan to establish tutorial academies in city schools.
Page A6.

City school officials shun for-profit systems

By Annie Sweeney
Education Writer

Other major cities have tried it, but full-scale privatization of education isn't right for Chicago's public schools, according to reformers and public school officials.

Nonetheless, the controversial concept, by which for-profit businesses operate publicly

funded schools, has generated nationwide interest among educators.

Schools in Baltimore and Hartford, Conn., hired the same private company, Minneapolis-based Education Alternatives Inc., to run their systems, but concerns over costs led the school boards in Hartford and Baltimore to terminate both projects.

The contracts — and subsequent cancellations — were significant because they involved the whole system in Hartford and a large portion of Baltimore's system.

Many watched the projects to see how privatization might affect education, itself a \$600 billion industry, according to Education Alternatives Inc., which consults with businesses involved in edu-

cation. Although those projects fell through, Education Alternatives is now negotiating with school districts in New Jersey, New Hampshire, New York and the District of Columbia.

Instructional privatization can be done a small basis, such as hiring a consultant to review

See **Privatization** page 6

Daily
Southtown

Sweet couple:
Chocolate and
Valentine's
Day
Food
35 CENTS

See **Tutors** page 6

pays the bill, and Sullivan Elementary in the South Chicago neighborhood are among 10 schools that hired Learning Systems Inc. to open tutoring centers within their buildings this school year. Most have signed three-year contracts with Sylvan, which for \$225,000 per year equips and staffs a learning center where 150 low-scoring students get twice-a-week lessons in reading or math.

"We wanted to provide that same quality of tutorial services to students who couldn't afford it," said Felton Johnson, Sylvan's national vice president for public education services.

Schools pay for most or all of these services using Chapter 1 funds, a combination of state and federal money given to schools that enroll a large share of low-income students. Chicago schools are allowed to decide for themselves how they will spend their Chapter 1 funds.

Some south suburban school districts also get Chapter 1 funds, but many have used it to hire and manage their own remedial teaching staffs. While Sylvan has yet to make inroads in suburban schools, its urban school centers are proving to be a growth industry for a company with revenues of \$47 million in 1994, Johnson said.

In three years Sylvan has seen the numbers climb, from five centers opened in Baltimore public schools to 63 centers, including 29 now in Maryland's largest city and five in St. Paul, Minn.

Chicago ranks second among the nine cities with public schools employing the for-profit company. While hiring private companies to manage public schools has sometimes raised controversy, Sylvan's more limited presence has stirred little media attention and few complaints.

Sylvan officials contend it's because they offer a supplemental service that can "give any school a shot in the arm," said Johnson, a former New York City district school superintendent.

"Why has Sylvan been able to fly under the radar and not create controversy? We're not out there taking over schools," he said.

A Chicago Teachers Union spokeswoman agrees.

"This isn't classroom teaching as such, and they have a proven track record of helping children," Jackie Gallagher said.

Gage Park was the first school in Chicago to open a Sylvan center, starting with a summer reading camp for 50 freshmen that opened in July. It was followed in September by nine other schools, including Fenger High School, 11220 S. Wallace Ave.; Harper High School, 6520 S. Wood St.; and Carver Primary School, 901 E. 133rd Place.

Sullivan Elementary, 8255 S. Houston Ave., actually was Chicago's first school to sign a contract with the Maryland-based company, said Joanne Planek, Sylvan's Chicago schools manager.

Sullivan Principal Robert Esenberg said he was convinced after he toured several of Sylvan's Baltimore school centers. And Esenberg says he's even more pleased with Sylvan's operations at Sullivan, where 134 children in the fourth through eighth grades are tutored twice a week in reading or math. A summer program is planned for 16 others.



Johnson

Spight

"Ours seems better — warmer, busier, energetic," Esenberg said.

It's too soon for a group analysis of Chicago student test scores, according to Esenberg and Gage Park officials, but they say early results indicate progress. They credit Sylvan's methods, including its use of certified teachers to work with students three at a time.

