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FROM: MARGOT ROBERTS

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ PAGES TO FOLLOW: -2-

COMMENTS: In keeping with our ongoing discourse
about Chicago. (The notes in margin aren't mine)
It certainly raises lots of issues on both sides of the debate:
social promotion. Anyway, food for thought.

Good to see you on Thursday

May

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CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Tuesday, January 27, 1998

City educators plan remedial high schools

8th grade transition centers to offer 4-6 year alternative

By Michael Martinez
TRIBUNE EDUCATION WRITER

The Chicago Public Schools' new freshman transition centers—created last fall for 8th graders too old for elementary school but too far behind academically to do high school work—will be transformed next year into four-to-six-year alternative high schools because school officials say some students will never be able to make it in a traditional high school.

As officials prepare to release Iowa Test scores for the roughly 1,100 students in the nine centers showing that more than half still failed to meet minimum requirements for high school, they say the new schools will be necessary for kids who remain as much as four or five years behind in reading and math.

The action is one more dramatic experiment in a school system facing the repercussions of years of chronic academic and urban challenges that have left many students unable to catch up even with intensive support.

Students who graduate from the new schools will be granted an alternative diploma akin to a General Equivalency Diploma upon completing four to six years in the transition school, said schools chief Paul Vallas.

The rocky experience of some students at the centers, which offer an impressive array of services and individualized instruction, illustrates the complicated issues involved in

SEE TRANSITION, BACK PAGE

Transition

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Keeping kids motivated to stay in school while also holding them back and labeling them as severely remedial students.

"For many kids who do not make grade and who will never make the minimum standard to get into high school (these transition schools) will become an alternative high school for them," said Vallas.

"It would be easy to fault the kids, but they were in a system that actually promoted them and provided no intervention when they were behind in their early elementary years—and not to mention the obstacles they faced at home or in their neighborhood.

The hope is that the bulk of the kids will move on to the high schools, but there will be some kids who will never be up to the minimum standards. So what are you going to do? Kick them out?"

Some educators at the transition centers, however, privately question the board's plan and say it could lead kids just to quit school entirely—a contention also made by researchers who say flunking contributes to dropout rates.

"Two years (in a transition center) will be counterproductive," one teacher said.

But school board officials say the transition centers stand to reduce dropout rates.

"Normally if the kids are put in high school they would drop out in their junior or senior year. The transition school is giving them the opportunity to make up for lost time," Vallas said.

He added: "Is it a school for stupid kids? The stupid kids are the ones who leave, who drop out. This is a school for kids who want to get caught up. We're trying to provide a special support service for children who have special needs. What we're saying is we're not giving up on any child in the system."

One teacher at a transition academy, Maureen Erickson, summed up the contradictions of the schools

"mies, where students call themselves 8th graders:

"For whatever reason they're here, it is a beautiful place for them. But none of them want to be here," said Erickson, a 23-year-old language arts teacher. "But they don't know how good they have it. Sometimes they say it is good, but it's not where the action is. They want dances, they want big. It drives us crazy because we know they are better off here."

Danny Shiba, 15, was placed at Transition Center A—the schools are too new to have full-fledged names—after failing to graduate last year from Solomon Elementary School. Of his placement, he commented: "It's messed up. It's for stupid kids. It's for kids who didn't do good. You're idiots. I'm admitting it. I didn't listen. I didn't do good. I'm facing the consequences."

Danny added, however, that he is working harder now: "I'm doing my work. I got my homework right here. In an envelope, my English sheets and my math sheets. And I read at home."

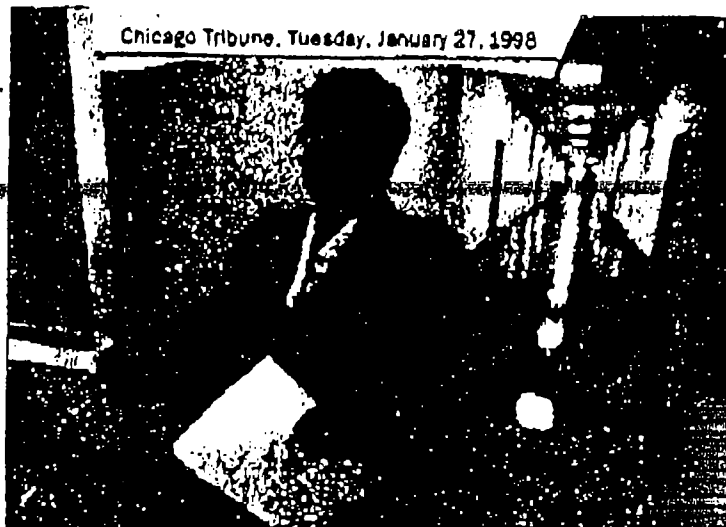
Erickson teaches reading and writing in what may seem the ideal assignment: freshly painted walls with big windows, new desks and classes with 12 students or fewer. On a recent afternoon, she provided individualized instruction to seven students in her language arts class, something most other public school teachers cannot do because their class sizes are more than twice that size. Then she acted like a mentor to three kids during a conversation over her desk. In all she spent more time on teaching than admonishing kids—an all too infrequent reality for many Chicago teachers.

But she is all too aware that the school is the last place most Chicago students want to go. These 8th graders spend one more hour a day in school than their peers.

At Transition Center A, at 630 W. Irving Park Rd., students have 100-minute classes in reading and math, in addition to the usual classes like social studies and health. But instruction is at 8th

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PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Chicago Tribune, Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Tribune photo by Robert O'Rourke Brown

"You tell them to keep at it, and you tell them they are going to high school," says Transition Center A principal Virginia Boutista-White, of the older students in her school's remedial program.

grade levels, a reality not lost on the 110 students.

Many of the students also face serious problems beyond traditional learning problems, such as juvenile probation, foster care, chronic truancy and behavioral disorders. In fact, about 100 of the 1,100 students in transition centers are 17 years old, or the age of high school juniors or seniors, officials said.

"When individual students want to talk about it, you're reflective and you tell them you need to do what you can do. You tell them to keep at it, and you tell them they are going to high school," said Virginia Boutista-White, principal of the transition center. "Overall, the idea is certainly good to address the needs of the students."

"The system is really trying to cut the Gordian knot between two unattractive alternatives: either passing the kids along and graduating kids who are not performing up to snuff, or not passing them along and having higher dropouts," said Fred Hans, research professor at Northwestern University's

School of Education and Social Policy, who has been hired by the school board to study the system's seven reconstituted high schools. "Whether it's successful or not is much harder to foresee."

School board officials are expecting to announce this week the math and reading results of the Iowa Tests taken by the 1,100 students two weeks ago. Students will have another chance to take the Iowas in May. To be promoted to 9th grade, students must post a 7.2 grade level on the Iowa reading and math tests. Students were placed in the transition center if they failed the reading or math test or both last year and had turned 16 years old by last Dec. 1.

Students who fail the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills this month or in May will be forced to attend the transition school another year—until they have met the board's promotion standards to enter high school.

School officials said preliminary figures show that about 40 percent of the students passed the Iowas this month and added that they

expect about half of the students to pass the test by year's end and go onto high school.

"I'm hoping for 50 percent or better. The reason that I'm saying that is that some of the kids are three or four years behind and you can't expect miracles," said Brandon Davis, the board's chief of schools and regions.

At Transition School A, located in a leased third-floor wing of the Islamic College, the school has few high school amenities: there are no clubs, no dances, no open campus, and no gymnasium, though other transition schools do have gyms.

It is just beginning to offer traditional activities: The school just started a boys basketball team, the Lake Shoreazers, under a new league for the nine transition centers, and it will later have a girls' team, organized by Kling High School basketball coach Landon "Sonny" Cox, who is also an administrator at the school board. The school is also organizing its first student council elections.

The recent Iowa tests were weighing heavily on some students at Transition Center A, but others were confident because their last scores were just shy of the promotion standard.

"I'm nervous," said Jo-Nathan Polindexter, 15. "I've been working hard, and I've been going to church and been praying about it. I just pray that I passed and that I make it to high school. I had a dream about it last night, that I didn't make it. I felt I was left out. I'd be kind of embarrassed if I don't make it because it would be twice I didn't make it."

"I'd rather be in a regular high school," said Dante Dodds, 15, who transferred from Transition Center C at 838 W. Marquette Rd. in November because of a family move. "I'd feel better. I'd be normal. I'd feel like myself again, but this school I'm doing OK."

"It's all right. It's better than my old school," said Brandon Dixon, 15. "In my old school, it was too rowdy and I couldn't concentrate on my work."

Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

When a School Fails

By Sandra Feldman, President
American Federation of Teachers

When the late Al Shanker started *Where We Stand* over 25 years ago, he pledged that he would freely explore and advance ideas, even if they were controversial and were not AFT policy. The new *Where We Stand*, which begins with this column, will have a different voice, but it carries the same pledge. I've spent my life in urban public schools—and there's probably nothing going on there that I haven't seen. So I'll be able to puncture some myths about how the schools work, confirm others, and raise issues that often get pushed aside. Our schools have plenty of problems; they also have many strengths. I'll be writing about both.

♦♦♦

One of the most outrageous things about failing schools is that everyone—including the district administration—knows which ones they are, but often years go by and no one does anything about them. In some cases, a school's problems are obvious: There is chronic disruption and violence, poor attendance, filthy hallways, and of course, achievement that is consistently below par. But sometimes a failing school is just a dead place where everyone has given up.

What can we do about these schools? Put simply and starkly, I believe that those of us responsible for public education must never defend or try to perpetuate a school to which we would not send our own children. If a district has recognized that a school is in trouble and has given it help over a period of time and the school has not responded, we must shut that school down and start anew.

A Simplistic Response

The good news is that states and cities are taking steps to shut down failing schools. The bad news is that in most cases they do it crudely—getting rid of people instead of bad practices, putting in new people and keeping the same old programs and practices that didn't work to begin with. This strategy, which often goes by the ugly name of *reconstitution*, offers a simplistic response to a complicated problem.

There are many reasons why schools fail. Poor leadership is one of them, and a shortage of qualified teachers is another. Often administrators have settled for weak, watered-down curricula instead of adopting solid, proven programs, and they are unwilling or unable to maintain school discipline. And often there is an unconscionable lack of books and supplies—a sure sign of bad management, even when



We must not try to perpetuate schools to which we would not send our own children.

resources are scarce. But if we shut down one of these schools—and do it right—the school *can* come back.

One New York City high school, for example, had incompetent principals for years. Discipline was never enforced. Violence was common. There were assaults on teachers and students, and students rioted in the halls and lunchroom. Many teachers had lost confidence in their ability to do their jobs.

How did this dysfunctional place get turned around? By starting over. Working together, parents, the teachers' union, and an enlightened superintendent were able to close the

school and re-open it as four small, theme-based schools in the same building. Today, parents who had forsaken the failing school are sending their children back. There's a waiting list for students—and teachers—at the new schools. About half the original teachers stayed; others were allowed to transfer to schools elsewhere in the district.

No One Group Is To Blame

As the New York experience and similar ones elsewhere show, no one group is to blame for failing schools and no one group can achieve the necessary change. Boards of education, superintendents, the leaders of local teachers' unions, parents, and school staff have to work together on solutions. On criteria to identify failing schools. On humane and dignified processes for transferring staff if that is deemed useful or necessary. And above all, on bringing in programs and practices that have been proven to work, especially with at-risk kids.

I made this proposal in one of my first speeches as president of the AFT—to an audience of AFT members and school board members and administrators from around the country. I thought that saying we should get out front in support of shutting down failing schools was a bit risky, but my risky proposal got a standing ovation.

Good ideas can be ruined in their execution. It's essential that we shut down failing schools. It's also essential that we do it right. If we have the guts and the patience to work together, we can rebuild these schools into places where

Where We Stand is published once every month in *Time*. To comment, write to Sandra Feldman, The American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001. For AFT news, visit our web site (<http://www.aft.org>).

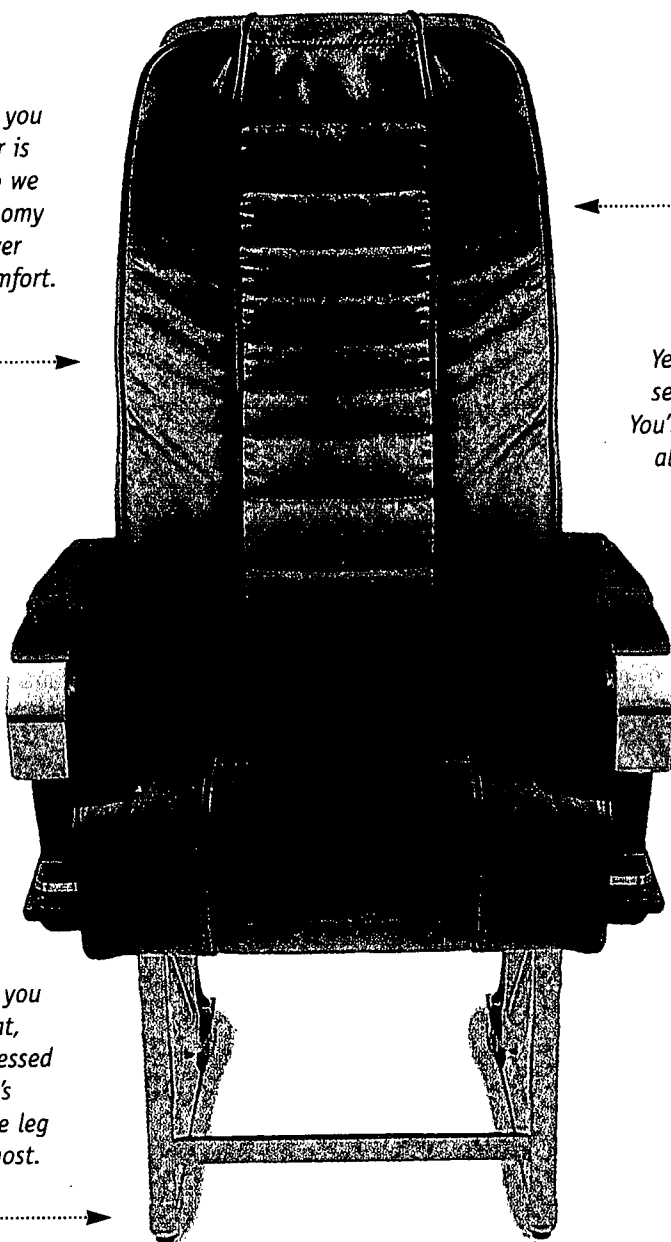
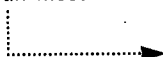
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No social promotion



Pauline_Abernathy @ ed.gov
08/25/97 10:19:00 AM

Record Type: Record

To: William R. Kincaid

cc:

Subject: State of the Union

Here's what the POTUS said in the 1997 SOTU:

"Good tests will show us who needs help, what changes in teaching to make, and which schools need to improve. They can help us to end social promotion. For no child should move from grade school to junior high, or junior high to high school until he or she is ready."

guidelines that no school shall have black enrollment of less than 10 percent or more than 80 percent.

Aug. 1984: Kaufman appoints five-member panel to recommend desegregation plan.

May 1985: Board of Education approves a new desegregation plan to create 30 magnet schools and provide additional financing for 10 predominantly black schools (Milliken II

schools).

June 1996: Board of Education votes to abandon court-ordered racial balance guidelines by allowing black students on a waiting list to fill 500 magnet program slots left vacant because no white, Asian or Latino students applied for them.

July 1996: U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte rules that the Board of Education must seek his permission

before abandoning the racial balance guidelines for the magnet programs. The judge also announces that he will appoint an independent panel to conduct the first full-scale review of the school system's desegregation efforts since the mid-1980s.

July 1997: The independent panel reports that Prince George's has done all it can to desegregate schools.■

37. Chicago Tribune

July 1, 1997

high stake testing / No social promotion

City schools start mandatory summer school programs

By Janita Poe

TRIBUNE EDUCATION WRITER

Demonstrating just how zealous they are about improving dismal standardized test scores, Chicago school officials launched mandatory and other summer school programs Monday with an unprecedented enrollment —about one-fifth of the student population —and an almost militaristic spirit.

In classrooms across the city, teachers began offering a regimented, step-by-step lesson plan designed to improve academic performance and lift the image of what for years has been one of the poorest performing school systems in the country.

At Metcalfe Elementary School on the Far South Side, teachers carried out their duties like a martial drill team: In Room 213, Gwendolyn Woodruff grilled 6th graders on percentages and number lines. Across the hall, counterpart Ruby McGhee was right in sync, reviewing the very same math concepts with other pupils.

"I think it's great because we're doing exactly what they want us to," said Woodruff. "Everything was planned. We're just following the lesson plans."

This year's massive \$50 million summer school program —up from a budget of about half that amount last year —was one of the centerpiece of the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees' determination to retool the academics of the nation's third-largest public school system.

The district pre-enrolled about 83,000 students this year, including 43,349 from 3rd, 6th, 8th and 9th grades in the mandatory summer school "bridge" program. Another 60,000 students were

enrolled in a range of sports and social activities —making the comprehensive summer program the largest in recent history.

In contrast to the past —including last year, when summer school began without adequate books or curriculum plans —officials appeared to be well prepared Monday. Teachers involved in the mandatory program, for instance, participated in two days of preparation and were armed with thick tomes of lesson plans averaging 150 pages.

Students and parents also have a better understanding of what is expected of them because of the district's refusal to allow "social promotions."

"What we did this year was to ensure that there was a great deal of preparation," said Deputy Education Officer Blondeau Davis. "Throughout the system there is a feeling of accountability."

Under the current administration, handpicked in a major reform move two years ago by Mayor Richard Daley, the previously condoned philosophy that academically challenged students should be promoted out of concern for their self-esteem quickly lost favor.

The value of that past philosophy has not just been a local concern; educators nationwide have been debating the benefits of passing students who are not able to adequately read, write or work out math problems.

