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The Urban School Initiative

The Conditions Necessary in Urban Schools for Supporting the Academic and Intellectual Growth of Poor, Minority Students

Guiding Principles for the Necessary Conditions

- ◆ All students can learn and achieve at high levels.
- ◆ A school is a learner-centered caring community.
- ◆ The central focus of a school and a school system is student outcomes.
- ◆ All members of a school community take responsibility for ownership of learning.

The Necessary Conditions in Urban Schools for Supporting the Academic and Intellectual Growth of Poor, Minority Students

- ◆ The presence of a system of high standards comprising challenging, meaningful curriculum linked to specific academic performance levels, rigorous assessment to measure performance, and a mechanism for on-going evaluation, revision, and improvement of standards.
- ◆ The use of effective pedagogical practices, processes, and materials that challenge students to learn, and are guided by a clear understanding of child development and cultural influences on learning, build on student strengths and capacities, and, therefore, enhance student learning.
- ◆ The use of an appropriate monitoring and accountability mechanism which emphasizes the responsibilities of teachers, schools, and administrators in establishing, operating and maintaining a system of high standards for all students. This could include built-in rewards and recognition.
- ◆ The presence of strong, competent school leaders to manage, operate, and lead schools in a flexible and collaborative environment and a well-trained and educated staff of teachers who possess strong skills in pedagogy, have deep content knowledge, and are informed about the process and stages of child development.
- ◆ The provision of co-curricular and after-school programs and activities to attend to a wide range of student competencies that go beyond scholarship and academics.
- ◆ A safe and disciplined environment to serve as a haven for urban children surrounded by poverty and crime.
- ◆ Well-maintained facilities which can support high achievement by adding to students' sense of order and discipline.
- ◆ Leadership and support from federal, state, local agencies, and school boards to schools are critical to the smooth operation of schools and classrooms. These agencies provide policies, resources, and guidance to support the goals of schools.
- ◆ The presence of structures for the preparation of children for the rigors of formal education from a very early age. Such structures enhance the cognitive and social development critical for later success by providing academic stimulation, culturally relevant, positive social experience, and demonstrating concern for the child's family unit.
- ◆ The availability of adequate resources to be allocated and used as effectively and efficiently as possible. Resources should be keyed to outcomes and not just to system inputs; resources must be provided for innovative reform efforts that aim to improve educational outcomes and must be redirected toward high-quality instruction for all and guided by student needs.

Steps to Initiate, Maintain, and Sustain Change

- ◆ Self-assessment to identify needs, capabilities, and resources.
- ◆ Establishing broad, major, and specific goals.
- ◆ Initial decision-making, including the identification and examination of program options and a school's capacity to implement the program of choice or a self-developed plan, evaluation of existing models in terms of compatibility, and examination of the availability of human and financial resources, as well as support and assistance.
- ◆ Identifying and mobilizing support
 - ▶ financial resources - assessing current resources, underutilized resources, and potential untapped

resources.

- ▶ commitment and human capital - garnering the involvement of all key players, encouraging collaboration, and building the continued commitment essential to effective change.

◆ Planning specific measures

- ▶ structural actions, such as changes to the school day and scheduling and efforts to reduce class size
- ▶ personnel development, including creating new staff positions or hiring more, highly skilled staff and implementing professional development activities for school staff.

◆ Institutionalizing change by addressing those policy actions that are a hindrance to the successful achievement of a school's goals or potential policies that may be a vehicle for supporting change.

◆ Continually evaluating success and improving the system as circumstances change, needs arise, and areas for improvement become apparent.

Players Involved in Establishing Necessary Conditions

◆ The District and the School Board

- ▶ identify and adopt programs, structures, and processes that support high standards for all students, for example instituting academic standards based upon the work of professional associations, eliminating all low-level courses and requiring high-level courses for graduation, or fostering school-community partnerships.
- ▶ provide resources, by enabling schools to make strategic use of increasingly flexible Federal aid or by actively soliciting the support of local businesses and foundations.
- ▶ provide professional development and support on specific pedagogical topics or general issues related to urban education and promote a variety of innovative forms of professional development mechanisms, such as "teaching hospitals," or systems for rewarding good teaching, certifications programs for school staff, and inservice activities offered through institutions of higher education.
- ▶ coordinate among federal, state, and local programs and provide flexibility at the school level.
- ▶ provide focused support for grades pre-K through 4 through parental involvement, provision of health care services, and the use of individualized instruction.
- ▶ coordinate across levels of schooling and between school and work by ensuring shared goals and objectives across the curriculum and assessment methods by setting district-wide standards and streamlining the assessment instruments, engaging local institutions of higher education in setting graduation standards, providing information about higher education to students, and offering college-level courses.
- ▶ coordinate with community organizations, such as local business, institutions of higher education, and community charitable organizations, for example in developing and funding early childhood preparation programs.

◆ Principal

- ▶ modify the school organization and structure. Examples include: involving staff in administrative decision-making, "school-within-schools," team-teaching, multi-grade classrooms.
- ▶ obtain external support for the school, particularly parents

◆ Teachers

- ▶ should empower themselves to do the best they can by actively participating in creating a sense of community and professionalism in schools and creating a climate of learning and collegiality in classrooms.

◆ Institutions of Higher Education

- ▶ prepare teachers for urban schools serving poor, minority children by helping them understand the role of culture in education and inculcating the belief that all children can be educated.
- ▶ partner with and support local schools by setting academic standards and admissions criteria aligned with high school graduation standards and by providing technical assistance.

◆ The Federal and State Governments

- ▶ devise and implement special strategies to support the hiring and retention of talented teachers, for example "loan forgiveness" programs or a better pay schedule.
- ▶ provide funding keyed to reform; schools have used money to provide staff development, reduce class size, involve parents in schools activities, upgrade and maintain facilities, and purchase technology and other materials.
- ▶ provide research information and technical assistance to local school systems

- ▶ develop and support structures for early childhood development.
- ▶ set policies and standards that support local leadership and reform efforts, including setting of up-to-date curriculum frameworks, high graduation standards, and fair school accountability mechanisms and by granting waivers.

Examples of Reform Programs and Models

Coalition of Essential Schools, The School Development Program, Success For All, Accelerated Schools, The Co-Zi Project, New Standards Project, Urban Systemic Initiative, The Learning City Program, School-wide Projects, Pacesetter Programs

Case Studies of Successful Urban Schooling

Dade County Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Gaines Elementary School (San Antonio, TX), Bowling Park Elementary School (Norfolk, VA), Central Elementary School, Somerville High School (Prince George's County, MD), Park Elementary School (NYC)

- ◆ Dade County Public Schools
 - ▶ implemented Urban Systemic Initiative (cooperation with the National Science Foundation) (see page 46)
- ◆ Chicago Public Schools
 - ▶ Chicago School Reform Act of 1988 laid the framework for systemic reform (see pages 46-7)

The Urban School Initiative

The Conditions Necessary in Urban Schools for Supporting the Academic and Intellectual Growth of Poor, Minority Students

September 1996

Submitted to: Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

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THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY IN URBAN SCHOOLS FOR SUPPORTING THE ACADEMIC AND INTELLECTUAL GROWTH OF POOR, MINORITY STUDENTS

Introduction

Over the past three decades, it has become increasingly apparent that, regardless of student background and family circumstance, schools can play a vital role in helping students to learn and to achieve at high levels. Many, however, have failed to do so, especially for poor, minority students in urban areas. The National Assessment of Educational Progress 1992 results show, for example, that disadvantaged urban students¹ attained significantly lower science, mathematics, and reading proficiency scores than students in advantaged urban communities (NAEP 1992 Trends in Academic Progress, 1994). Similarly, other indicators of educational outcomes, including low graduation and high rates, illuminate the impoverished educational experiences of disadvantaged students (e.g., Dropout rates in the United States, 1994; Hammack, 1986).

Disadvantaged urban students, by definition, are those who attend public schools located in urban areas with attendant problems of crime, unemployment, and lack of adequate services — schools that, in part, support and enhance a vicious circle of poverty and unequal opportunity by providing a less-than-rigorous education. The majority of these students also are of minority status.

Yet, despite these grim realities, in a recent poll, the leaders of America's major urban public school systems expressed optimism about the future of urban schools (Casserly & Root, 1996). The U.S. Department of Education, expressing the same optimism, has undertaken the Urban School Initiative to help improve the quality of education for poor, minority students in urban² schools. The purpose of the Urban School Initiative is to:

- Identify the conditions of schools and education systems that lead to high levels of academic achievement and intellectual growth;
- Identify information and materials that exemplify the above conditions in principle and in practice; and

¹ Disadvantaged urban students live in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) central cities and attend schools where a high proportion of students' parents are on welfare or are not regularly employed (NAEP 1992 Trends in Academic Progress, 1994, pg. 316). An SMSA has a population of 50,000 people or more; or, if it is urbanized, it consists of a city of 50,000 or more with a total metropolitan population of 100,000 or more.

² Schools referred to as urban are located in central cities SMSAs.

- Develop a national strategy to help others implement the identified conditions in urban schools across the country.

Thus, the challenge of the Urban School Initiative is to harness what is known about effective urban schools and to support the use of that knowledge in other urban schools. The Initiative seeks to encourage the development of a coherent set of strategies that support the understanding, adoption, and implementation of the conditions necessary for success.

As an initial first step, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education convened a group of experts to discuss the conditions necessary in urban schools for supporting high growth education and to identify strategies for helping schools and education systems establish those conditions. The group represented educators, school reform experts, and scholars with close association with, and knowledge of, urban schools. (See Appendix A for a list of experts.)

This report presents a synthesis of the judgments and views expressed by the group of experts regarding the key conditions. It highlights the conditions of schooling urban schools must establish if they are to meet conscientiously their obligations and responsibilities. Furthermore, the report serves as a guide to how educators, policy makers, students, parents, and communities can work together to establish the conditions.

Background

The problems faced by urban school systems are challenging on several dimensions, but not insurmountable. However, the challenges can only be met by first understanding the nature of the problems, by defining them in concrete terms, and by proposing creative solutions.

Challenges in Urban Education

National data indicate that a larger percentage of urban children live in poverty and receive free or reduced price lunch than do students in other locations, and a larger percentage of urban students (40 percent) attend schools with high concentrations of poor children than do students in other locations (25 percent in rural and 10 percent in suburban areas) (Lippman et al., 1996).

Studies also show that the outcomes of education for students enrolled in high-poverty, urban schools are significantly short of desirable. For example, data from national surveys and research studies reveal that achievement is not only low for children enrolled in schools with high concentrations of poverty (e.g., Abt Associates, 1993; Jencks & Mayer, 1990), but that those students are less likely to graduate on time than are students in wealthier schools (Lippman et al., 1996). Furthermore, data also indicate that poor schooling outcomes result in students living in poverty. For example, one out of four young adults who had attended urban high poverty schools was living below the poverty line in 1990 (Lippman et al., 1996).

National data also reveal that urban schools with high concentrations of poverty enroll a high percentage of students from minority backgrounds (69 percent) and students with difficulty speaking English (Lippman et al., 1996). These data strongly suggest that urban schools with high concentrations of poverty are failing to provide a sound education to their students. The data also demonstrate that the issues related to the reform of urban schools with high concentrations of poor students are, in effect, issues related to the education of poor, minority students.

The failure of urban schools serving poor, minority children is the result of a variety of factors. A host of persistent urban problems, such as the movement of jobs from urban centers to the suburbs, a lack of services, crime, and poverty highlights the plight of the residents of these areas and the difficult environment in which many urban schools operate (Bartlet, undated). National data show, for example, that youth living in urban communities are more likely to be victimized by crime than are those living in other communities (Lippman, et al., 1996). School administrators also point to difficulties such as limited English proficiency, disability, and discrimination as significant hurdles in the education of urban children (Council of the Great City Schools, 1994).

Children of poverty also are at special risk because of their family characteristics. Research indicates that students with more highly educated parents have higher educational achievement (e.g., Horn and West, 1992). Furthermore, if one parent has completed four or more years of college, household income tends to be higher, with parents having greater access to economic resources to support a child (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). However, only 12 percent of students enrolled in urban schools with high poverty concentrations have college-educated parents. Students in poor, urban schools also are affected by family instability — they are more likely to have changed schools more than two or three times since first grade — a factor possibly leading to low attachment to school, exposure to fragmented curriculum, a less stable educational experience, and, therefore, the risk of school failure (Lippman et al., 1996).

In addition to the above, a combination of factors more directly related to the education enterprise impedes the effective functioning of urban schools. These factors may include a lack of resources (Disparities in Public School Spending 1989-1990, 1995) and an absence of the structures and processes that enable schools to perform well and produce high student achievement (Lippman et al., 1996).

However, it is widely known that not all urban schools serving poor, minority children are failing. Ample programmatic and research-based evidence illuminates the fact that poor, minority students in urban schools can learn and achieve at high levels, given the right conditions (e.g., Rossi & Stringfield, 1996; Khattri et al., 1996; and Stringfield et al., 1994). Well-known examples of urban schools that support learning and high achievement include the Urban Academy and Central Park East in New York City. These and other “gardens of victory” provide us with insights into the kinds of arrangements and supports required for urban schools serving high concentrations of poor children. Such schools, further profiled in the last section of this report, prove that the morbidities facing urban schools are

not insurmountable. The experience of successful schools suggests that "good" urban schools can be the rule rather than the exception. There must, however, be a commitment on the part of policy makers, educators, parents, students, and communities to make the schools work.

Meeting of Experts

On March 27-29, 1996, as the first step in its Urban Initiative, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) held a meeting of experts. The meeting agenda focused on identifying, discussing, and arriving at a consensus regarding *the conditions necessary for supporting minority students in urban schools to achieve at high levels in challenging academic subjects and to reach their full intellectual potential*. The experts were contacted in early March of 1996 and divided into three teams, each of which started its work prior to coming to the meeting. Members of each team exchanged ideas and information and came prepared for a full discussion at the meeting.

The 26 experts present at the meeting represented a range of disciplines and professions relevant to urban schooling. The participants of the meeting included such experts as James Comer, Director of the School Development Program, Lorraine Monroe, Principal of the Frederick Douglas Academy in New York, Michael Casserly, Executive Director of the Council of Great City Schools, Adrian Lewis, Chief Assistant to the President, New York Urban League, and other eminent educators, innovators, representatives of national education organizations and associations, and researchers. A full list of the meeting participants is presented in Appendix A.

Following the meeting, a consensus document was prepared that reflected the views and opinions of the participating experts. This document was sent to the meeting participants for their comments and review. In addition, the Department of Education convened a set of smaller meetings of individuals representing state education agencies, district education agencies, the media, the business sector, and foundations, to solicit their comments on the key conditions of schooling explicated in the consensus document.

Overview of the Document

This document presents a synthesis of the consensus from the experts, the programmatic and research information they provided regarding urban school reform, other relevant research findings and program information, and additional key issues identified in the smaller meetings. In the first section, the consensus of the panel of experts regarding the necessary conditions is outlined. Where relevant, some evidence from the literature also is presented. In the second section, some of the strategies and processes that may be useful in establishing the necessary conditions and the actions different stakeholders can take are discussed. In the third section, some information on programs targeted at improving school conditions are provided. Finally, in the last section, some case studies profiling the implementation of programs and strategies for change that led to the establishment of the necessary conditions are presented.