"It's a good investment and it's working. I've looked at some of the scores and they did improve," said Donna Koestner, a parent who heads Gage Park's local school council.

Gage Park, along with Fenger and Harper, is on a watch list of 126 Chicago schools that have failed to meet standards on state achievement tests for three consecutive years.

With concerns about improving student performance, Koestner and other school officials say they like Sylvan because of its guarantees: The company pledges to be up and running quickly, often within six weeks of signing a contract.

Sylvan also promises to give additional instruction, at no added cost, to any students who fail to show minimum gains in test scores after they finish a year's worth of lessons.

And if Sylvan fails to prove effective, school officials say, schools can choose not to renew contracts — a move school officials say is easier than dismantling a program manned by teachers from a school's own staff.

Chicago schools pay Sylvan \$1,500 for each student enrolled, Planek said. Although that translates to more than \$20 an hour, it is lower at Gage Park, where students can take up to two hours of extra lessons each week.

"To do it this way (with Sylvan) is cheaper," Koestner said.

As proof she points to the money Sylvan spends to equip the centers with books, work tables, computers and air conditioning — a \$60,000 expenditure at Gage Park.

At Sullivan Elementary, Sylvan's cost used up 80 percent of this year's Chapter 1 funding. Before Sylvan, Sullivan used the grant to hire five extra teachers so some classes could be cut in half, to 15 children. But when that effort showed little benefit, Esenberg said, he decided to switch to Sylvan and cut four teaching jobs by attrition.

Esenberg is optimistic that Sylvan can keep its guarantee of getting his students to post gains of at least three points on the Normal Curve Equivalent for standardized tests. That's roughly equal to making a year's progress, he said.

"There's no magic trick," Esenberg said of Sylvan's methods. "They come in, pretest and zero in on what the students need to know."

Planek says she oversees teachers who rely on the same "master learning" techniques used in company franchises for 16 years. It requires that a student show at least an 80 percent mastery rate



Larry Ruenh/Daily Southtown

James Barnett, a teacher at Gage Park High School, 5630 S. Rockwell Ave., Chicago, tutors a student at the school's Sylvan Learning Center.

before his tutor moves to teach the next concept.

Gage Park's center is typical, Planek says. Faculty use test scores to select which freshmen and sophomores will be placed in the center. Sylvan teachers then follow up with assessment tests, which are used to design each student's lesson plans.

Sylvan officials acknowledge these methods are similar to those used in remedial programs run by many schools' own staff of teachers, including use of a 3-to-1 teaching ratio. But with a high school of 1,450 students to manage, Gage Park officials say they like the fact that Sylvan employs, trains and manages its own staff in the use of company-selected teaching materials.

What is unique is Sylvan's practice of rewarding students with prizes to spur motivation and further progress.

At Gage Park, students earn points good toward buying T-shirts, team banners and other trinkets from a cupboard they refer to as "The Sylvan Store." Perfect attendance is rewarded with a chance to participate in a monthly lottery that gives a winner free movie passes or a gift certificate to a local shopping mall.

Cleothas Snell, 16, says he prefers to buy headphones when he earns a prize from his Gage Park tutor, Ginna Ahn. But Snell says he's also proud of getting perfect scores on tests of his reading comprehension, skills such as understanding inference and making analogies.

"You put more effort in your work, and it makes you want to do it. It makes you want to come," Snell said.

Kay Walker, the mother of a 14-year-old freshman, says rewards are what motivate her son. "He's saving his tokens for something he wants to buy, and I can see that he's reading better," Walker said.

While some educators criticize the use of rewards, Johnson compares it to adult incentives such as paychecks. He also contends that Sylvan works because parents are required to get involved, with parent-teacher contact required after every eight hours of instruction.

"We never say negative things about kids," Johnson said. "We talk about whatever progress is

made, and it inspires parents to come to school because they hear about progress, not failings."