Some school officials believe a regimented summer school program will help youngsters focus on their weak points and become better students. "The public school class is large and when you

have kids who need more attention they sometimes start slipping through the cracks," said Metcalfe principal Al Foster.

Others hope the strict promotion policy will help students and their parents get serious about learning. "I think it is motivating parents to get their children motivated," said Francis Oden, principal of Beethoven Elementary School on the South Side.

Mandatory summer school is required for students in certain grades who are not achieving minimum scores in reading and math on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills —2.8 for 3rd graders, 5.3 for 6th graders, 7.0 for 8th graders and 8.0 for 9th graders. This year, summer school also is required for students in those grades with a grade of "F" in reading and math or more than 20 unexcused absences.

The 3rd and 6th graders attend school for three hours —half the time spent studying reading and half in math. Older students spend four hours in the two subjects.

At the end of summer school —Aug. 8 for the lower grades and Aug. 15 for upper level students —all students will take another version of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Those 3rd and 6th graders who do not score at the required level will have to repeat a grade; students in the 8th and 9th grades will enroll in special transitional centers where they will remain until they test at an acceptable level, and then go on to high school.

While many students are not too happy about having to attend school during what was supposed to be vacation

however, because of the demographics of a school system that is now about 73 percent black, the report says.

The panel asserted that involuntary busing actually may have made racial segregation more severe in some middle schools, because black children have been bused to schools that are predominantly black.

The report, which comes as even many NAACP members are beginning to question the continued need for busing, is scheduled for release today at an 11 a.m. news conference at the school administration building in Upper Marlboro. A source who asked not to be identified shared the panel's findings with The Washington Post, and a school official and a county official confirmed the conclusions.

Board of Education Chairman Kenneth E. Johnson (District 6) said he believes the report will allow the board to implement its neighborhood school plan, which proposes a gradual end to involuntary busing and a return to significantly enhanced or brand-new neighborhood schools. The report does not mention the board's \$346 million plan, but Johnson said the report does not rule out the possibility that the judge could order the county to finance the neighborhood school plan.

"It gives us some means to look at other alternatives for desegregating," Johnson said. "I think it gives us the opportunity to do what we wanted to do all along."

Deputy County Attorney Sean D. Wallace said the panel's findings point to an end of court supervision. The county supports the board's neighborhood school plan but does not want nor expect the judge to order it implemented, he said.

"They clearly have recognized those facts that those of us who live here know to be true: that the time has long passed when it is necessary or appropriate for the court to be supervising our school system," Wallace said. "The court is there to end segregation. It is not there to let the board have what the board wants."

Messitte plans to hold a hearing on the panel's findings this summer and issue a ruling that will be implemented by the beginning of the next school year, in September.

In recent years, federal courts across the country have released school districts from decades-old desegregation orders similar to the one in Prince George's. With about 125,000 students, Prince George's is the only school district in the

Washington area under a federal desegregation order.

The NAACP, one of the staunchest supporters of involuntary busing as an integration tool, is reopening discussions on the issue of school integration. A debate is scheduled at the civil rights organization's national convention, which begins next week in Pittsburgh.

The organization has been criticized by black and white parents alike, who say mandatory busing has outlived its usefulness, especially in school systems that are overwhelmingly black. In Prince George's, the school system was nearly 80 percent white in 1972 when another federal judge issued the busing order.

William R. Martin, who was president of the Prince George's branch of the NAACP in 1979, said he has believed all along that the focus of the civil rights organization should be the quality of education in the schools, not their racial makeup. He said he resents the idea that black children could not get a quality education in a predominantly black or all-black school.

"Busing didn't do anything to improve achievement test scores," he said.

But Sylvester Vaughns, one of the parents the NAACP represented in the lawsuit that led to forced busing, said he remains a strong supporter of mandatory busing. And he said he is not convinced that the school system has done all it could to eliminate segregation.

"The Supreme Court in 1954, as I understand it, made a decision that schools could not be segregated because segregated schools are inherently unequal," Vaughns said. "If it has come to a point where segregation does not have the same effect as it once did, somebody will have to convince me of that."

Messitte assigned the panel of specialists to scrutinize 14 areas of school operations: staff hiring, transportation, extracurricular activities, facilities, quality of education, school board appointments, compensation, curriculum, school locations, comparative dropout rates, graduation rates, scores on standardized tests, magnet schools, and Milliken II schools, which receive extra resources because they are deemed too difficult to integrate.

The members did not make a recommendation on whether the school system should be declared "unitary," which would mean that court supervision is no longer necessary because school officials no longer operate a dual system

for black and white children. However, they found that in most of the areas they studied, the school system has done what is practical to promote integration or eliminate traces of discrimination.

The panel identified teacher assignment to schools by race as a problem area and questioned how vigorously school officials have worked to integrate faculties.

Although outlining other problem areas, the report says the panel could point to no discriminatory policies or procedures that might have caused them. Those include a disproportionately low number of black children in Advanced Placement courses and other challenging academic programs, the abundance of black children in special education, the high number of black children suspended and expelled, and the gap in standardized test scores between black children and their white peers.

The panel recommended that if the judge declares the school system unitary, the school system should be required to do the following: declare its intentions to keep the resources in place for its magnet and Milliken II programs, establish a plan that would describe what it would do next, define ways to strengthen accountability measures, and design a research and evaluation program to ensure that schools remain integrated.

The panel was headed by Robert E. Shoenberg, a former member of the Montgomery County school board and University of Maryland administrator who now works as an education consultant in Silver Spring. The other members were Robert Peterkin, director of the Urban Superintendents Program at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education; Christine H. Rossell, chairman of the Political Science Department at Boston University since 1975; and William T. Trent, associate chancellor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

25 YEARS OF SCHOOL BUSING

Here is a chronology of school busing in Prince George's County, which originally was designed to help integrate schools throughout the county.

Dec. 1972: U.S. District Judge Frank A. Kaufman orders implementation of a desegregation plan to be accomplished primarily by student busing.

Sept. 1981: Plaintiffs request case be reopened, alleging the county still maintains a segregated school system.

Sept. 1983: Kaufman issues new desegregation order, establishing

time, the smaller classes and early preparation may be paying off for some.

Jorie Lightfoot, a 6th grader at Metcalfe's mandatory summer school, said she will be working on math, her

weakest testing area.

But trouble with test-taking has not been her only challenge. Jorie said she sometimes felt invisible in her class of 34 pupils. In a summer school class of a

dozen pupils, however, Jorie says she expects to get involved more. "It's not so much confusion," said Jorie. "You get to get involved more. It's actually kind of fun."■

38. The New York Times

07/01/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final; Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 3, Column 1

School Board President Is Quiet Peacemaker

By JACQUES STEINBERG

The president of the Board of Education, William C. Thompson Jr., had just called a public meeting to order when the chants of "Give our kids a chance!" erupted from the back of the wood-paneled room.

It was a protest by 70 members of Acorn, a community action group, who were demanding that the board discuss a new report showing how hard it is for minority children to gain admission to the city's elite public high schools.

Mr. Thompson's answer was swift. "I'm going to adjourn this meeting for five minutes," he said, "and I'm going to ask that the room be cleared." The protesters were then escorted out by school security officers, and when the May 21 meeting resumed, they were gone.

The response by Mr. Thompson was somewhat jarring, given that his voice has rarely been heard publicly or prominently in the year since he marshaled a majority on the seven-member board, including the two appointees of Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, behind his bid to oust Carol A. Gresser as president.

Yet the moment exemplified how Mr. Thompson, who is expected to be reappointed today to another one-year term, has approached his job: trying, mostly out of public view, to squelch discord in favor of peace.

That Mr. Thompson, who turns 44 next week, has been successful results not so much from his position, which is largely ceremonial, but from a confluence of outside forces.

For the first time in years, there is a Schools Chancellor, Rudy Crew, who gets along with both the board and the Mayor, whose influence on the system is great. And Mr. Thompson, who has presided over it all, has been a prime beneficiary.

But given that he holds only one of

the seven votes on his board, Mr. Thompson's continued success is contingent on his remaining in the good graces of Dr. Crew and Mr. Giuliani — and that has prompted his low-key approach.

For most of the 1990's, peace has been elusive at the board, an institution riven by such issues as sex education, shrinking budgets and mayoral control. Those disputes contributed to the unseating of one schools chancellor and the resignation of another.

Dr. Crew says he is grateful for Mr. Thompson's efforts. They have entailed keeping controversial items off the board's agenda, building alliances and preaching accommodation with City Hall, which provides the board with much of its \$8 billion annual budget.

"If you're always looking over your shoulder, it undermines your authority," Dr. Crew said, describing a dynamic that ensnared his predecessors Ramon C. Cortines and Joseph A. Fernandez. "Bill effectively says to me, 'I'm going to create the opening and you take the system through it.'"

But others say they believe that Mr. Thompson's avoidance of confrontation, particularly with the Mayor, has come at a price. While acknowledging the school system's receipt of more than \$100 million during this election year for teaching literacy, technology and the arts, critics say that the system is still reeling from the \$1.2 billion in projected school spending that the Mayor cut during the first two years of his administration.

"His role is to be a catalytic agent, and he just hasn't done it," said Victor Gotbaum, who served on the board as an appointee of David N. Dinkins during his last six months as Mayor. "If, in effect, your presidency is contingent on the Mayor and you become the submissive, somebody like myself would say, 'Why did you take it in the first place?'"

Indeed one of the few weapons at Mr. Thompson's disposal is his office's bully

pulpit, which his predecessor, Mrs. Gresser, repeatedly used to apply pressure to City Hall.

But the tactic ultimately cost Mrs. Gresser her job. Mr. Thompson has instead worked behind the scenes to help Dr. Crew, the system's chief executive.

With his dapper mustache, monogrammed cuffs and persistent smile, Mr. Thompson stands out in the board's musty headquarters in downtown Brooklyn, which is stocked with former teachers. He appears far more at home in the city's power corridors.

It is a level of comfort that Mr. Thompson acquired young, growing up the son of William C. Thompson Sr., a prominent Democratic Councilman, State Senator and judge who introduced his son to Robert F. Kennedy and Mr. Dinkins, then an Assemblyman.

After graduating from Tufts University, Mr. Thompson set out on his own political career, working as an aide to Representative Frederick W. Richmond, Democrat of Brooklyn, and then as a deputy to Howard Golden, the Brooklyn Borough President, who appointed him to the board in 1994.

It was by tapping the many political contacts he made over those years, Mr. Thompson said, that he was able to make what he considers his greatest contribution as board president: helping persuade legislative leaders to enact the sweeping law last winter that shifted authority to the Chancellor from the city's 32 community school boards.

Though Mr. Thompson was only one of many making a similar pitch, Stephen K. Allinger, the board's lobbyist in Albany, said it was the board president who most effectively outlined the provisions of the compromise bill that the Legislature ultimately adopted — a bill that quieted, at least for the moment, the fierce debate over whether the central board should be abolished.

While the Chancellor was largely credited with winning support for the bill

from Mayor Giuliani. Mr. Thompson made significant inroads with Gov. George E. Pataki during a meeting in the state's Manhattan office last September, Mr. Allinger said.

It is the kind of setting, in front of an audience of just one or two, where the soft-spoken Mr. Thompson says he feels most effective.

"I really do believe there needs to be one face on this education system, and in this instance it is Rudy Crew," said Mr. Thompson, who counts the Chancellor as a friend and often giggles with him during meetings.

But Bertha Lewis, an organizer for Acorn, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, said the black and Hispanic parents who are her constituents need an advocate in the

president's office. "We don't need him behind the scenes," she said. "We need him up front marching with us."

Hardly the marcher, Mr. Thompson is more of a compromiser, a skill he displayed on Wednesday during a meeting with Andrew Humm, an AIDS-services advocate who was urging the most far-reaching overhaul of sex education in New York in two decades. Mindful of the battle over condom distribution that brought down Mr. Fernandez, Mr. Thompson threw up his hands.

He then told Mr. Humm he would insure that the high schools were following those AIDS education practices that were already board policy.

Afterward, Mr. Humm was cautiously optimistic, saying of Mr. Thompson, "He

listened, he took notes and that counts."

Earlier that day, at a City Hall ceremony marking a rise in students' reading scores, Mr. Thompson received a far more emphatic endorsement — from Mayor Giuliani, whose two appointees on the board are essential to Mr. Thompson's majority and who has so far overlooked Mr. Thompson's only significant resistance to a mayoral idea: the takeover of school security by the police.

Mr. Thompson, the Mayor told the gathering of children, teachers and principals, does "a very difficult job that doesn't get the credit."

"This success," the Mayor added, "would be impossible without him." ■

39. The New York Times

07/01/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final (New Jersey); Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk: Page 1, Column 1

Payment Made to School

By ANDY NEWMAN

LONG BRANCH — Six weeks after the State Supreme Court ordered Gov. Christine Todd Whitman to provide up to \$248 million to 28 urban school districts, the first of the money was given out, as a

\$1.1 million grant to the Long Branch schools. The district plans to spend \$400,000 on computers for classrooms and \$313,000 to train reading and language teachers, the Schools Superintendent, Joseph Ferraina, said.

Another \$155,000 will be used to replace a leaky school roof. The court had ruled that the Governor's plan to improve education by raising academic standards, instead of spending, was unconstitutional. ■

40. San Francisco Chronicle

July 1, 1997

28 Bay Area Public Schools Given \$4 Million for Reforms

Twenty-eight Bay Area public schools have received a total of \$4 million to pay for changes in their administrative practices.

The award by the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, announced yesterday, comprises about \$150 per student at each school. The 28 recipient campuses include:

— International Studies Academy, in San Francisco. The high school will use its grant to introduce more sophisticated

senior projects into its curriculum.

— Paul Revere Elementary, in San Francisco. The school was given money to continue building literacy skills in Spanish and English bilingual development classes. In addition, the award will pay to expand programs for students with reading difficulties.

— E.R. Taylor Elementary, in San Francisco. Located in the Portola district, this school was awarded a grant to establish uniform language-arts standards

and to integrate computer technology into its curriculum.

The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative is a "partnership" of public and private agencies, including foundations. Its main income is derived from the Hewlett-Annenberg Challenge grant, a \$50 million financial base created by William R. Hewlett, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Annenberg Foundation. ■

Ratings Raise Qualms in Suburban Schools

By JOSEPH BERGER

SCARSDALE, N.Y., Feb. 21 — This has been an especially harsh winter for administrators in the suburban school systems around New York City, which include some of the best schools in the nation.

Just after New Year's Day, the State Education Department for the first time issued school report cards that allowed families to compare their children's schools within their own districts or with those in neighboring districts.

New York City had been publishing similar comparisons for years and the response there was relatively nonchalant. But in genteel towns like Scarsdale, Pelham, Irvington, and Mamaroneck in Westchester County and Roslyn and Oyster Bay in Nassau County, parents who had been led to believe that their schools were models of educational excellence suddenly discovered that many schools did not quite measure up. And they were not happy.

"Where, as in Scarsdale, you pay premium property taxes, you are entitled, at the very least, to premium test scores," Seth M. Schwartz, a corporate lawyer, wrote in one of the many letters debating the reports cards in the local weekly, *The Scarsdale Inquirer*.

In the ensuing uproar, school superintendents and principals have been put on the defensive. Some superintendents, including Dr. Charles T. Wilson of Pelham, are promising changes in curriculums to emphasize such Dick and Jane basics as phonics. Many are questioning how accurately the report cards reflect the quality of a school. And **virtually** all are doing some soul-searching, examining if they are **demanding** enough of their students and **asking** teachers to aim material **more** directly at improving test scores.

"It's been very painful," Dr. Francis M. Murphy, the Scarsdale Superintendent, said. "Nobody likes to review their work in public with their customers, particularly through the newspapers. On the other hand if we have some lemons, let's make some lemonade."

In Scarsdale, school officials are

rethinking a 20-year-old policy of not giving homework until third grade, a policy that Mr. Murphy said was intended to keep students from becoming automatons.

"Parents have been telling us that the fact that you don't give homework doesn't give us a sense of what you're working on," Dr. Murphy said, "and as a consequence, we don't know how to help."

In challenging the accuracy of the report cards, the superintendents have aimed much of their criticism at newspapers like *The New York Times*, which published selections from the report cards and ranked schools by adjusting reading scores to reflect differences in community income. Among other objections, some superintendents say the in-

In schools and real estate offices, reverberations from a report card.

come figures fail to paint a full picture of the range of families using each school. Many superintendents protested that numbers used in *The Times* were on the reading score of a single grade — third grade — when the results of other grades in other subjects often gave a more varied picture of a school's quality.

"We're talking about 100 third graders who took one reading test in one afternoon and it was like they had lost the Super Bowl," Dr. Wilson, the Pelham Superintendent, said. "I had a real estate agent come in and tell me he lost the sale because of *The Times* article."

At the Edgewood School here, tests showed that 66 percent of third graders were able to read typical grade 3 textbooks, compared with 88 percent at two other Scarsdale schools. The school's principal, Dr. Scott Houseknecht, found himself holding seven meetings with parents and residents

and an eighth meeting for an unusual constituency, real estate agents, who were concerned that mediocre scores would make it difficult to sell houses. Dr. Houseknecht called the third grade score misleading, noting that the school's fifth graders had higher scores than the other four Scarsdale schools.

But such rationales do not sit well with parents. A second grader's mother said that Edgewood's true problem is its singleminded whole language approach, which she said worked best with children who had a talent for figuring new words in context.

"Some kids need explicit phonics instructions," she said. "Some kids need a road map and when they don't get it, they become crippled."

These debates are precisely the kind that Richard P. Mills, the state's Education Commissioner, had hoped the report cards would ignite. "If a community has been used to hearing that things are just fine," he said, "now they get a chance to see that for themselves."

