

Draft
10/25

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Since taking office in 1993, and with your strong leadership, my Administration has pursued a comprehensive effort to strengthen public schools. We have worked to raise academic standards, promote accountability, and provide greater competition and choice within the public schools, especially by supporting a dramatic increase in charter schools. And we have worked to make the investments necessary to improve teaching and learning in every classroom in America, through efforts to keep our schools safe and free of drugs; provide students who need it the extra help to master the basics; increase parental and community involvement in our schools; recruit, prepare, and provide continuing training to teachers and to reward excellence in teaching; and, to make sure every school has access to and can effectively use 21st century technology.

This strategy will produce results. We know for certain that all students can learn to high standards, and that every school can succeed if it has clear instructional goals and high expectations for all of its students, if it creates a safe and orderly environment for learning, helps parents be involved in their child's education, and uses proven instructional practices. All schools must be given the resources, the tools, and the flexibility to help every student reach high standards.

Yet no school improvement strategy can work without real accountability for results, as measured by student achievement. Excellent schools and schools that show significant improvement must be recognized and rewarded. At the same time, schools that demonstrate persistently poor academic performance--schools which fail to make adequate progress in educating all students to high standards--must not be ignored. Instead, local and state education officials must step in and redesign failing schools, or close them down and reopen them with new, more effective leadership and staff.

A growing number of (states and) cities have begun to take these steps. Cities such as Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia and New York, and states such as Maryland and Kentucky identify low performing schools and take steps to intervene if the schools fail to make progress. These steps often include the implementation of school improvement or corrective action plans, providing after-school academic help to students, training and assistance for school staff, creating smaller and more personal settings, such as schools-within-schools, and reconstitution of the school and replacement of the school principal and other staff.

We must encourage and help more cities (and states?) take up the challenge of turning around low performing schools and helping the students they serve get back on the path to meeting high standards, by making widely available information on what works and what doesn't, and by ensuring that federal education resources are most productively used for these purposes.

In order to accomplish this, I am directing the Department of Education to:

RAISING STANDARDS AND STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY: KEYS TO IMPROVING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 28, 1997

President Clinton visited Oscar Mayer Elementary School in Chicago, where he met with parents, students and teachers to learn firsthand of Chicago's school reform efforts. The President called for more cities and states to raise standards and work aggressively to turn around failing schools, as Chicago has done.

President Clinton Praises Chicago School Reforms. More than a decade ago, the Chicago school system was singled out for having the schools that were "the worst in America." Today, noting significant increases in test scores over the past two years, President Clinton said that Chicago is now a school system on the move. Since legislation placed the school system under the control of Mayor Daley, Chicago has installed a new management team that placed the school system on sound financial footing, invested in needed school renovations and repairs, and adopted tough discipline policies. The school system has raised academic standards and implemented new programs to help students reach them. The Chicago Public Schools have strengthened the curriculum, expanded participation in preschool programs and kindergarten, provided training to help parents succeed as their children's first teachers, and implemented after-school programs to expand learning time and provide extra help to students who need it.

A Model of Accountability: Ending Social Promotions and Intervening in Failing Schools.

President Clinton praised Chicago's tough accountability system, which holds both students and educators accountable for learning.

Chicago has ended social promotions, requiring instead that students meet academic standards at grades 3, 6, 8, and 9 before moving to the next grade level. Students who need it are given extra help to meet the standards, through extended day programs that keep schools open longer each day and provide tutoring, enrichment, and other kinds of academic help. Students who don't pass the tests at these key grade levels are required to attend summer school. Nearly half of those who attend summer school go on to meet the standards and are promoted to the next grade.

Chicago also holds schools to tough accountability standards, and takes decisive action when schools are failing. Schools with fewer than 15% of the students meeting national norms in reading are placed on probation. These schools are reviewed by a team of outside experts, which helps develop a corrective action plan that the school must follow. Schools on probation receive additional assistance and their performance is closely monitored. If the test scores fail to improve or if the school fails to implement the corrective action plan, the Chicago Public Schools can take additional steps, including requiring the principal and teaching staff to recompetete for their positions, removing the principal, or, if necessary, closing the school.

Federal Support for States and Districts Working to Turn Around Failing Schools. President Clinton challenged other cities and states to follow Chicago's lead by taking decisive steps to turn around schools with persistently low performance. The President directed the U.S. Department of Education to produce and disseminate guidelines on effective approaches to turning around failing schools, based on the experience of Chicago and other cities such as San Francisco, New York and Philadelphia, states such as Maryland and Kentucky, as well as on lessons learned from business and education research. He also directed the Education Department to develop a plan for helping local school districts use existing federal education programs and resources, such as Title I, the Charter Schools Program, America Reads, and the 21st Century Schools program, to improve or close down failing schools, and to provide the students from those schools with the extra help they need to catch up academically.

1. Produce and disseminate widely guidelines on effective approaches to turning around low performing schools. There is much of value to be shared from the lessons and experiences of cities and states that already intervene in low performing schools, as well as from education R&D on effective school improvement practices, business experience in managing high performing organizations and in turning around low performing companies, and other sources. These lessons must be captured in clear and useable formats, and made widely available to educators, parents, state and local policymakers, business leaders and others working to improve public education.