At Gage Park, the Sylvan center's attendance rate of 88 percent tops the school's own average of 82 percent, according to Joyce Spight, the center director and a retired Chicago public school teacher.

Spight credits the prize lottery as well as a strict rule that requires students to attend all lessons or face being replaced by another child. Gage Park recently moved to drop four students who had unexcused absences for two lessons in a row.

"One boy was dropped, but he insisted we give him another chance," Spight said, sounding pleased.

In an effort to involve more students, Gage Park has asked the center to add 15 freshmen for after-school instruction, Spight said. They will use up the hours of students who failed to attend makeup classes after excused absences.

At Sullivan, a different sort of attendance problem is the issue: More than 25 children who started in the fall already have moved away, Esenberg said.

Sixty percent of Sullivan students are moving in or out of the school each year, but Esenberg believes Sylvan is designed to cope with a school's high mobility problems. That's because children can begin individualized instruction at any time in the school year, he says.

Children who move away are quickly replaced with others, said Esenberg, who estimates that 95 percent come from low-income families.

Esenberg says Sullivan "would welcome any outside funding" that would allow it to enroll more students in Sylvan. Koestner says she hears from students who want to know why Gage Park offers the program only to selected students enrolled in Introduction to English.

She is backed by David Driver, the student who says five months of tutoring boosted his reading speed from 120 to 160 words per minute. David says he often hears older students complaining because they can't get in.

"It should be in every school, for more kids," he said.

Sweet couple:

Chocolate

Valentine's

Day

Food

Daily Southtown

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1979

Sylvan hired to assist tutor training program

By Anne Bowhay

Staff Writer

The Chicago School Reform Board has signed its own contract with Sylvan Learning Systems Inc. to help establish tutorial academies in city schools.

Sylvan was hired in November to help the board establish a city-wide tutoring program manned by honor students and their teacher-coaches, said Yvonne Jones, project manager for the board's 10,000 Tutors initiative.

Sylvan will assist for three years in developing the program, monitoring the schools involved and providing curriculum, materials and training, said Bill LaPlante, Sylvan's director of the tutorial program.

LaPlante would not discuss Sylvan's fees, but Jones said that under the terms of the current one-year contract Sylvan was to be paid no more than \$796,180.

In this first year of the program, 20 students and one teacher-coach from 70 schools will begin twice-a-week tutoring in basic reading and math skills. The program should reach 2,800 stu-

dents, most of them high school freshmen. Each tutor will be assigned to give two students two hours of instruction each week, Jones said.

Students took their training last week and were to begin after-school tutoring this week. They are paid \$4 an hour, and their teacher-coach earns \$11.87 an hour.

"Eventually we'd like the program to encompass all the schools," Jones said.

Among the 65 high schools participating are Bogan, Bowen, Calumet, Carver, Chicago Agricultural, Chicago Vocational, Corliss, Curie, Englewood, Feiger, Gage Park, Harper, Hubbard, Julian, Kelly, Kennedy, Morgan Park, Richards Vocational, South Shore and Washington. Five elementary schools also are participating.

More than 1,500 tutors already are working in Chicago schools. And in an effort separate from Sylvan's, seven other agencies and colleges are training their own volunteer tutors, Jones said. These include Trinity Christian College and Chicago Christian High School, both in Palos Heights, which are providing tutors for 400 children attending six schools on the far SouthSide.

CHICAGO

Privatization

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curriculum or hiring a private tutor. The complete privatization of schools or school systems accounts for \$14.1 billion of the \$81 billion that is spent annually on education-related private businesses.

The Chicago School Reform Board has privatized non-instructional areas of the system, including 400 trades jobs. But instruction has been privatized only in small degrees, such as hiring Sylvan Learning Systems Inc. to run a reading tutor academy for 70 schools. Ten other city schools have signed individual contracts with Sylvan to set up programs.

But officials from area reform groups, unions and business groups are not clamoring for the more widespread privatization tried in Hartford and Baltimore.