Public schools have been tested for decades, although the results in the suburbs and upstate were usually broadcast only within each school. Even then, the barometer for evaluating a school was the proportion of students meeting the state's minimum competency level — content that can be one year below the level of the grade taking the test. That standard is virtually meaningless in affluent suburban districts, where more than 90 percent of the students regularly surpass it.

The report cards provided more results than ever before — percentages of students reading two years above grade level, fourth-grade science scores, fifth-grade writing scores and more. And the results were furnished to newspapers and made available on the Internet. That let parents compare schools by using the same set of scores.

In responding to parents' concerns about the report cards and newspaper rankings, superintendents have been trying to explain that some results may not be as mediocre as they seem because grade level was

More...

Suburban Schools continued...

defined in a way parents had never seen before.

Grade level is usually arrived at by giving a reading test to a demographically representative sample of third graders. The median score — which 50 percent of students surpass and 50 percent fail to reach — becomes the grade level for the entire nation.

The state report cards were based on tests that use a tougher standard: reading passages that testmakers have decided children ought be able to read at the end of third grade. Dr. Murphy thinks the fill-in-the-blank questions based on those passages were "sophisticated" even for Scarsdale third graders.

In Roslyn, L.I., 92 percent of the third graders met the minimal state requirements but only 60 percent adequately read the third-grade passages on the state's test. Frank A. Tassone, the Roslyn Superintendent, wrote to *The Times* that "you arbitrarily chose a higher standard to define 'grade level' so you wouldn't have to report that almost all Long Island schools are doing very well in third grade reading."

Another sore point was that the State Education Department calculated the proportion of students passing the Regents exam by dividing the number passing a given subject by the average enrollment in a high school grade. Critics noted that many students were not in Regents-level courses, chose not to take the Regents test or took harder tests under variances approved by the State Education Department.

At Irvington High School, the report cards showed that 68 percent of the 76 students in the 10th grade passed the Regents biology test. But Richard A. Hajek, the Irvington Superintendent, said that 55 students took the test and 53 of those passed, a passing rate closer to 96 percent and one that would reflect more favorably on Irvington's biology teachers.

Mary Ann Awad, the state education official who coordinated the report cards, said the state calculated the passing rate in the way it did because otherwise schools would give the examination only to students

who could pass.

Across the suburbs, educators say they worry that the report cards will put an undue emphasis on preparation for testing and sabotage programs aimed at getting students to

enjoy reading. "Are we going to put so much emphasis that we achieve high reading scores," Dr. Murphy said, "but make reading so repugnant for children that they don't become lifelong learners?"

assessment exams that are being developed by the state as a requirement for high school graduation by 2004, Zimmer said.

For Hammond freshman Scott Sines, starting the new sequence of math classes has been a vast improvement over his previous math studies.

"We're learning different ways to understand the same thing," said Scott. 14.

And as Hammond math teacher Larry Luthe points out, Scott's math grades have improved from B's last year to A's this year. One reason: Scott is more willing to spend time studying math because "it's more interesting."

Probability and beans

One recent morning, Luthe led his students through a lesson on probability, mixing the algebraic skills of cross-multiplication, the numeric skills of proportions and a geometric, hands-on exercise involving beans.

"The students would never be studying probability this year," Luthe said. "I think they're seeing that math has real applications a lot earlier, which

hopefully will keep them interested."

By bringing probability and statistics into the three-year integrated algebra and geometry sequence, more students won't have to take an extra year to study those subjects before taking precalculus, Zimmer said.

That likely will mean more county high school graduates will be prepared to start calculus in their first year of college.

Another benefit of the program is that its lessons are similar to the way the SAT is structured, Zimmer said.

School districts in California and Oregon using a similar program have seen their high school students' SAT math scores rise by at least 30 points.

"I really think the students will improve on the SAT," said Mount Hebron math teacher Steve Beninghove.

SAT math questions

He said he gave a set of 16 SAT geometry questions to his students in the first year of the integrated class, and they answered 13 to 15 questions correctly.

Typically, those same students would do much worse, he said, because their instruction so far would have been only

in algebra.

"We're ahead in geometry, but we're behind in algebra," Beninghove said. "That's the part that feels so unfamiliar, and it's the part that worries me a little bit."

"I think that's why we need a second year of the pilot," he said. "We need to make sure the kids pick up the necessary algebra skills."

To be sure, the new sequence of courses spends less time emphasizing the traditional drills for algebra problems.

Zimmer said the change acknowledges students are going to be reliant on calculators, though they won't be successful unless they know how to apply the calculators properly.

For example, to determine square roots, she said, "we have technology that will do it."

"Students who know how to manipulate that technology are the ones who will be much more powerful in the future," Zimmer said.

"The real world doesn't deal with a row of problems that come out in whole numbers all the time." ■

18. Austin American-Statesman

05/24/97 Page B1

TAAS scores add to schools' glow over Blue Ribbons

By Jodi Berls, Sharon Jayson

School honors popped up like wildflowers in Central Texas on Friday, but it was Austin's day to bloom.

The Austin school district collected four Blue Ribbon School awards and posted preliminary test scores that show dramatic gains, especially in mathematics for African American students, whose scores had been a source of concern.

In fact, the district has exceeded the state's year-2000 standard for passing rates on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) in all but a few categories three years early, and Austin still is predicting it will have no schools rated low-performing for 1996-97.

The district had 11 schools rated low-performing last year.

Early scores elsewhere in the area also showed improvement on the tests given in late April, with schools in the San Marcos and Round Rock districts posting notable gains.

The Texas Education Agency plans to announce statewide results next week.

At a ceremony Friday at Campbell

Elementary School, U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett awarded Blue Ribbon status to seven Travis County campuses, which he said was the largest number of any county in the nation.

The U.S. Department of Education presents Blue Ribbon honors to schools that have demonstrated excellence in student achievement, safety and parent involvement.

"We've heard plenty about what's wrong with public education," Doggett said. "There is no better proof of why we should continue a national commitment to education than the success of these Travis County schools."

Brown, Campbell, Walnut Creek and Zavala elementary schools in Austin won the prestigious recognition, as did Smith Elementary in Del Valle and Eanes and Valley View elementaries in the Eanes school district.

The only other Central Texas school to win a Blue Ribbon was Pond Springs Elementary in the Round Rock school district.

Staff gets credit

In celebration of the good news about Blue Ribbon awards and test scores, Austin Superintendent Jim Fox credited the district's "brilliant staff," all the way down to the "courageous bus drivers who sit with 60 screaming kids behind them every day."

The four Austin schools have populations that are mobile, mostly minority and overwhelmingly poor, conditions that many educators say might make it difficult for students to do well in school. Nevertheless, all four consistently have posted achievement scores well above state standards.

Principals at the winning schools said they haven't done anything flashy — they've just worked hard for their students over the long haul.

"We've come a long way," said Leticia Hinojosa, principal at Brown. She attributed the school's success to sticking to the basics, using staff teamwork and maintaining parent support.

"This will put us on the map," she said of the award.

Screen of
Kenny
Browning
of State
July

Mamie Robinson of Campbell agreed. "It will let people know that we are a quality school," she said. "We have a great campus and a great staff, and our kids are doing a great job."

Final TAAS scores won't be released until August, when state officials issue annual campus ratings. But Austin officials were so tickled with their results that they released preliminary scores early.

Good numbers in math

Deputy Superintendent Kay Psencik said math scores, which have been troublesome both in Austin and across the state, showed the biggest gains. All grades tested — third through eighth — passed at rates of between 5 percent and 11 percent higher than last year. More than 60 percent of students in all grades passed the mathematics portion of the test.

"Mathematics has been the area on which we've focused," Psencik said. "It was an area where we needed to see a

great deal of growth."

The district's scores in reading showed improvement, too, and writing scores showed minority and low-income students slowly gaining on their white counterparts, she said.

The state has set a standard that requires schools to show 50 percent passing rates for reading, writing and mathematics in all grades and for all student groups by the year 2000. Groups measured are African American, Hispanic, white and low-income students.

Austin now has met that standard in all but two areas: seventh- and eighth-grade mathematics for low-income and minority students, where despite improvement, passing rates are in the 40 percent range.

In other Central Texas districts, preliminary results were also encouraging. Round Rock district campuses generally posted gains, although there was a slight dip at some campuses for certain grade levels.

Several campuses had 97, 98 or 99 percent passing rates, and Laurel Mountain Elementary School noted a 100 percent passing rate for third-grade reading.

In the Hays school district, Assistant Superintendent John Hardwick said he is "pleased with the progress we've made." The district posted gains in most grades, but fifth-grade scores dipped slightly in reading and math.

For San Marcos students, there were significant gains all around, with many campus scores reaching a 90 percent passing rate. DeZavala Elementary, in particular, had passing rates of 93 to 96 percent in several areas.

"We're very pleased with the results," said Superintendent Hector Montenegro. "We are not teaching to the test, but we are aligning our curriculum to address the TAAS objectives."

Staff writer Sharon Jayson contributed to this report. ■

19. The Dallas Morning News

05/24/97; Edition: HOME FINAL; Section: NEWS; Page 36A

8 Dallas-area schools win national Blue Ribbons

By Todd Bensman

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

The U.S. Education Department has bestowed its coveted Blue Ribbon award on eight Dallas-area schools that demonstrated educational excellence and community participation.

The awards, among 26 Blue Ribbons awarded this year to Texas schools, follow a lengthy process of self-analysis and scrutiny from professional educators.

Delegations from each award-winning school are to be invited to a Washington, D.C., ceremony usually attended by the president.

"It's a very big deal - they worked very hard and they have achieved this honor," said Kathy Crossley, an education program specialist for the federal department.

In the Dallas area, the awards went to six public and two private schools.

The local private-school winners are St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Dallas and Walnut Glen Academy for Excellence in Garland.

The winning public schools are Maureen Connolly Brinker and A.H.

Meadows elementary schools in Plano, O.C. Taylor Elementary School in Colleyville, Prestonwood Elementary School in Dallas, Valley Creek Elementary School in McKinney and Dr. Joey Pirrung Elementary School in Mesquite.

Dr. Carole C. Stabile, the St. Thomas Aquinas principal, said the award validates recent efforts by teachers and parents to improve the school. Parents planted flowers and raised money for new computers, and teachers go the extra mile, she said.

The award comes as the school is about to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

"When you look at the school and what it stands for, you see three generations of parents and their efforts," Dr. Stabile said.

John Drummond, principal of Walnut Glen, said he believes his school was chosen because of a strong spirit of teamwork among staff members and children.

"The teachers and kids have established a culture where the norm is to be here and work hard," he said. "If you don't do that, you stick out."

O.C. Taylor Elementary is the Grapevine-Colleyville district's second Blue Ribbon school in two years.

"Our feet haven't touched the ground yet," said Norma Jackson, a second-grade teacher who helped compile the complex application.

District Superintendent Jim Thompson said the key was a deep commitment by parents who have donated an estimated 65,000 hours of service since 1993.

"It just goes to show that when you bring the parents into the school, they bring success with them," he said.

Dr. Chuck Clotfelter, principal at Meadows, said the award means that staff members, parents and students can take pride in the Plano school.

"I would equate this to winning the Super Bowl," he said.

But he said the accomplishment also serves as an incentive to do even better. "We can't rely on what we did in the past," he said.

At Brinker, the other Plano winner, principal JoAnn Priest said blue ribbons were tied around the front of the school to let students and others know about the

a position where he is going to be the representative for his race," said Ms. Soto on Thursday. The student, whom the law school declined to identify, has decided to attend Cornell University's law school instead.

Ms. Soto said at least one other black student who had been admitted had told

law-school officials that she was sending in a deposit, but they have not yet received it. Several black students could still decide to enroll, Ms. Soto said, and others could be admitted from the waiting list this summer.

The number of other minority students who have accepted offers of admission to

the law school also is down. As of this week, only 14 Mexican-American students had reserved places in the class. Normally, the law school enrolls 40 to 60 Mexican-American students a year.

"It is premature to say these are the end results," Ms. Soto said, "but we are not optimistic." ■

LOCAL

26. Chicago Tribune

May 23, 1997

Test scores soar at city schools on probation

By Janita Poe TRIBUNE EDUCATION WRITER

Last fall when Chicago Public Schools chief Paul Vallas placed more than 100 schools on academic probation, many students and officials expressed embarrassment—even anger—that their schools were being singled out for the bureaucratic equivalent of a trip to the principal's office.

Now, with the release Thursday of scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills for Grades 3 through 8 showing marked improvement in many schools on probation, officials at some of those schools say it was that very attention and pressure that seems to have gotten results.

Whether the slew of probation managers, external partners and other visits by the central administration produced tangible changes in instruction remains debatable. But one thing seems indisputable: Probation delivered a psychological punch.

"What these scores tell me is that probation is working," Vallas said.

Of the 71 elementary schools on probation, 54 improved in reading and 69 in math, according to preliminary reports on the test scores. On Thursday, officials said 22 of those schools are now eligible to be removed from the designation.

Overall, 393 of the city's 473 elementary schools tested improved in math and 271 had higher scores in reading than the previous year. Schools doubling their test scores in at least one of the subjects included Beidler, McNair, Carver Middle and Morse.

School administrators plan a news conference to discuss the scores at 10:30 a.m. Friday at the Parkman School.

Pat Harvey, the schools'

accountability chief, said she was encouraged by the scores because of gains made by the poorest performing students.

"The lowest performing students are getting better, and so are the two groups next to them," said Harvey. "... I think the message is that all kids, regardless of where they are born, regardless of their station in life or their race, can achieve."

The release of the preliminary data—a small percentage of makeup tests were not included—was being pointed to by Vallas' allies as proof that the new management team for schools is succeeding. Earlier this month, school leaders announced even greater gains in high school students' scores on the Test of Achievement and Proficiency.

But some school-reform leaders say the scores are indicative of improvements implemented over the last decade, not any recent revamping.

"There's been a trend of improvement over the last seven years, and we're pleased to see that trend is continuing," said Donald Moore, executive director of Designs for Change, an educational research and reform group.

"I think principal leadership, the involvement of the local school councils and the commitment of teachers to working together have paid off."

Though the overall scores improved, that improvement was not seen uniformly. For instance, pupils at or above national norms in reading comprehension declined slightly for the system's 3rd, 6th and 8th grades.

And scores of 30.1 percent in reading and 35.6 percent in math mean that the vast majority of students were below

national norms.

For schools on probation, the improved scores were a reason to rejoice.

Geraldine Moore, principal of Beidler in the Garfield Park neighborhood on the West Side, said her staff initially was "devastated" about being placed on probation. But the status also was a "wake-up call" to improve standards at the school, she said.

"We wanted to know 'Why, what had we done wrong?'" said Moore, a former parent aide who has been principal of the school since 1994. "But what we did was to turn it into a reaffirmation. We looked at our weaknesses and set out to improve them."

The work apparently paid off: Reading scores at Beidler more than tripled—from 10.2 in 1996 to 33.3 in 1997—and those in math rose from 24.8 to 36.3 during that same period.

Moore said the renewed commitment spilled over to the five-member probation management team, set up in October and headed by West Side education legend Marva Collins. The team implemented many of Collins' methods—including a focus on phonics and repetition—and also began following her lead on student encouragement and regimented daily schedules.

Beidler also was one of 132 schools to set up extended school days this year; the school added two hours of optional math and reading study for four days a week after school. By early winter, Beidler had developed a motto, prominently displayed on the school marquee: "Probation brings opportunity."

Principals at other schools posting improvements also said the probation

*Success of
Academic
chance /
year*

status forced them to focus on specific problems at their schools.

Albert Gaston, principal at the Fulton School in the Back of the Yards neighborhood, said his school was "already on its course" and did not modify any curriculum, programs or instruction methods. But he said teacher and student motivation increased after the school went on probation.

"I attribute the increase to our teachers, our probation team and the

support that we got from the accountability office," said Gaston. "Our goal was to put Fulton into an achievement mode."

Though the overall scores improved, that improvement was not seen uniformly. For instance, pupils at or above national norms in reading comprehension declined slightly for the system's 3rd, 6th and 8th grades.

Vallas and other officials said they hope to make even more significant

improvements on testing in the next few years. The increases made by the probation schools, they said, prove any school can succeed if goals and priorities are set for them.

"What I'd like to see in the next five or six years is for these scores to exceed 50 percent," Vallas said. "We won't be satisfied or content until all of our schools have more than half of our kids reading at or above the national average."

■

27. Chicago Tribune

May 23, 1997

GOP writing obituary for Edgar's schools plan

By Rick Pearson and Courtney Challos TRIBUNE STAFF WRITERS

SPRINGFIELD — A push to overhaul how Illinoisans pay for public schools, which has consumed the General Assembly for five months, appeared headed for the rocks Thursday.

A day before the self-imposed deadline for lawmakers to deal with the issue, Senate President James "Pate" Philip pronounced as "dead" a 25 percent income tax increase that House Speaker Michael Madigan expects to call for a vote Friday.

The income tax increase appeared to be further doomed by predictions that fewer than five House Republicans support it. Madigan has committed the votes of 45 Democrats, but 60 votes are needed for approval.

Gov. Jim Edgar, who has made a school-funding overhaul the centerpiece of his second term, chose to downplay the comments as political posturing. Aides to the Republican governor were helping Madigan draft the bill, while Edgar continued meeting one-on-one with lawmakers in an attempt to line up votes.

At the least, the Friday deadline set by Philip and Madigan for considering a school-finance overhaul appeared to be turning into an artificial barrier. The spring legislative session is sure to spill into next week.

But the rhetoric between Republicans and Democrats was very real, and that ultimately could help sink any effort to change the decades-old system that relies heavily on property taxes to pay for public schools throughout Illinois.

House Republican leader Lee Daniels, who strongly opposes any increase in the

state income tax, complained that the failure of Edgar and Madigan to provide him with a copy of the tax-increase bill a day before the vote was "repugnant and an abrogation of legislative responsibility."