2. Review existing Federal education programs to determine how they can best be used to support (state and) local efforts to turn around low performing schools, and to provide incentives so that additional (states and) cities will more quickly. Federal education programs should help and encourage more states and cities to develop sound, comprehensive approaches to turn around low performing schools and help students in them get a better education, and, once developed, should support their implementation. In particular, the Education Department should develop a strategy to ensure that funds provided to state and local education systems under existing federal programs can easily and effectively be used to support efforts to turn around failing schools. Second, the Education Department should develop a strategy, in collaboration with states and cities, to provide appropriate research, dissemination and technical assistance resources to support state and local initiatives. Third, the Education Department consider if additional federal incentives could effectively increase the number of states and cities that adopt accountability policies and effective strategies to intervene in failing schools.

Many Education Department programs are already well suited for these purposes, because they provide funds that can be used to provide extra help during and after the school day to students who need it, high quality professional development for teachers, and resources to plan and implement effective school reforms. The Education Department should develop a plan for enabling local school districts to access the funds and use them in an integrated fashion to support their comprehensive efforts to improve low performing schools. Where there are statutory barriers to accomplish this purpose they should be identified so we can work with the Congress to change them.

A number of existing federal education programs, including Title 1 and Goals 2000, require participating states and school districts to hold schools accountable for results, and provide resources that can be used for these purposes. Other existing programs also provide resources that can be used to help turn around low performing schools, such as the Eisenhower professional development program. In addition, the Charter Schools Program can be used to provide start-up funds to replace failed schools with new charter schools, and/or to provide students in low performing schools with additional choices within the public schools. The 21st Century Schools program can help keep schools open longer hours and provide a setting in which students can get extra help after school.

New initiatives under consideration in Congress can also provide important help. The Balanced Budget Agreement I reached with Congressional leaders last summer commits the

Congress to enacting an early reading program consistent with the principles of my America Reads initiative. When enacted, this program will help mobilize an army of one million volunteer tutors to give students who need it extra help in order to learn to read independently by the 4th grade. These volunteers can be especially helpful for students in low performing schools. The bipartisan Comprehensive School Reform program under consideration right now by the Appropriations Committee will, if funded, provide funds that will help schools implement proven practices for improving student learning. This can be particularly helpful to low performing schools.

Together, these programs can help local school districts turn failing schools into successful schools by providing teacher training, strengthening instructional practices, overhauling school management and implementing schoolwide reforms. They can provide students who need it extra help, during and after schools. And they can provide students with additional choices within the public schools.

Draft 10/27/97 4pm

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS ON SOCIAL PROMOTION
OSCAR MAYER SCHOOL
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
OCTOBER 28, 1997**

Acknowledgments: Rep. Rod Blagojevich [*Bla - Goy - Yevitch*]; Mayor Daley; Robert Blitstein, Principal; Maggie Sullivan, teacher; Mary Medina, parent; Evaline Medina, student.

Six years ago, I challenged all Americans to work with me to chart a bold new course for our country in the 21st Century -- to make the American Dream come alive for every person responsible enough to work for it, to keep our country the world's strongest force for peace, freedom and prosperity, to bring our people together across all the lines that divide us, into one America.

Together, we've made great progress -- our economy is growing, crime is down, our social fabric is mending. But we have much more to do, especially when it comes to making sure every child receives the world class education he or she needs to survive and thrive in the new economy of the 21st Century. I believe this is America's single greatest challenge. That is why reforming, strengthening and challenging our public schools must be our crusade today and in the years to come.

I've come to the Oscar Mayer School to thank Mayor Daley, the principals, teachers, students and people of Chicago for leading this crusade, for showing America how it can be done. Because of your leadership, the city that works now has a school system that works. Chicago has shown us that accountability works ... setting high standards works ... and above all, that every single child can meet our highest expectations. That faith must be at the heart of all our school reform efforts. And I am here to urge every school district in America to make the choice Chicago has made, to reject defeatism, and abolish the devastating practice of social promotion.

I've called on all Americans to work with me to make sure that every eight-year old can read, every 12-year old can log onto the Internet, every 18-year old can go to college, and all Americans can keep learning throughout a lifetime. The historic balanced budget I signed into law this summer brings us much closer to these goals. Through expanded Pell Grants and student loans, tax-free IRAs, Hope Scholarships and other tax credits, we are opening the doors of college for every person willing to work for it. We are well on our way to putting computers in every single classroom.

But none of this will matter if our children don't master the basics. That is why I am fighting to bring America Reads to every school to mobilize an army of volunteers to teach every

child to read ... to introduce more choice and competition to our public school systems through thousands of charter schools ... to encourage communities to make our schools places of learning and values, not violence and disorder, through efforts such as curfews to school uniforms ... and to empower parents to take active roles in their children's education.

And above all, that is why we must have high academic standards in the basics -- voluntary tests in fourth grade reading and eighth grade math. Through national standards, our parents and teachers can make sure that their children gain the skills they need to thrive in the global economy. Every employer should be able to look at a diploma and know that a job applicant can read a manual, tally a check, analyze and solve a problem, and be a dependable worker. I thank Mayor Daley for his early support of high national standards.

If the response in Chicago has been unusual, unfortunately, the problems were not. A few years ago, the people of this city looked at the state of its public education system and were faced with a critical choice. Were you going to look at low test scores, high drop-out rates, students earning diplomas they couldn't read, and throw up your hands, or were you going to roll up your sleeves and get to work? Were you going to walk away from your public schools or were you going to stand up for the God-given promise of every single child in this city? You stood firm. And you went to work. As a result, the winds of change have swept through every classroom. Schools, principals and teachers who weren't doing their jobs, have been put on notice. And just as important, students have been put on notice that they won't graduate if they haven't done the work.