The Conditions Necessary in Urban Schools for Supporting the Academic and Intellectual Growth of Poor, Minority Students

Over the last decade, a body of literature has emerged that identifies an ensemble of school conditions associated with a smoothly functioning school organization and high student achievement. Studies across the spectrum of schools show that high expectations for student achievement, a challenging curriculum, a shared vision focused on teaching and learning, and a sense of community are associated with high school performance and student achievement. Evidence for this perspective comes from a variety of sources, including national survey data (e.g., Bryk & Driscoll, 1988), case studies of schools identified as being exemplary (e.g., Newmann & Wehlage, 1995), and comparisons of different types of schools (e.g., Hill et al., 1990). These studies and research efforts provide a compelling view that a general school culture keyed to teaching and learning promotes high student achievement, a view largely echoed by the Initiative's panel of experts.

Guiding Principles for the Necessary Conditions

As a starting point, the panel of experts for the Urban Initiative agreed that the goal of education must be to produce well-educated individuals who are fully prepared for the world of work and are caring and responsible members of society. All stressed that, while schools must support all aspects of children's development, the primary focus must be academic and intellectual development. To enable schools and school systems to achieve this goal, the panel of experts agreed that a set of interrelated and dynamic, necessary conditions of education must be established in each school. These conditions must be organized around, and reflect, the following principles:

- *all students can learn and achieve at high levels,*
- *a school is a learner-centered caring community,*
- *the central focus of a school and school system is student outcomes, and*
- *all members of a school community take responsibility for and ownership of learning.*

All Students Can Learn

A conviction that all children can learn and achieve at high levels is an essential principle for organizing urban schools. This principle ensures a commitment to policies, procedures, and behaviors that make the central focus learning and achievement. Research shows that schools that provide a common curriculum for all students, with a blend of resources and expertise directed to meeting the needs of individual students and teachers, show an overall improvement in student performance for all students — including those who require greater-than-usual support (Wang, undated). Thus, the education system must be geared toward building upon students' strengths and capabilities, and supporting, all students and teachers in their joint pursuit of excellence.

The absence of the conviction that all students can learn results in policies, procedures, behaviors, and outcomes that are detrimental for a vast majority of poor, minority students. For example, a belief in the "Deficit Model," a model which emphasizes students' weaknesses, can result in children being assigned to low-level classes, taught less-than-challenging courses, drilled in low-level skills, and provided low stimulation, leading to high rates of drop-out and failure.

Learner-centered Caring Community

A school must be a strong community that cares for its members, is open to learning, and acts in the interest of the learner. Thus, school conditions must support caring and learner-centered actions of every adult involved. Researchers suggest that educational outcomes are a result of both educational engagement and social bonding (e.g., Newmann, 1991). When students feel they are accepted and valued in the school community, they can more easily identify with the school's expressed goals and values. They learn through forging personal connections with the school, the teachers, and other students. The presence of a strong community is particularly important for disadvantaged students, since the kind of social supports present in the lives of more advantaged students are absent in theirs. A strong community encourages emotional and social channels through which academic learning, the development of positive expectations, and the development of character can take place. In fact, both research and programmatic evidence demonstrate that a school community that supports, nurtures, and respects its members and engages them in meaningful learning has an especially beneficial effect on its disadvantaged and at-risk students (e.g., Battistich et al., 1995; Wehlage et al., 1990; Comer, 1980).

That a sense of community is important is illustrated in the remarks of graduates of Central Park East, a New York City public high school in Harlem. In interviews, a majority of the students offered that it was teachers and administrators taking an interest in them as people, and teachers and coaches recognizing their individual interests and translating them into school activity that made the most difference in their school performance (Bensman, 1994).

Focus on Outcomes and Responsibility for Learning

Finally, the conditions in schools must reflect a relentless, systemic focus on outcomes. In addition, they must be conducive to inculcating a sense of responsibility for learning in members of the school community. Thus, all school activities should be geared toward creating a cultural milieu that signals to all individuals that they must accept the responsibility of their various roles: students must invest effort into learning and achieving at high levels; teachers must invest effort into teaching and accept their responsibility for student outcomes; and the administrative staff must provide the necessary management support to teachers. This focus must be through the provision of opportunities that engage students in learning and help them to realize their full academic and intellectual potential.

Table I
The Principles and Conditions Necessary in Urban Schools
for Supporting the Academic and Intellectual Growth
of Poor, Minority Students

The Principles

- *All students can learn and achieve at high levels.*
- *A school is a learner-centered, caring community.*
- *The central focus of a school and a school system is student outcomes.*
- *All members of a school community take responsibility for and ownership of learning.*

The Conditions

- A system of high standards comprising challenging curriculum and rigorous assessment
- Effective pedagogical practices, processes, and materials
- An appropriate monitoring and accountability mechanism
- Strong, competent school leaders and a well-trained and educated staff
- Co-curricular and after-school programs and activities
- A safe and disciplined environment
- Well-maintained facilities
- Leadership and support from Federal, state, and local agencies, and school boards to schools
- Structures for the preparation of children for the rigors of formal education from a very early age
- Adequate resources

High expectations and actions that convey those expectations help students to develop the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for working hard, achieving, and developing a sense of competence (Wang et al., 1996). Similarly, adults in the system also must perceive the system to be working with them in order to generate a focus on outcomes.

Experts agreed that the specific school conditions must collectively channel the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of all involved in the direction of the above fundamental features of a responsible and responsive education system. Thus, a synchronous set of policies, programs, and practices must be articulated so that all individuals involved can work collaboratively toward the same objective — high student achievement. Table I summarizes these guiding principles and the conditions of schooling necessary for success.

The Conditions Necessary in Urban Schools for Supporting the Academic and Intellectual Growth of Poor, Minority Students

The panel of experts identified a set of interrelated, rather than mutually exclusive, conditions necessary for supporting student achievement. Conditions thus identified are mutually reinforcing and comprise a system that is dynamic and purposeful — a system that requires careful coordination and collaboration across all levels of the education enterprise, especially between schools and district offices. Neither are the conditions significantly different from the conditions that already exist in many urban, suburban, and rural schools serving more affluent students and already producing high student achievement. All are important; all are difficult to establish and maintain; and all lead to a culture of teaching, learning, and achievement.

Yet, while the conditions outlined below are common-sensical and, in many ways, state the obvious, the manifestation of the conditions might be quite different in poor, urban schools from that in schools serving more affluent students. The operationalization of the conditions, then, will require creative thinking, use of local resources and ideas, responsiveness to local needs and realities, and a collaborative relationship between the district and the school. While strategies used to establish the conditions may differ considerably from those utilized by schools in more affluent areas, the *spirit* and the *ideas* underpinning the operationalization of the conditions must reflect the guiding principles of a responsible education system. Below, we discuss the specific conditions.

- ***The presence of a system of high standards comprising challenging curriculum and rigorous assessment.***

A system of high standards symbolizes a school-wide and system-wide commitment to the moral, ethical, and academic outcomes of schooling and is an important condition for ensuring that all students learn. The principles guiding this system must incorporate a commitment to continual improvement in both teaching and learning. To elaborate, the system must incorporate:

- a challenging, rigorous, and meaningful curriculum linked to specific academic performance levels,
- an assessment system to measure performance and to signal the work students, teachers, administrators, and the school must do to meet those expectations, and
- a mechanism for on-going evaluation, revision, and improvement of the standards, themselves.

This system of high standards must consist of “. . . a functional system of rules, standards, incentives, supports, and safeguards” that acts as a deterrent against “dumbing down” the curriculum and tracking students into low-level courses (Lovelace Billups, The American Federation of Teachers, personal communication). It must be based upon the best

content, pedagogy, and assessment standards available, and it must promote the use of substantive depth in curriculum, interdisciplinary learning, and the integration of academic and “real world” learning. The system also must place emphasis on the moral, ethical, and social dimensions of knowledge and learning.

This system of standards must be applied to all students. Too often, children are held to different standards through tracking, and the pace of teaching the “less advanced” students is less than optimal (Biemiller, 1993). While such a system should incorporate incentives to do the hard work demanded by the standards, it also must include intervention programs designed to help struggling students advance until they, too, meet the required standards.

In short, the system must take into account students most at-risk of failure, and it must ensure that students are given the extra help they need to accelerate their academic progress (whenever their performance falls below the standard level). This “extra” help, however, must be provided with discretion, so that students are not stigmatized and no systematic biases exist in giving such help. This also means that teachers must structure class time so that it allows students to learn at a challenging pace.

The system also must provide examples of how to meet the standards. For example, it could provide illustrations of the pedagogy and assessment tasks that meet or exceed the standards. Such concrete examples could provide a mechanism for helping teachers evaluate and refine their own pedagogy, and they could serve as “conversation pieces” for the system to continue to better itself.

- *The use of effective pedagogical practices, processes, and materials.*

The systematic and system-wide use of instructional practices demonstrated to be effective is another essential condition. Instructional practices that challenge students to learn, and are guided by a clear understanding of child development and cultural influences on learning, build on student strengths and capacities and, therefore, enhance student learning. This three-part condition implies that teachers provide “scaffolding” and build upon the existing knowledge and strengths of its students, including levels of maturation, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and interests — a challenge that is enormously demanding.

Children come to school naturally motivated and curious to learn — a motivation and curiosity that can increase as soon as they discover that school work can be personally relevant, and that learning can resonate with their own cultural and social experiences (Boykin, 1994). Research indicates that, even in the worst of circumstances, children can demonstrate the resilience essential for achieving academic success (e.g., Wang et al., 1996). Effective teaching strategies, then, must build upon a child’s natural capacities to learn and to achieve — and those strategies must be rooted in the child’s cultural context and social experiences.

A corollary of this condition is that teachers provide opportunities that engage students in active, authentic learning. The pieces that comprise the gestalt of authentic learning are: construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and value beyond school (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Teachers must use instructional methods and assessments that engage students in thinking and constructing knowledge, conducting disciplined inquiry, solving relevant, real-world problems, and communicating their conclusions to audiences beyond the classroom and the school.

However, effective and meaningful pedagogy can be supported only through the availability of up-to-date curriculum materials and technology. Such materials are necessary to help students become full-fledged participants in a society in which information, knowledge, and good decision-making capabilities are important capitals.

- ***The use of an appropriate monitoring and accountability mechanism.***

The presence and use of an appropriate system of accountability linking sanctions and rewards to specific behaviors and to student and school outcomes is another necessary condition and a hallmark of an effective education system. The accountability mechanisms must emphasize teachers', schools', and administrators' responsibilities in establishing, operating, and maintaining a system of high standards for all students. The mechanism could include built-in rewards and recognition, as well as provisions for struggling schools.

- ***The presence of strong, competent school leaders and a well-trained and educated staff.***

Schools must be managed, operated, and led by strong, competent leaders who set high expectations and standards for all within the school community. Yet, leaders must provide a flexible environment that encourages creativity, professionalism, independence, and a sense of autonomy among staff and students. Evidence indicates that urban school systems often are characterized by burdensome bureaucracies that can stifle professionalism among teachers, and generate an anomic, impersonal environment for students (Glazer, 1992). To make their system work, school and education leaders must minimize bureaucracy and establish policies and programs that support a collegial and collaborative environment.

School leaders include the administrative staff and mentor teachers. These school leaders must continuously demonstrate their commitment to learning by challenging and guiding the entire school community to settle for nothing short of excellence in all domains. The school also must have a well-trained and educated staff that supports the functioning of the school and its goals. Such a staff should include teachers from diverse backgrounds as well as individuals who can serve as models for poor, minority youth. Such role models are extremely important, as they can be instrumental in destroying the myths of superiority and inferiority that are still all too pervasive within society and within schools.

Numerous studies show that teachers who are well-trained and supported in their efforts are key to the success of any school (e.g., Khattri et al., 1996; Rossi & Stringfield, 1996). A well-trained teaching staff includes teachers who possess strong skills in pedagogy,

have deep content knowledge, and are informed about the process and stages of child development. They are able to use state-of-the-art pedagogical skills that have been proven to be effective. Further, they use the pedagogy to link subject knowledge with student experiences and talent, in order to enhance student understanding, learning, and development (Newmann, 1993).

- *The provision of co-curricular and after-school programs and activities.*

The education system must attend to a wide range of student competencies that go beyond scholarship and academics, and it must provide opportunities for participation in co-curricular and after-school programs and activities. Research shows that students who participate in extracurricular activities also do well in school (e.g., Finn, 1993). While this does not imply causality, extracurricular activities might well affect a student's sense of responsibility and discipline — habits that are conducive to learning and high achievement

Co-curricular and after-school programs include sports, theater, and other social and cultural activities. Such programs and activities must reinforce academic learning and support development and socialization in appropriate beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. This condition also implies that teachers must provide leadership to students, even during informal interactions outside the classroom. In brief, teachers must ensure quality teacher-student interactions within formal academic settings and within informal settings that also are important for intellectual development.

- *A safe and disciplined environment.*

Effective schools must be safe havens for urban children caught in the cross-fire of poverty and crime. The already unsafe environment of many schools in poor, urban areas sends a powerful message to students about how "authorities" view their ability to learn and their right to prosper and be safe from harm.

Data indicate that many students in urban areas do not feel safe (Lippman et al., 1996), and many have witnessed or experienced crime at school (U.S. Department of Education, October, 1995). Unsafe restrooms, hallways, and classrooms have a negative impact on students' motivation and ability to learn. The American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth has, in fact, declared that youth need not be *direct* victims of crime in order to experience victimization; the presence of violence in their communities is enough to induce a sense of victimization among any group of students. A safe and disciplined environment, on the other hand, improves student concentration on learning and helps students to trust and to respect one another and their teachers.

- *Well-maintained facilities.*

Physically intact and well-maintained buildings are necessary to support high achievement. Clean restrooms, well-equipped libraries and school buildings, and adequately maintained facilities add to a student's sense of an orderly and disciplined environment. A

well-maintained school reinforces the importance and seriousness of learning, thus bolstering a student's sense of self worth.

- ***Leadership and Support from Federal, state, local agencies, and school boards to schools.***

Leadership and support from Federal, state, and local agencies, and school boards are critical to the smooth operation of schools and classrooms. Leadership from those agencies also provides the policy and programmatic context within which schools must operate. If these agencies provide policies, resources, and guidance that are consonant with and reflect the guiding principles of a good education system, the teaching and learning processes in the classroom are more likely to be at their optimal.

Numerous studies have detailed the power of leaders in these offices to transform their states, districts, and schools into better systems (see the section on Programs), while others have revealed the chaos that ensues if individuals do not use the power of their offices to improve their education systems. For example, in 1988, the Illinois Legislature passed the Chicago School Reform Act that laid the groundwork for systemic reform in Chicago schools. Thus empowered, the school system embarked upon an ambitious reform agenda of school improvement.

Leaders must actively support schools' goals of academic achievement, professional development, and parent involvement. In order to do this, they must ensure equitable resource policies, devise programs that make sense from the perspective of practice, provide flexibility, and hold themselves and their staff accountable to high standards.

- ***The presence of structures for the preparation of children for the rigors of formal education from a very early age.***

Early childhood experiences provide a critical foundation for subsequent intellectual development and academic performance. Yet the early childhood environment of many poor and socially disadvantaged children is not conducive to enhancing cognitive development (Scarr, 1981). Thus, the provision of structures that enhance the cognitive and social development of poor children is important to the later academic success of those children. Although the value of public investments in early childhood preparation programs such as Head Start remains controversial (e.g., Haskins, 1989), other studies show that early childhood gains can be sustained well beyond childhood (e.g., Campbell & Ramey, 1995; Berrueta-Clement et al., 1984). That early childhood support is essential is both intuitive and logical; that early gains may not persist in later years only serves to bolster the argument for providing stronger support throughout a child's education.