"Obviously, I don't want to inflame the situation any more than it is," said Daniels, of Elmhurst. "But it just, to me, is incredible we haven't gotten a bill. I can't compete against the governor's press office."

Fanning Daniels' anger is the fact that the Republican governor has been working with the Democratic House speaker to draft a bill.

Madigan spokesman Steve Brown said Daniels knows the topics being considered in the bill. But Brown also said Daniels has "pretty well surrendered any credibility" on the issue of overhauling school funding.

"Earlier this week, he thought a way to fund the education of children was with a tax on pornography," Brown said.

Madigan has said the bill will call for increasing the state's personal income tax rate to 3.75 percent from 3 percent. The \$1.5 billion generated by the plan would provide \$900 million in property tax relief and \$600 million in new money for schools.

Other provisions of the bill would create a program to build and repair schools, an income tax credit for renters and increased transportation reimbursement to families that send their children to private schools.

Thursday night, the state's major teachers unions gave their tentative support to the plan after reaching

agreement with the Edgar administration on new rules for an independent board to set teacher-certification standards. Teachers would be certified and tenured after four years. They would face recertification every fifth year thereafter.

Edgar aides called the changes sweeping. But it is questionable whether they provide as much teacher accountability as Republican lawmakers were seeking.

For his part, Daniels has proposed using inflationary growth in state tax revenue, as well as a batch of smaller tax hikes, to increase funding for poorer schools, provide property tax relief and launch a school-construction program.

While feeling pressured by the tag team of Madigan and Edgar, Daniels received some comfort. In a closed-door meeting, a majority of Senate Republicans favored a school-funding plan that would boost taxes on telephone calls, cigarettes and riverboat gambling — but not the income tax.

Those alternative taxes would raise about \$310 million. The Senate GOP plan also counts on inflationary tax revenue growth and cuts in Edgar's proposed state budget. Ultimately, the proposal would provide \$614 million more for schools.

The plan by Senate Republicans would establish \$3,950 as the minimum that school districts could spend on each student. It would create a \$250 income tax credit for parents of students attending private schools. And it would help pay for \$1 billion worth of school construction bonds. The proposal calls for no property tax relief, however.

Meeting with Jennifer O'Day
on Reconstitution and Title I School Accountability Study
July 23, 1997

Mike -
FYI re: reconstitution
-Bill

On July 23rd, Department of Education staff met with Jennifer O'Day to discuss plans for conducting case studies of Title I schools that were both identified as in need of improvement, and located in school districts or States with reconstitution policies. The purpose of the case studies is to examine the relationship between Title I accountability requirements and supports for schools identified for improvement and reconstitution accountability and supports. This work will be conducted in coordination with the work Dr. O'Day is doing on reconstitution under the OERI grant to the Consortium on Policy Research in Education (CPRE).

The tentative plan agreed to at the meeting includes the following components:

A focus on schools that are reconstitution-eligible and are also Title I schools, located in 2 States and 2 districts. Proposed States are Kentucky and Maryland and proposed districts are San Francisco and Chicago. The group decided that more relevant information for Title I would be obtained by examining schools that have been identified for possible reconstitution, than schools that are being reconstituted. The reconstitution option for Title I schools only becomes available when final assessments are in place and after technical assistance by the district and state has failed.

The collection of contextual information in the fall of 1997. Such information would include: reconstitution policies, incidence of schools identified as eligible for reconstitution, incidence of schools that have actually been reconstituted, the status of standards development and the State's assessment system and accountability requirements, the incidence of reconstituted or reconstitution-eligible schools that are also Title I schools, and finally, whether those schools are targeted assistance or schoolwide models and whether they have been also identified for school improvement under Title I. Information would also be collected on the identification process and criteria used for Title I adequate yearly progress and for the district/State's own accountability to see the extent of alignment between these processes.

The contextual information would be gathered through an examination of documents from these States/districts and through phone interviews with State/local officials in the fall of 1997.

Conduct of case studies in schools in each of these States/districts in the spring of 1998. The contextual information will help determine the appropriate focus of the case studies. Once data are collected on the relationships of district/State reconstitution policies and processes to Title I school improvement and accountability, an emphasis will be on uses of this data to determine what seems to work well to effect school change and improved student achievement. We would like to be able to describe the varied approaches taken by schools and districts and how Title I money is used to support improvement efforts. Also, we want to be able to identify barriers at the district and State level to pulling together all available resources to help failing schools. Ultimately, ED hopes to issue a guide to the field on what works well in interventions aimed at schools identified for Title I school improvement, particularly in districts and States with reconstitution policies in place.

\$10,000 of tuition thereafter.

The president called on Congress to approve tax credits to help firms hire former welfare recipients, to help businesses that clean up "brown field" urban toxic waste sites and convert them to productive use, and to finance

construction rehabilitation of elementary or secondary schools in distressed communities, a plan pushed by Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun (D-Ill.).

Clinton renewed his call for creation of 20 more empowerment zones to attract businesses into disadvantaged

neighborhoods. He noted that the "brown fields" and empowerment zone proposals were mentioned in the budget agreement and called on GOP leaders "who did the agreement to work together to achieve that." ■

13. The New York Times

07/01/97; Edition: Late Edition - Final (New Jersey); Section: Section B; Metropolitan Desk; Page 1, Column 1

Vice President Pays a Visit

By ANDY NEWMAN

JERSEY CITY — In an indication of how much the New Jersey gubernatorial race means to Democrats, Vice President Al Gore came to town yesterday to support James E. McGreevey, whose

face-off against Governor Whitman is still four months away. Mr. Gore attended a fund-raiser in Secaucus for Mr. McGreevey, a State Senator from Woodbridge, then helped him host a

public meeting on education in Jersey City. Mr. McGreevey talked of his plans for more prekindergarten classes, and Mr. Gore advocated college tuition tax credits. ■

14. Boston Globe

July 1, 1997

ON THE JOB

Flat-out parents can help with homework - on the fly

By Diane E. Lewis
Globe Staff

If you're a working parent, then you know the drill: Pick up the kids, dash home, make dinner, monitor homework and/or encourage the children to stretch their minds and turn off the TV.

At a time when two-income households are the norm and the percentage of single parents has mushroomed, many have so little time that they can't do much more than check Junior's math or spelling at the end of the day.

The situation is grave enough to warrant the government's attention. Last week, Vice President Al Gore, his wife, Tipper, and a team of experts met in Nashville, where they convened the Gore annual family reunion conference. This year, the topic was how to get working parents to participate in their children's education.

One solution: interactive homework. Coined by Joyce Epstein, a professor at Johns Hopkins University, it's really a new term for an old-fashioned concept: families reading, writing, and learning together.

Epstein, a panelist at the conference, says it is no secret that children whose

parents read to them and are involved in their schooling do better.

According to federal statistics, 79 percent of parents want to spend more time teaching and interacting with their children.

But many just don't have the time. When the US Department of Education examined parental involvement recently, it found that only 13 percent of parents with children age 9 to 14 have time to do what Epstein advises.

"Some parents are working more than full time just to make ends meet," notes James Borland, an associate professor of education at Teachers College at Columbia University in New York. "These parents understand the importance of involving themselves in their kids' educations, but they are so busy working and rushing from one job to another, they can't find the time."

Enter Epstein. She says she has a solution for part of the problem. Her federally funded Center on School Family Partnerships will be working with 177 schools and hundreds of parents in Baltimore. The center is also starting to reach out to educators in Massachusetts.

Epstein's partnership is a whole package - a sort of primer for the overworked and overwhelmed. Under the

program, schools give out interactive assignments - homework specifically designed to encourage parental involvement. This is homework parents help with while driving the kids home, preparing dinner, or washing dishes.

"Just about all parents care about what their children are learning, and they want to know that their children are making progress in school," says Epstein. "So, we need to design new elements that will assist 1990s parents whose time is limited."

"Interactive homework is particularly helpful to parents who work during the school day," Epstein continues. "If homework is designed clearly, if it requires reading aloud and sharing ideas, it is possible to participate in the child's learning while cooking dinner."

Those discussions sound a lot like the kind of talks I have with my daughter, a sharing of ideas that comes while eating dinner, traveling from school to our home, or driving to an extracurricular activity. In other words, simple communication.

My daughter and I have been able to talk because I'm usually home long before bedtime, though I've missed dinner more times than I'd care to admit.

Having a summit on education and

Transcripts
Report cards
School un-

Student Accountability

parenthood is a step, but the real issue lies in what employers and the government should be doing to help American parents find true balance.

If the underemployed are stringing together so many part-time jobs that there is no down time, and the over-employed

are working too many hours a week, then even Epstein's solution could turn out to be hard to pull off. ■

15. Boston Globe

July 1, 1997

The proof is in the transcripts

IBM's message to applicants: Take high school seriously

By Robert J. Samuelson
Globe Staff

We had a small announcement from IBM the other day that could have large consequences for education. IBM said it has begun asking for high school transcripts from young workers wanting manufacturing jobs. The idea is to persuade students in high school - when the cult of cool is often so contemptuous of adult values - to take school seriously. IBM is saying that how they do in school matters and that a diploma, by itself, isn't enough.

It's a crucial message. Motivating students is the central problem of high schools. Perhaps the only exceptions are students aiming for elite colleges; competition for scarce spots compels these students to work hard. But only 100 to 200 colleges have tough entrance requirements. Most others gladly take any high school graduate. Without students (and the federal and state funds they bring), these colleges would cease to exist. And almost 40 percent of high school graduates don't go to college.

This is why IBM's announcement matters. Since World War II, the economic worth of a high school diploma has eroded as more Americans have gotten one. In 1940, only 25 percent of adults age 25 and older had graduated from high school. In 1995 this figure was 82 percent. A high school diploma no longer guarantees a well-paid job.

This has been particularly true since the 1970s, write economists Richard J. Murnane and Frank Levy in their recent book, "Teaching the New Basic Skills." Employers, reacting to declining profit margins and rising competition, became more selective in their hiring. Companies began to favor college graduates for jobs that had once gone to high school

graduates: skilled factory jobs, office managers, technicians, and customer representatives.

Companies preferred college graduates not because these jobs involve college-level skills but because a high school diploma no longer seemed to signify the needed competencies. These are what Murnane and Levy call "the new basic skills." They include the following: doing ninth-grade reading and math; solving "semistructured problems where hypotheses must be formed and tested"; and communicating clearly orally and in writing.

Note that these requirements should not be beyond most students. "Doing math at a ninth-grade level means the ability to manipulate fractions and decimals and to interpret line graphs and bar graphs," write Murnane and Levy. But perhaps half of all high school seniors lack these skills, they conclude.

Why? It's not because most students are stupid or lazy. The best answer is: peer pressure. In after-school jobs and sports, "young people work very hard," writes economist John Bishop of Cornell University. But no "adolescent wants to be considered a 'nerd.'" Alone, schools can't easily change the climate, because they also face pressure from parents not to be too tough.

In research, Bishop has shown that outside standards that schools can't manipulate - graduation tests, entrance requirements - raise achievement. These create consequences for students and affect how they behave. In theory, the job market could impose one such standard. If high school graduates who did well earned higher wages, there would be more reason to work harder. But companies don't consider transcripts or course work in hiring. Those with better

skills earn more after, say, five or six years, as performance is rewarded through promotion. But the time lapse is too great to impress most students. The message doesn't get back.

What IBM aims to do is make the connection. Anyone within five years of high school graduation applying for a manufacturing job will be asked basic questions. What courses did you take? What were your grades? Those receiving job offers will have to provide transcripts to verify their answers.

In isolation, IBM's policy won't matter much. Only about 10 percent of its 125,000 US jobs are in manufacturing. Still, IBM's change shows a new willingness to impose meaningful standards directly on students. We are seeing other examples. The Chicago school system has rejected social promotion in word and deed. It flunks students in eighth and ninth grades who are well below grade level. They have to go to summer school or repeat. Paul Vallas, the head of Chicago's schools, calls social promotion "educational malpractice."

The disuse of high school transcripts for jobs is the same thing. The fault does not lie entirely with companies. "Equal opportunity" laws bar employment practices - giving tests, asking for grades - that might have a "disparate impact" on minorities unless the practices have a "valid" relation to the job. So IBM had to do research showing that good grades improve job performance. But most employers can't afford research; the foolish requirement ought to be repealed.

If we expect students to take school seriously, we have to take what they do in school seriously. Unless they see a reason to work harder, little else matters. ■

tenure she spent too much time on outside business interests. Her relationship with the faculty has perhaps been more adversarial than necessary. Moreover, the failure rate among CUNY graduates on the state teacher certification tests is troubling. While we do not swallow whole what Mr. Badillo and others have said about graduation rates and grade inflation, the board can, with reason, compare CUNY's statistics to those of similar public institutions.

If the board decides on the merits that her debits outweigh her contributions, that is its right. It is even within reason to arrive at the judgment that it is simply time for fresh leadership. But an attempt to create crises unnecessarily in order to drive her out just will not do. It is unfair

to the Chancellor. It creates chaos in a system that desperately needs order, and it will make it harder to attract a quality replacement. Dr. Paolucci's comments about how easy it would be to find someone good to run the place temporarily illustrate precisely the sort of unrealistic, grudge-driven decision making that CUNY and the city cannot afford.

The weeks between now and the next board meeting in September could be a crucial time for the system. Dr. Paolucci and Mr. Badillo say they are not sure they have the nine votes to dismiss the Chancellor. All 16 voting members of the board have a civic and institutional obligation to use the summer months for

the creation of a more rational atmosphere rather than head counting on the success of the Paolucci-Badillo removal campaign.

The board members and the Chancellor explored and defined their differences. Now they have to work out the question of whether they can work together in a timely way. Moderate trustees like Ronald Marino and James Murphy have proposed a more measured approach to this problem, and that is encouraging. But if this is a summer of warfare that cripples a valuable institution, much of the political blame will come to roost on Governor Pataki and Mayor Giuliani, whose political appointees are behind the furor. ■

68. Los Angeles Times

* 07/06/97; Edition: Valley Edition; Section: Metro; Zones Desk; Page B-16 Category: Editorial

*Fixed
Failing Schools*

Parochial About Schools

Giving the Los Angeles Unified School District's 100 worst schools an academic boost might seem like a solidly popular idea, a way to raise all boats with the tide. But here in the San Fernando Valley, where zero-sum provincialism sometimes runs roughshod over reasoned discourse, the proposal by new schools Supt. Ruben Zacarias to do just that fell flat among people who want to break up the district. It's a pity that in this weekend celebrating the nation's great patriots, those passing themselves off as local patriots offer little more than a rhetoric of selfishness and fear.

Zacarias targeted the district's 100 worst campuses as he campaigned for the job. Just seven of the schools lie in the Valley. That doesn't seem to matter to breakup advocates, though, who greeted Zacarias' announcement by fretting that resources earmarked for Valley schools would be rerouted to help campuses on the other side of the Santa Monica Mountains. If that happened, they vowed, it would be just the kind of abuse that

justifies dissolving the political bonds holding the district together. Zacarias says no money will be rerouted and that improvements can be made by changing the way campus administrators spend their existing budgets.

Whether or not Zacarias' plan is a good one seems almost beside the point. Big-city superintendents across the country have targeted their districts' worst schools in an effort to raise test scores across the board. In the Valley, the dispute centers more on the district's limited resources and the perception that Valley schools don't get enough of them. Anything that threatens, however marginally, what the Valley already gets causes a stir. Valley advocates contend they're just trying to make sure local schools get their "fair share." But that's the kind of narrow thinking that exacerbates the district's—and the Valley's—problems.

The notion that one student's—or school's—success can come only at the price of another's undermines the very

foundation of public education, which promises kids equal access regardless of how much their parents pay in taxes. In the process, some kids naturally get more attention than others. For instance, imagine a math class with 30 students. Three are having trouble with multiplication. Should the teacher simply ignore those three, knowing that doing so will hobble them in later classes and disrupt learning for others? Or should the teacher spend a little extra time with those students to bring them up to a level where they can contribute to the class?

That, essentially, is the equation here, but in a much larger context. Clearly, it makes sense to help the kids who are struggling because the entire class benefits in the long run. The Valley can ignore the rest of Los Angeles, but it won't be long before residents and students start to pay a price. Good things for kids in a classroom across town don't always mean bad things for kids in the classroom across the street. ■

69. Christian Science Monitor

07/07/97; Edition: ALL 07/07/97; Section: EDITORIALS; Page 20 Category: Editorial

Kids These Days

Americans are deeply concerned about moral rootlessness among their children, according to a recent survey. The findings should be pondered along with other survey results - specifically, polls indicating that Americans continue to be an extraordinarily religious people for whom values are important.

Why, then, do millions of them patronize entertainment that glorifies violence and exploitative sexuality? Why do they allow youngsters to soak up books, films, TV programs, and computer games more likely to scare or instill aggressiveness than to inspire?

Such questions are impelled by the study, "Kids These Days: What Americans Really Think About the Next Generation." The 2,000 adults surveyed by the Public Agenda research organization generally characterized teenagers and younger children as "irresponsible," "rude," and "lazy." Those, of course, are scarcely new attitudes toward youth, especially teens. What seems different is the depth of concern across all economic or ethnic lines, and the extension of that concern

even to preteen youngsters.

Moreover, people described themselves as determined to do something about the lack of strong moral values among today's youth. Deborah Wadsworth, the executive director of Public Agenda, observed: "Adults are not confused and they're not ambivalent. Instead, they're virtually riveted by the need to teach kids integrity, ethical behavior, respect, civility, compassion,... They're focused like a laser beam on the question of character...."

And that focus isn't exclusively an American phenomenon. Recent news reports have mentioned, for instance, the concern of Japanese parents about moral drift among their children - especially following a highly publicized murder case involving a young teen.