Let me be clear: Ending social promotion does not put anybody down; it seeks to lift all our children up. We don't do anyone any favors giving them a pass on high standards. I am tired of being told that our children cannot achieve because their parents are poor or their neighborhoods are rough. Every child, regardless of their race, ethnic background or station in life has the ability to succeed.

Here in Chicago, the notion that holding a child back a grade would destroy self-esteem has gone the way of the old fable that Mrs. O'Leary's cow started that Great Fire. There are thousands of Americans sitting in GED classes, struggling in literacy programs, standing in unemployment lines who can tell you that there is nothing more harmful to a person's self-esteem and future than not being able to read a want ad or fill out a job application.

I want what is happening in Chicago to happen all across America. So I challenge every school district to adopt high standards and abolish the practice of social promotion. We must say to every student that we care whether you learn to read, add, multiply and divide, that we all believe in your potential to succeed. If you're having trouble, we will help you make the grade, through summer school, extra tutoring, and special classes.

So today, I am directing my Department of Education to find ways to make sure that efforts such as Chicago's promising approach to low-performing schools are shared with

communities across the country. I'm also asking them to strengthen our efforts to help local school districts use existing federal education resources to improve or close down schools that are failing and lift up students that are struggling.

Mahatma Gandhi once said that "The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would be enough to solve most of the world's problems." Well today, let us commit ourselves to filling that gap when it comes to our public schools. We know what works. And we see in Chicago what every school district can and must do. Let us work to bring the solutions to every single school in our country so that our children and the generations to follow have the education and the tools to realize the American Dream.

DRAFT -- October 27, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Subject: Turning Around Low-Performing Public Schools

Since taking office in 1993, and with your strong leadership, my Administration has pursued a comprehensive effort to strengthen public schools. We have worked to raise academic standards, promote accountability, and provide greater competition and choice within the public schools, including support for a dramatic increase in charter schools. Moreover, we have worked to make the investments necessary to improve teaching and learning in classrooms across America, through efforts to keep our schools safe and free of drugs; provide students who need it extra help to master the basics; increase parental and community involvement; recruit, prepare, and provide continuing training to teachers and reward excellence in teaching; and make sure every school has access to and can effectively use 21st Century technology.

This strategy is starting to produce results. We know that all students can learn to high standards, and that every school can succeed if it has clear instructional goals and high expectations for all of its students, if it creates a safe, disciplined and orderly environment for learning, helps parents be involved in their children's education, and uses proven instructional practices. All schools must be given the resources, the tools, and the flexibility to help every student reach high standards.

Yet no school improvement strategy can succeed without real accountability for results, as measured by student achievement. Excellent schools and schools that show significant improvement must be recognized and rewarded. At the same time, schools that demonstrate persistently poor academic performance -- schools that fail to make adequate progress in educating all students to high standards -- must be held accountable. No American child deserves to get a second class education. Instead, local and state education officials must step in and redesign failing schools, or close them down and reopen them with new, more effective leadership and staff.

A growing number of states and cities have begun to take these steps. In addition to Chicago, cities such as San Francisco, Philadelphia, and New York, and states such as Maryland and Kentucky identify low performing schools and take steps to intervene if these schools fail to make progress. These steps often include the implementation of school improvement plans -- providing after-school academic help to students, strengthening training and assistance for school staff, creating smaller and more personal settings, such as schools-within-schools -- and, where necessary, reconstitution of the school and replacement of the school principal and other staff.

We must encourage and help more cities and states take up the challenge of turning around low performing schools and helping the students they serve get back on the path to achievement. We can do this by making widely available information on what works and what doesn't, and by ensuring that Department of Education resources are most productively used for

these purposes.

In order to accomplish this, I am directing the Department of Education to take the following actions within 90 days:

1. Produce and widely disseminate guidelines on effective approaches to turning around low performing schools. There is much of value to be shared from the experiences of cities and states that already have successfully intervened in low performing schools; and from research and development on effective school improvement practices; and from business experience in managing high performance organizations and in turning around low-performing companies. We know of several promising models of reform, ranging from the New American Schools designs to Robert Slavin's Success for All program. These lessons must be summarized in clear and useable forms, and made widely available to educators, parents, state and local policymakers, business leaders, and others working to improve public education.

2. Help states and cities committed to turning around low-performing schools use existing Department of Education resources to accomplish this goal. U.S. Department of Education programs should help and encourage more states and cities to develop and implement sound, comprehensive approaches to turn around low-performing schools and help students in them get a better education, and, once developed, should support their implementation. The Department should develop a plan to provide training and technical assistance to states and cities seeking to turn around failing schools. In addition, the Department should inform states and cities of how they can use funds from existing Education Department programs to support their objectives. Many programs, such as Title I, Goals 2000, the Public Charter Schools Program, and the 21st Century Schools Program, are well suited for intervening in failing schools, because they can be used to provide extra help to students during and after the school day, support high quality professional development for teachers, and plan and implement effective school reforms. The Education Department should ensure that local school districts can easily and effectively access federal funds from such programs and use them in an integrated fashion to support comprehensive efforts to improve low performing schools. Where there are statutory barriers to accomplishing this purpose, they should be identified so we can work with the Congress to change them.