The early childhood preparation structures must play a supportive role in the lives of both young children and their families. Such structures, in short, must provide academic stimulation, culturally relevant, positive social experiences, and they must demonstrate concern for the child's family unit.

- *The availability of adequate resources.*

The availability of adequate resources is an essential condition for supporting high student achievement, as without adequate resources schools cannot attract and support quality staff, purchase needed instructional materials, and ensure the safety and comfort of their students and staff.

The use of public resources for education is a much-debated topic. One issue that assures the difficulty of this debate is the absence of objective criteria to determine whether given amounts of resources are "adequate" for given purposes (Disparities in Public School Spending, 1989-1990, 1995). The issue of resource adequacy is probably best examined through a comparison of who gets how much and for what purpose. An analysis of national data indicate that, controlling for factors such as district enrollment and metropolitan status, school districts with a more than 25 percent rate of poverty spent less per pupil³ than did school districts with a poverty rate of 5 percent, and they received lower funding. It also showed that student-teacher ratios increased steadily with increased school poverty (Disparities in Public School Spending 1989-1990, 1995).

Furthermore, these data indicate that, although there are no differences between rich and poor schools in the percentages of total expenditures allocated to core instruction, administration, and support, there were significant differences in the percentage allocated to capital outlay. If districts included purchase of instructional materials such as computers and science laboratory equipment in capital outlays, then the differences in expenditures represent serious inequities in the quality of educational experiences between students enrolled in rich schools and those enrolled in poor schools (Disparities in Public School Spending 1989-1990, 1995).

A second issue in the "resource debate" is whether or not more money will make a difference in student achievement. While the sentiment that "throwing more money at schools is not going to work" is justified insofar as the resources are ill-used, it is based on research that shows that there is no *systematic* relationship between resources and achievement (e.g., Hanushek, 1989, 1991). However, other studies counter these claims and show that resources *are* related to outcomes (e.g., Hedges, Laine, & Greenwald, 1994). Thus, while "throwing money at schools" in and of itself will not enhance school performance and student achievement, resources may be a prerequisite.

The provision of an adequate level of resources requires, first, that available resources be allocated and used as effectively and efficiently as possible. This means that education officials and school districts must set goals consistent with goals for student achievement, and enable schools to manage and to use their funds effectively. It also means that the use of resources is keyed to outcomes and not just to system inputs. However, there

³ The expenditure comparison is based upon cost- and need- adjusted dollar estimates. Cost adjustments are based on a set of cost-of-living indices, and need adjustments are based on the average, marginal costs of providing services to meet the needs of special education, compensatory education, and limited English proficient students (Disparities in Public School District Spending 1989-1990, 1995, Appendix D).

are times when existing resources do not suffice and additional resources should be made available, especially in order to respond to changing conditions and challenges. For example, the lack of adequate resources may result in teachers feeling stymied by the inability to provide the individual attention needed in overcrowded classrooms or by the scarcity of instructional materials to help accelerate learning.

In such cases, even modest amounts of funding to support teacher training or to hire new teaching assistants can make a difference. Thus, resources must be provided for innovative reform efforts that aim to improve educational outcomes for poor students in urban schools. Resources must be redirected toward high-quality instruction for all, and the use of funds must be guided by student needs.

Summary

Attaining the conditions discussed above requires sustained effort and commitment on the part of all concerned parties. The conditions, furthermore, require the design and implementation of effective policies, procedures, programs, and practices that are streamlined across the entire education enterprise and that reflect the guiding principles. Below, we discuss the issues involved in establishing the conditions, and introduce some pathways to follow in the process of school and system reform.

Processes for Implementing Change

That it is not an easy task to provide conditions conducive to high student achievement is indicated by both research literature and the experience of dedicated educators (e.g., Bodilly, et al., 1995; Smith & O'Day, 1991). For example, although there is wide consensus on the conditions necessary for success in urban schools, there is less agreement (and far less of a knowledge base) on exactly how these conditions can be effectively generated. The literature on school reform, like the literature on the school conditions conducive to high student achievement, is large and points to the difficulties inherent in initiating, managing, and sustaining change. There is general consensus, however, that this change requires the concerted effort of all players involved in the education system, and it requires the design, organization, and implementation of a complex set of policies, programs, and practices that span the different levels of the education system.

Part of the reason it is difficult to capture, understand, and explain *how to change* is that the individual steps required are iterative and overlapping. For example, goal-setting and collaborating are two steps for establishing change. Yet, collaboration is necessary in establishing goals, and goals may foster further collaboration. The order in which actions occur and their distinction from one another are quite vague. Further, the steps involved in the change process may overlap with the desired school conditions. For instance, community engagement is a condition shown to be conducive to high student achievement. However, the very *act* of engaging the community can be an integral part of the change process.

There is little research to support particular change processes or reform vehicles. However, an examination of successful reform efforts shows that, although there is no one "path" or set of actions that will effectively reform schools, there are some steps common to successfully reforming schools, and some lessons to be learned in initiating and sustaining the change process (NSF, 1996; Sizer, 1994; Levin, 1987; Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1991; Comer, 1980). Some of these common steps for initiating, maintaining, and sustaining the change process are:

- self-assessment, goal-setting, and initial decision-making,
- identifying and mobilizing support,
- planning specific measures,
- institutionalizing change, and
- continually evaluating success.

Self-Assessment, Goal-Setting, and Initial Decision-Making

Self-assessment, goal-setting, and initial decision-making are very important first steps for initiating the change process. Researchers assert that, because of lack of information resources or the existence of strong anecdotal evidence for a particular program, schools sometimes select reforms from a narrow set of choices. However, an initial period of self-assessment and goal-setting can inform initial decisions and foster the necessary elements for successful transition.

Self-Assessment

Self-assessment involves school leaders examining a school's needs, strengths, weaknesses, and contextual characteristics, and is a very important first step in the change process. Such assessment allows leaders to gain a fuller understanding of a school's ability to implement reform, provides a starting point against which progress may be measured, and, by involving key players, may foster a successful transition (e.g., staff commitment and understanding.)

There are several core elements in this first step of self-assessment. For instance, there should be:

- identification of needs (What areas need improvement — attendance, student achievement, teacher morale, the physical structure, school discipline...?),
- identification of capabilities (What are the school's strengths — administrative leadership, teacher skills or dedication, physical structure, community involvement...?), and

- identification of resources (What resources are currently available? Are there underutilized resources? Are there potential untapped resources — nearby universities, available grants?).

This process is operationalized in several reform models.

Both the National Science Foundation's Urban Systemic Initiatives (USI) and Henry Levin's Accelerated Schools require a period of self-evaluation, followed by a substantial planning period. The USI program awarded \$100,000 to the 25 U.S. cities with the greatest number of children in poverty to conduct a self-examination and to develop a comprehensive plan, addressing instruction, standards, curriculum, assessment, professional development, policy, governance, as well as partnerships and public awareness. The Accelerated Schools project refers to such assessment as the "inquiry process," and follows it with brainstorming solutions and pilot tests of the resultant plan.

Goal-Setting

The establishment of goals follows naturally from the first activity. Undergoing self-assessment allows school leaders, through the identification of specific areas of need, to set goals and to develop a vision for "what the school can be." Specific goals help to establish a culture of shared vision that resonates with the values of involved stakeholders. Reform models such as the School Development Program, the Coalition of Essential Schools, and the "Success for All" have been shown to be effective in establishing change and improving outcomes, in part, because each program has clearly established goals.

Examination shows that, generally, part of establishing goals requires a broad goal or objective, which is refined into more specific goals. This process can be outlined as follows:

- **Broad goals** are, in essence, a school or system's mission statement, and reflect the vision of what leaders want the school or system to be. For instance, a broad goal is "...to make Philadelphia the first American city where virtually all students perform at high levels" (School District of Philadelphia, 1995).
- **Major goals** are the chief components for achieving broad goals, and, therefore, often inform reform directives. For instance, one the goal — also from the Philadelphia Public School's Children Achieving campaign — is "...to provide a professional development system [that will] empower every teacher, administrator, and staff member to develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to create learning settings that enable all students to demonstrate high levels of achievement."
- **Specific goals** set the standards of what is to be achieved. Further referencing the Philadelphia plan, examples of specific goals to implement the goal for professional development are to "...provide 20 days of professional development to every teacher," and to offer inservice training that "...targets priority needs [such as training for beginning teachers]."

Developing a continuum of goals is an important aspect of implementing the change process.

Such a continuum illustrates the philosophy of the reform in the broad goal, outlines the components that will foster the reform in the major goals, and sets specific goals, the achievement of which will signal program success. In fact, the setting of specific goals and the methods to achieve them overlaps considerably with initial decision-making and planning specific measures, which are other steps in the change process.

Initial Decision-Making

With knowledge of a school's needs, capacities, and limitations, as well as its desired goals, leaders may make an informed decision. For instance, they may choose from among various reform models or they may opt for self-developed activities (perhaps informed by components of different models). Thus, an important step in establishing a change process is examining program options and a school's capacity to implement the program of choice or self-developed option.

First, school and district leaders must identify options and understand the key features of these options. For instance:

- What are the existing reform models?
- Upon what philosophies are the models based?
- What grades do the models target?
- What are the financial requirements of the models?
- What is the level of technical assistance and training required for implementation of the models?
- What is required of schools for implementation of the models?

Second, school and district leaders evaluate the models, or particular components of different models (for replication in site-developed reform), in terms of their compatibility with the school's needs, capacities, limitations, and goals. A high school, for example, may find it difficult to implement the School Development Program, because the program focuses only on young children and child development, but may wish to replicate its inclusionary governance structure and interdisciplinary focus.

Several specific factors (which somewhat overlap with the above) have been shown to be helpful in the implementation of reform, and thus assessing these factors also is an important aspect of initial decision-making. Two highly important areas for examination are the availability of resources (both human and financial) and the availability of assistance. Lack of financial sources, lack of human interest, and lack of technical and training assistance for program and staff development must be identified as possible blocks to effectively implementing a change agenda. Another key factor in successful reform

implementation is state or district support for staff development. Therefore, a school or district may examine the extent to which such support exists. Finally, contextual factors, such as inadequate leadership, racial tension, and budgetary fluctuation, are proven to be hindrances in implementing a reform program. Are these factors a problem in the school or system? As is evident in answering these questions, the school or system is once again addressing its capacity, but in a narrower fashion and with respect to a specific change agenda.

Exploring different reform models and answering questions based upon factors identified by research as important to effective change may inform school leaders on whether their school environment is a match for the reform — an important discovery process for establishing change.

Identifying and Mobilizing Support

Having adequate resources and community support are two major precursor conditions (cited previously) for achieving reform success in urban schools serving a disadvantaged population. Therefore, identifying and mobilizing financial and human support is the next major step in effecting change.

Financial resources

A large influx of financial resources is not always necessary for substantial change (Stringfield, et al., 1994). However, the lack of a base of resources can effectively halt the process of reform. Therefore, an important step in initiating and establishing the change process is identifying financial resources that will be used for the reform. This includes assessing (as during self-assessment) current resources, underutilized resources, and potential untapped resources. Part of this process may be researching and writing for available public and private grants, lobbying for public support at the local, state, and federal level, developing relationships with local businesses and organizations, and seeking in-kind funds, such as training sessions in management, self-assessment, and implementing structural changes.

Commitment and Human Capital

A key factor in achieving lasting change is school commitment to the philosophy and goals of the reform program. However, in order for reform to be supported, all those involved in making the reform “happen” must feel that they had a role in shaping and implementing it. Therefore, the processes for establishing change must include methods that garner the involvement of all players, encourage collaboration, and build the continued commitment essential to effective change.

A review of popular and successful reform efforts demonstrate that there are several ways to involve players, including structures that encourage collaboration. It is also wise to seek the involvement of parents and teachers in any reform plan.

In re-organization efforts, many successful reform initiatives focus on collaboration among key stakeholders in education and on involving a wide range of players in decision-making. School reform models provide structures for the involvement and collaboration of administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and students. For instance, in Chicago, local school councils comprising community members, parents, and two teachers assumed the role of “administrator” with the power to “hire” and to “fire” the principal, and to represent the views of the community (Bryk, et al., 1993). In other schools, councils play more of an advisory role, but are nonetheless able to shape school action. In Accelerated Schools — now successfully operating in numerous districts — a steering committee with a majority of teachers, as well as the principal, other staff, parents, and student representatives, is responsible for planning school activities, with smaller cadres meeting weekly to focus on specific areas, such as curriculum development.

Two specific groups whose involvement is of great importance in the reform initiatives examined above are teachers and families. Effective school reform initiatives have garnered the involvement of teachers and shown that their opinions are valued by putting in place the above described structures for their collective action and discussion. A study of the education reforms in Chicago showed that the most successful schools in the district’s recent reform initiatives were led by principals who used “inclusionary” practices with their staff, seeking their expertise and implementing their ideas (Bryk, et al., 1993).

Successful urban programs have also incorporated the family into the education reform process. While some programs or reforms simply sought parental involvement in tangential ways other programs went a little further and established boards or councils where parents could have an even more direct effect on school plans and policy. But in all cases, parents were invited to join the school in positive ways.

Planning Specific Measures

A major step in firmly establishing the change process, especially systemic change within a school or district, is planning specific measures to be instituted. This step is very closely related to the action of goal-setting. Not only are measures implemented in order to reflect and achieve the goals set, but sometimes the measures themselves are found within the specific goals. For instance, as leaders set specific goals, they are, in essence, planning specific measures. Consider the earlier example “to provide 20 days of inservice to every teacher” (School District of Philadelphia, 1995). This goal represents a measure to be taken to establish change.

Through goal-setting and initial decision-making — where the vision is developed and the broad reform is chosen — preliminary planning occurs. Yet, this planning continues, with the input of stakeholders, throughout the course of the change process. Because the specific goals of schools and the contexts in which they operate vary, no one set of plans is guaranteed to be effective in establishing change. However, a review of case studies reveals that many reform activities fall within two categories: school structure and personnel development. Typical reform activities, as possible steps in permanently establishing the conditions, are discussed below.

Structural Actions

Many urban schools that have begun successful reform efforts have implemented specific structural changes which have been shown to benefit student achievement, especially among disadvantaged and previously unsuccessful students. Some of these are changes to the school day and scheduling and efforts to reduce class size.

There are a variety of programs that implemented extended time and summer programs as part of reform efforts (Stringfield, et al., 1994). Such programs may be voluntary or mandatory and include a variety of strategies such as tutoring, extra school days for students, and extra professional development days for teachers and staff. Corollary to this type of school day restructuring is a trend toward block scheduling of core subjects. For instance, in the Coalition of Essential Schools, nearly all schools use block scheduling to give students comprehensive, cohesive instruction in essential subjects (Stringfield, et al., 1994). Similarly, in the Success for All program, students spend a mandatory 90 minutes per day in reading groups for intensive, level-appropriate instruction (Ascher, 1993). Finally, many programs are opting to eliminate all "pull-out" classes and focus on whole school day activities.

Another structural change effective for a disadvantaged, urban population appears to be reduced class size, which thereby increases individual attention to students. Many schools use their Chapter I funds to pay additional staff to minimize the teacher to pupil ratio and provide as much individual support to students as possible.

Personnel Development

Another measure common among many successful urban school reform efforts is focusing on staff. Such efforts are generally one of two types: (1) staffing by creating new positions (such as program coordinator, resource specialist, or health professional) or by hiring more, highly skilled staff, and (2) professional development activities (such as training and in-service education) for school staff. Such reforms are among the most expensive, but are also considered very useful — as creating new positions takes some of the burden off teachers, hiring new teachers may reduce class size, and providing professional development may provide up-to-date knowledge of pedagogical, curriculum, and administrative information.