Such concerns among adults can be the seeds of helpful action: more community activities for kids, school programs that explore moral responsibility, more attention to the trends in children's thought by parents, churches moved to fill their role as

agents of moral instruction.

Religion, in fact, is indispensable. If Americans are as committed to the worship of God, and as open to recognizing His power in their lives, as surveys have indicated over many years, they have at hand a prime means of acting on their desires to reinforce character in the young. The founder of this newspaper, Mary Baker Eddy, once wrote in answer to the question of how to raise a child without resort to corporal punishment, "If you make clear to the child's thought the right motives for action, and cause him to love them, they will lead him aright."

Those right motives are, according to religion, a love for others and a love of God. It may seem hard for children, or adults, to establish those motives when today's culture often glorifies opposite tendencies. But to allow children to live without them is hardest of all, on everyone.

Tomorrow: a look at how adults and children can join in an effort to close racial divisions in society. ■

70. Los Angeles Times

* 07/07/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-4

College Savings Proposal: Worthy but Flawed *Federal tax credit plans need refining to ensure fairness*

House and Senate conference committees will begin huddling this week on the contentious matter of tax cuts. Most of the public attention so far has fastened on the paramount issues of child credits and capital gains tax cuts. But a good chunk of the proposed tax changes is aimed at helping families finance college educations for their children.

Politically it's a done deal, because of May's bipartisan agreement to provide about \$35 billion in education tax credits and deductions as part of the new budget. The goal now is to fashion fiscally sound, responsible benefits that do not exclude the working poor.

The House, Senate and White House each have packages. These are works in

progress, but each proposes a tax credit for some college costs, a tax deduction for other costs, and educational savings accounts similar to individual retirement accounts. These concepts have merit; the devil will be in the details, and so far those are sketchy at best.

The House, Senate and President Clinton each would provide a tax credit of up to \$1,500 for tuition and fees for at least two years, but they vary on income eligibility. Clinton would phase out credits for families with incomes of \$80,000 and up—more sensible than the higher income limits in the House and Senate versions.

The amount of the credit is based on the \$1,500 average cost of tuition and fees at a U.S. public community college.

The California Postsecondary Education Commission would like to include other costs of attending college, such as transportation and child care, because full-time students at California community colleges pay just \$400 a year, which would automatically cap the credit at that amount. The state commission rightly warns that states like California would be tempted to raise tuition and fees since they essentially would be paid in federal dollars.

The tax credit, as proposed, could be applied only against taxes actually owed. So if a low-income family had no tax liability, it would get no benefit. Either the credit should be fashioned so that poorer families can receive some benefit or some other mechanism should be

45. Los Angeles Times

* 06/27/97; Edition: Home Edition; Section: Metro; Metro Desk; Page B-3

Measure giving alternative program temporary charter status goes to governor for signature.

By MATEA GOLD
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

A bill that would allow a group of acclaimed alternative schools based in East Los Angeles to reopen as a charter program sailed through the state Legislature on Thursday.

"We're dancing in the streets," said Brother Modesto Leon, executive director of the Soledad Enrichment Action centers.

The 25-year-old program has received high praise for reaching at-risk youths, many of whom are on court-ordered probation or have been kicked out of public school.

But the Los Angeles County office of education terminated its five-year contract with the program last fall after the state found that it had violated regulations by, among other things, hiring non-county employees as teachers and aides.

The last of the centers was closed in December after county funding ran out. At the time, about 850 students were studying at 16 sites around Los Angeles

County, including classrooms in Pacoima, Wilmington, El Monte and Central Los Angeles.

Since then, the county has employed some of the teachers and kept eight classrooms open for about 225 students.

But hundreds of other students who couldn't go back to their home high schools had nowhere to go.

The bill that will give the program the authority to operate as a charter school until June 30, 1999, cleared the Assembly and Senate without a single vote of opposition.

"This is a much-needed piece of legislation," said state Sen. Richard Polanco (D-Los Angeles), who wrote the bill. "Eight hundred kids will have a permanent place in the educational system, and these are high-risk kids that would not have anywhere else to go. I'm just ecstatic."

The bill now goes to Gov. Pete Wilson, who has indicated he will sign it, program directors said. A Wilson spokesman said the governor had no comment until he sees the legislation.

Program directors said they could reopen within 10 days after the bill becomes law.

The charter status would allow the program to operate without being tied to certain county restrictions. It would enable the program to reopen its sites around Los Angeles and continue what many say is a winning formula for reaching at-risk youths.

The key, Leon said, is having three to five teachers in classes who can give students more attention than they would receive in traditional classrooms.

Regular courses are augmented with lessons on job skills, parenting and counseling for students.

East Los Angeles resident Virginia Lopez credits the program for saving her two grandsons from gangs and failing out of school.

On Thursday, Lopez was thrilled at news of the bill passing.

"Today seems like a victory," Lopez said. "It's such an important step because it's for the youth—and these are the youth that need a second chance." ■

46. The Washington Post

06/27/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: A Section; Page A03

Jobs at Stake as Staff Members at 7 Chicago Schools Are Put to the Test

By Edward Walsh
Washington Post Staff Writer

CHICAGO — For about 1,100 teachers and other school employees in the nation's third-largest public school system, this summer is one of anxiety and discontent.

In the latest and most dramatic step to shake up the troubled Chicago public schools, seven of the city's poorest-performing high schools are being turned inside out, their principals, faculties and other staff members, including custodians, told that they must reapply for their jobs. Not all of them will be rehired.

The action was one in a series

throughout the last two years by a new school administration here that has attracted increased national attention as it has steadily tightened standards for a school system that was once deemed the nation's worst.

Last summer, eighth-grade students who lagged in standardized proficiency tests were forced to attend summer school and raise their test scores to be promoted to high school. This summer the program is being expanded to include third-, sixth- and ninth-grade students with poor test results, swelling the mandatory summer school program to include more than 10 percent of the system's 424,000 students.

Last year, 109 schools, about 20 percent of the city's total, were put on academic probation. Now seven of those schools, in effect, have been dissolved and told to start over.

While educators say it is too early to assess the effect of the changes, there have been some preliminary signs of progress, such as an improvement in test scores.

What is driving this flurry of activity is not only a new administration armed with extraordinary powers by the state legislature, but the conviction of Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley (D) that the quality of the public schools will determine the future of his city and

Fixing Early Schools

parents," Weaver said. "We keep hearing about a lack of rigor."

Weaver said the board will consider adopting some national standards and may consider adding comprehensive exams at the end of courses. "If this is implemented, we will be expecting more of students," she said. "Public schools need to have higher expectations."

In addition to recommending the district revise its curriculum to be more challenging, the auditors recommended that the school system:

Establish and implement equitable curricular and instructional practices to erase racial and socioeconomic disparities in the district, where affluent, predominantly white students in north Fulton schools routinely outscore predominantly black schools in South Fulton.

Develop and implement a systematic

testing program to measure how well students have learned the curriculum. While Fulton has home-grown tests in math and language arts, the tests are not consistently administered, interpreted or acted upon, the auditors found.

Dolinger and Weaver both said they disagreed with the audit's recommendation that the school system use a revenue formula that automatically adjusts the millage rate to student growth to ensure stable funding.

"The public doesn't want us to raise taxes without some kind of exceptional reason to do so," said Weaver. Dolinger said automatic revenue increases would discourage schools from being efficient with resources such as energy and supplies.

"We felt it took a lot of courage for not just the board, but the staff to open

up and really be criticized," said Weaver. "It's hard from the inside to critique yourself and be sure we're meeting national standards. We want to be the best school system in the nation, not just satisfied with being the best in Georgia."

Fulton County schools plan to gather public input this fall on the audit's recommendations.

Copies of the 24-page executive summary of the report will be available after Wednesday at each Fulton County school, or by calling the school's community relations office at 404-763-6834. Copies of the full report, which is more than 300 pages long, may be examined between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at the information and community relations office at the main Fulton County Schools office at 786 Cleveland Ave. SW, Atlanta. ■

44. The Washington Post

06/27/97; Edition: FINAL; Section: Metro; Page B07

Prodded by Allen, Va. School Panel Seeks U.S. Funds

By Spencer S. Hsu

Washington Post Staff Writer

RICHMOND, June 26 — Bowing to pressure from Gov. George Allen, Virginia's Board of Education today applied for \$15 million from a national education program called Goals 2000, despite objections from conservatives who complained that Allen had abandoned their fight against federal involvement in local schools.

The board voted 5 to 3 to apply for \$6 million from the U.S. Department of Education in 1997 and \$9 million in 1998. Squeaking under a June 30 federal deadline, Virginia became the last state in the nation to join the program.

Although the Republican governor reversed his position on the issue only last January, he lobbied hard and personally in recent weeks for the federal funds, staking his administration's clout against the desires of his own board appointees and groups such as the Family Foundation, which maneuvered to keep Virginia out of the program.

The vote marked the second reversal in two years by the board — both times at Allen's urging — on an issue that symbolized his fluctuating commitment to fighting federal influence at the cost of

giving up aid to the state.

"The governor, in my consideration, is the soul of Virginia . . . and I'm going to support the soul of the governor," said board member Rayford L. Harris. Goals 2000 "is not perfect, and it never will be. . . . But the people have spoken, and they're not totally dumb."

Today's vote marked a grudging concession by Allen's own allies that continuing to refuse the federal education money was becoming a political problem.

Democrats, notably gubernatorial candidate Donald S. Beyer Jr., had said the education panel's refusal to apply for the money indicated that conservative activists were hindering efforts to help Virginia's public schools.

All five members who voted aye called it a "hold-your-nose" vote. They cited assurances from Allen and GOP leaders in Congress that federal strings on the aid would be limited.

Today, administration leaders clenched their teeth and declared victory.

"The governor asked them to apply for it, and they applied for it," said Allen senior counselor Mark C. Christie, who watched today's vote in person. Allen was battered by criticism during his

two-year resistance to Goals 2000, a program begun during Republican President George Bush's administration.

In 1996, Allen pushed the formerly Democrat-dominated board to quash an application to join the program. Democrats used the sacrifice of \$15 million in school aid to paint him and other Republican politicians as extremists during that year's state legislative elections.

In January, Allen backed down after Democrats promised to make an issue of Goals 2000 again and GOP lawmakers deserted him.

"The federates will be dancing tonight on the grave of Virginia's sovereignty," board President Michelle Easton said after staging an unsuccessful rebellion against the governor, who appointed all nine members of the board.

"It's wrong for the federal government to take our money . . . dribble it past thousands of people in the U.S. Department of Education, then send a smaller amount of that money back to us with hundreds of pages of strings," Easton said. "By capitulating today, it would be a defeat . . . at the expense of the parents and children of Virginia." ■

others, including the nation's capital. Handed responsibility for the schools two years ago by the Illinois General Assembly, Daley has been preaching since then that only good schools will produce a work force that can function in a modern, urban economy and stem the flow of middle-class families to the suburbs.

"It is no accident that Prince George's County in Maryland has one of the fastest growing African American populations in America," he said in a speech earlier this month at the National Press Club. "Families are leaving Washington to find a better quality of life, including safer neighborhoods — and most importantly better schools. . . . The only way for our city — or any city — to have a bright future is if public officials devote their full energies to improving our public schools."

Such sentiments are motivating similar moves in the Washington region. The District system, with the worst academic performance in the area, is now under day-to-day control of a former general appointed by an independent control board. In Prince George's County, School Superintendent Jerome Clark announced that he is replacing the principals of five low-performing schools and forcing teachers and other staff members at those schools to reapply for their jobs. Maryland state officials, meanwhile, have ordered 50 Baltimore city schools and two others in Anne Arundel and Somerset counties to draft reorganization plans because they have been performing so poorly.

In Chicago, there is no question that the first seven targeted schools — officials vow there will be more — are in deep trouble. In standardized test scores, fewer than 10 percent of the schools' students were at, or above, national and state averages in reading and mathematics. The average attendance rate at the schools was about 70 percent, while their graduation rates ranged from 42 to 25 percent.

For the last year, Barbara Radner, director of the Center for Urban Education at DePaul University here, has served as an "expert partner" at one of the schools, part of an intervention program at some of the city's most troubled schools. What she found at Orr High School, she said, was a student body severely lacking reading skills and a school that was not organized to deal with the problems it faced.

"Textbooks are kind of alien objects to the kids," she said. "Teachers, because the kids can't read, spend more time teaching fewer things because the kids don't get it."

Radner said she is concerned by the seeming abruptness of the action against Orr and the other schools and the impact it will have on the morale of teachers and students who already felt labeled as underachievers. She said when similar tactics have been tried in a handful of other cities — although not on this scale — a few of the affected troubled schools lost some of their best teachers who moved elsewhere.

But Radner does not question the need for drastic action. "You've got to say that something radical has to happen," she said. "You don't reform it, you transform it."

That is precisely the point of view of the school system's chief executive officer, Paul G. Vallas, 44, a perpetually harried former teacher and budget director for Daley. "If a school is not working, sometimes you just have to start from the beginning," he said in an interview.

Vallas' latest action, ratified by the Chicago Board of Education this week, is only the most visible step in the attempt to transform the school system. The administration is also in the midst of a three-year program to restructure all the high schools by imposing a rigid "core curriculum" with more emphasis on science, mathematics and other basic subjects.

The high schools are also effectively being divided in two, with a "junior academy" for ninth- and 10th-grade students that will be segregated from the "senior academy" of 11th- and 12th-grade students. The junior academy students will face mandatory summer school if they fall behind and will be required to pass an "exit exam" to move to the senior academy.

The school board's decision last year to end "social promotions" of students who were not academically prepared for a higher grade has been widely accepted here. The only outcry came when this year's failing eighth-graders, unlike their counterparts last year, were told they not only would have to attend summer school but would be excluded from their school's graduation ceremonies.

"What happens when you teach children early in their lives that there is a

consequence for poor performance?" Vallas said in defense of a policy he may extend to first-graders next year. "It's too abstract a notion to tell a child in even the eighth grade that if you don't do well you may not get a job. But if you tell them you're going to spend six or seven weeks in summer school and you may repeat your grade, that really drives home the point."

The seven schools targeted for what is known in education jargon as "reconstitution" are in some of the poorest, most crime-ridden Chicago neighborhoods. Radner noted "such a correlation" between neighborhood poverty levels and the schools' performance. "Granted, there are some areas of the city where the challenges are greater than in others," Vallas said. "But I think a lot of this is excuse-making. We have top performing schools in very tough inner-city neighborhoods. We always talk about racism in this country. There is nothing more racist than having low expectations for inner-city children, for not demanding the same high standards that we do for suburban students."

Test scores at Chicago schools have risen in each of the last two years. According to Radner, on average, the 109 schools on probation showed more improvement than other schools. Amid such signs of progress, even those most directly affected have been cautious in responding to the decision to target the seven schools.

At this stage, it is not clear how many of the about 1,100 principals, teachers and other employees will not be rehired at their current schools and will have to look for work elsewhere in the system. The Chicago Teachers' Union, which has supported most of Vallas's moves, told its members it would guard against any assault on their job security.

"Dramatic action sometimes solves problems, but it's got to be handled carefully," said Jackie Gallagher, the union's spokeswoman.

"Of course I'd like it to be done in some other way," said Beverly Tunney, head of the Chicago Principals' Association and a 40-year veteran of the school system. "But it's sending a message that the schools have to work and if they don't work action will be taken to make sure they do. We've been making excuses for years and maybe this is the time for no more excuses." ■

47. Los Angeles Times

* 06/27/97; Edition: Orange County Edition; Section: Metro; Zones Desk; Page B-5

Injunction Allowing School Bible Club to Meet Refused

By THAO HUA
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SANTA ANA — A Superior Court judge Thursday refused to order Mission Viejo High School to allow about 40 Bible club members to meet on campus, an attorney in the case said.

Superior Court Judge Dennis S. Choate rejected the request by a 16-year-old Mission Viejo student, Justin Vanschoick, for an injunction.

The senior-to-be filed a lawsuit last year challenging the Saddleback Valley Unified School District's refusal to recognize the Fellowship of Christian Athletes as a legitimate school club because it is a religious group, said John Mendoza, Vanschoick's lawyer.

The lawsuit argued that under the Equal Access Act, school officials must recognize the club as long as they allow other clubs that are not related to the school's curriculum, Mendoza said.

Trial is set for Oct. 20, but Mendoza had sought an injunction giving the club equal access until the case is resolved. But Choate ruled that Vanschoick would not suffer irreparable harm and pointed out that school is not in session for the summer, Mendoza said.

The student's mother, Sheila Vanschoick, said Thursday she is infuriated that her son's "extremely

positive group" is not allowed in school.

"There are very few things kids can get involved with that are positive," the mother said. "It breaks my heart that there are so many rules and regulations that have been inflicted upon us."

Although the ruling came a day after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a law that made it more difficult for the government to interfere with religious practices, Mendoza said his case is not about religion. It's about gaining equal access, he said.

Mendoza said school officials already allow two non-curriculum clubs, a Key Club and a girls' league, both community service clubs.

"We like those clubs, we have no problems with the clubs," Mendoza said. "The problem is that once they allow those clubs, they can't discriminate" against Vanschoick's group.

School officials contend that these clubs satisfy an eight-hour community service graduation requirement, therefore making them part of the curriculum, Mendoza said. However, he said, at least one school official has said there is no such graduation requirement.

In a previous interview, Supt. Peter A. Hartman said he felt the district would be vindicated in court, based on a decision by the Supreme Court in 1988 that

prevented students at Mission Viejo and El Toro high schools from promoting or advertising religion-oriented clubs on campus.

In the spring of 1996, Vanschoick began meeting with about 10 students to form the Bible club. The group was not allowed to meet in classrooms, but they could gather on a lawn during lunch and before and after school, Vanschoick's mother said. The group, which has since grown to about 40 members, also was denied access to multimedia equipment, such as speakers and school newspapers, Sheila Vanschoick said.