Together, these initiatives can help local school districts turn failing schools into successful schools by improving teacher training, strengthening instructional practices, overhauling school management and implementing schoolwide reforms. They can provide students who need it with extra help, during and after school hours. And they can provide students with additional choices within the public schools.

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Pages: 8 , including this cover sheet.

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Subject:

Please see revised front page
and additional background material

Terry P.

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Draft
10/25

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Since taking office in 1993, and with your strong leadership, my Administration has pursued a comprehensive effort to strengthen public schools. We have worked to raise academic standards, promote accountability, and provide greater competition and choice within the public schools, especially by supporting a dramatic increase in charter schools. And we have worked to make the investments necessary to improve teaching and learning in every classroom in America, through efforts to keep our schools safe and free of drugs; provide students who need it the extra help to master the basics; increase parental and community involvement in our schools; recruit, prepare, and provide continuing training to teachers and to reward excellence in teaching; and, to make sure every school has access to and can effectively use 21st century technology.

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Yet no school improvement strategy can work without real accountability for results, as measured by student achievement. Excellent schools and schools that show significant improvement must be recognized and rewarded. At the same time, schools that demonstrate persistently poor academic performance--schools which fail to make adequate progress in educating all students to high standards--must not be ignored. Instead, local and state education officials must step in and redesign failing schools, or close them down and reopen them with new, more effective leadership and staff.

get a second class education because we did not quickly enough to fixing their failing school. No American child deserves to be a last resort. The.

A growing number of (states and) cities have begun to take these steps. Cities such as Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia and New York, and states such as Maryland and Kentucky identify low performing schools and take steps to intervene if the schools fail to make progress. These steps often include the implementation of school improvement or corrective action plans, providing after-school academic help to students, training and assistance for school staff, creating smaller and more personal settings, such as schools-within-schools, and reconstitution of the school and replacement of the school principal and other staff.

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New initiatives under consideration in Congress can also provide important help. The Balanced Budget Agreement I reached with Congressional leaders last summer commits the

OVER

Fixing Low-Performing Schools

Schools need to be held accountable for results. If schools are unable to provide students with a world-class education that holds them to high standards, the nation will fail to achieve its educational goals. Yet many states and school districts lack the appropriate mechanisms to hold schools accountable for results. States, school districts, and communities must be able to overhaul any school that fails to provide an adequate education for its students. Reconstitution is one way to turn around low-performing schools.

What is reconstitution?

- Although the term's meaning varies, reconstitution of schools usually means the takeover (of daily operations, staffing, and decision-making) of a consistently low-performing school or district by a higher-level governing body. For example, a district might reconstitute a school or a state education agency might reconstitute an entire district office.
- For schools or districts to be reconstituted, they must first be identified as failing to meet expectations over an extended period of time. Such sites have already drafted and implemented a corrective action plan but have failed to meet its specifications.
- The threat of reconstitution may provide sufficient incentive for schools to change. After being identified as a low-performing school, Patterson High School in Baltimore, Maryland, hired a new principal who handpicked several new teachers to lead a planning effort. The school's improvement team developed a plan to increase student achievement by restructuring the school day and the way in which instruction is delivered. In 1995-96, the most recent school year for which data is available according to Maryland state and district officials, Patterson's attendance rate rose from 71 percent to 77 percent; more students passed the Maryland Functional Tests in reading, writing, and mathematics required for graduation; and a greater percentage of seniors graduated than in previous years.

How is reconstitution implemented?

- Ideally, intervention is based on an objective analysis of student performance and the extent to which the school is meeting state and/or locally established performance targets. If student performance remains chronically low, the school is then required to develop and implement an improvement or corrective action plan.
- While the school is fashioning its corrective action plan, the district or state is responsible for providing all necessary resources, including technical assistance and additional professional development for teachers. The district or state then

continually assesses the school's progress to determine if student performance is improving.

- If the school's improvement targets are not met and the school remains low-performing or declines further, the district or state is authorized to replace some or all school staff and to require the new staff to develop a new improvement plan. In some extreme cases, the district or state may require all school staff to reapply for their positions. In some cases, the district or state can overrule any decision made by newly hired school staff.
- When the school's or district's improvement targets are consistently met over several years, then decision-making authority is returned to the school or district.
- Alternatively, if a state or district shuts down a failing school completely, parents and community members can learn about effective education programs with a documented record of success. One particular source of effective school designs is the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC). NASDC design teams can help local teachers and parents plan for a new school, provide quality training to teachers, and assess whether the school is progressing as projected. Many families and students may not have to leave their own neighborhood or community in order to find good schools.

Where is reconstitution being implemented?

The Education Commission of the States reports that 23 states have policies that permit the takeover of any district whose schools are low-performing. Many districts also have policies allowing takeover of low-performing schools.¹

New Jersey

- New Jersey has taken control of three public school districts under the Academic Bankruptcy Law, including Jersey City in 1989, Patterson in 1991, and Newark in 1995. These districts failed to meet a proportion of state-set standards in student performance, curriculum development, professional development, condition of facilities, and certification of teachers. Following the districts' failure to carry out a corrective plan, the state removed the local school board members, superintendent, and key personnel serving that superintendent, and appointed a new superintendent. In each case, the new superintendent and other SEA officials became the policy-making body for the district and created a new school board. All three districts are making progress toward meeting state standards and restoring local control.