Because such reforms are expensive, many schools use their Chapter I funds to implement such staff development efforts. One major urban school district coupled these funds with private foundation funds to provide development activities for staff and parents and create and hire for new positions such as instructional interventionist, parent trainer, program support teacher, math resource teacher, and school-community liaison (Winfield, 1991).

While these structural changes amount to instituting a key condition, they are a part of the process of change, as they must be assessed, evaluated, and changed if they do not fulfill the goals of the reform.

Institutionalizing Change

Another step in the change process is institutionalizing the vehicles that support it. Generally, the vehicle that supports sustained change, besides financial and human resources, is policy. Policy operationalizes principles that support change — and make them a regulated part of the program. Therefore, addressing those policy actions that are hindrances to the successful achievement of a school's goals or potential policies that may be a vehicle for supporting change is an important part of the change process and its longevity. For instance, policy that allows students to elect non-rigorous courses in academic subjects does not support the tenet that all children can learn at high levels. Whereas, a written policy that students must complete Algebra I by the end of 9th grade does support the tenet. Although with policy there is no guarantee that change will be institutionalized; *without* supportive policies, there is little chance that they will. An important aspect of institutionalizing change is that the resultant policies appear unified and coherent from the perspective of practice.

Continually Improving

A final, built-in step in a successful change process, and one that cannot be overlooked, is making an effort to continually improve the system, as circumstances change, needs arise, and areas for improvement become apparent. Therefore, establishing change involves a continual and methodical (as reflected in policy and accountability measures) reflection on the achievement of goals. Reflection involves examining both processes and outcomes. That is:

- Are the processes selected being properly, fully, and effectively implemented?
- Are the desired outcomes (such as increased attendance) being achieved?

Basically, are the goals being met through the vehicles chosen? With continual reflection on the purpose, the effort, itself, in a sense, becomes a circular one: where the beginning (goals) informs the end (achievement), and the end informs the beginning.

Summary

Programmatic and research evidence indicates that no pre-packaged programmatic feature or strategy alone can work. Only a coordinated combination of a variety of approaches that take into consideration the principles stated above, the resources available at the local level, the strengths of the staff, the constraints under which the district or the school operates, can be successful. Poorly implemented or ill thought-out versions of successful programs will tend to yield poor results.

Based upon these general reform principles and upon the judgment of the panel of experts, we outline several suggestions for actions directed at the players involved in the education system. In the following section, we present some program information and case materials that exemplify the key conditions necessary for success in urban schools and the processes and procedures used to establish those conditions.

Players Involved in Establishing Necessary Conditions

The necessary conditions can be established through coordinated actions of the players involved in the education system, at both policy and practice levels. At the very least, these players include, at various points in time, the school board, district officials, the principal, teachers, the state education agency, the Federal government, and institutions of higher education. The precise roles of these players is likely to differ from one urban school district to another, and more than one player may be involved in developing and implementing a policy or program option. For example, the Federal government, the state education agency, the district office, as well as the local school professional community may be involved in developing the guidelines for the most effective use of Title 1 money. Therefore, in this report, the classification of the locus of responsibility is intended to serve only as a general guide. Furthermore, the actions discussed under one "player" also may fall under the purview of other "players."

The District Office and The School Board

The district office and the school board play a central role in providing the environment in which the necessary conditions of schooling can be established and maintained. Schools are not isolated entities; they are affected in powerful ways by the communities and the districts in which they are located through several tangible and intangible mechanisms, including resources, accountability procedures, and staff hiring and firing practices. The district office and the school board, then, must create an atmosphere conducive to reform by highlighting the centrality of teaching and learning, and by conceptualizing the change process from the perspective of practice (Cohen, 1995). They can do this by placing emphasis on standards, providing resources and professional development and support, being actively engaged in hiring a well-trained staff deregulating when regulations hinder school operations, helping to implement programs and practices that complement one another, coordinating across local, state, and Federal programs, and being available to solve problems that might arise at the local school level.

Examples of the kinds of actions district officials and school board members can take are highlighted below.

- *Identify and adopt programs, structures, and processes that support high standards for all students.*

District officials and school board members are in a powerful position to support the adoption of a variety of programs and policies that help schools move toward high performance. For example, districts can leverage gains in academic achievement through instituting academic standards based upon the work of professional associations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). They also can help develop assessment and accountability mechanisms based upon criterion-referenced assessments that tap into a range of skills, including higher-order thinking skills. A number of states and districts have already adopted this programmatic approach. Examples include Maryland, Vermont, and Prince William county in Virginia.

Other policy options include the elimination of all low-level courses and the requirement of high-level courses for graduation. For example, in Chicago, graduation requirements were increased in mathematics and science, and all students are required to complete Algebra by the end of 9th grade (Cityschools, volume 2, 1996). In Phoenix, all remedial mathematics courses have been eliminated and replaced with NTCM standards-based courses (Cityschools, volume 2, 1996). Similarly, in the six majority-minority districts participating in the College Board's Equity 2000 program, all students are required to take Algebra 1 by the end of 9th grade and Geometry by the end of 10th grade. The pattern of enrollments and course-completion shows that more and more students are taking and passing these courses previously thought of as being "too hard" for "some students" (Pelavin Research Institute, 1996).

The district superintendent (or another cognizant official) can play an active role in fostering the adoption of national or regional reform programs, as they often provide the stimulus, ideas, and resources for the kind of initial energy required to initiate change at either the district or individual school levels. National programs that support the adoption of high standards include the Accelerated Program, Success for All, and the Coalition of Essential Schools.

District officials also can foster school-community partnerships, wherein urban schools are linked with a full range of social, human, and health services that actively support, and do not hinder or actively oppose, the goals and work of schools. These services could be consolidated into an integrated package available within the school for students and their families. Examples of such services include adult education classes and the provision of childcare.

- ***Provide resources.***

Resources are necessary to establish and to support the key conditions of schooling. District officials and school boards must set expenditure priorities keyed to inputs and aimed at the core of schooling — teaching and learning. In addition, district officials can enable schools to make strategic use of increasingly flexible Federal aid.

District officials and school boards also can be active in soliciting the support of local businesses and foundations. Frequently, extra funds are required at the start of a program, and additional sources of money can support the purchase of extra services, materials, and training. For example, the mathematics teachers involved in Equity 2000 were provided professional development sessions free of cost by the College Board. The focus of these sessions was the use of inclusionary practices in teaching mathematics and the understanding of the causes of student failure (Pelavin Research Institute, 1996).

- *Provide professional development and support.*

Coherence in education policy does not imply coherence in practice, and current research indicates that investment in the professional development of teachers is essential to successful school change and school outcomes (Elmore, 1995). School change or reform can only be successful if it incorporates deep changes in a teacher's knowledge of academic subjects and the process of teaching and learning; and it aids the development of professional values and commitments as well as social resources (Cohen, 1995).

A well-trained, educated, and motivated staff at the school level can only be maintained through a regular, on-going provision of professional support, and urban schools are in need of such support. Statistics show that high-poverty schools, including urban schools, tend to have a higher concentration of teachers with less than four years of teaching experience. Furthermore, while those schools employ a higher proportion of (39 percent) of minority staff than other schools, the percentage does not reflect the ethnic composition of the students, who are 69 percent minority (Lippman et al., 1996). Data indicate that these teachers are less likely to report having influence over the curriculum than do teachers in other schools (but the same as suburban, high-poverty schools), and they are more likely to spend at least one hour per day on disciplinary issues (Lippman et al., 1996).

These figures indicate, then, that, in some cases, teachers may not be prepared to deal with the rigors and demands of the urban classroom. For example, they may not be prepared to interact with children who are not socialized in the ways they recognize, and they may react to the unexpected in a manner that makes outcomes worse for children in such schools (Newmann, 1993). Teachers may interpret students' approach to work or interaction with teachers as an indication of a lack of motivation and intellectual capacity and lower their expectations. Research has, in fact, documented that African American, Hispanic, and poor children in general have been the most frequent targets of low expectations (e.g., Oakes, 1987).

Due to lowered expectations, teachers may unwittingly provide an impoverished environment of learning. As students experience failure, they lower *their* expectations and perform at lower levels, continuing a downward spiral of low expectations and low achievement. This spiral of low expectations and low achievement can become ingrained in the very culture of the school. Yet, it may be that the teachers are just not accustomed to such behavioral patterns and do not know how to constructively build upon them.

Much research evidence indicates that deep, meaningful professional support and development of teachers is an indispensable method to maintain a well-trained staff capable of engaging students in high quality learning. Research indicates, too, that teachers need time to observe one another's teaching, discuss what they observe, and provide feedback on their observations (e.g., Elmore, Peterson, and McCarthy, 1996). Ambiguities inherent in such pedagogy ideas such as "teaching for understanding," "writing across the curriculum," and "real-world problem-solving" must be resolved through a careful implementation process that includes sustained observation, dialog, and feedback as teachers attempt to engage in new practices. Research also shows that students from culturally diverse backgrounds can be taught quite effectively, given the right conditions (e.g., Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989; Wehlage et al., 1989).

District officials can play a central role in providing the context in which both teachers and administrators can play an active as well as reflective role in establishing an environment conducive to high achievement. They can provide professional development and training opportunities on specific pedagogical topics — such as the use of new instructional strategies, schooling of special populations, and the use of assessment strategies for instruction — as well as on the more general issues related to urban education. Thus, for example, teachers might be exposed to the professional provided by the New Standards Project, which is a coordinated program of curriculum standards, open-ended and portfolio assessments, and performance standards.

Other topics might include pedagogy that is useful with a diverse set of students. One such pedagogical approach is cooperative learning. Research shows that the strategic use of groups comprising students with different abilities can raise academic achievement of all students. It also helps to build student self-esteem and positive social interactions, and it utilizes students as teachers and teachers as a classroom resource (Newmann, 1992). Several approaches to cooperative learning are now available. Other instructional techniques include the Reading Recovery program designed by Marie Clay (1985), a New Zealand child psychologist. The program focuses on helping the lowest achievers in class become proficient and independent readers.

These pedagogical approaches are examples of the resources available for use with a wide variety of students. Not all pedagogical strategies are likely to work with all children, and teachers require expertise in more than one kind of strategy. Different programs have different strengths, and, with a given repertoire, a teacher can decide when to use which strategy.

Professional development, however, is more than just the honing of discrete skills — it is the development of *shared* norms, knowledge, and skills of teachers, which mediate changes in structure and changes in teaching and learning (Elmore, 1995). Therefore, professional development must go beyond just the provision of focused training in pedagogy, and district officials can be at the forefront of promoting a variety of innovative forms of professional development mechanisms. For example, schools could be encouraged to operate "teaching hospitals" where new teachers serve as interns with more advanced and seasoned teachers. In this way, new teachers would be supported during their first years, and

more experienced teachers would have the opportunity to coach, provide feedback, and to mentor junior staff.

Other professional support programs could include systems for rewarding good teaching, certification programs for school staff, and inservice activities offered through the institutions of higher education. Linkage with professional organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), would enable teachers to develop and maintain a new knowledge base and up-to-date curricular materials that expand choices beyond what is available through textbook publishers. In order to be effective, however, all professional development must be based on the principle of empowering, and building a sense of professionalism among, teachers (Little, 1993).

- *Coordinate among Federal, state, and local programs.*

Schools are embedded within and affected by larger organizations. For example, local reform efforts are quite affected by state curriculum frameworks and assessment systems (Smith & O'Day, 1991) and may hamper or facilitate local reform efforts, depending on how they are configured with local realities (Khattri et al., 1996). Thus, seeking coordination across various levels of the education enterprise and providing flexibility at the school level is an important activity for the district official and school board members. For example, school reform efforts could be supported through allowing a more flexible use of categorical funding. Thus, Title I funds and funds for special education and bilingual education could be freed up to: (1) provide inservice professional development that focuses on the implementation of effective principles and pedagogical strategies that work; (2) stimulate family involvement; (3) coordinate school services; and (4) improve day-to-day school operations.

Districts also could spin off some of the services, if these take too much time to monitor and track. If the district superintendents are too involved in large systems with transportation or meal problems, they can't get engaged in the more core issues of curriculum and instruction.

- *Provide focused support for grades pre-K through 4.*

Schools serving children in grades Pre-K through 4 require a high degree of attention and support. The early years of schooling are especially important, and the earlier the support is provided, the better it is for later outcomes. Thus, the district could stimulate focused support of these early years of education through, among other things, a high level of parental involvement in schools, the provision of health care services, and the use of individualized instruction.

- *Coordinate across levels of schooling and between school and work.*

Similarly, transition from one school to the next, and from school to work or to higher education, are stressful times for both students and teachers. Students face a new,

unfamiliar environment, and teachers must get to know a new group of students and their needs. This stress can be eased through a variety of measures. For example, the district leadership can ensure shared goals and objectives across the curriculum and assessment methods through setting district-wide standards and streamlining the assessment instruments.

For transition to higher education, the district leadership could engage the local institutions of higher education in setting graduation standards. They could further facilitate the transition and coordination between schools and institutions of higher education by providing information about higher education to high school and middle school students, and by offering college-level courses to high school students.

Many youths, however, make a transition from school directly into the job market, for which they must possess marketable skills. Thus, helping students make a successful transition from school to work must be a systematic part of the coordination effort. Schools must forge relationships with local businesses to provide internships for high school students and to develop mechanisms that facilitate employer contact for obtaining quality postsecondary jobs.

- *Coordinate with community organizations.*

District leaders also must, when possible, engage in constructive interactions with community organizations, such as churches and a variety of other public and private institutions with a visible presence in urban areas, as these organizations can be critical allies and become integrally involved in children's education. They can be instrumental in coordinating services from a variety of community organizations. Vehicles for such coordination could include K-12 councils that include local businesses, institutions of higher education, and community charitable organizations.

The experience of the urban education systems involved in the National Science Foundation's Urban Systemic Initiative provides evidence that constructive relations can be forged with the larger community. The initiative required the coordination of the district and other city-wide agencies to improve science and math instruction for all students, a step that has resulted in improved student achievement (Cityschools, volume 2, Spring 1996).

Thus, for example, the district leadership can engage the community organizations in developing and funding early childhood preparation programs. The coordination of community early childhood programs with the education system can provide social experiences that support learning from a very early age and expose children to rich linguistic, cultural, and academic experiences earlier than those available through formal schooling. Head Start demonstrates how such pre-school preparation can be achieved, and other, community-based programs can be modeled upon it.

Coordination of the reform programs with local networks or with local colleges and universities also can provide the much-needed new pipeline of technical help and new, talented staff. For example, a school with a program for at-risk students built a working

relationship with a state university so that student-teachers from this state were regularly assigned to the school. This gave the regular faculty a chance to become familiar with the student-teachers and to make offers to those who understood and accepted the schoolwide objectives and culture (described in Rossi & Stringfield, 1996).

The Principal

Numerous studies of school change and reform show that strong, competent leadership at the school level is a major factor in the success of any reform at the building level (e.g., Khattri et al., 1996; Rossi & Stringfield, 1996). Through her or his actions, the principal affects the culture, the sense of community, and the functioning of the school. Thus, in the principal must believe in the power of education, build confidence and a sense of mission among his or her staff, and make available the time and resources required to undertake the tasks of teaching and learning. He or she must come to see the range of possibilities available for organizing a dynamic learning community.