"The business guys that I have talked with, if there were any further changes, (it would be) merit pay (for teachers), vouchers (for private schools)," said Jeff Mays, vice president of human resources and policy for the Illinois Chamber of Commerce. "And I think those are not as far-reaching as 'let's contract — private-for-profit — out the education of our kids.'"

Mays said the new management power given to Chief Executive Officer Paul Vallas already was resulting in systemwide change.

Since taking over this summer, the board has approved a balanced budget, initiated a capital improvement plan and found warehouses of wasted supplies in the system. The board also has begun to target problematic schools.

Vallas said Chicago had been approached by another private company, The Edison Project, about a contract that would involve the company running a clus-

ter of schools. Vallas said negotiations did not go very far, although he did not rule it out.

But the larger, more comprehensive approach of Education Alternatives is not right for Chicago, Vallas said.

Fred Hess, executive director of the Chicago Panel on School Policy, argued that the line of accountability to Mayor Richard Daley, who appointed the new management team, had been working so far.

"(The reform) is supposed to have a four-year time span," Hess said. "Let's leave it on the shelf and see what it does."

Still, Mays said the premise behind complete privatization in a school or district was worthy of consideration.

"You (for-profit companies) are there to perform to standards and either you do it or you don't," Mays said. "In the private side you have that mentality; you have to perform. You are not in business if you don't."

Union officials, however, argue that the bottom line doesn't translate in education.

"We are not dealing with canned hams, rubber tires. We're dealing with human beings," said Robert Haisman, president of the Illinois Education Association.

Chicago Teachers Union spokeswoman Jackie Gallagher agreed with Haisman and said the Sylvan project was just one area of instruction but still would be closely watched.

But Debbie Lynch Walsh, who is running against incumbent Tom Reece for the CTU presidency, faults even the Sylvan reading program.

"Why are we looking at add-on after-school remediation when the money should be invested in the current program," Lyndi Walsh said.

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS DEVELOPING CORE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

BACKGROUND

CURRENT SITUATION

There are 553 schools in our system and surely there are 553 different curricular structures to match. Since the reform law of 1988, each local school has had the authority to control curriculum and instruction. The overall effect of this has served to diminish the role of instructional leadership as a primary function of the school system.

Schools have attempted to develop models at the local level that were culturally relevant, academically appropriate and educationally sound. Success has been difficult to achieve without a central guidance and support structure.

RATIONALE

The new leadership of the Chicago Public Schools contends that all schools must have a common instructional focus. The strategies used to implement the instructional focus may vary.

The following instructional models are under consideration.

The Sylvan Learning Center Model - This model is based on:

- Learner Diagnostic Assessment which evaluates each student with a battery of assessment instruments prior to the development of an individualized education program
- A formative assessment of the student after each hour of instruction stressing thinking skills
- An individualized mastery learning approach
- An emphasis on vocabulary and language development
- Computer assisted instruction
- A three to one student-teacher ratio.

Direct Instruction

Direct instruction is a summary term for recent findings on effective teaching. It refers to a systematic method of effective teaching that emphasizes proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students. The term is interchangeable with other terms such as active teaching, systemic instruction, explicit teaching, interactive teaching, and effective teaching for achievement gain.

The conclusions about effective teaching have been primarily based on reading and mathematics research conducted in urban elementary and junior high schools, but the procedures are relevant to any instruction designed to teach skilled performance or mastery of knowledge. Specifically, these procedures are applicable to reading, mathematics, foreign language, English grammar, science, and parts of social studies and language arts. They are less applicable for teaching students to develop higher level thinking skills, to construct their own creative responses, or to learn to appreciate the aesthetic elements of the world.