Ohio

- In March 1995, the state assumed control of the Cleveland Public Schools after a

federal judge declared the district to be in a state of crisis. The state appointed a new superintendent who is working with a team of state and local administrators to manage the district's daily operations and to develop a reform plan. The reform plan, "A Blueprint for Change," gives principals, teachers, and parents more authority to make decisions. Eight "Fast Track" schools are piloting this decentralization effort, and they will serve as models for 40 "Wave 2" schools that will implement the plan in the 1998-99 school year. Changes include extended school hours, new grading systems, tutoring in basic skills by community volunteers, site-based management, and expanded professional development.

Cleveland has taken reconstitution one step further, reconstituting two elementary schools that had failed to meet district-mandated school performance indicators. The district also discovered significant internal strife among staff members in the two schools. It reassigned the schools' principals just before the start of the 1997-98 school year and asked all teaching staff to reapply for their positions. As a result, about two-thirds of teachers at the reconstituted schools are new to the buildings this year.

Maryland

- Maryland may identify schools eligible for reconstitution based on low or declining student attendance rates, student achievement on state assessments, and high school dropout rates. After schools are identified as low-performing, they are required to develop and submit improvement plans for state approval. If schools fail to improve, the state may reconstitute the schools. Though no schools have been reconstituted, many schools identified as reconstitution-eligible have made programmatic changes. Currently, the state has identified 52 schools as low-performing, 50 of which are located in Baltimore city.

- *The Maryland legislature passed into law a November 1996 agreement between the state and the Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS), allowing the state to exert great influence over the operation of the school district. The legislation settled three lawsuits filed by the state and district against each other and provides \$254 million in additional funds over five years for BCPS, starting with \$30 million for the 1997-98 school year. These funds will be used to help implement the agreement between the two agencies, including a number of district-level management changes. A new nine-member board of education, selected jointly by the mayor and the governor, oversees the process and will appoint a CEO to operate the city schools. The CEO will be authorized to appoint the chief financial and chief academic officers.*

- In Prince Georges County, the district recently reconstituted six schools that the state identified as low-performing, in part to avoid possible future state reconstitution. In June 1997, all staff in the six schools were required to reapply for their positions. About one-third of the original staff remain in the buildings.

Kentucky

- As part of Kentucky's school accountability program under the Kentucky

Education Reform Act, schools that do not reach academic and non-academic (attendance, retention, dropout, transition to the next level of schools or the job market) accountability targets must develop their own school improvement plan. If a school fails to improve over the next two years, the state assigns a distinguished educator to provide support and advice to the school. If the school's performance continues to decline, the state can assume control. Although the state has yet to take over a school, 88 schools were recently identified as being in decline and nine have been placed in the "crisis" category. No data are available yet on the outcomes associated with reconstitution.

San Francisco, California

- San Francisco has exercised its authority to take over individual schools. Under the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, the district places low-performing schools on a probation for one year. At the end of the year, the superintendent, two assistant superintendents, and a former principal review test scores, attendance and suspension rates, student portfolios, and the improvement plan to determine if school results are significantly improving. If there is no improvement, the school is reconstituted. All staff must reapply for jobs at their school; those who are not rehired are relocated to another school in the district. The school board hires a new principal, who then hires new staff for teaching, janitorial, and cafeteria positions. The new team must develop an improvement plan to improve student academic achievement and to raise other indicators. Since the 1993-94 school year, ten schools have been reconstituted.

Chicago, Illinois

- As a part of their effort to improve the quality of education in Chicago, administrators in the Chicago Public Schools reconstituted seven high schools between the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. Additionally, at the beginning of the 1997-98 school year, administrators placed 115 schools on probation. Schools on probation have a history of low-performance and risk reconstitution unless they demonstrate improvement.
- In the first round of reconstitution, the district retained two principals and hired interim principals for the remaining five schools. The new principals, with the help of district administrators, interviewed teachers and support staff in order to determine who they would rehire. On average, schools retained 63 percent of their teachers and staff. Teachers and staff who were not retained were given two years to relocate, either at a different school in the district or outside of Chicago. Reconstituted schools have two years to show improvement; various factors determine a school's success, including assessment data from district and statewide standardized tests, progress toward graduation, and delinquency rates.

Atlanta, Georgia

- As of October 1997, the Atlanta Public Schools have reconstituted two low-achieving schools, Pitts Elementary School and Walden Middle School, both of which had a history of low performance on norm-referenced standardized achievement tests. At Pitts, the district rehired only two of its 38 teachers and brought in a new principal from outside the Atlanta Public Schools to redesign the school. The newly formed staff worked closely with the Executive Director of the Atlanta Public Schools and the central office staff to realign the curriculum in order to meet Georgia's standards. The two schools have five years to demonstrate adequate improvement, which the district defines as reaching the 90th percentile on any standardized measure.

What is the evidence of success?

Although most states and districts engaged in reconstitution report that it is too early to see significant progress, there are some data pointing to the success of reconstitution in some locales. Below are some of the most promising reconstitution examples.