In many ways, the role of the principal is the same as that of the superintendent, but on a smaller scale. The principal is responsible for the smooth functioning of his or her organization, and serves as the point of contact between the school and external agencies, such as the district office, community organizations, and parents. In other ways, however, the role is much expanded. In addition to administrative responsibilities, principals also bear the responsibility of providing instructional leadership. They provide the vision of what must happen in the classroom; and they provide concrete strategies for how that vision is to be operationalized.

Thus, the principal's role can be powerfully used to transform a struggling school into one that manifests the conditions necessary for high student achievement. Principals can be effective in helping their schools change by modifying and streamlining the school organization and administrative procedures and by obtaining external support for the school.

- *Modify the school organization and structure.*

The principal can facilitate changes in the school organization by involving the staff in administrative decision-making, setting up committees and other organizational entities for change, establishing smaller, "school-within-school" units, and changing the structure of the day to accommodate a variety of classroom arrangements, such as team-teaching and multi-grade classrooms.

- *Obtain external support for the school.*

Since schools are embedded in the larger community, they also must forge links with, and obtain the support of, parents and the larger community for the betterment of students' lives. A growing body of research shows that parental involvement in their children's education is critical to student achievement, and schools open to parental influence and input tend to be better on several measures of student outcomes (e.g., Wang et al., 1996; Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Fehrman, Keith, & Reimers, 1987). Research also shows that family

warmth and cohesion are important elements in protecting children against adversities, and extended families play an important role in the lives of inner-city youth, especially African Americans (Taylor, 1996; Wang et al., 1996). Thus, principals can play an important role in creating the structures that support students through supporting their families, creating mutually-beneficial and collaborative relationships, and empowering them to become meaningfully engaged in their children's education.

The Teachers

Teachers have a special role in establishing the necessary conditions. They, with their students, are at the core of the education enterprise. Thus, their values, attitudes, actions, all have a profound effect on students and on the climate of the school.

Teachers can actively participate in creating a sense of community and professionalism in the school. They can form committees to formulate school standards, organize professional clubs, develop partnerships with the local community and professional groups, and forge constructive relations with the local institutions of higher education. In addition to these "special" activities, teachers also can create a climate of learning and collegiality by sharing on a daily basis their classroom strategies and students' work. They can collect samples of their assessment tasks and collaborate on setting standards of teaching and student performance. They can empower themselves to do the best they can.

The Institutions of Higher Education

The necessary conditions of schooling are profoundly dependent upon the support of the postsecondary institutions that are located in the neighborhood of urban schools. In many cases, such institutions educate the teachers who staff the local urban schools, just as they enroll students who attend those schools. Thus, institutions of higher education have an integral role in developing the conditions necessary for high student achievement. This role includes adequately preparing students for teaching in urban schools serving poor, minority children, creating partnerships to support local schools, and providing inservice programs targeted at solving the specific problems of the local schools.

- *Prepare teachers for urban schools serving poor, minority children.*

The institutions of higher education can fill the yawning gap in teacher preparation by helping teachers understand the role of culture in education. This teacher development must be designed to help teachers create a deep understanding of students, their cultures, and modes of thinking; it should move away from providing courses that "exoticize" students from diverse backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Above all, they must inculcate the belief that all children can be educated regardless of their backgrounds.

- *Partner with and support local schools.*

Institutions of higher education also can become involved in urban school reform by setting high academic standards and admissions criteria that are aligned with challenging

high school graduation standards. By setting such standards, the institutions of higher education can send a powerful message to schools about what they think is important. They can be instrumental in helping districts formulate their high school standards. In this regard, the collaboration between institutions of higher education and the K-12 system is critical.

They also can provide technical assistance to schools involved in restructuring efforts. For example, they can assist schools in developing and implementing new instructional strategies, curriculum materials, class organization methods. Thus partnering with local school systems, the institutions of higher education can greatly help to increase the capacity of the future members of their own community.

The Federal and State Governments

Federal and state governments can continue to provide "top-down support" for "bottom-up" school reform through a set of priorities and coherent strategies. Such strategies include programs for attracting talented individuals to teach in urban schools, providing funds keyed to reform outcomes, and providing support for research and dissemination.

Strategies that support reform also could include specific policies. Research shows that policies generated at the state level may galvanize action and policy-making at the local level, and that intergovernmental relations need not be a zero-sum game. State- and Federal policies, if carefully crafted, can serve to enhance local expertise, creativity, and latitude in decision-making (Kirst, 1995). For example, state curricular frameworks provide a context within which leaders at the local level can formulate local-level curricular requirements that meet or exceed the state standard (Kirst, 1995). Vermont provides an example of how state curriculum frameworks and assessments can be used to stimulate local reforms — the state-required use of portfolios at two grade levels has been extended into other grade levels in at least one district (Khattri et al., 1996). Furthermore, curriculum reform networks started and supported by the government, such as the California Science Improvement network, can help to build teacher capacity and bring the reform into the classroom (CPRE, 1992). These specific policies, however, must provide for some local control, be forward-looking, and must "...be designed from a view inside the classroom looking outward rather than from top/down intergovernmental structures." (Kirst, 1995, pg. 19).

- *Devise and implement special strategies to support the hiring and retention of talented teachers.*

Reform in urban schools serving poor students can be supported through measures that enable the recruitment of high caliber teachers. Statistics show that administrators from urban high poverty schools were more likely than their suburban counterparts to experience difficulty in hiring teachers (but no more likely than their rural counterparts) (Lippman et al., 1996). Thus, measures that facilitate the hiring of talented teachers would enhance a school system's capacity to produce high student achievement. Such measures include "loan forgiveness" programs and a better pay schedule. */ already exist*

Elementary and Secondary Act

- ***Provide funding keyed to reform.***

In some ways, the Federal government already has taken the steps to support local reform through providing funds keyed to outcomes. Passed in 1994, Goals 2000 offers states Federal grants to develop standards-based education systems, and Title I regulations already call for a standards-based education system. Congress reauthorized the Title I compensatory education program in 1994. By law, states are required to use the same or equally rigorous standards and assessments they devise for Goals 2000 for monitoring the progress of Title I students, but districts can also devise their own standards and assessments as long as they are as rigorous as those of the state. Used as proposed, the funds can be used powerfully to transform education.

That the provision of flexible funding keyed to outcomes can contribute to improving educational quality is illuminated in several schools receiving Title I funds. In 1988, the Hawkins-Stafford Amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Act made changes of great consequence to the recipients of Title I (formerly Chapter I) compensatory funds. The Title I program (formerly Chapter I), in place for nearly 30 years and expending 80 billion in Federal resources, was changed to allow schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged students to use their funds for whole school improvement rather than just for the traditional "pull-out" or remedial programs. Schools have been more than willing to accept the greater accountability that accompanies discretion over spending the Title I funds. Schools have typically used the money to provide staff development, reduce class size, involve parents in school activities, upgrade and maintain facilities, and purchase technology and other materials (Stringfield & Rossi, 1994).

- ***Provide research information and technical assistance to local school systems.***

Research and dissemination are critical features of a system interested in improving itself. The Federal and state governments can be integrally involved in the process of improvement through funding and creating different models of schooling.

Furthermore, in an era of deregulation, local school systems often go wanting for technical assistance. Deregulation in and of itself does not result in significant local change; rather local capacity-building is required to effectively generate new local policies and programs, and of these, policy is only one instrument (Kirst, 1995). Thus, the provision of technical assistance to the local school systems by making available experts in the areas of system reform, curriculum, assessment, professional development, and policy would stimulate better and more effective local policies and programs.

- ***Develop and support structures for early childhood development.***

The Federal government currently supports early childhood development through Head Start. This (and other such programs) could be greatly expanded to include more support to the families of participant children. In addition, the Federal and state governments

can provide seed money to local school system to develop their own programs for early childhood development.

- *Set policies and standards that support local leadership and reform efforts.*

States can create a policy environment that enhances the capacity of the local agencies to make and institute their *own* policies and programs. Such policy environments include the setting of up-to-date curriculum frameworks, high graduation standards, and fair school accountability mechanisms.

States can also grant waivers to local districts and schools to initiate their own programs of improvement. Research indicates that in some states the less successful schools most in need of waivers might not be receiving them (CPRE, 1992). Thus, a new policy that includes schools that might benefit the most from waivers and technical assistance would be a useful support strategy for states to follow.

Summary

The actions discussed above are by no means exhaustive. What is important is that the players involved realize the range of possibilities for action available to them. Below, some specific examples of reform programs and models are discussed.

Examples of Reform Programs and Models

*Target to
elementary, middle
school*

There are many promising programs that illustrate how schools, districts, and communities might work together to establish the necessary conditions for high academic achievement. It is important to note that each program is unique in its focus and procedures, and, therefore, its application by other schools depends upon the specific needs of that school, the program's compatibility with local reform efforts, and, of course, the school's (or district's) available resources. Below, we provide a brief list of summary and contact information for some programs.

The list of programs described is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, the list includes several highly recognized programs and several lesser known programs that, together, offer a range of methods and foci for individual school reform. Each of the 10 programs is discussed in terms of its philosophy, structural approaches, and components, and implementation requirements (where available), followed by contact information.

*Different grade
levels*

Coalition of Essential Schools ("Sizer Schools")

The Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) is a program designed to restructure high schools, and was an outgrowth of the *Study of High Schools* conducted in the early 1980s, under the sponsorship of the National Association of Independent Schools. The scholar

known for the development of this project is TheodoreSizer, and therefore, CES schools are sometimes referred to as "Sizer schools."

Philosophy. The program's philosophy is based on the belief that secondary schools should stress and exemplify, in all policies and interactions, the values of unanxious expectation, trust, and decency (Sizer, 1984). Among the most important of the underlying principles is belief in a personalized approach to schooling and learning.

Components. The major components utilized in the program are: reduced class size, teachers as facilitators, interdisciplinary approach to curriculum, block scheduling for core subjects, student demonstrations of mastery of subjects, policies based upon program values and trust, and teachers as generalists rather than specialists. One example of a typical pedagogical method that embodies the CES philosophy is "backwards planning," wherein teachers begin with a "knowledge goal" and design curriculum and assessment around achievement of that goal (Sizer, 1992). Teachers then attend to students on an individual level, according to where the student stands in relation to the overall goal.

Implementation. Schools interested in the CES must obligate themselves to its 6 common principles, work over time toward "whole school" involvement, participate in at least one yearly professional development activity offered by the coalition, document their progress, undergo self-evaluation, and demonstrate the ability to fund coalition activities (Coalition of Essential Schools, 1990). The CES offers a framework within which schools may begin the change process, and they offer workshops that elaborate their principles and philosophy. However, participating schools are encouraged to devise their own curricular objectives and instructional methods for operationalizing the CES philosophy. Although there is no limitation on "membership," *per se*, CES is typically implemented by high schools, and sometimes middle schools.

For further information, interested parties should contact:

Essential Schools Coalition
Brown University
1 Davol Square, P.O. Box 1969
Providence, RI 02912
(401) 863-3384

The School Development Program

The School Development Program (SDP) is an urban school reform program that began nearly 30 years ago as a partnership between the Yale Child Study Center and two impoverished New Haven public schools. The program is now in place in over 400 elementary, middle, and (a few) high schools.

Philosophy. Theories of child development and social psychology, as studied for years by program developer James Comer, underlie the program's philosophy. The program is intended to expand the responsibility of schools in terms of the developmental needs of

children and to rebuild ties in the community that foster the healthy development of its children. The program aims to improve academic achievement through setting high standards of learning, with the understanding that, although high standards are an integral component of the program, the program, itself, is built on the idea that such standards are most effectively met by encouraging community involvement and by addressing the affective and social needs of children. (Comer, 1980)

Components. Schools implementing the SDP re-organize their decision-making processes and organizational structures to incorporate school-planning management, a mental health team, and parental involvement. The management team of 12-15 people is comprised of parents, teachers, school staff, the principal, and a mental health expert (and meets on a weekly basis to plan school activities). This team also is responsible for long-term school planning, evaluation, and professional development. Mental health and health professionals serve on the mental health team and ensure that principles of these fields are incorporated into the activities of the school. Finally, parents are asked to be involved with the school by serving as classroom assistants, by participating on the school management team, and by sponsoring extra-curricular family activities. (Comer, Haynes, & Hamilton-Lee, 1988).

Implementation. Schools can implement the SDP without a significant increase in resources, as long as staff and community are committed to establishing the Comer school "ethos;" to accepting the values of shared decision making, "whole child" perspective, and high expectations for student success; and to participating in staff-development activities. The Yale Child Study Center provides initial staff training and monitoring, although the Center encourages schools to assume and continue those responsibilities as soon as possible. The model may be implemented in any school. However, most of the schools adopting the SDP are elementary and middle schools.

For further information contact:

School Development Program
230 S. Frontage Road
P.O. Box 20790
New Haven, CT 06520-7900
(203) 785-2548

Success for All

The Success for All program began 10 years ago as a project of the Center for Research on Effective Schooling at the Johns Hopkins University. The program is a highly structured and intensive early intervention program aimed at bringing at-risk children up to a level at which they can gain from high-quality classroom instruction (Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Dolan & Wasik, 1991). It currently is in place in seven schools in three districts.

Philosophy. Program developers believe that schools should focus resources on early prevention and use all that is known about effective instruction to help young students

achieve success in reading (Madden et al., 1991). This program is different from the first two discussed above in that it is highly structured across schools and relies on specific pedagogical practices and models to help at-risk students catch up with their peers. The program is characterized by instructional support for teachers and developmentally appropriate programs for preschool and kindergarten.

Components. Program components include:

- one-on-one reading tutors 20 minutes a day for eligible students,
- homogeneous grouping for 90 minutes a day for reading,
- long-term reading assignments,
- specified curriculum and instructional materials,
- pre-kindergarten (half- or full-day) stressing language development,
- a family support team that coordinates outside social services, trains volunteers, focuses on attendance, and relates to parents about students' behavior,
- a program facilitator responsible for day-to-day program administration, and
- a building advisory team comprising parents, teachers, and the principal that is responsible for program development (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1992).

Implementation. The requirements for participation in the Success for All Program are mainly financial (resources are needed for new positions, staff training, and materials) and conceptual (school staff must be committed to a restructuring of its early education system). The program focuses on kindergarten through the middle elementary grades.

For further information, interested schools should contact:

Center for Research on Effective Schooling
Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 516-8800

Accelerated Schools

The work of Henry Levin and researchers at Stanford University, Accelerated Schools, is another scholar-activist-designed program begun to help impoverished local, urban schools achieve systemic reform.

Philosophy. The program was born of Levin's belief that the consequences to society will be great if the needs of the growing population of disadvantaged students remain ignored

(Levin, 1987). His program is modeled on the principles of a democratic workplace and seeks to achieve an efficient and democratic educational organization. Principles include unity of purpose, school-based improvement, and building upon strengths (Levin & Hopfenberg, 1991).

Components. The first step for participants, now numbering over 140 schools, is to undergo the "inquiry process." In this process, schools examine their problems, brainstorm solutions, develop a plan, pilot test the plan, and conduct an evaluation. This typifies the underlying principles of the program: empowerment and responsibility. The structures used to achieve such goals are a steering committee (comprising teachers, administrators, parents, and students), curricular and other specialized cadres of teachers, and whole school meetings where all major decisions, including budget and curriculum issues, must be agreed upon by all the stakeholders (Hopfenberg, Meister, & Rogers, 1990).