The research has found that teachers effective in direct instruction procedures use most of the following techniques:

- Begin a lesson with a short statement of goals
- Begin with a short review of previous, prerequisite learning
- Present materials in small steps, with student practice after each step
- Give clear and detailed instructions and explanations
- Provide frequent active practice for all students
- Ask numerous questions, check for student understanding, and obtain responses from all students
- Guide students during initial practice
- Provide systemic feedback and corrections
- Obtain a student success rate of 80 percent or higher during initial practice
- Provide explicit instruction for seatwork exercises, and where necessary, monitor students during seatwork.

Modified Direct Instruction

The Malcolm X College program incorporates many of the provisions of the direct instruction approach. It is designed to increase student performance among elementary school students in the upper grades. It emphasizes the direct instructional approach in the content areas.

Student Achievement Structure (SAS) De Paul University Instructional Model

The SAS model for student achievement has several main components, which followed, will lead to the elevation and acceleration of student achievement as measured by standardized tests such as the IGAP, TAP and ITBS. Main components of the plan include:

Decision Making Model: The principal is the instructional leader and includes the entire school community in decision making activities. However, decision making has two tiers: 1) making the decision and 2) implementing the decision. Everyone participates in the first tier, but the principal assigns tasks and directs the second tier.

Instruction Teams: An instructional team is formed in each school including the following: principal, assistant principal, IASA Chapter teachers, special education teachers, counselors, grade level chairs, all freed teachers, union delegates, PAC chairpersons, career service and security personnel. These teams work on tasks such as monitoring, measuring, grouping, setting staff development schedules, selecting materials, supplies and resources.

Acceleration and Pacing: Students needing acceleration must be paced to assure leaps in achievement by using methodology and technology to help students who need to grow two years or more. Methodology should fit the needs of the students. Direct instruction should be used where students need great leaps. Additionally, two hour tutoring periods should be organized after school.

Grouping: Students must be grouped for instruction according to their instructional needs. These are not permanent groups and re-grouping is an ongoing instructional strategy to meet instructional goals and to provide for individual needs.

Instruction and Staff Development: Instruction is conducted so that it meets the student's needs and must be done in conjunction with student assessment. Staff development must be presented in three tiers: 1) presentation for awareness and knowledge; 2) opportunity to practice with assistance; and 3) demonstration.

Monitoring: Teachers should be monitored on a weekly basis by the Instruction team. Teachers should be evaluated every five weeks for compliance with the School Improvement Plan. Regional Officers should confer with principals monthly.

Through a series of coordinated efforts on the part of all staff, a strong staff development component and constant monitoring, student achievement will result.

Modified Cooperative Small-Group Learning

Considerable research supports the concept that cooperative learning should occupy a least 60% of the time in most classrooms. Compared with competitive and individual instruction, the skillful use of cooperative learning results in:

- Higher achievement in the mastery of facts, information, and theories taught in school
- Acquisition of higher level analytical reasoning strategies
- Higher motivation to achieve by more students striving for mutual benefit and joint effort
- More positive attitudes toward subject areas (including math, science, and foreign languages) which in turn generate a continuing motivation to study, to take advanced courses, to learn more about the area, to enter related careers
- Greater competencies in working effectively with other people in career, family, and community settings
- Greater integration of caring and supportive relationships with other students, including stronger friendships, a sense of psychological support and safety, and conviction that peers support and encourage one's efforts to learn
- Greater psychological stability, health, and well-being, including positive self-esteem and a sense of autonomy.

Whole Language Approach

Many teachers in American schools have begun to adopt the Whole Language approach which immerses the child in an environment rich with language and culture. This approach is based on the premise that students will learn to read and write the way they learn to speak and walk, by actually doing those things with the help and guidance of a competent adult. Thus, rather than reading basals, students read a wide range of "real" books and write about things in which they are interested. Teachers help them develop reading and writing skills while they are engaged in these high interest activities.

In those schools which utilize this approach, every room is a "print-rich" environment, featuring samples of the children's writing and charts with words from songs, poems, or books that they want to share. Curriculum is dealt with as a coherent whole once the teacher is free from the necessity of getting through a text. Rather than drilling kids on word lists, teaching them phonics in isolation, or having them read generally dull and uninteresting texts, teachers using a whole-language approach connect reading and

writing to students' interests and to the rest of the curriculum. The students will never forget these experiences, and they are learning academic skills in the context of use.