- In *Ohio*, since the state took control of Cleveland, the district's state proficiency scores have shown a slight upward trend. For the first time in 10 years, the district is operating without a budget deficit. Cleveland has also achieved racial balance among teachers and students in its schools. The state legislature has passed a bill turning control over to Cleveland's mayor in November, and the state has filed a petition for unitary status with the court to free the system from court supervision.
- In *Maryland*, Furman-Templeton Elementary School in Baltimore showed improvement in test scores after being identified as a low-performing school and hiring a new principal. In 1995-96, after only one year on the list, the percentage of third-grade students with satisfactory scores on the state performance examination rose 8 percent in reading, 18 percent in science, and 7 percent in writing. Fifth-graders' mathematics scores increased by 7 percent on average.
- In *New Jersey*, available data on student achievement in Jersey City indicate student gains across the board. Passing rates for eighth-grade students in 1995-96 improved to 77 percent on the reading portions of the state's Early Warning Test (EWT), a gain of 7 percentage points over 1994-95; 77 percent on the writing assessment, a gain of 2 percentage points over the previous year; and 62 percent on the mathematics assessment, a one-year gain of 10 percentage points. Gains were also impressive for eleventh-grade students, 67 percent of whom passed the reading section of the state's High School Proficiency Test, 4 percentage points more than the previous year; 79 percent, or 10 percentage points more than the previous year, passed the writing section; and 71 percent, a 7 percentage-point gain, passed the mathematics section. Student performance data from 1996-97 have not yet been made public.

- In *California*, one school in San Francisco, Visitacion Valley Middle School, has demonstrated improvement on standardized test scores across subjects and grades. The school has not only enhanced parent involvement but also restructured itself to reflect the newly adopted curriculum.
- In *Illinois*, Dr. Al Williams, head of the office of accountability for the Chicago Public Schools, explained that staff in the reconstituted schools show increased morale and that the schools seem to be "moving in the right direction." As the schools were reconstituted during summer 1997, student performance data from these schools are not currently available.

Resources for Developing Improvement Strategies

The New American Schools Development Corporation
U.S. Department of Education Regional Laboratories and Comprehensive Assistance Centers
Education Commission of the States
Council of Chief State School Officers

FAX TRANSMISSION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

600 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE SW, RM. 6133
WASHINGTON, DC 20202
202-401-3414
FAX: 202-401-0586

To: Mike Chen / Bill Kurcaid

Date: 10/27

Fax #:

Pages: 45, including this cover sheet.

From: Terry K. Peterson/Lidice Rivas

Subject:

Attached are my comments - awaiting for
additional comments from others and will fax
them to you as soon as possible.

Terry

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

THIS TRANSMISSION IS INTENDED FOR AND RESTRICTED TO THE NAMED ADDRESSEE ONLY. IT MAY CONTAIN CONFIDENTIAL AND/OR PRIVILEGED INFORMATION. IF YOU RECEIVE THIS TRANSMISSION IN ERROR, YOU ARE NOTIFIED THAT YOU ARE PROHIBITED FROM READING, COPYING, OR DISSEMINATING THE TRANSMISSION. PLEASE CALL 202/401-3000 TO ARRANGE FOR RETURN OF ANY TRANSMISSION SENT IN ERROR. THANK YOU.

Draft
10/25

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Since taking office in 1993, and with your strong leadership, my Administration has pursued a comprehensive effort to strengthen public schools. We have worked to raise academic standards, promote accountability, and provide greater competition and choice within the public schools, especially by supporting a dramatic increase in charter schools. And we have worked to make the investments necessary to improve teaching and learning in ~~every~~ ^{every} classroom in America, through efforts to keep our schools safe and free of drugs; provide students who need it the extra help to master the basics; increase parental and community involvement in our schools; recruit, prepare, and provide continuing training to teachers and to reward excellence in teaching; and, to make sure every school has access to and can effectively use 21st century technology.

This strategy will produce results. We know ^{disciplined} for certain that all students can learn to higher standards, and that every school can succeed if it has ~~clear~~ ^{clear} instructional goals and high expectations for all of its students, if it creates a safe and orderly environment for learning, helps parents be involved in their child's education, and uses proven instructional practices. All schools must be given the resources, the tools, and the flexibility to help every student reach high standards.

Yet no school improvement strategy can work without real accountability for results, as measured by student achievement. Excellent schools and schools that show significant improvement must be recognized and rewarded. At the same time, schools that demonstrate persistently poor academic performance--schools which fail to make adequate progress in educating all students to high standards--must not be ignored. Instead, local and state education officials must step in and redesign failing schools, or close them down and reopen them with new, more effective leadership and staff.

A growing number of (states and) cities have begun to take these steps. Cities such as Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia and New York, and states such as Maryland and Kentucky identify low performing schools and take steps to intervene if the schools fail to make progress. These steps often include the implementation of school improvement or corrective action plans, providing after-school academic help to students, training and assistance for school staff, creating smaller and more personal settings, such as schools-within-schools, and reconstitution of the school and replacement of the school principal and other staff.

We must encourage and help more cities (and states?) take up the challenge of turning around low performing schools and helping the students they serve get back on the path to meeting high standards, by making widely available information on what works and what doesn't, and by ensuring that federal education resources are most productively used for these purposes.

In order to accomplish this, I am directing the Department of Education to:

students can get extra help after school.