The program does not mandate a specific curriculum, but it does issue five guidelines for teachers to follow in implementing a curriculum and instructing students. Classroom activities and instruction should:

- have clearly stated goals,
- emphasize language development in all subjects (including math and science),
- relate to student experiences,
- focus on development of problem-solving and analytical skills,
- rely upon active learning experiences provided by a teacher who serves primarily as a facilitator, and
- draw upon community resources (Ascher, 1993).

Implementation. The requirements for participating in Accelerated Schools is simply that schools be willing to undergo the "inquiry process" and focus on organizational principles that lead to collaborative decision-making. There is no mandate or even recommendation for a particular curriculum or school structure. The Stanford group provides initial training — there are 10 satellite training centers around the country — to participating schools. The overall change process takes about six years; and the program is targeted primarily at elementary schools, as one of its aims is to bring students up to grade level by the 6th grade (Levin, 1987).

For further information, contact:

Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305
(415)725-1676
ATTN: Accelerated Schools Project

The CoZi Project

The CoZi (Comer-Zigler) project is an approach to school reform that combines the complementary philosophies of James Comer and his colleague at the Yale Child Study Center, Edward Zigler. James Comer's School Development Program (discussed earlier in this section) has been in place for nearly 30 years and is built on the philosophy that shared decision-making should inform a school culture that addresses all the needs of children — academic, social, emotional, and affective — and that such a culture is necessary for the social and academic success of an increasingly marginalized population. Zigler's contribution, the 21st Century School (21C) vision, was influenced by the fact that there are an unprecedented number of mothers working outside the home (U.S. Department of Labor, 1988) and a significant number of children receiving poor quality care. Zigler's intent with 21C is to provide a quality environment for young children so as to avoid early experiences that put them at-risk of social and educational problems later in life (Stern & Finn-Stevenson, 1996). Thus, Zigler's contribution to the CoZi initiative — to add to Comer's broadening of a school's scope and consensus decision-making — is the addition of pre-school classes, child care programs, and more parental involvement campaigns.

Philosophy. The CoZi initiative targets children newborn to 12, and links the school community to family support services. The five CoZi goals are to: (1) rebuild community by encouraging administrators, teachers, children, parents, and community partners to work together through shared leadership strategies and efforts to involve adults and children in solving school problems; (2) promote school-based intervention by involving parents and educators in child-centered, school-based planning (the Comer Process Team Approach) to increase attendance, achievement, a sense of self-worth, and overall development; (3) focus on child development and learning by emphasizing all aspects of child development, including physical, social, emotional, language, and intellectual development; (4) link family support services to the school by offering pre-school programs, before- and after-care, and home visitation for parents of infants and toddlers through the Parents as Teachers Program; and (5) bond parents to the school community by providing parent-development programs, such as shared decision-making activities (Norfolk Public Schools, n.d.).

Components. The CoZi program is built around "child-focused school-based planning." In planning, leaders:

- make use of their knowledge of child development to inform decisions on any topic from instruction to the use of school uniforms,
- concentrate on relationships (adult-to-adult, child-to-child, and adult-to-child),
- seek parental involvement (i.e., by soliciting their involvement on various boards and committees), and
- seek community involvement (i.e., through funding and collaboration of services).

Specific components used to develop the four principles above include:

- consensus decision making by a school governance team supported by a mental health team (see SDP),
- provision of health services, home visitations to parents of newborn to three-year-olds,
- provision of child care, including preschool, before- and after-school care, and vacation care, and
- coordination of social services. (Norfolk Public Schools, n.d.)

Implementation. Implementation requirements are that a school have a strong and innovative principal who is willing to go outside the traditional boundaries of his or her role, and a demonstrated need for and interest in child care and early childhood education services (Stern & Finn-Stevenson, 1996). It also is helpful if there is a successfully implemented SDP in place. Initial training and assessment is provided by the study group at Yale, with the program targeted at elementary schools.

For more information on the CoZi initiative, write:

Barbara M. Stern, CoZi Project Manager
Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy
Yale University
310 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511-2188

- 2

William?

New Standards Project

The New Standards project began in 1991, with the aim of reinvigorating and revamping American education. The project is jointly managed by the National Center on Education and the Economy and the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh. The main purpose of New Standards is "...to create an internationally benchmarked system of standards and assessments that could provide a foundation for making America's schools second to none" (NCEE, n.d.).

Philosophy. The New Standards project is built on the belief that setting very high academic standards and developing appropriate assessments to measure progress are twin steps that are essential to fostering high achievement and learning. What is unique about the New Standards is that they are performance standards that outline, not just what students should know, but what they should be able *to do*. Further, the assessments test students against the standard, not other students — meaning that all students (not just the "top of the curve")—can achieve. Developers intend the standards and assessments to be: (1) 'doable,' given time and teacher constraints; (2) focused on "applying learning;" and (3) examples of how tasks can be relevant across disciplines (NCEE, n.d.).

Components. Performance standards have been developed for English language arts, mathematics, and science, with the standards comprising three components:

- performance descriptions (outlining what knowledge is essential and what skills are to be assessed),
- samples of student work (illustrating the quality of work expected to meet the standard), and
- commentaries on student work (explaining why the sample meets the quality of work expected).

The assessments, which have been developed in English language arts and mathematics and which are “in the works” for science, consist of an examination and a portfolio system. The English and math examinations — pilot tested by a total of 80,000 students — use a combination of traditional test items and longer performance tasks that, together, last three class periods. The examination is *graded* against a single standard. The complement to the examination is the portfolio system — pilot tested by 60,000 students — which has students compile samples of their best work for review against the standards. /?

Implementation. The adoption of such progressive standards and their corollary assessments by districts or states is one way in which many experts think urban districts might begin their reforms (as the standards reflect and demand high standards for learning, which are believed to be conducive to, and even necessary for, high academic achievement). Currently, 17 states and 6 school districts⁴ are partnered with NSP. These sites, now adopting the standards and corollary assessments, were also involved in their development. Teachers from these areas, in fact, provided input on the content standards. Also, they are responsible for submitting to the NSP self-developed assessment tasks and scoring rubrics (for which they are paid, if the rubrics are accepted) and for conducting pilot tests in their classrooms. C

Participating states and districts receive support from an on-site NSP coordinator. Further, teams of teachers attend assessment task and scoring rubric development, curriculum development, and portfolio design training. These teachers, after a specified number of sessions, become *Senior Leaders* who, in turn, conduct NSP training in their own states and districts (Khatti et al., 1996).

For more information, contact:

Media Specialist
700 11th Street, NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20001
202-783-3668
202-783-3672
nsinfo@ncee.org

⁴ Partner states include California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Missouri, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, and Vermont. Partner districts include Fort Worth, New York City, Pittsburgh, Rochester (NY), San Diego, and White Plains (NY).

Urban Systemic Initiatives

The Urban Systemic Initiatives (USI) consists of cooperative agreements between the National Science Foundation (NSF) and participating U.S. cities. The NSF provides funding to the urban districts to establish system-wide reforms to improve learning leading to high achievement in mathematics and science education. At the outset of the program, NSF awarded \$100,000 to each of the 25 U.S. cities with the greatest number of children in poverty. The cities used the award to examine their systems and to propose a *comprehensive plan* for reform. Using already-developed criteria, NSF awarded \$15 million over 5 years to each of 9 cities to implement their plans. In subsequent years, they have funded a "second cohort" of seven cities.

Philosophy. With USI, NSF has challenged urban systems to aggressively reform teaching and learning and given them the financial support necessary to do so. The program strives to achieve the "excellent and equitable education systems" necessary in order to serve all of the nation's children well and to secure a healthy economic future and workforce (NSF, 1996). Because the reform plans of the individual cities are funded through cooperative agreements, there are specific accountability mechanisms already in place. That is, NSF requires the systems it funds to focus their reforms on the development and achievement of high academic standards; and systems are held accountable through monitoring of policy action concerning course offerings and of student achievement records.

Components. The comprehensive plans are city-designed, thus, there is variation in the specific measures of the plan (i.e., in the amount and type of attention given to professional development or early childhood education). However, participating cities' plans share several core elements. All have: (1) raised graduation requirements, eliminated non-rigorous courses, and increased the availability of challenging math and science courses; and (2) reallocated existing funds and generated new resources (NSF, 1996). With regard to funding changes, some cities have passed bond issues to upgrade educational technology and equipment, while others have developed partnerships with community businesses. Many cities have been able to match NSF funds in the ratio of 3:1, to provide themselves with a base for continuation of systemic reform.

For more information, contact:

National Science Foundation
Directorate for Education and Human Resources
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230
(703) 306-1234
<http://www.nsf.gov>

① omitted
implementation
section
② what grade?
level(s)

The Learning City Program

The Learning City Program (LCP) is based upon a research program developed at the National Center on Education in the Inner Cities at Temple University. The program's focus is to improve learning through linking schools with other learning environments, such as libraries, museums, work-places, and institutions of higher education. The LCP was initiated three years ago in three inner-city schools — one middle and one elementary school in Philadelphia and one elementary school in Houston. Since then, the program has expanded to include three other schools, an overall plan to link the program with the Enterprise Community project initiated in one of the communities in which an LCP school is located.

Philosophy. The LCP was founded on the philosophy that to foster the educational resilience and success of inner-city youth who are plagued by poverty, violence, and lack of opportunity, there must be a unity of resources and expertise of schools, families, and the communities concerned (CEIC Research Brief, No. 106). The LCP's three main goals are to: improve student achievement, particularly for students at the margin of achievement distribution; enhance effective teaching and learning processes; and help develop positive student and teacher attitudes toward their school environment.

Implementation. The implementation of LCP is supported by a delivery system that provides organizational and professional support. Regular and special education teachers, school psychologists, speech pathologists, and other school professionals work together in teams to provide for the diverse needs of individual students. LCP schools must focus on collaboration within the school, to personalize learning — and without the school, to bring the necessary social services to students to support their lives and educational success.

For more information on the Learning City Program, contact:

Temple University Center for Research in
Human Development and Education
933 Ritter Hall Annex
13th Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenues
Philadelphia, PA 19122
(215) 204-3001

Talented School Model?

School-Wide Projects

7/11/87 Although the School-wide Project, as it is described here, is not a specific reform program *per se*, many reform activities are conducted with the support of SWPs. SWP is a funding option of Title I (formerly Chapter I), new in 1988⁵, the major Federal compensatory education fund. Title I funds are targeted toward students who are economically disadvantaged and perhaps at-risk of educational failure. The SWP funding option is open to schools wherein 75 percent or greater of students are eligible for Title I, and it allows schools to use the federal funds on whole school improvement, rather than on programs that serve target populations. Since the inception of SWP, the number of schools implementing school-wide improvement plans with Title I have at least tripled.

Philosophy. This authorized, increased discretionary use of Federal money is justified on several grounds, including the belief that:

- Likely higher incidences of educational deprivation indicated by high poverty rates may best be addressed through whole school upgrades;
- Pull-out, remedial programs are not in the best interest of any student;
- "Correlates" found in the "School Effectiveness Movement" studies are alterable and valid;
- Schools are the logical unit of improvement; and
- Local educators know better than the Federal government what local needs are and how these needs should be addressed (Stringfield, et al., 1994).

Components. Because there is discretion at the local level, there is wide variation in exact use of the funds. Some typical uses are for the purchase of technology, materials, additional staff to reduce class size, and professional development (Stringfield, et al., 1994). One SWP is described below.

One of the first schools to implement an SWP under Title I focused its plan on leadership and team-building development and monitoring at-risk students while implementing the "whole school" improvements as led by a School Improvement Committee. Funds were used to hire additional school professionals, including a/an:

- instructional interventionist to coordinate resources,
- instructional support teacher to serve on the School Improvement Committee and provide support and training to teachers, and to handle administrative duties,
- parent trainer to train volunteers,

⁵ Prior to 1988, school-wide projects did exist. However, if schools used their federal fund for these purposes, they were required to match the funds—making implementing an SWP with federal money very difficult. The only exception to the rule were the 11 lowest achieving urban schools.

- program support teacher to provide professional development activities to teachers, to lead teacher team meetings, to coordinate committee meetings, to mentor, and to provide specialized reading instruction,
- math resource teacher, and
- school-community liaison. (Winfield, 1991).

Other activities have included changing the time structure of the day — extending the school year, the school day, or the number of opportunities for professional development.

Implementation. Any elementary, middle, or high school, with over 75 percent of its students in poverty may apply for the SWP funding option.

For further information on Title I SWP funding, contact:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Compensatory Education Programs
Portals Building, #4400
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 260-0826

Pacesetter Programs

The Pacesetter programs were jointly developed by the College Board and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and are “integrated programs of standards, teaching, and assessment” (College Board, 1995). The programs are intended as one strategy to help students (especially minority and disadvantaged students) to take and to succeed in rigorous academic courses in high school.

Philosophy. The program is built on the belief that “all students can learn.” Designed to complement the Equity 2000 program — which requires the enrollment of students in rigorous courses⁶ — the Pacesetter programs are intended to “pull” students toward achievement of the high standards required in their classes.

Components. The programs comprise three core components: statement of standards, teacher preparation, and assessment. The standards organize the curriculum into units and delineate expectations for achievement. Typical activities for students are “task

⁶ Equity 2000 requires all 9th and 10th grade students to enroll in Algebra I and Geometry, respectively, and includes teacher and counselor development components to help staff teach rigorous material to previously unchallenged students. The Equity 2000 project addresses these two courses in particular because they were shown, in an earlier study, to be “gatekeepers” for college entrance. Therefore, by increasing participation and success in these classes among minority and disadvantaged students may increase their chances for and interest in post-secondary education.

sets" through which students work on lengthy projects guided by the teacher, rather than on short, discrete assignments. Also, instructional support and curriculum training are provided to prepare teachers who implement Pacesetter programs. Finally, end-of-the-year assessments — given to all Pacesetter students nationwide — address not only content knowledge and skills, but the application and communication of such knowledge and skills.

Implementation. To implement Pacesetter academic programs, schools must be enthusiastic about trying the program and must have the financial resources to support it. It is also helpful to be involved in Equity 2000, or some program that increases the enrollment of disadvantaged students in rigorous courses. Additionally, being able to take advantage of teacher training and support from ETS or the College Board is helpful in the first year. The program is aimed at high schools.

For more information, contact:

The College Board
45 Columbus Avenue
New York, NY 10023
(212) 713-8268

Summary

In addition to these examples, others are available through individual states and districts that have spearheaded their own programs. Although those programs are tailored to individual state and district needs, elements of any program can be adopted for specific urban schools or districts, given appropriate needs, interest, context, and resources. For example, several states recently have implemented standards and assessment reforms aimed at improving the standard of learning and outcomes for all students.

The following section provides case studies of districts, schools, and classrooms that have successfully implemented reform programs — some of the types discussed above and some self-developed.

Case Studies of Successful Urban Schooling

There are many examples of successfully reforming and successfully performing urban schools and districts and inspiring stories of dramatically turned-around students, classrooms, schools, and districts. Below are some case studies, highlighting various conditions necessary to high academic achievement in urban schools.

The following exhibit indicates the schools selected for description, including location and size of the school, reform implemented, and conditions. It should be noted that *all* these schools exemplify *most* of the conditions necessary to achieve success. However, we chose to highlight those conditions that are particularly well-implemented or that play a

larger role at a given site, so that each of the conditions may be illustrated in semi-isolation and detail.