Phonetic Approach to Instruction

Awareness that spoken language is composed of phonemes is an extremely important predictor of success in learning to read. Phonics instruction teaches children to sound out words and activities designed to develop young children's awareness of words, syllables, and phonemes significantly increase their later success in learning to read and write.

The impact of phonemic training on reading acquisition is especially strong when phonemes are taught together with the letters by which they are represented. However, programs for all children should strive to maintain an appropriate balance between phonics activities and the reading and appreciation of informative and engaging texts.

Chicago Public Schools Instructional Model

The instructional methodology adopted by the Chicago Public Schools will utilize a modification of the direct instruction model, while incorporating Best Practices from other models. The CPS model will provide quality instruction within a culturally enriched environment. It will include a phonetic approach to the teaching of reading in the early years and a strong monitoring component.

**HELPING
KIDS
WRITE
BETTER.**



THE SYLVAN CLEAR WRITINGSM PROGRAM.

The Sylvan CLEAR WritingSM Program is neither a grammar course nor a primer in vocabulary or spelling. It's a program designed to teach children, teenagers, and adults to think more clearly and logically, and then to communicate those thoughts, with equal clarity and logic, on paper.

THE FIRST STEP: DIAGNOSTIC TESTING.

The Sylvan CLEAR WritingSM Program begins with the diagnostic test battery. We use nationally recognized tests to pinpoint your child's current writing skills and evaluate a sample of his or her writing for content and style.

Your Sylvan Learning Center[®] Director, a professional trained in administering and interpreting tests, then assesses the test results and prescribes an individualized writing program.

CHOOSE THE LEVEL OF SKILL YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE.

The Sylvan CLEAR WritingSM Program is designed to lead the student at his or her own pace through a series of writing goals.

Learning to write paragraphs is the first goal for all students. From there, your child proceeds to more challenging goals such as friendly letters, short essays, business letters, long essays, and essay tests.

The duration of the program depends on how quickly your child masters each goal and how

sophisticated you wish his or her writing skills to be.

A "PROCESS" APPROACH TO WRITING THAT'S FUN AND EFFECTIVE.

At Sylvan, we've learned that the best way to teach students to write is to have them do just that—write.

The student-teacher ratio is never more than three to one at Sylvan. Students receive plenty of personal attention, encouragement, and praise.

SOPHISTICATED, MULTI-SENSORY LEARNING MATERIALS.

The Sylvan CLEAR WritingSM Program features a variety of multi-sensory learning materials, including basic Writing Skills Kits containing special skill and practice cards; state-of-the-art word processing programs for electronic editing; and, for older students, additional drill-and-practice exercises using computer software.

YOU'LL SEE THE DIFFERENCE.

We're confident your child's writing skills will increase dramatically at Sylvan. That can lead to better grades, better college application skills, even better jobs. Equally important, you may well see a lift in self-esteem and confidence that carries into school and social life, too.

Give your child the competitive edge of the Sylvan CLEAR WritingSM Program now. Begin today.

Adult enrollment welcomed. Ask your Sylvan Center Director for more information.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY ABOUT SYLVAN.®

“I have studied the Sylvan program very carefully and feel that it provides an excellent opportunity for each child—whether that child needs remediation of existing problems or enrichment of the regular academic program offered in the school. Sylvan Learning Centers use curriculum materials and teaching techniques that are among the most effective I have observed.”

—T.H. Bell, Ed.D., United States
Secretary of Education, 1981-1984

“Sylvan is the nation's largest supplementary education service and works closely with school counselors and teachers. I know their testing to be thorough and their programs on target to help students achieve in school. I endorse their services.”