New initiatives under consideration in Congress can also provide important help. The Balanced Budget Agreement I reached with Congressional leaders last summer commits the

OVER

Put in a
 1. Produce and disseminate widely guidelines on effective approaches to turning around low performing schools. There is much of value to be shared from the lessons and experiences of cities and states that already intervene in low performing schools, as well as from education *research and best practice* on effective school improvement practices *have successfully* ~~business experience in managing high performing organizations~~ and in turning around low performing companies, and other sources. These lessons must be captured in clear and useable formats, and made widely available to educators, parents, state and local policymakers, business leaders and others working to improve public education.

move *appropriate* *to address this issue*
 2. Review existing Federal education programs to determine how they can best be used to support (state and) local efforts to turn around low performing schools, and to provide incentives so that additional (states and) cities will more quickly *Federal Education U.S. Department of Education* programs should help and encourage more states and cities to develop sound, comprehensive approaches to turn around low performing schools and help students in them get a better education, and, once developed, should support their implementation. In particular, the Education Department should develop a strategy to ensure that funds provided to state and local education systems under existing federal programs can easily and effectively be used to support efforts to turn around failing schools. Second, the Education Department should develop a strategy, in collaboration with states and cities, to provide appropriate research, dissemination and technical assistance resources to support state and local initiatives. Third, the Education Department consider if additional federal incentives could effectively increase the number of states and cities that adopt accountability policies and effective strategies to intervene in failing schools.

Many Education Department programs are already well suited for these purposes, because they provide funds that can be used to provide extra help during and after the school day to students who need it, high quality professional development for teachers, and resources to plan and implement effective school reforms. The Education Department should develop a plan for enabling local school districts to access the funds and use them in an integrated fashion to support their comprehensive efforts to improve low performing schools. Where there are statutory barriers to accomplish this purpose they should be identified so we can work with the Congress to change them.

A number of existing federal education programs, including Title *X* and Goals 2000, require participating states and school districts to hold schools accountable for results, and provide resources that can be used for these purposes. Other existing programs also provide resources that can be used to help turn around low performing schools, such as the Eisenhower professional development program. In addition, the Charter Schools Program can be used to provide start-up funds to replace failed schools with new charter schools, and/or to provide students in low performing schools with additional choices within the public schools. The 21st Century Schools program can help keep schools open longer hours and provide a setting in which students can get extra help after school.

New initiatives under consideration in Congress can also provide important help. The Balanced Budget Agreement I reached with Congressional leaders last summer commits the

Insert "A"

we also know that ~~a generalized~~
~~mass~~ "of ~~success~~" There are ~~not~~
now several successful models
of reform from The New American
Schools Development Corporation to
Robert Slavin's "Success for All" program.
That have ~~established~~ a proven
track record in ~~fixing~~ fixing failing
schools.

Parker-Obey

Congress to enacting an early reading program consistent with the principles of my America Reads initiative. When enacted, this program will help mobilize an army of one million volunteer tutors to give students who need it extra help in order to learn to read independently by the 4th grade. These volunteers can be especially helpful for students in low performing schools. The bipartisan Comprehensive School Reform ~~program~~ ^{initiative} under consideration right now by the Congress Appropriations Committee will, if funded, provide funds that will help schools implement proven practices for improving student learning. This can be particularly helpful to low performing schools.

Together, these programs can help local school districts turn failing schools into successful schools by providing teacher training, strengthening instructional practices, overhauling school management and implementing schoolwide reforms. They can provide students who need it extra help, during and after schools. And they can provide students with additional choices within the public schools.

OSCAR F. MAYER SCHOOL

2250 N. CLIFTON AVE.
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60614
PHONE: 773-534-5535
FAX: 773-534-5777

FAX COVER PAGE

To: Christa Robinson

From: Bob Blitzstein

Date: 10-27-97

No. of Pages: 9

MEMO

Principal's Address

Teacher's

Parent

Student

1-Page description of Oscar Mayer

Principal's Address
President Clinton's Visit to Oscar Mayer School
October 28, 1997

I would like to welcome all of our guests today: parents and community members from Oscar Mayer, Region 2, Region 2 Executive Officer Domingo Trujillo, Mr. Chico, Mr. Vallas, Alderman Bernadini, Congressman Blagoyovich, Mayor Daley, and President Clinton. It's an honor to have you visit Oscar Mayer.

You are visiting a very special school. We focus on academics, as well as social and emotional growth in an extremely diverse group of children. We are excited over the new Character Education curriculum instituted by Mr. Chico and Mr. Vallas. In a school as diverse as Oscar Mayer, character education is practiced daily, minute to minute. We teach and more importantly model respect and caring, and maintain high standards for appropriate behavior for all of our children, regardless of their background. Adherence to such standards is essential to their success as citizens.

Similar standards in reading have been part of Mayer for years. Such standards include children reading and being read to daily. We set high standards for our students to achieve skills, read regularly, and complete a minimum number of novels during the year. Teachers are held to standards to implement the essentials of our program, monitor the progress and provide necessary interventions to children in need. Parents are held to standards in providing the proper preparation and support for school, homework space and time, and the opportunity to read with their children.

We understand that progress is steady and consistent, a result of meeting such standards. We thank Mayor Daley, Mr. Chico, and Mr. Vallas for their initiatives,

support, and willingness to get things done, and we thank President Clinton for his support to public education and his concern for all the children of the nation.

I now would like to introduce Rod Blagoyovich, the Congressman for the 5th Congressional District who carries our message to Washington.