Name ⁷	Location	Level of School; Size	Level of Reform	Type of Reform	Conditions Exemplified
Dade County Public Schools	Miami, FL	Elementary, middle, and high schools; varies <i>varies</i>	Systemic	Urban Systemic Initiative	Focus on achievement; high curriculum standards and early intervention
Chicago Public Schools	Chicago, IL	Elementary, middle, and high schools; <u>Varies</u> <i>varies</i>	Systemic	Local reform; legislative mandate for restructuring and increased local discretion and accountability	Sense of responsibility and ownership of learning; accountability and leadership; resources
Gaines? <i>1 Middle Prince Georges</i>	San Antonio, TX	Elementary; 523 students	School	Self-developed strategies, including strong principal leadership and close community ties	Caring community; creative and effective resourcing
Bowling Park? <i>2 Edison Files Long Island</i>	Norfolk, VA	Elementary; 500 students	School	CoZi Initiative (Cormier-Zigler Model)	Caring community; support from federal to school board level and co-curricular and after-school activities
Central? <i>2 Long Island New York</i>	unnamed	High school; 1200 students	School	Coalition of Essential Schools	Ownership of learning; effective pedagogical techniques
Somerville? <i>3 Washington Project in Schools</i>	Prince George's County, MD	High school; 2641	School/class	Pacesetter and Equity 2000	All students can learn; high curriculum/assessment standards and effective pedagogical techniques
Park Elementary	New York, NY	Elementary school; 250	Class	School-based reform	All students can learn: pedagogical techniques and materials; well-trained and educated staff

Raising Standards, Raising Achievement: Miami-Dade County's Urban Systemic Initiative

—based on Westat McKenzie Consortium's quarterly newsletter, *Systemic Initiatives*, 1996

Miami-Dade County is the fourth largest school district in the Nation, and one in which over half the children live in poverty. With the support of the National Science Foundation, Miami-Dade County has developed and implemented an Urban Systemic Initiative (USI) that has had a profound impact upon the entire educational community. (See previous section for more information on USI programs.)

⁷ Names of some case study schools have been changed.

In order to gain the financial support of NSF, Miami-Dade County used an initial NSF grant of \$100,000 to engage in a self study of the system and a year of careful planning, and to submit a comprehensive proposal for reform to NSF. Miami-Dade County was then chosen as one of nine cities in a "first cohort" to receive \$15 million over five years for the implementation of their plans. The goal of Miami-Dade County's program is to "...engage students and families in successful school experiences" and to improve the teaching and learning of all subjects, especially mathematics and science. Besides the financial support of NSF, there is a strong commitment of school staff to making the system work.

As part of the Systemic Initiative, the Miami-Dade County public school system:

- Devised policies that reflect and support high academic standards and achievement, as evidenced through elimination of low level math and science courses, the requirement of Algebra I by the end of 9th grade, and stringent textbook adoption guidelines;
- Provided professional development experiences for over 3,000 teachers system-wide;
- Developed standards-based curriculum in elementary mathematics; and
- Emphasized early grades, with implementation of pre-kindergarten, a range of learning program for young students, and encouragement of pre-school and Head Start activities.

These reforms, centered around high academic expectations and quality teaching through staff development and commitment, have had many positive outcomes after just two years of implementation. On the Stanford Achievement Test, scores are up for the sixth year in a row; scores of students in the early grades are competitive with the rest of the nation; and math scores for first- and second-graders are above the national mean. Further, on the Stanford Achievement Test, there has been a significant increase in math achievement by Hispanics, African Americans, and students as a whole.

Restructuring For Increased Accountability And Leadership: The Chicago School Reform Act

— Based on *A View From the Elementary Schools: The State of Reform in Chicago* Anthony Bryk et al., 1993, Consortium on Chicago School Research.

In December of 1988, the Illinois legislature passed the Chicago School Reform Act (PA 85-1418), which laid the framework for systemic reform of the Chicago Public Schools, then-considered to be among the worst in America. The act devolved control in several areas to local schools. The powers of principals within the domain of their schools were increased — giving them greater authority over the school budget, the building, and personnel. They were able to recruit new teachers and fire ineffective ones. At the same time, teachers became accountable to their Local School Councils, made up of parents, community members, and teachers (who have two seats on the council), as this body has

authority for hiring and firing the principal. A third "player" was brought to the fore, as well: The Professional Personnel Advisory Committee. Elected teachers sit on this board, and have advisory responsibility over curriculum and school program issues. The final important aspects of the reform were: a restructuring of the funding mechanisms (with dollars becoming more discretionary, and more dollars being diverted to the more disadvantaged students), the requirement of a three-year School Improvement Plan led by the principal, and the establishment of academic standards for all students.

Dr. Anthony Bryk and the team at the Consortium on Chicago School Research have been studying the effects of these reforms and the progress of the Chicago public elementary schools in achieving systemic change. Over the course of 3 years, they have examined over 500 schools within the system and examined factors that certain schools (6 schools in particular) successful.

Bryk and others found many common themes in the strategies used by the six highest achieving schools. The team found that the key elements for successful change are:

- Active Local School Council Role,
- Facilitative, Inclusive Principal Leadership,
- Principal's First Steps: A New Image for the School and Renewed Sense of Agency,
- Longer-term Focus: Strengthening the Technical Core,
- Strong External Connections to Support School Development, and
- Strategic Use of Discretionary Resources.

Building Community Support: Case Study Of a San Antonio Elementary School

—based on *Education Reform and Students At Risk*, Rossi & Stringfield, American Institutes for Research

Gaines Elementary School, as we will call it, in San Antonio, Texas, appears to be a model school for any area. Its walls are bright and colorful, its students pleasant and knowledgeable, and its staff active and supportive. It is an example of a school serving at-risk students well, with students showing significant gains in attendance and academics. Ninety-six percent of the children at the school receive free or reduced-price lunch, 28 percent are Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 91 percent are minorities, mostly Hispanic. Also, there is a high mobility index and one of the lowest per pupil expenditures in the district.

Researchers attribute the improving academic achievement and attendance rates and the positive environment to several factors. One of the most important factors is the school's close ties with community organizations — such as the YMCA, local art museum, and

Trinity College School of Education. These organizations provide volunteers, special activities, facilities, and, in the case of Trinity College, new staff, professional support and development, and grant-writing assistance. Another important factor is the quality of the school's curriculum. The curriculum is designed with an emphasis on multi-culturalism and is often cross-disciplinary. Students engage in a variety of activities, and study culture, history, art, and literature from all areas of the world. Also, the curriculum is intended to be interesting, broadening, and at the same time, linked to real-world issues. A third major factor for success is the co-curricular activities students and parents participate in throughout the year. One such activity, wherein parents, students, and faculty interact, is a "Museum Night" (when the above group dines together and then students lead group tours). Some other reasons for success are attributed to the fact that students are valued and viewed as an integral part of the school; the school's relationship with the school to take advantage of professional development opportunities and hire quality, new staff; the extra-curricular staff serve an expanded role, allowing planning time for grade-level teachers; and the facilities are well-maintained.

The school is able to fund the increased staff development and parent involvement, as well as instructional materials and special events, through several sources. The school receives approximately \$279,000 in Chapter I funds that may be used for School-wide Projects (because of their high concentration of disadvantaged students). Additionally, with the help of Trinity College, the school has secured several long-term grants providing up to \$106,000 per year. The school was also able to hire full-time staff for library, physical education, and art classes (rather than part-time, as specified by the district because of the school's size) thanks to its good relationship with the district and the wise use of the extra time to block schedule same grade-level teachers with substantial team planning time.

This school is an example of how community support can be utilized to the fullest extent, in order to give students, generally written off as uninterested in such topics, a rich, varied, and challenging curriculum.

Multilevel Support for Comprehensive Schooling: Bowling Park Elementary School and the Cozi Initiative

— based on information provided by the Norfolk Public School System, 1996, and the Yale Child Study Center's *Bowling Park CoZi Community School Process Evaluation II*, 1994-95

Bowling Park Elementary School is located in Norfolk, Virginia, an urban center of approximately 600,000 people, and home the U.S.'s largest naval base and a 20 percent transient, military presence. Ninety-two percent of Bowling Park's students are on free or reduced-price lunch, and most live in the surrounding public-housing projects.

Several years ago, the school implemented James Comer's School Development Project, seeking to involve the entire community in school improvement. More recently, however, the school became the first demonstration site for the CoZi project — an approach to school reform that combines the complementary philosophies of James Comer and his colleague at the Yale Child Study Center, Edward Zigler. The addition of the Zigler

components expanded the schools services with the addition of pre-school classes, child care programs, and more parental involvement campaigns.

The CoZi initiative targets children newborn to 12, and links the school community and family support services. The five CoZi goals are to: (1) rebuild community by encouraging administrators, teachers, children, parents, and community partners to work together through shared leadership strategies and efforts to involve adults and children in solving school problems; (2) promote school-based intervention by involving parents and educators in child-centered, school-based planning (the Comer Process Team Approach) to increase attendance, achievement, a sense of self-worth, and overall development; (3) focus on child development and learning by emphasizing all aspects of child development, including physical, social, emotional, language, and intellectual development; (4) link family support services to the school by offering pre-school programs, before- and after-care, and home visitation for parents of infants and toddlers through the Parents as Teachers Program; and (5) bond parents to the school community by providing parent development programs such as shared decision-making.

The project began in 1992, and among the first activities were hiring a program coordinator and raising start-up money. Because of the school's high proportion of disadvantaged students and also through grant-writing efforts, officials were able to find several avenues of financial support for the reforms. The school received funds from an Early Childhood Grant sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education, Chapter I funds (\$125, 610) plus in-king district resources valuing \$142,959, and the Carnegie Corporation, which funded the CoZi organizational team and subsequent training for 18 months.

To continue the program, stable funding sources have been found as well. Fifty percent of operational expenses are paid with Chapter I funds. The Federal government also sponsors the Child Nutrition Program, which serves 92 percent of Bowling Park's students. Although state allocations continue to diminish, they currently cover approximately 3 percent of the budget. The local government contributes to the school in such ways as donating a new playground and providing stipends to housing project residents who volunteer at the school. Other community contributions include: free haircuts to students, gift certificates from local businesses for special activities, grant-writing assistance, and financial contributions. Finally, the school receives grants from foundations such as the Yale Child Study Center, the Barbara Bush Family Literacy Foundation, and the National Adult Literacy Foundation. Among the factors that have made fundraising at Bowling Park so successful are strong district support, strong principal leadership, national and local recognition (named *Redbook* "Outstanding School of the Year"), and community outreach.

The changes that the school has made with the aid of such funding include the addition of pre-school classes, before- and after-school care, summer vacation care, and Parents as Teachers home visitations. These activities extend the philosophy, already in place, that seeks to incorporate the community as active members of a child's education, focus on all his or her needs (academic, social, developmental), and provide supports that encourage high academic achievement.

The school embodies parental involvement — selecting parents for seats on the school governance board, encouraging volunteerism, providing GED/ABE classes to parents, conducting home visitations to encourage expectant parents and parents of toddlers to become “first teachers,” and sponsoring parent-child activities. Other components of the program are sampled below:

- Structural components — multi- age, single-gender, and alternative classes,
- Enrichment activities — tennis camp and student radio station,
- Additional programs — resource teachers, extended year, and one-on-one tutoring, and
- Discipline and self-esteem building — conflict mediation and school uniforms

Although no outcome evaluations have occurred, process evaluations show that the school has adopted the philosophy and activities of CoZi and, further, that the educational community and the community at large are pleased with the program and find it effective in meeting the needs of their children.

Ownership of Learning: One Member of the Coalition of Essential Schools

— based on case study description in *Special Strategies for Educating Disadvantaged Students*, Stringfield et al., 1994

Central Elementary School, as we will call it, serves a lower middle class population, 56 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and 99 percent of whom are African-American. The Coalition of Essential Schools program was begun at this school (in an unnamed city) in 1988. By 1992, students in grades 9 through 11 were participating in the program.

As the CES philosophy states, the goal of the program is to increase student achievement through increased attendance and personalization of learning, while requiring students to exhibit proper behavior and skills mastery.

There is a full-time program facilitator at the school who supervises the teachers, teaches students, and handles day-to-day operational matters. A key feature of School Y's implementation (and all CES schools) is that teachers work together in teams to plan interdisciplinary, thematic units. There also are two-hour blocks for the teaching of core academic subjects. Such block scheduling is believed by many to be an effective technique for use among educationally disadvantaged students. Teachers use coaching and cooperative learning activities primarily in their classroom instruction. Students are asked to set goals for themselves beginning in the ninth grade and must demonstrate their academic progress through assessments and demonstrations. Staff promote college and career awareness for all students.

This structure has paid off for Central. One study showed that after two years in the program, Essential Schools students had higher attendance rates, higher promotion rates, and

higher standardized achievement scores than in previous years. In a more recent study, it was shown that ninth grade Essential Schools students had better attendance and better performance on a statewide competency than students in traditional programs.

All Students Can Learn: Somerville High School

— based on case study description in *Studies of Education Reform: Assessment of Student Performance*, Khattri et al., 1996

Somerville High School is located in a large suburb of Washington, D.C., Prince George's County, Maryland — an urban center itself, serving a large disadvantaged and minority population. There are several programs in place at Somerville High School that are intended to improve student achievement. First, as in the entire system, the high school has been implementing the Equity 2000 project. This project is sponsored by the College Board and requires all students to take and complete Algebra I and geometry in the 9th and 10th grades, respectively. The project challenges students and systems to abide by the standard "all children can learn," and increase the chances for minority and disadvantaged students to attend post-secondary education — as algebra and geometry were shown to be "gatekeepers" for college entrance in a previous study. Equity 2000 has teacher and counselor development components to help staff teach rigorous material to previously unchallenged students. Another program in place at Somerville, along the same philosophy as Equity 2000 and, in fact, a complement to it, is the Pacesetter program. While the Equity 2000 program "pushes" students into rigorous coursework through course requirements, Pacesetter "pulls" students toward higher achievement. The Pacesetter programs have three main components: statement of standards, teacher preparation, and assessments. That is, it clearly delineates the expectations placed on students, provides in-service for teachers in the Pacesetter philosophy and pedagogy, and uses specially-designed assessments.

At Somerville, there is a Pacesetter program in place for mathematics. The curriculum comprises six units that call for a variety of integrated instructional and assessment activities. A typical project for students is "task sets" that are lengthy assignments on a specific mathematical function. These activities are complemented by an end-of-the-year assessment by all Pacesetter students nation-wide that assesses "...mathematical knowledge, applied problem solving, and communication in the language of mathematics."

Although there is some room for improvement in the Pacesetter program as implemented at Somerville, teachers have made many positive comments about the program and said that it has impacted their teaching. For instance, teachers remarked that they now use more technology, encourage group work, and construct more performance-based assessment tasks. Students, as well, remarked favorably saying they understood the applicability of "real-life" math. Future improvements may shorten the end-of-year assessment, clarify some of the assessment's components (i.e., "communication in the language of mathematics), and seek to lessen the cost of the program.

Pedagogy to Individualize Instruction: Park Elementary School and the Primary Learning Record

— based on case study description in *Studies of Education Reform: Assessment of Student Performance*, Khattri et al., 1996

Park Elementary School in New York City is a small, magnet school with a well-mixed population that has significant proportions of white, African-American, and Hispanic students. The school's underlying philosophy is a belief in a child-centered learning environment built by a well-trained and educated staff. To this end, teachers in the school have adopted the Primary Language Record (PLR) and the Primary Learning Record (PLeR) system.

The PLR/PLeR are pedagogical assessment tools designed for daily use by classroom teachers. With the PLR/PLeR, teachers can follow their students' academic progress and use the information to plan individually appropriate educational activities. These tools are intended to help teachers better understand children's learning styles both to tailor educational programs to students and to communicate that information to future teachers.