—Darryl T. Yagi, American School
Counselor Association (ASCA)
School Counselor of the Year, 1989

“I have reviewed Sylvan's curriculum, especially its Study Skills Program, and found it to be an excellent blend of skills, parental involvement, behavior enhancement and time management strategies.”

—Ruth A. Peters, Ph.D.,
Clinical Psychologist
Sylvan Study Skills advisor

“The Sylvan Learning Center Reading Program is a fantastic array of interesting materials designed to enhance reading/thinking skills. The diagnostics result in accurate placement so that an individual can achieve and get positive feedback immediately.”

—Larry Hafner, Ed.D., Professor of
Reading and Language Arts at
Florida State University in Tallahassee



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Helping kids be their best.™

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Sylvan Learning Center.®
Helping kids be their best.™

THE SYLVAN® ALGEBRA PROGRAM.



HELPING KIDS DO BETTER IN ALGEBRA.

Sylvan Learning CentersSM can help. With positive encouragement, professional guidance, and a proven motivation system, we'll help your child conquer the basics of algebra, and give him or her a better start toward a successful future.

THE FIRST STEP: AN ACCURATE APPRAISAL.

We begin with a custom-developed test which reveals strengths and weaknesses in conceptual mathematics and algebra. We also screen vision and auditory discrimination to see if physical problems could be inhibiting learning.

WE DON'T USE A SET FORMULA TO TEACH ALGEBRA.

The test pinpoints exactly which skills the student needs to work on. Then, based on the test results, the algebra program is prescribed by a Sylvan teacher specially trained to administer tests and interpret results.

The duration of the program will depend on each student's particular needs. Some will need to review and reinforce fundamental basic math skills before proceeding to the more demanding algebra phase.

A computer software system especially designed for Sylvan supports the core of the algebra program. The

software is user-friendly and encourages students to analyze their mistakes, while allowing the instructor to correct errors and reinforce basic skills. This is accomplished using achievement plans and a host of supplementary materials.

PROGRESS IS CHARTED DAILY.

Progress in algebra is charted daily and tested regularly. You are kept up-to-date through parent conferences. And because the regular classroom teacher is a part of the educational process, he or she is kept abreast of the improvement as well. Of course, parents are welcome to visit any time during the program.

YOU'LL SEE RESULTS.

The results of Sylvan instruction show up not just on the report card, but also in a whole new self-confidence and desire to learn that you may never have seen before — and may never have thought possible.

If you want to see your child do better, the time to come to Sylvan is now. Because the program is individualized, your child can start at any time. Why not today?



"The attention I received helped a lot . . . my test grades went up 230 points and [Sylvan] helped me in my schoolwork. Everyone



was so accommodating to my schedule . . . and really nice."



The key to successful SAT/ACT test scores is through learning to think and solve problems, not through gimmicks and guessing games. That is where Sylvan Learning Center can help.

Across the U.S. and Canada, students learn and use the critical thinking strategies, identified by author and testing expert Dr. Gary Gruber, to significantly boost their SAT/ACT math and verbal scores. More importantly, students who've taken the course also demonstrate remarkable improvement in their overall test-taking abilities.

We prepare your child for success:

- We teach critical thinking, not guessing.
- We provide courses that fit busy schedules.
- Our certified teachers provide a positive, challenging and fun learning environment. We offer either individualized or group courses that give students the freedom to work at their own pace.
- We offer consultation and tutorial opportunities.
- We schedule conferences to discuss your child's progress.
- We guarantee results. We expect your child to improve a minimum of 120 points on the SAT, or a comparable 3 points on the ACT. If the second SAT/ACT score isn't the guaranteed number of points higher than the first score, your child can attend SAT/ACT study labs at no charge.

The SAT/ACT tests are crucial for college placement. Sylvan can help. Because we offer a variety of SAT/ACT preparation courses, you can choose the one that best fits your needs and schedule.

Call or visit your neighborhood Sylvan Learning Center today.



**Sylvan
Learning
Center®**