After the group's application to be a legitimate school club was denied, Vanschoick went to Mendoza, a pro bono attorney affiliated with the Virginia-based Rutherford Institute, which is a Christian legal center.

"In this day and age, when you have so much negativity in schools with drugs and alcohol and violence, it seems to some that [school officials] should welcome a club that promotes community services and good will," Mendoza said. "Instead, the school district is defiantly saying, 'Well too bad, we're not going to allow your Bible club.'"

Also contributing to this report was Times staff writer Tina Nguyen.■

48. Los Angeles Times

* 06/27/97; Edition: Valley Edition; Section: Metro; No Desk; Page B-3

Firm Gives Computers to School Lab, Pupils

By DARRELL SATZMAN

While the children at Langdon Avenue Elementary School are not the only ones in the Los Angeles Unified School District to benefit from donated computer equipment, they may be the only ones who are actually taking the computers home.

To date, 84 Langdon students have received surplus computers as part of a 3-year-old partnership between a local

aerospace company and the school's LA's BEST after-school program. The company, Van Nuys-based ITT Gilfillan, offers a six-week training course to the Langdon students and then presents the graduates with their own computers.

TD

ITT Gilfillan has also outfitted the school's computer lab with 10 machines, and on Thursday it donated a new, high-powered computer with Internet access and a color printer to the school's

library.

"Many companies donate computers to schools, but we wanted to start a training program as well," said Victor Rios, president of ITT Gilfillan.

"There is a very large underprivileged population in this area that doesn't have access to computers. I believe we have a corporate responsibility to help the community we are in," Rios said.

The partnership between the company, which builds radar systems, and the

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Title V

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- Needs more targets
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MEMORANDUM

TO: TOM FREEDMAN
FROM: JULIE MIKUTA
RE: TITLE I SUMMARY
DATE: JUNE 20, 1997

SUMMARY

This memo describes how money allocated to states under Title I can be applied to the reconstitution of schools. ~~The source of this money are funds that the state reserves specifically for school improvement.~~ There is a program, under the reauthorized Title I, designed as a federal distribution to states specifically for school improvement; however, it has never been funded. Local educational agencies are responsible for monitoring the progress of schools, and applying sanctions, including reconstitution, if necessary. The State assesses the progress of the LEAs, and implements corrective actions if necessary. The State does not deal directly with individual schools.

OVERVIEW OF TITLE I

Title I money is allocated to schools, not individual students. Students in schools receiving Title I money get the district average per pupil plus 25% more; this means the money runs out before it reaches all poor students. To decide which schools receive the money, districts rank them by poverty level.

These are the 7 programs that make up Title I:

Name	Purpose	FY '95
Basic Grants and Concentration Grants	<i>Basic grants</i> make up the bulk of the overall program; they are allocated to states by the federal government based on the number of low-income children that attend schools. <i>Concentration Grants</i> are targeted at counties with poverty rates that exceed 15%.	\$7.4 billion
Even Start	for early childhood education	\$118 million
Migrant Program	for the education of children of migratory farm workers and fishers who have moved within past 36 months	\$310 million

Neglected or Delinquent Program	for youth under age 21 in State neglected, delinquent, or adult correction facilities	\$40 million
Capital Expenses	for providing educational services to eligible children attending non-public schools	\$41,434,000
<i>Additional Assistance for School Improvement</i>	<i>for technical assistance, incentives and other strategies to assist schools to help students meet standards</i>	<i>FY'95, 96, 97 = \$0</i>
Evaluation	for assessment of Title I programs	\$9 million

TITLE I AND SCHOOL RECONSTITUTION

Sources of Money

There are 3 sources of money for school improvement under Title I:

1. the program, "Additional Assistance for School Improvement", described on the chart;
2. money reserved from the State's Title I allocation for these programs: Basic Grants, Concentration Grants, Migrant Program, Neglected or Delinquent Program, under Section 1003, "Reservation and Allocation for School Improvement"; and
3. money reserved as state administrative funds from the same programs listed in #2, under Sec 1603 (c), "State Administration".

According to Sec 1003, a minimum of \$200,000 must be reserved by the State for school improvement from a combination of these 2 sources. The program, "Additional Assistance for School Improvement", has never been allocated any funds. The entire \$200,000 must therefore come from the State's Title I allocation. A state is able to reserve up to 0.5% of its total allocation for school improvement from the programs listed above.

According to Sec 1117, "State Assistance for School Support and Improvement", a State educational agency may use the State administrative funds to support schools as described in the state education plan (see below for description of plan). A state is able to reserve up to 1% of its total allocation for administration from the programs listed above. The Education Department says that states rarely use administrative funds for school improvement.

"School Improvement" under Title I

State Plan

In order to obtain Title I funding, a State educational agency (SEA) must get the approval of the Secretary of Education for its plan to implement and run Title I programs. In this plan (outlined in Sec 1117) will be a description of a statewide system of support for schools, and school improvement processes. This system includes: school support teams that provide information and

assistance to schoolwide programs; distinguished schools that serve as models and provide support to other schools; and distinguished educators, who assist schools needing improvement and those involved with schoolwide programs. The process of implementing this system is funded by the \$200,000 reserved by the State (described above), and the money reserved under "State Administration".

Local Agency Plans

In order for a local educational agency (LEA) to receive Title I money, it must get the State's approval of its plan to implement and run Title I programs. Included in this plan are assurances that the LEA will fulfill its responsibilities regarding school improvement, including the taking of corrective actions.

Section 1116, "Assessment and Local Educational Agency and School Improvement" describes how a LEA monitors individual schools and applies sanctions, including school reconstitution. These are the responsibilities of an LEA that pertain to school improvement:

1. annually review schools
2. identify for school improvement any school that has not made adequate progress (as defined in State's plan) for 2 consecutive years and work with them to develop and implement an improvement plan
3. provide technical or other assistance to the schools during improvement process
4. if a school does not meet the State standards after 3 years (in some cases 4 years), take corrective actions against the school (N.B. the LEA can take corrective action against a school identified for improvement at any time)¹.

These are the responsibilities of the SEA regarding school improvement:

1. make technical assistance available to schools farthest from meeting the State's standards
2. take corrective actions against an LEA that does not carry out the above responsibilities
3. review the progress of the LEA to determine if schools receiving funds are progressing towards the State standards
4. reward LEAs that have made outstanding progress
5. identify LEAs that are not making adequate progress, and work with them in the same way that LEAs work with improving schools, as described in #1-4 above².

¹These are the corrective actions listed in the text of Sec 1116: withholding funds; interagency collaborative agreements between the school and other public agencies to provide social services needed to remove barriers from learning; revoking authority for a school to operate a Title I program; decreasing decision-making at the school level; making alternative arrangements such as the creation of a public charter school; reconstituting the school staff; authorizing students to transfer to other public schools, served by the LEA; and implementing opportunity-to-learn standards or strategies developed by such State under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act.

²These are the corrective sanctions listed in Sec 1116 that a State may apply to an LEA: withholding of funds; reconstitution of school district personnel; removal of particular schools from the jurisdiction of the LEA; implementation of the opportunity-to-learn standards or strategies developed by the State under Goals 2000; placing of the LEA into receivership; abolition or restructuring of the LEA; authorization of students to transfer from a school operated by LEA into a school operated by a different LEA; development of a new LEA plan.

States' eppling in at urban schools in crisis

Troubled by inadequate schools and unresponsive administrators, legislators are allowing states to intervene using drastic measures

By John Ritter
USA TODAY

HARTFORD, Conn. — The news hit like a stake in the heart at America's second oldest school. Outside evaluators revoked Hartford Public High's accreditation — in effect, labeling the 135-year-old institution a failure.

But as troubling as that news was — teachers were shocked, students were angry — it was merely the catalyst for bigger events. Connecticut's Legislature, embattled by the dismal performance of schools in the state's largest city, rushed through a law to abolish the locally elected school board and empower the governor to appoint a new one.

The June 1 state takeover came as a relief in Hartford after years of school board mismanagement, policy failure, political infighting and declining academic achievement. Across the country, takeovers are an increasingly popular tool of last resort when frustrations over bad schools collide with local inability — or unwillingness — to reform.

Yet there is no evidence that takeovers can turn school failure into success. No research suggests that they inspire wholesale academic improvement. New Jersey has been running two troubled urban districts, Jersey City and Paterson, since the late 1980s and seen only a modest bump in test scores. Among the most visible takeovers: Cleveland; Youngstown, Ohio; Newark, N.J.; Washington, D.C.; and Chicago. None of these school systems has shown dramatic results either, though educators caution that it probably is too early to expect big gains.

Schools in all these cities had hit rock bottom, just as they had in Hartford. And if educators agree on anything about the nation's dysfunctional urban schools, it's this: Turning them around will take a long time. Assorted problems — academic and non-academic — have to be addressed at once: crime and security, dilapidated buildings, mismanagement, curriculum overhauls, even bus routes and cafeteria food.

If the state simply brings in a new layer of control without meaningful reform in the classroom, no amount of big-footing will change the status quo. Twenty-two states now permit some drastic intervention — takeovers, the closing or consolidation of schools, civil lawsuits or school board recalls — and several others are considering their own "school bankruptcy" laws.

But most often "we see the biggest changes in management and finance, and that's not what it's about," says Hal Hayden of the Northeast and Islands Regional Education Laboratory at Brown University, the group that studied Hartford's schools and made recommendations to the state.

"It's about student learning and increasing student perfor-

mance. That's where the focus must be. Otherwise, what we're doing is painting the house a different color, but it's still the same house."

Differing tactics

There is nothing approaching a standard takeover. In Washington, a control board appointed by President Clinton picked a retired Army general to shape up D.C. schools. In Illinois, the Legislature essentially said to Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, "The schools are yours, go work a miracle." In Ohio, the Legislature can't decide whether to ratchet up the Cleveland takeover with a law making Mayor Michael White the school czar.

But one thing any takeover needs, experts say, is a free hand to hire and fire and move teachers around — union contracts notwithstanding. That's possible in only a few states.

As high-profile as takeovers are, they're relatively rare — and part of a broader movement in the 1990s to hold failing schools accountable. Government impatience is at an all-time high, and lawmakers in state after state are telling schools: Improve or we'll impose change. "Accountability is just enormous in the states this year," says Kathy Christie, policy analyst at the Denver-based Education Commission of the States. "We could see a bunch more takeover laws this year. And if not takeover, tougher accountability."

In urban districts like Hartford, underfunded and plagued by suburban flight, the socio-economic realities of inner-city life magnify schools' shortcomings. More than a third of families with children live below the poverty line.

Because fewer than half of Hartford's children go to preschool, large numbers arrive in kindergarten not knowing the alphabet or how to differentiate colors. Only 40% of Hartford Public's students graduate from high school, compared with 80% statewide. Scores on standardized tests are Connecticut's lowest. Drugs and gangs are pernicious influences.

"We have kids who say they're going to die anyway so why stay in school," says Amado Cruz, Hartford Public's principal. Besides deficiencies in curriculum and teacher-training, lack of discipline was cited in the accreditation decision, which the district is appealing.

Also cited was the failure, after years of promises, to bring buildings and classrooms up to accrediting standards. The library-media center, for example, is too small; just two of its computers are wired to the Internet and at least triple the number of books and videos should be available in a high school with 1,800 students. "We have so many needs," says librarian Norma Cherry.

Teachers critical

School is out in Hartford, and the new school board hasn't announced major plans yet. A 48-point improvement plan that the Brown University lab came up is expected to

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
6-10-97

It's clear that Hartford's teachers will be crucial to reform. Depending on the source, teachers are either the glue that holds a crumbling system together or the root of many of its problems.

"People don't understand how many hours these teachers put in," Cruz says. "This isn't a suburban district where you have a lot of stability. Teachers are resolving all kinds of problems, all kinds of emergencies. They're tutoring, mentoring, visiting homes, helping kids find jobs, training them for interviews."

Estaban Gonzalez, a junior honors student, says: "The teachers are there for us all the time — before school, after school. We call them at night."

But critics say Hartford's highly paid teachers — average pay \$53,000, with many above \$70,000 — are protected by restrictive work rules, won in contracts negotiated over many years, that rob the district of flexibility to make major reforms.

Donald Romanik, president of the defunct board, says: "The teachers' contract regulates every aspect of how to run the schools — from extra pay provisions, to the number of parent-teacher conferences, to restrictions on the number of required lesson plans, to yard duty assignments."

Takeovers that have teeth are those that give new boards power to move teachers and principals around, experts say. In districts with unions, that means power over contracts.

In Connecticut, a strong union state, the Legislature handed Hartford a mixed bag. The new board can go over union leaders' heads and appeal to the membership to approve changes. But a membership no vote kills the proposal.

Two years from now, though, all bets are off. The law sets up a clean slate for talks on a new contract. If disputes between the board and the union go to binding arbitration, the arbitrators can ignore precedent or any previously negotiated work rule. The law says the arbitrators are bound only by what's best for the children. If the board makes the case that a change is good for kids, the teachers must comply.

For now, almost everyone is taking a high road. Superintendent Patricia Daniel, hired this year by the old board, does not believe the goal of raising Hartford's test scores in just three years is unrealistic. "I won't use the fact that kids are from welfare families as an excuse for not learning," she says. "And I will not let anyone else here use that as an excuse."

Teachers union president Cheryl Daniels says if the new board "really wants to help it will embrace the people working in the system already."

At Hartford Public, the immediate worry of students like Suzi Senna, a sophomore honors student, is whether the accreditation crisis will pass before her chance of a college scholarship is ruined. "We're all middle class or lower-middle class here and we can't transfer out to private schools because we can't afford it."

Mike, Tom —
Shd we be calling on every state to pass a takeover law?

- BR

cc: EK

USA TODAY
TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 1997

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Takeover
Aul 14/95

LAWMAKERS OK MORE CHARTER SCHOOLS

Published on 07/02/97. Article 1 of 52 found.

SOURCE: By Kate Zernike, Globe Staff

Legislators voted yesterday to double the number of charter schools statewide, affirming the popularity and early success of the alternative public schools, but angering critics who say charters will rob money from struggling school systems.

An overwhelming vote in the House to increase the number of schools to 50 came on the heels of a similar vote in the Senate Monday. The bill is expected

[Click for complete article](#)

BUDGET HEDGES, STEPS UP SPENDING

Published on 07/01/97. Article 2 of 52 found.

SOURCE: By Adrian Walker, Globe Staff

For young children and their parents, college students and legal immigrants, the new state budget is full of good news.

As for those who thought the state's economic boom provided a historic chance to significantly cut tax rates -- Governor William F. Weld foremost among them -- well, perhaps they should have known better.

[Click for complete article](#)

CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOW IMPROVEMENT IN TESTS

Published on 06/27/97. Article 3 of 52 found.

SOURCE: By Kate Zernike, Globe Staff

OPTIONS FOR AN URBAN INITIATIVE ON FIXING FAILING SCHOOLS

ROUGH DRAFT July 2, 1997

Background:

While many urban districts are undertaking significant standards based reform efforts, many individual schools remain stubbornly unresponsive to change, with chronically low test scores, poor attendance, and unsafe conditions. These schools shortchange their students, demoralize staff, and contribute to debilitating public skepticism on the potential to reform urban public schools. Several districts across the U.S, including Chicago and San Francisco, as well as some states, such as Maryland, have moved aggressively to intervene in persistently failing schools, beginning first with a period of probationary status, and, if the school does not show improvement, then reconstituting the school with new principal leadership, new teachers, or both, as well as a strong instructional program. While the reauthorized Title I contemplates district intervention in failing schools, it also places significant restrictions on the conditions under which intervention can occur, as well as the types of remedial action allowable, under the auspices of Title I. Moreover, federal, as well as non-federal resources should be made more readily available to encourage and support districts that are willing to take on failing schools in an aggressive manner.

Purpose:

A new initiative on fixing failing schools would provide incentives, technical assistance, and resources to encourage districts to dramatically accelerate and intensify their efforts to intervene with failing public schools, particularly in low-income urban areas. Such an effort would provide support for many more districts to reconstitute or take similar dramatic actions for schools that have failed their students educationally and that don't respond to more conventional school improvement strategies.

Potential elements:

Guide on School Reconstitution

Working alone, or together with CPRE or other outside partners, the Department of Education could assemble a practical guide for school districts on strategies for fixing failing schools, including school reconstitution. The guide could potentially include:

- *Summary of research and key principles for intervention* , including a focus on high standards, clear and fair accountability, a strong vision of school improvement, adequate resources for teacher and administrator professional development, collaborating with experienced and effective reform partners, effective communication with teachers and administrators, building parental and community support, and appropriate timing.
- *Strategies for reconstitution* and similar interventions in persistently failing schools,

including reassigning individual teachers who refuse to actively participate in a school's research- and standards-based schoolwide reform effort; dismissing and then rebuilding leadership and teacher teams from the ground up; and closing schools and reopening them as public charter schools or schools-within-schools.

- *Examples or case studies* of recent intervention efforts, along with analysis of lessons learned.
- *A description of federal financial and technical resources* available to assist intervention efforts, including Title I, Eisenhower, Goals 2000, Charter Schools, and other funds, as well as regional education laboratories and comprehensive centers, including contact information.
- *A description of non-federal school reform networks and resources* concerned with improving failing schools, including contact information.

Legislative Changes to Existing Federal Programs to Encourage Aggressive Intervention

- *Title I School Improvement Provisions*
 - Compress intervention time-frame to require more rapid intervention in the most dysfunctional schools.
 - Substantially reduce restrictions on reconstitution, charter schools, and student transfer remedies.
 - Narrow list or otherwise make set of acceptable interventions more directive/more focused on reconstitution and related remedies.
- *Title I Funding Provisions*
 - Allow brief relaxation of per-pupil allocation provisions to give an extra boost to schools in early stages of reconstitution for intensive summer and after school professional development.
 - Authorize SEA to retain additional funds to use in working with failing schools where local district has failed to aggressively intervene.
- *Charter Schools Program*
 - Create priority within Public Charter Schools program for states that pledge to devote 35% of their charter schools grants to schools that have been closed and are reopening as public charter schools.