Teachers at Park Elementary gather information, not only based on their own observations of students, but from students themselves and from parents. At parent-teacher conferences, teachers solicit information from parents about the history and progress of a child's language development at home. This technique is one that is appreciated by parents, as it allows them to take a role in their child's education and gives them a sense of importance — and rightly so.

The PLR/PLeR consists of two types of forms: the Primary Language or Learning Form and the Observations and Samples Form. The first form is the place where teachers record background information on the child, notes from the parent-teacher conference, and initial classroom observations, as well as a second semester summative evaluation. The Observation and Samples Form is for daily use where observations of children's talking, listening, reading, writing, and behavior are recorded. Other items on this form include titles of books children have read. This form is reviewed by teachers throughout the year to plan educational activities particular to the child. The following paragraph describes one way in which a teacher used the PLR/PLeR to individualize instruction is described.

Park Elementary's special education resource teacher talked about a boy in her class who was interested in drawing but had a very limited sight vocabulary. After observing his strength (drawing) and recognizing his weakness (sight vocabulary), she developed activities designed to draw on the strength to help improve the vocabulary and language skills. The teacher and student made books together. The child would draw a story, his teacher would then help him write the story he had drawn, and he would maintain new sight vocabulary words in a "word bank" at home.

Although, as Park Elementary teachers note, the system requires time and discipline, it is one that has value in better understanding students as individuals and planning

appropriate activities for them. Some teachers also comment that the PLR/PLeR becomes helpful documentation for other decisions, such as declassifying special education students. One feature that supports the PLR/PLeR and all learning activities at Park Elementary is voluntary, bi-monthly meetings of teachers to discuss student progress in the nature of a "study group."

This method is based on the belief that accurate and unintrusive assessment can and should inform instruction and curriculum decisions. In short, through inquiry and collaboration, teachers seek to better understand their students and, therefore, better address their needs.

Mission Statements of Reforming Urban Elementary Schools Exemplifying Conditions Necessary for Success

The mission of Tyler Elementary School is to provide a safe, healthy environment that fosters the belief that all children can learn with a well-rounded curriculum.

—John Tyler School, Washington, DC (448 students)

... To engage students and their families in meaningful activities to enhance student achievement and self esteem through a focus on reducing the social and educational factors which hinder the development of children and their families.

—Norris S. Barratt Community Middle School, Philadelphia, PA (1,137 students)

Creating a community of caring individuals whose ultimate goal is that of ensuring optimal development of children, the school's mission combines collaborative teaching and learning with the provision of family support services.

—Bowling Park School, Norfolk, VA (640 students)

... To commit ourselves to provide a safe environment in which all students feel respected, valued, challenged, and successful.

—St. Helena School, Norfolk, VA (260 students)

... Creating a new school environment focused on active learning, the development of literacy, team work, and staff development on how to teach, using quality knowledge work for the students.

—Alton School, Memphis, TN (705 students)

... Foster the development of lifelong learners and productive citizens by maintaining a safe and nurturing environment, meeting the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs of our students individually and collectively.

—Minor School, Birmingham, AL (330 students)

The school along with the community are dedicated to providing a child-centered educational program where positive self-image and mutual respect are fostered in a safe, secure environment.

—Dr. Ethel D. Allen School, Philadelphia, PA (665 students)

To educate children in a warm nurturing environment by engaging the whole child. The curriculum seeks to engage children in a broad range of activities as appropriate for given age and level of development.

—Urban Waldorf School, Milwaukee, WI (312 students)

Author: Sharon P. Robinson at WDCR03
Date: 11/5/96 8:57 AM
Priority: Normal
TO: Gerald N. Tirozzi at WDCJ01
CC: Susan Frost at WDCT02
CC: Jonathan Schnur at WDCB01
CC: Gabriela Uro at WDCJ01
TO: William Kincaid at WDCT01
CC: Robert McClure at WDCR01
CC: Rita Foy at WDCR02
CC: Hunter Moorman
Subject: Re: NEA Commission on Urban Children

----- Message Contents -----

Bill, you can contact Bob McClure at 219-1445. He can provide
information on what the Commission is about.
Sharon

Reply Separator

Subject: NEA Commission on Urban Children
Author: William Kincaid at WDCT01
Date: 11/12/96 08:03 PM

Gerry and Sharon--

Have either of you been approached about an "Emergency Commission on
Urban Children" that the NEA is setting up? Evidently there is a
meeting scheduled for here in DC next week.

Thanks.

Bill

Education Association Outreach Meetings

October

16th - 9:00 am -

School Construction Initiative
Washington D.C.

21st -

School Construction Initiative
San Francisco, Ca

28th - 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Reading Initiative
City Reads Meeting
Dept. of Ed., Room 6200

29th - 8:45am - 1:30pm

Reading Initiative
READ*WRITE*NOW
Dept. of Ed., Room 6200

Education Association Outreach Meetings

November

1st - 9:00am

School Construction Initiative
New York City, NY

1st - 1:00pm-

Reading Initiative
Principals' Meeting
Dept. of Ed., Room 6200

6th - 8th

School Construction Initiative
Council of Great City Schools Conference
Florida

7th - 1:00pm - 2:30pm

Reading Initiative
Ed. Associations Meeting
Dept. of Ed., Room 6200

8th - 3:30pm-5:30pm

Higher Education Meeting to discuss loan policy
Dept of Ed., Room 6200

8th - 4:00pm - 5:30pm

Reading Initiative
Teacher's Meeting
Dept. of Ed., Room 5165

12th - 3:00pm - 5:00pm

Reading Initiative
Early Childhood Providers' Meeting
Dept. of Ed., Room 6200

14th - 4:00pm - 5:00pm

Ed. Assoc. Outreach Meeting
Dept. of Ed., Room 6200

15th - 9:00am - 4:00pm

CAREERS Meeting to discuss legislation
Dept. of Ed., Switzer Bldg., Room 4409

19th - 10:30am -

Urban Initiative
@ Council of Great City Schools

22nd - 9:00am-4:00pm

CAREERS Meeting to discuss legislation
Dept. of Ed., Switzer Bldg., Room 4409

Education Association Outreach Meetings

December

6th - 11:30am - 1:30pm
2:00pm - 5:00pm

Higher Education Regional Meeting
Atlanta Hilton & Towers, Atlanta, Georgia

9th - 11:30am - 1:30pm
2:00pm - 5:00pm

Higher Education Regional Meeting
Holiday Inn Select, Phoenix, Arizona

9th - 10:30am

Urban Initiative
@ the Council of Great City Schools

10th - 11:30am - 1:30pm
2:00pm - 5:00pm

Higher Education Regional Meeting
Park Plaza Hotel, San Francisco, California

12th - 11:30am - 1:30pm
2:00pm - 5:00pm

Higher Education Regional Meeting
Hotel Sofitel, Chicago, Illinois

12th - 4:00pm-5:00pm

Education Association Outreach Meeting
Dept. of Ed., Room 6200

13th - 11:30am - 1:30pm
2:00pm - 5:00pm

Higher Education Regional Meeting
Back Bay Hilton Hotel, Boston, Massachusetts

17th - 11:30am - 1:30pm
2:00pm - 5:00pm

Higher Education Regional Meeting
Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington D.C.

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL COVER

DATE: October 28, 1996 TOTAL PAGES INCLUDING COVER 5
TO: Mike Smith RECIPIENT FAX: (202) 401-3095
FROM: Ramon Cortines SENDER FAX: (818) 564-9380
SENDER VOICE: (818) 795-9835
MEMO: Attached for your information.

Copy to Susan Frank

B. H. K.

for S.

FYI - we should

have someone at this

mtg.

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NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cynthia", with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Robert E. Chase, President
Reg. Wetters, Vice President
Marilyn Monahan, Secretary-Treasurer
Don Cameron, Executive Director

1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-3290
(202) 822 7000 Fax (202) 822-7974

Executive Office

October 18, 1996

Ramon Cortines
356 W. Del Mar Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 92205

Dear Mr. Cortines:

For years individuals and organizations have addressed specific components of the crisis affecting urban children and their families. These efforts, even when well-funded, have met with limited success.

NEA believes that creating and sustaining stronger, effective urban communities requires a comprehensive approach: that is, a partnership of the economic, social, political, public policy, and religious sectors. The greater potential for success that exists in collaboration and partnership is why NEA is forming an Emergency Commission on Urban Children. I would like you to become a part of this Commission.

The NEA Emergency Commission on Urban Children will be comprised of public officials, business leaders, clergy, community activists, educators, and researchers as individuals or representatives of national organizations who can generate a shared agenda designed to maximize the effectiveness of existing resources and programs to halt the decline of our urban centers.

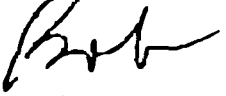
We would like to bring the Emergency Commission together on November 20, 1996 in Washington, D.C. to share what each of us is doing to enhance the quality of life in America's cities and to identify ways we can help each other to expand the impact to more children and their families. The frequency or need for subsequent meetings will be determined on that date. We hope to avoid excess meetings and commit ourselves, instead, to action that we can carry forward immediately. If we cannot confirm this date, we will propose an alternate date.

Your leadership, experiences, wisdom, and commitment will make the difference as we launch this significant challenge together.

Please contact me at (202) 822-7389, regarding your availability. I hope that you will be able to join us.

I have enclosed a brief statement on the Emergency Commission on Urban Children.

Sincerely,



Bob Chase
President

ENCLOSURE.DOC

THE NEA EMERGENCY COMMISSION ON URBAN CHILDREN: A CALL TO ACTION

America is failing our urban children.

We as a nation are allowing an entire generation to grow up in poverty and hopelessness, in disease and danger. No single institution in American life — not schools, not business, not social service agencies, not the courts — can right this wrong alone. But every institution can make a difference.

Time is short. By nearly every measure, from health to educational achievement, the gap between those children inside urban America and those outside is growing ever wider. The social fabric is tearing, in one urban community after another. Commentators now routinely compare our cities to Calcutta.

Meanwhile, at the national level, America's political leaders — of both parties — are responding by dropping responsibility for children's well-being on local communities. Few communities are ready to meet this responsibility.

For urban children, all this adds up to an emergency situation. The siren must be sounded.

The NEA Emergency Commission on Urban Children will endeavor to sound this siren — and mobilize a response that unites all the institutions that can and must make a difference for America's urban children.

The men and women who will serve on the NEA Emergency Commission — educators, public officials, business leaders, clergy, community activists — will share no single set of answers, only a commitment to do right by each and every child. The Emergency Commission will identify the ideas that can bring hope to urban children -- and the resources necessary to make these hopes real.

The Emergency Commission will seek to foster collaboration across political and social lines, but the Commission will not settle for any easy or vacuous consensus. Where the situation demands, the Emergency Commission will focus a critical eye on quick-fixes that promise far more than they can ever deliver.

The NEA Emergency Commission on Urban Children will not be content to produce and disseminate recommendations for policy and action. The work of the Commission will only be complete when the siren has been heard — and heeded.

With this Call to Action, we in NEA affirm our commitment to the success of *all* public schools and our willingness to devote significant resources toward meeting the extraordinary needs of urban children.

We will work to meet these needs by building a broad-based collaboration that joins leaders from NEA urban affiliates with experts and activists from a broad array of national organizations.

Through the Emergency Commission, we hope to model the collaboration among institutions that is so essential to the well-being of our nation's urban children. Serious and sustained collaboration, we believe, can maximize our resources -- and effectiveness.

Collaboration and partnership, we also believe, can help identify those strategies, programs, and proposals that are -- in many communities across the United States -- already meeting the needs of urban children. We don't need to reinvent these strategies, programs, and proposals. We need instead, as a nation, to give these the attention and the resources they need to succeed.

A recent PBS special, moderated by Bill Moyers, powerfully illustrated the barriers and income disparities that currently deny equal educational opportunity to children in America's most impoverished communities. These barriers are so high, the disparities so wide, that only a comprehensive effort, joined by every major sector of our society, can undo the damage and destruction wreaked by the "us vs. them," "rich vs. poor" mentality so pervasive in America today.

The more than 2.2 million members of NEA are committed to this effort. We stand ready to join hands with other Americans to get the job done.

Our children deserve no less!

Once appointed, Emergency Commission members will jointly establish an agenda, determine priorities, and develop an action plan to mount an immediate assault upon the barriers that deprive our urban children of full and productive lives. Subsequently, NEA will collaborate with the other organizations and institutions to facilitate implementation of the Commission's proposed action plan.

The initial meeting of the Commission will be conducted after the November elections.

Saving City Schools

What's Our Duty to Inner-City Kids?

By Bob Chase, President
National Education Association

Late at night, driving through one of Washington's poorest neighborhoods, I caught sight of several children hanging out on a street corner. It is an all too common reality in inner-city D.C.: young kids on mean streets, aimless, unattended, effectively parentless.

As a parent myself, I reacted with compassion and concern. But as an educator, I reacted with anger — outrage at the unfairness of these children's fate. I recalled Jonathan Kozol's hard words in *Savage Inequalities*: "One consequence of medical and early educational denial is the virtual destruction of the learning skills of many children by the time they get to secondary schools."

Do we have an obligation to these inner-city kids? I pose this question not just to *Post* readers but, more pertinently, to the 2.2 million members of the National Education Association. Bear in mind, the great majority of NEA members work in successful, mostly suburban, school districts. Heretofore we have tended to disassociate ourselves from central cities and their often troubled schools.

This arms-length detachment now officially ends. This month, NEA launches its new Urban Project as both symbol and substance. Symbolically, we affirm our dedication to the success of all public schools. And substantively, we commit significant NEA resources to meeting the extraordinary needs of urban children.

The Urban Project will be a broad-based collaboration, with leaders from NEA's urban affiliates teaming up with experts and activists from a broad array of

national organizations. We will focus attention on smaller, more effective schools and classrooms; higher standards for both academic achievement and student con-

"The failure of poor urban children is not innate — it is instilled."

duct; and more effective ways of meeting children's social, human, and health needs to ensure that all pupils are physically and psychologically ready to achieve in school.

This initiative will not be limited to issues of money and material needs. Even more importantly, it will confront the crisis of spirit — the debilitating sense of hopelessness — in inner-city communities. After all, the failure of poor urban children is not innate; it is instilled. It is planted like a bad seed in the impressionable minds of youngsters who know that society has abandoned them.

Two years ago, Charles Murray's notorious book, *The Bell Curve*, described an "underclass" of 12-million-plus Americans whose children, according to Murray, are mostly born dumb and, therefore, are destined to die poor. Acting on this grotesque premise, Murray advocated taking money from Head Start and Title I, and redirecting it to programs for the gifted and talented.

Others propose a different type of abandonment: tuition vouchers to siphon the best students away from urban public schools.

But surely the most insidious message of abandonment comes from teachers and school officials who communicate to inner-city



children that they are not capable of strict discipline and strong achievement, not worthy of the same high expectations as suburban kids.

We must not be complicit in these acts of abandonment. Instead, listen to the words of a teacher at a South Bronx public school respected for its demanding curriculum and high achievement. She said: "You have to believe in them. Many kids don't have anyone at home who does."

But many of these kids do have parents who believe in them — parents who seek for their children the kind of transformation described by Richard Wright in his autobiography: "The impulse to dream had been slowly beaten out of me by experience. Now it surged up again and I hungered for books, new ways of looking and seeing."

To restore their "impulse to dream," we must communicate to inner-city children a powerful message of hope and possibility. And we must insist on schools that respect every child as worthy, responsible, and capable of ambitious learning.

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