- *Community Schools Program*
 - Create priority within Community Schools program to promote creation of community schools from schools that are being reconstituted.
- *Technical Assistance Programs*
 - Place a statutory priority for ED's technical assistance providers to aid districts and schools engaged in reconstitution efforts.

Establish a New Grant Program or Priority Within Existing Program That Provides Incentives and Support for Districts to Intervene Aggressively in Failing Schools

- Discretionary grant program open to urban and rural districts with high concentrations of poverty.
- Districts can seek up to \$50,000 per school, for a maximum of 5% of its schools per year, to close down and reopen with new leadership and faculty those schools that persistently fail to meet acceptable standards for student achievement, attendance and safety.
- 90% of the funds must be spent at the school level; the remainder can be retained at the district level for technical assistance activities.
- Each school receiving funds must commit to:
 - Developing a clear school improvement plan for using all available resources to help students reach high standards.
 - Upgrading the physical appearance of the school.
 - Extending learning time and providing safe environments for students by keeping the school open after-school, on weekends, or during the summer.
 - Working with recognized partners using recognized, research-based, effective schoolwide improvement models.
 - Providing intensive professional development for all members of the new instructional team prior to the schools' reopening and continuing for the first two years following reconstitution.
- Priority for funding would be given to those schools that are being reopened as schools within schools or public charter schools, to encourage more personalized learning

environments and accountability for student achievement.

Establish a Partnership on Fixing Failing Schools

Establish a new partnership including New American Schools Development Corporation, reform networks and other partners willing to make themselves available to help districts fix failing schools. Could also include teacher unions. Each partner will commit to using their reform model and working with a minimum number of schools across the U.S.. Schools could use resources made available through the possible new grant program in order to modify and implement appropriate reform models.

Establish a Network on Fixing Failing Schools

Establish a network of school districts and state agencies (including Chicago, San Francisco, Maryland and others) having experience with reconstitution and similar interventions to help each other and consult with other districts.

Long-Term Study or Studies

Contract for a long-term study comparing failing schools that did participate in reconstitution with those that didn't, and further identifying effective practices among those that did.

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 - Create priority within Public Charter Schools program for states that pledge to devote 35% of their charter schools grants to schools that have been closed and are reopening as public charter schools.

- *Community Schools Program*
 - Create priority within Community Schools program to promote creation of community schools from schools that are being reconstituted.
- *Technical Assistance Programs*
 - Place a statutory priority for ED's technical assistance providers to aid districts and schools engaged in reconstitution efforts.

Partnership on Fixing Failing Schools

Establish a new partnership including New American Schools Development Corporation, reform networks and other partners willing to make themselves available to help districts fix failing schools. Could also include teacher unions. Each partner will commit to using their reform model and working with a minimum number of schools across the U.S..

Network on Fixing Failing Schools

Establish a network of school districts (including Chicago, San Francisco and others) having experience with reconstitution and similar interventions to help each other and consult with other districts.

Establish a New Grant Program or Priority Within Existing Program That Provides Incentives and Support for Districts to Intervene Aggressively in Failing Schools

- To receive funding, schools must either connect with partners that have proven schoolwide reform designs or else become a charter school.

Long-Term Study or Studies

Contract for a long-term study comparing failing schools that did participate in reconstitution with those that didn't, and further identifying effective practices among those that did.

Fixing Failing Schools -- Possible Policy Initiative July 2, 1997

Catherine Jovicich
Jackie Jackson
Jon Schnur
Jessica Levin

Background -- convergence
Urban
Fixing Failing Schools
Now, Race--good chance to get something done

Asked to focus on what a policy initiative on fixing failing schools would look like
Relation to Fall 96 Urban Initiative
What we can do within existing resources, but if we were going to do something new and resources were available, what would that look like?

Catherine: CPRE findings

Jessica: Title I barriers

Talk about options

CPRE CONFERENCE

Bring state, local, federal people together on research agenda

Rationale between high stakes and school accountability
Compared San Francisco (court system/deseg) vs. Maryland (continuous school improvement) vs. Kentucky (school identification and assistance along the way) vs. overhauling terrible schools
Distinguishing among different types
Vehicle used to reconstitute/aggressiveness/theory behind all effect it
SF, KY, MD, Philly, Chicago -- all have very different approaches and political dynamics
How to identify failing schools -- gets complicated very quickly -- indicators affect how it goes --
MD academic caution, alert, takeover -- and then indicators to get off of probation
In Chicago, very hard to get out of improvement if test scores don't go up
Chicago speaker reference school in Chicago that is on academic probation, but ED recognized as
New American High School

If did promote reconstitution, would need to do research on models for identifying schools that are failing--immediately

Probationary period--places in decline, what kinds of interventions in place -- Maryland may be overwhelmed by 45 schools

Planned to have universities and outsiders help
What if actually has to take over
If school does go into reconstitution, planning and thinking -- Catherine likens to starting up of a new charter school
Not really discussed at conference

[Jessica, allowing principals to choose team]

Assistance from outside consultants, state, universities
Slavin
Michael Clonsky, Chicago -- helping large schools become small ones

Discussion of politics
High level of disagreement
Teacher emotions especially bitter -- labeling of those who are dismissed

Broke into small working groups

Impact on Community and Race Relations
Unions/Professionalism
Accountability/Urban Reform
Financing School Improvement

All of the factors interacted

SF's reconstitution effort came out of civil rights/deseg -- issues come up again in decision of where to intervene.

Models and Strategies
Background Info

Don't know what next steps from conference would be
Maybe conference

School takeover versus school intervention and support
Distinguished educators to go in and work with them for a year
Teacher is considered an insider
Don't want them to leave after the year is up

Reconstitution leaves lots of teachers bitter

Philadelphia--
San Francisco==
negotiated new
Superintendent

Federal programs were never mentioned

JESSICA/TITLE I

Barriers--

Appeal provisions on data

Can't take stronger actions until have final assessment

No action taken can conflict with teacher rights, contracts

Jovicich--

State plan negotiations -- weak -- what puts them into school improvement

Grace

Delaware contact

parent participation

rewards and participation over long time

connections to long-term success

Jovicich

Have been getting requests from cities to help them with their federal programs

EX. Hartford--

Judith has been talking with comprehensive centers and staff at ED -- a packaged response team to help them use their resources better in working with failing schools -- focusing on building capacity of ED's technical assistance providers

With new census count, got a lot more money than before -- encouraging to treat it as true new money.

Jessica--

How do we frame the problem?

Would contact a list of ten people -- ask them what they get?

What are the unique combination of factors that have come to bear in Chicago, including the politics?

San Francisco--

Lack of strong political coalitions against

Jovicich wants to share the cross-cutting findings paper

Seems to track systemic reform efforts that we have been pushing

Gerry could pick out people that we would want to talk to in-depth

Show and tell on reform models --

Gerry, John Anderson, and Mary Jean met with Becton re: how to use schoolwides for using New American Schools designs

Research on aspects of successful SWPs

Have spoken with Anderson on Cincinnati and Memphis (maybe DC) would like Title I people to sit down with them to figure out real and perceived barriers to using federal resources to implement -- going to meet next week

DC efforts

Elements of successful schoolwide programs

Significant planning up front

Interim indicators

-- on the way down

--on the way back up

-- keep up the progress

sustaining momentum

Part of OESE Budget is instructional leaders academy--
tied to reading and math in big cities

Could be that you combine a principal academy building/distinguished principals to turn around schools/distinguished teachers/KY.

NBPTS

Chicago, etc. has a list of TA providers that can come in and help

It would be nice to have a comprehensive approach to urban problems

school construction

safe and drug free schools

technology stuff -- e-rate, TLCF, etc.

America Reads

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Hot issues

Copy
All
DPC
50079

June 18, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

KITTY HIGGINS

LB
3-11

SUBJECT: HOT ISSUES -- DENVER, CO

Limited-English-Proficient Students: In mid-May, DOEd's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) notified Denver Public Schools (DPS) that OCR has found DPS to be in serious violation of the Civil Rights Act and other federal law. OCR asserts that DPS discriminates against limited-English-proficient minority students, on the basis of national origin and disability, by failing to provide them with equal educational opportunity. DPS has been under court order since the mid-1980s to establish adequate programs for limited-English proficient students. OCR's letter will give DPS an opportunity to negotiate a compliance agreement with OCR; failing an agreement, OCR will refer the matter to DOJ. CO's language-minority student population has grown 714 percent since 1981. (DOEd)

Gender Discrimination: The University of CO at Boulder and Colorado State University are among the 25 schools cited in a recent complaint filed with DOEd's Office for Civil Rights alleging violations of Title IX of the Civil Rights Act in the schools' athletic programs. The complaint, which was filed by the National Women's Law Center, alleges that the schools discriminate against female athletes by awarding fewer athletic scholarships to female students than they award to male students. (DOEd)

Voucher Suit: Approximately 100 parents filed a state court class action suit against Denver Public Schools (DPS) May 7 alleging that the school system has systematically failed to teach even basic skills to Denver's poorer children. The plaintiffs, represented by a 1996 Congressional candidate who supported the losing 1996 state school voucher initiative, ask the court to order DPS to provide tax money to low- and middle-income families who want to send their children to private schools. (DOEd)

OPIC Elimination: CO Sen. Wayne Allard has introduced legislation to eliminate the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, telling the *Rocky Mountain News* he wants to reduce "corporate welfare," and believes that Democrats have used OPIC as a "slush fund for political contributors." Several CO firms, such as US West, received OPIC loan guarantees. (DOC)

Shattuck Chemical -- Denver Radium Superfund Site: The City of Denver and numerous community groups have appealed EPA's decision to dispose of radioactive soil on-site within the city limits rather than move it to a hazardous waste disposal facility. Mayor Webb has contacted you regarding this issue. EPA and the state believe the current cleanup plan is fully protective of public health, and are working with the city to address its concerns. (EPA)

Commemorative Coins: On June 17, the *Denver Post* ran a front page story about a proposal to produce 50 new designs for the quarter, one for each state. This issue is of particular interest to Denver because minting the quarters would increase production at the Denver Mint, which produces half of the circulating coins nationwide. On June 9, Treasury forwarded the 50 State Commemorative Coin Program Study to Congress, and Secretary Rubin has until August 1 to proceed with the program. The study estimated that the program would generate \$2.6 - \$5.1 billion over a decade. Secretary Rubin has reservations and is considering its merits. Rep. Michael Castle, chairman of the House Banking Committee's monetary policy subcommittee, sponsored the law, which requires Secretary Rubin to mint the quarters or explain his reasons for declining. (Treas.)

Rocky Flats: There has been recent coverage in the *Denver Post* regarding reports of lax security at DOE facilities in the area. On June 12, the DOE Director of Security Affairs released his assessment along with an unclassified report from the Office of Oversight which, citing significant improvements since January, concluded that, "The security concerns...while some are significant, do not put special nuclear material at immediate risk of theft." (DOE)

At a Portland State University rally, students complained they weren't included in discussing the changes.

The announcement of the compromise on the eve of finals week drew a more muted response.

Chocka Guiden, the PSU student government's vice president and a scholarship recipient, said students are upset about the changes but are committed to working with school officials on new guidelines.

"All the students I've talked to feel the compromise is a bad thing," she said. "Every scholarship has some criteria that make some people ineligible."

Guiden says the changes might turn off minority students from attending state

colleges. She probably would have attended an out-of-state college if not for the scholarship.

"It sends out a negative message," Guiden said. "A lot of people don't know about the legality of the case; they will just hear that it was cut."

The changes will not affect students who are receiving the scholarships or are slated to receive them next fall. Butler is still on the case. Whatever guidelines the campuses deliver will be monitored by federal officials. The U.S. Office of Civil Rights regional office in Seattle forwarded all calls about the agreement to its Washington, D.C., headquarters, where a spokesman refused to comment because the case isn't closed.

Butler said he will be keeping a close watch.

Although he hasn't learned about the deal's details, he said, "If race is still a major factor, I don't think it would hold up in court."

Although Butler vowed to see the issue through, the work has been tiring.

"I'd like to have it over with," he said. "I'm not so fast on the typewriter anymore."

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27. Portland Oregonian

06/15/97; Edition: SUNRISE; Section: LOCAL STORIES; Page B01

HUMBOLDT OVERHAUL FOLLOWS U.S. TREND OF SCHOOL REFORM

By BILL GRAVES - of the Oregonian Staff

A year ago, students were loud, disorderly and urinating in halls and stairwells at Balboa High School in southern San Francisco.

School dances had been banned for years after one ended in a near riot. On campus, windows and benches were broken, graffiti marred the walls, and foliage was overgrown. And the school was academically bankrupt.

So district leaders targeted Balboa for their most radical reform. They dismissed the entire school staff and hired a new principal to rebuild the 1,500-student school from scratch.

Today, the school is clean and orderly. Dances have resumed. Windows have been repaired, walls painted, plants pruned.

The school shifted to a four-period day this year that allowed teachers to spend more time with fewer students. Academics gained so much emphasis that the football team gave up practice Monday afternoons for three hours of tutoring.

"We have established what I call a culture of civility," said Elaine Koury, the new principal.

San Francisco has been cleaning house in low-performing schools for 12 years, longer than any other district, but it suddenly is getting lots of company.

Jack Bierwirth, superintendent of Portland Public Schools, last week announced he will replace the staff at Humboldt Elementary, a North Portland school where more than 80 percent of students perform below state standards in reading and math.

"We have set our sights a whole lot higher," Bierwirth said, "and we are pushing ourselves to be much more demanding."

Denver and Philadelphia are choosing new teachers for two of their worst schools, and a suburban Maryland school district plans to strip six schools of their staffs this summer. Also last week, New York City announced it will replace faculties for two middle schools, and Chicago leaders announced they want to boot the adults out of seven schools. Cleveland and Houston also have dismissed entire staffs in poor-performing schools.

Clean sweeps of school staffs — a practice educators call reconstitution — represent the latest, most radical edge of a national push to hold educators more accountable for their students' achievement. The accountability movement in recent years also has fostered a flurry of state and national tests and standards and a growing number of school choices to spur competition. High-level endorsement

Even U.S. Secretary of Education

Richard Riley recently endorsed replacing teachers in failing schools.

"If a school is bad and can't be changed, reconstitute it or close it down," he said. "If a principal is slow to get the message, find strength in a new leader. If teachers are burned out, counsel them to improve or leave the profession."

Wiping out the whole school staff is sometimes necessary and beneficial but always drastic and painful, like hitting a school with a neutron bomb, said Gary Orfield, a Harvard education professor who led a study of San Francisco's first six reconstituted schools. For the school and community, it is like open-heart surgery, Orfield said. For teachers, he added, "It is really a public hanging."

Portland got its first taste of the pain last week as wounded teachers worked through their final days at Humboldt and as angry parents stormed a school board meeting. The district can expect more turmoil, Orfield said, because it typically takes schools two or three years to recover from the trauma.

Koury of Balboa High agreed. "It is such a dramatic change that you have to expect the beginning to be rocky," she said. "There are too many people walking around not knowing one another's name."

Humboldt parents worry their longstanding relationships with the school will be severed when the staff leaves. That has been a common concern

at the 14 schools San Francisco has reconstituted since 1984.

After the district cleaned house at Visitacion Valley Middle School three years ago, the new staff immediately set out to build strong community ties. "We went out into the community and met everyone we could," Principal John Flores said.

Teachers visited parents at home, including those living in the city's largest housing project. The school also hired social workers and nurses to help students and their families. Today, the school has better ties with the community than ever.

The school also reorganized into five smaller groups within the school, each matching a team of teachers with a group of students. Once in the academic basement of the 62,000-student district, Visitacion has moved up to the top of the bottom third in reading and to almost average in math, Flores said. Success factors

Other reconstituted schools have shown improvements to varying degrees, although it is too soon to judge newer ones because it usually takes three years to affect student learning, Orfield said. Success depends on a strong principal and a sharp academic focus.

The first six, which were overhauled in 1984, all have shown significant academic gains, he said.

"We really did turn around the first six," he said. "They were changed very deeply."

San Francisco began replacing dysfunctional school staffs as part of its agreement with the federal government to address desegregation and the needs of poor and minority children.

But the district will boot a staff only as a last-ditch effort after it has tried other, less traumatic interventions, spokeswoman Gail Kaufman said. The district uses a broad review process to monitor all of its schools and identify those in academic trouble.

Failing schools are given time to

design and carry out improvement plans. The central office provides guidance and support. Some improve; others get worse.

Each year schools are evaluated using a variety of indicators such as test scores, student writing samples, and attendance, dropout and suspension rates. A team of evaluators also visits each school to interview staff members and review the school's improvement plan and climate. Each school is rated on a 200-point scale; Balboa scored 78 points on the eve of its revamping.

The district cleans house when it concludes the school climate or culture is suffocating student performance and overshadowing the work of strong teachers. The school needs a critical mass of adults focused on high student performance, Kaufman said.

Overhauled schools are expected to develop plans that include the following:

- Philosophical tenets that assert all students can reach acceptable achievement levels.

- Specific learning goals for each subject at grade level.

- Use of computer technology in instruction.

An ongoing process of monitoring results and fine-tuning.

Portland has a similar proposal for Humboldt's new staff, and it does monitor schools in academic trouble as part of its strategic plan. But its monitoring is less structured and formal than San Francisco's. Oppose overhaul strategy

Many teachers' unions and critics say leaders could turn around failing schools by dumping bad teachers rather than entire staffs. Last month, hundreds of San Francisco teachers gathered with signs outside a school board meeting to protest the clean-sweep approach to reform, arguing it was cruel and unnecessary.

Outraged Portland teachers criticized the Humboldt overhaul, saying the district did not visit the school or give it time to carry out promising reforms.

They also contended the district will not have time to assemble and train a new principal and staff by September.

In Philadelphia, Superintendent David W. Hornbeck struck a contract with the teachers' union that gave him power to replace as much as 75 percent of a school staff. That's what will happen at Olney and Auden Ried schools.

The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers filed an unfair labor practice about the move, which is in the hands of an arbitrator. The two neighborhood schools were not changing, and it was time for an overhaul, said Paul Hanson, a district spokesman.

Denver Public Schools followed a more orderly process in targeting two schools for new staffs. The district identified low-performing schools and sent a team, including members of the teachers' union, to visit them. Involving teachers reduced turmoil, said Sue Edwards, president of the school board.

Denver has hired two principals who are selecting their teachers. The new principals will get time and money to train their staffs and develop an improvement plan this summer, Edwards said.

Whatever their circumstances, principals and teachers taking over failed schools can expect long hours, stress and tumult, said weary veterans in San Francisco.

"You can change a failing school into a succeeding school," said Koury, principal of Balboa High, where two-thirds of the students return this week for summer school.

But, she added, "Anybody who thinks this is an easy answer better think again."

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will meet ISU's requirements and can be used as stepping stones to earn ISU bachelor's degrees.

Although Ivy Tech students previously could transfer some credits to other universities, this latest agreement with ISU allows them to get credit for their full two years of work.

"We believe it's a pretty significant agreement," said Stanley Jones, head of the commission. "This will give students of Ivy Tech a lot more opportunities to continue their education."

Two additional bachelor's degree programs will be offered at Ivy Tech campuses through distance learning in 1998 and another two in 1999.

Franklin estimated that 35 to 40 students would enroll in the fall at the Ivy Tech sites, and the number of students would increase to more than 500 within five years.

Initially, most instruction will be offered through the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System, which televises classroom lectures to remote sites. But plans call for students to also use video cassettes at home, and to utilize the Internet and World Wide Web to give them other interactive learning experiences.

A full-time ISU learning coordinator will be at the Indianapolis, South Bend and Columbus campuses of Ivy Tech to

help students with the technology and financial aid. Ivy Tech staff will assist students at the other sites.

Franklin said ISU developed the program to help meet the need for college-educated adults in the work force and make higher education more accessible. In addition, the university hopes to boost its enrollment and use the technology for on-campus classes.

ISU's student body has declined by about 1,000 students during the past four years.

"We think it will attract new students who know they want to get a four-year degree," said Marnia Kennon, executive director of educational planning. ■

34. Cincinnati Enquirer

June 8, 1997

Schools fall short of new goals Lagging districts could face takeover

BY MARK SKERTIC
The Cincinnati Enquirer

State educators want their tough new school standards to be backed up with harsh consequences: Fail to meet the goals and schools risk a state takeover.

An Enquirer analysis of student test scores shows the state could end up running a lot of schools.

Only seven of the state's 611 school districts now meet all the proposed performance standards. Most districts fall woefully short, failing to have the mandatory 75 percent of students passing their math, science, reading, writing and citizenship proficiency exams.

Worse, some record that no students are able to pass some of the tests. Those schools and others whose performance is low will have to make constant strides in student performance or face state intervention under new rules proposed by the State Board of Education and now being considered by lawmakers.

"The accountability piece strikes fear into the hearts of many people," said Dr. John Goff, state superintendent of public instruction.

State involvement could range from requiring an improvement plan to - in extreme cases - usurping control from the local board. The takeover option won't necessarily solve problems a board has struggled to reverse, said Lynn Marmer, Cincinnati Board of Education president.

Taking away the school board's authority "is a political solution, not a classroom, school-level solution," she said. A memo circulated to State Board of Education members and Dr. Goff in April 1996 reported that 82 school districts met the proposed minimum performance accountability standards. But that tally was based on 1995 data, a year before the state began administering a science exam to fourth-, sixth- and 12th-graders.

The Enquirer's analysis of test scores for each public district and 4,245 school buildings and offices showed that the majority of students in rich suburbs, tough urban areas and poor rural communities all fail to meet the new performance goals.

The analysis found:

Sixty percent of schools fail to meet the minimum attendance rate (93 percent) and maximum dropout rate (3 percent). Among them is Cincinnati Public Schools, with an attendance rate of 87.3 percent and a dropout rate of 14.2 percent, among the state's worst.

Locally, the Lockland and Hamilton districts also have dropout rates far exceeding the state's proposed maximum, with 11.3 and 11.1 percent respectively dropping out annually.

Of the 22 schools recording no students passing the sixth-grade science exam, 12 are in Cincinnati Public Schools. Two of the 12 also recorded no

fourth-graders passing their science test.

In 77 percent of the districts, average scores on the fourth-, sixth- and 12th-grade science exams all failed to meet the 75 percent passing threshold.

Although the new standards would give added importance to test scores, the accuracy of the data remains questionable. Twelve districts didn't report the results of their 12th-grade proficiency tests to the state. Locally, Princeton schools didn't report scores for fourth-, sixth- or 12th-graders.

All the news wasn't bad. Of the seven districts that now meet all standards, four of them - Indian Hill, Madeira, Mariemont and Wyoming - are in Hamilton County.

Few have success

Those districts that have had success spend more than the state average on students. They also have high percentages of middle- and upper-income families, intangibles that affect student success. "This district has put a lot of attention on results in what we're teaching," said Wyoming Superintendent Ted Knapke. "But it's not just a function of the quality of instructions. It's parental support, the community."

Parents who support the school are essential for a successful school, said Joanna Perry, principal at McKinley Elementary. Hers was the only CPS elementary where more than 75 percent

history professor who helped develop the program. "The students are, literally and figuratively, seeing more."

Small colleges with a strong liberal arts tradition such as Reed College also are embracing technology. Reed professors use the Internet to refresh the classics. Students can read "The Odyssey" and other Greek texts on-line, for example, which allows them to click on unfamiliar words to get definitions.

"It is much more dynamic," said Wally Englert, a Reed classical studies professor who integrates technology into classes on poets such as Homer or Virgil.

All the changes come at a high cost. Schools are spending millions to stay on the cutting edge — raising tuition, reallocating funds, floating bonds.

The Oregon State System of Higher Education three years ago began assessing students a fee to pay for technology — networks, computers, software, facilities, staff. The fee amounts to about \$50 a term for an undergraduate, and raises about \$6 million annually from system's seven schools. How some of that money gets spent is decided by campus student-faculty committees.

But the changes also engender a fair amount of skepticism. Some worry that the basics might be overwhelmed in the rush to embrace all things high-tech.

"We should be doing this, but we should be doing it carefully, not rushing into everything," said Ken Krane, chairman of OSU's physics department. He uses computers in his classes, but he says there are limits to what they do.

"In many cases," he said, "there really is no substitute for a student going off to a solitary place with a textbook and thinking about things."

A critical test of the new technology's effectiveness as a teaching tool — on a large scale, at least — is Portland State University's Harrison Hall.

The state-of-the-art multimedia building looks like a standard 320-seat lecture hall, except for the computer control console onstage and the enormous screens looming along the walls, which allow instructors to incorporate computer animation and other effects into their presentations. The room isn't used to teach computer science; the classes include subjects such as sociology, psychology and biology. The building cost \$2.3 million.

The U.S. Department of Education is paying \$500,000 for a study to determine whether Harrison Hall makes a difference in how students respond to classes and learn. Students who take courses in Harrison Hall are being compared to their peers taking the same courses in regular classrooms — being

studied, ultimately, for how much they learn. Early indications are positive, but conclusions still are forthcoming.

Technology shouldn't be considered simply a teaching tool, says Nancy Perrin, a PSU psychology professor and part of the team studying Harrison Hall. It has become such a part of everyday life and work that education demands that students be exposed to it. Technology has become an educational end in itself.

"Students will need technology tools to succeed," she said. "By integrating technology into the classroom, we can start modeling that behavior now."

Even technology enthusiasts argue that greater caution could be a good thing. They see technology's potential, but they also are aware of its limits.

"There's a ton of stuff out there that's good, and a ton that's garbage," said Marty Ringle, Reed's director of computing and information services.

"The best experiences people have in college," he said, "have to do with their professors and fellow students."

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33. Indianapolis Star-Tribune

June 15, 1997

Educating the masses

ISU launches distance learning program

By Barb Albert

INDIANAPOLIS — With an Ivy Tech State College associate degree under your arm, a full-time job and a family to support, the chances of earning a four-year degree on a college campus might seem slim.

That's the challenge Ivy Tech and Indiana State University are trying to address through distance-learning technology.

Beginning in the fall, some Ivy Tech graduates with two-year degrees across the state can seek bachelor's degrees from ISU without setting foot on its Terre Haute campus.

Students will be able to take ISU classes in degree programs in business

administration and electronics at any of Ivy Tech's 22 campuses.

The move, approved by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education last week, is designed to encourage more students to seek four-year degrees in Indiana and make it easier for them.

Indiana ranks 47th in the country in the percentage of its population with four-year college degrees.

In taking this step, the state is following an increasing nationwide trend in higher education to offer instruction off-campus through new types of technology.

The administration of ISU President John Moore initiated the distance-learning plan. In the next two

years, ISU is investing more than \$2 million in the program, and the state legislature appropriated \$1.9 million.

"Technology is making higher education very competitive. We felt very strongly that it's important to move ISU in that direction," said Tim Franklin, assistant vice president for governmental affairs.

He said studies show about 1 million students nationwide are taking college courses through distance learning in more than 760 colleges. Thirteen million college students are taking instruction on campuses.

Ultimately, the two Indiana colleges hope to align their curriculum so that up to 27 of the two-year, Ivy Tech degrees

of the fourth-graders passed all sections of their proficiency exam last year. Sixth-grade scores were not as impressive - 20 percent passed their math test and 50 percent the science exam - but the school has identified problems that led to the poor performance and tried to correct it, Mrs. Perry said.

Although McKinley is a neighborhood school that draws primarily from the Columbia Tusculum area, performance there outpaced the results at magnet schools that get more money and often more attention from the district.

Mrs. Perry's school benefits from a relatively small enrollment, about 250 students, that results in manageable class sizes, she said. "The teachers feel like I do - that these kids are smart," she said. "Their parents want to send them to us and they expect them to learn."

State Board of Education member Melanie Bates has sat through hours of debate and presentation on the standards. She has also seen the decrepit science labs in some schools, talked to principals struggling with a burgeoning dropout problem and knows how far some districts must move to even be close to the new performance measures.

"I really don't think the goals are too high for the kids," said Ms. Bates, the mother of two CPS students. "But they've got to get the support at school. And we've got to get these kids what they need without gouging the taxpayers."

Cincinnati is among those districts that must improve in all areas. Only two high schools, Walnut Hills and the School for Creative and Performing Arts, meet the performance levels for both ninth- and 12th-graders. Both schools also have control over their enrollment; Walnut has an academic entrance exam and SCPA is a magnet school for which students must audition to enter.

Cincinnati teachers must improve their own abilities to teach the subjects if they want to help students make the dramatic improvements the state demands, said Kathleen Ware, CPS director of quality improvement.

"We know we've got to improve," she said. "Science has been frequently overlooked as far as being taught to elementary kids. Teacher training is a significant issue for science."

Low achievement in math and science is a problem nationally, and even the highest performing U.S. schools don't measure up internationally, said Dr. William Schmidt, national research

coordinator for the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS).

The 50-nation study is measuring the performance of students in fourth, eighth and 12th grades. A comparison of eighth-graders' scores released last year found the U.S. ranked below the international average in mathematics and slightly above average in science. "Ohio is not unique," said Dr. Schmidt, a professor at Michigan State University. "The whole country does not do particularly well."

To compete internationally, states must find a way to improve teaching and student performance, said Ted Britton, associate director of the National Center for Improvement of Science Education, based in Washington, D.C.

"Maybe 20 years ago you could do a catchup game - in middle school and high school you could hunker down and give students what they needed," he said. "Now, science has exploded and its impact on our lives has exploded and our dependence on it has exploded."

Support for change

Ohio educators' work on new school standards began four years ago. In addition to higher performance levels, the proposed standards include tougher graduation requirements, with an emphasis on mathematics, science, English and social studies and the addition of a foreign language requirement.

Lawmakers appear ready to support the changes. Last week, the Senate Education Committee voted 5-4 to recommend a bill that would increase the minimum requirements necessary to earn a high school diploma. It could be taken up by the Senate this week.

The movement to higher standards and more accountability comes at the same time state officials are considering how to pump millions of additional dollars into public schools. In March, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled the state's present school funding system is unconstitutional and that it shortchanges some districts.

If the state Department of Education doesn't lead the way on demanding better performance, lawmakers will, Dr. Goff warned. "People are not going to put up with non-performance in our schools and requests for new money," he said. "They're just not going to do it."

New performance demands will also increase the importance of accurate reporting by schools to the state. Accuracy and completeness is still

spotty: CPS had reported a dropout rate of 0.9, though it was actually 14.2. Other districts fail to report some information. Cleveland Public Schools, which is now being run by the state, was among those that reported no 12th-grade proficiency scores.

Ohio law already allows the State Board of Education to identify "educationally deficient districts and buildings" and to oversee corrective action plans. But the 8-year-old law has never been used by the state to take over a district.

"We've intervened, in the sense of offering help," said Roger Trent, state director of testing and evaluation. "Not in the sense of going in without an invitation."

The new standards law proposal details what constitutes unacceptable performance and expands the state's authority to demand changes, including development of an improvement plan.

In extreme cases, the state would dictate changes, Dr. Goff said: "You can't remove the (local) board, all you can do is set aside their power."

In most cases the department would work with the local district to find solutions. "Coming in and taking over is a last-ditch effort," said Gene Harris, the assistant state superintendent who oversaw development of the standards.

"We hope it would be a partnership, where we would come in and work with them," she said. "That may mean bringing in national experts, offering a fresh vision."

Financial problems have already forced the state to oversee financial operations in four districts: Cleveland, Youngstown, Osnaburg and Ledgemont. Those responsibilities have already taxed the staff of the Department of Education, and the state doesn't want to usurp decision-making power in dozens of other places, Dr. Goff said.

But, he added, ultimately the state needs the power to compel change.

Twenty states, including Ohio, have academic bankruptcy laws that allow varying levels of intervention when student achievement in a district or school is below tolerable levels.

The most effective laws give states power to make changes at a school when necessary, said Christopher Cross, president of the Council for Basic Education. The council, based in Washington, D.C., is a non-profit organization that has fought for education reform through higher

standards.

Mr. Cross is also president of the Maryland School Board, which has identified 52 schools in that state where students don't perform at acceptable levels.

"You've got to look at schools, not district averages," he suggested. "Averages mask the extremes. Kids attend schools, they don't attend districts."

Once a school in Maryland is singled out for poor achievement, a state team comes in to assess problems. That fact-finding step has helped many principals identify problems, Mr. Cross said. The Kentucky Education Reform Act also has provisions for identifying

schools in crisis. A decline of 5 percent in the proportion of successful students in a two-year period is all that is necessary to earn the dubious distinction.

Nine schools now have the designation, said Jim Parks, spokesman for the Kentucky Department of Education. Once a school there is named educationally deficient, the certified staff is placed on probation and is subject to dismissal or transfer, a state-appointed educator is assigned to work with the school and parents are given the chance to transfer their students to another school.

Some of the Kentucky schools designated deficient are not among the

state's lowest scoring. "Some of those schools that declined were schools with high schools that apparently rested on their laurels, and their scores went down," Mr. Parks said.

To balance the harsh penalties in their laws, Kentucky and Maryland are among the states that have a reward system that benefits schools where student achievement improves. The Ohio proposal includes a reward proposal, which would require state funding.

"You need consequences and rewards," Mr. Cross said. "Otherwise you're only punishing negative behavior, you're not rewarding positive behavior." ■

35. Seattle Times

June 17, 1997

Seniors won't face criminal charges if they pay for the cleanup and stay away from Sammamish commencement

By Katherine Long Seattle Times Eastside bureau

BELLEVUE - Seventeen Sammamish High School seniors won't face criminal charges for slopping paint over their school, as long as they agree to pay for the cleanup, stay away from commencement exercises and do nothing to disrupt the ceremony.

The agreement was reached yesterday between the students, their attorney, the Bellevue School District and the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

The 17 are accused of painting Sammamish High with slogans during an

early-morning graffiti party more than a week ago. Principal Don Haid banned the 17 from commencement exercises, raising a furor in the community. The students said the punishment was too harsh and hired an attorney.

As part of the agreement, the school district recommended that the students not be charged. Prosecutors agreed yesterday to refer the case back to the district.

"We recognize this is a school disciplinary matter," said Dan Donohoe,

spokesman for the prosecutor.

The students faced felony charges for malicious mischief. They will be required to pay for cleanup, estimated at \$5,000.

Although banned from tomorrow's ceremony, they still will receive diplomas.

"Good settlements mean nobody's happy," said Lori Lamb, an attorney who represented the students. "I wouldn't call them happy, but they want this to be over. It has had a life of its own." ■

36. Richmond Times-Dispatch

June 17, 1997

Gilmore gets F's from educators **Beyer criticized for tobacco holdings**

BY TYLER WHITLEY Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

Several educators with Democratic ties put a dunce cap on Republican gubernatorial candidate James S. Gilmore III yesterday.

They gave him a series of "F's" for supporting proposals that they said

would weaken education.

Gilmore, meanwhile, gave his Democratic rival, Lt. Gov. Donald S. Beyer Jr., an incomplete report card on credibility, as he hammered Beyer for not disclosing his holdings in tobacco stocks.

Beyer struck back.

"This is not about owning stock in a industry, it's about being owned by an industry," said Page Boinest, press aide to Beyer. She said Gilmore has solicited thousands of dollars in tobacco industry