Teacher's Address - Maggie Sullivan (6th grade)
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October 28, 1997

We are so honored to have our distinguished guests, Mr. Chico, Mr. Vallas, Mayer Daley and President Clinton. It is really through your efforts that the kind of academic standards I have set for myself and my students for over 25 years, are now becoming a reality for all school children. My children have always been held to the highest standards. However, too many times I feel I've had to "reinvent the wheel", because children come to me in September from different schools and have been taught different concepts and skills. I would spend at least a month until we were all on the same page, literally. The idea that uniform standards are now in place in all classrooms in Chicago is exciting. Agreement among all schools to teach the same skills, same concepts and same standards will only help our children grow and achieve to the fullest.

As our Chicago Guide for Academic Standards states "Expecting More - Higher Standards for Chicago's Students" the teachers at Oscar Mayer are expecting more from our students than ever. We now have clear goals for all of our children. We can easily integrate and connect our curriculum and make it real, meaningful and authentic. We, at Mayer are part of an Annenberg Network that gives us the time and resources to plan and connect for our students and to our students. And we do not accept any excuses. No matter what problems our children bring to school, we expect and demand that they listen, study and learn.

Our promotion policy has given us the support to bring this altogether. As a 6th grade teacher, I see change in the children's eyes and attitudes towards school. This is serious business - no time to play. The children and parents understand success is necessary to go to 7th grade. Last year, the first year of our promotion policy and a new accountability, sent the message home. 15 sixth graders attended the Summer Bridge Program at Mayer. Only 1 student was unsuccessful and had to repeat 6th grade. The students see it's a new day. Mr. Blitstein, our principal, myself and the rest of the Mayer staff have agreed to save the Chicago Public Schools money. Our goal is that no Mayer student, in any grade, will need to attend Bridge in 1998. We will achieve this. Thanks for your support.

Parent Address

Good morning, President Clinton, Mayor Daley, Mr. Blitstein, and other guests. My name is Mary Medina. I have been given the honor to talk about the new standards which helped my daughter Evaline.

Through the efforts of the teacher, Mrs. Andrews, and the Principal, Mr. Blitstein, we decided that the summer reading & math program was the best for Evaline, and all other students of Mayer School.

It turned out to be the best for all who were involved, because we all performed exceptionally well nationally.

As a concerned parent I am pleased with Mayor Daley and the Board of Education, for providing us with a program that advances our children's ability to read at their level and above. Setting standards raises expectations for us all.

As a mother of seven children, who looks to the public education system for their future betterment, I see this program as one of the steps in helping them to further their education.

I believe that this program is one tool that our children as well as we parents need.

In this day when our public education system is under attack from all parts of our society, I thank God for a Mayor and a President who are truly concerned with our children to implement the changes that are needed.

As a concerned parent, I take up the challenge to participate in this change. A heart warming thanks from my family goes out to you, Mr. Clinton and Mayor Daley for this opportunity. May God bless you and our nation. I would now like to introduce my daughter, Evaline. Thank you.

Student Address

Hello, my name is Evaline Medina. I am a 4th grader at Oscar Mayer. I went to the Summer Bridge program and it helped me a lot. I would like to introduce the President of the United States.

Oscar Mayer School
Unit 4680
Region 2

Oscar Mayer School is a school of approximately 750 students. It is located in Lincoln Park and has an attendance area bounded by North Ave. on the south, Wrightwood on the north, Halsted and Lincoln on the east and Clybourn on the west. A majority of our children are bused to Mayer via the Voluntary Transfer program. Parents submit applications and children are chosen by lottery to maintain a racial-ethnic balance that currently is 39% African American, 32% Hispanic, and 27% White. Our population also exhibits a dramatic socio-economic diversity that truly brings together children of various backgrounds and value systems. They play, work and learn together in a rich, nurturing atmosphere.

We are located on the western edge of the DePaul campus. We are fortunate to receive student observers and student teachers who help our children and learn from our outstanding teaching staff.

There are 2 full-day kindergarten classes and 3 classrooms at grade levels 1-8. Our Independent Studies Program is a research project-oriented program for 5-8 graders. We have full visual arts, vocal music and P.E. programs. We have a networked computer lab, and multimedia computer units in every classroom. We have 2 library/media centers. These provide children opportunities to use the library to find books for recreational reading or to do research on the Internet (both libraries are "on-line"). We focus on the "whole" child. To that end, we have a full-time social worker to supplement service of the Board of Ed. Mayer is part of an Annenberg network that will receive close to \$750,000 over a 5 year period to integrate curriculum through the arts and technology.

One of Mayer's greatest strengths is its parent body. Mayer set the precedent for parent volunteers in the city. Parents are also an integral component in the decision making process. The principal, teachers, and parents work to identify and acknowledge existing problems and then generate successful solutions.

Mayer has one of the lowest mobility rates in Chicago. This is a testament to the satisfaction parents feel towards our school. Once a child enrolls at Mayer, they rarely leave until graduation.



City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Office of the Mayor
City Hall, Room 406
121 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602
(312) 744-9500

FAX TRANSMITTAL MEMO

DATE: 10/27

TO: CHRISTA ROBINSON

COMPANY: _____

PHONE: _____

FAX: 202/ 456 7431

FROM: LISA BOULDEN
ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR

PHONE: (312) 744-3920

FAX: (312) 744-2727

PAGES: 10 including cover

COMMENT: • MAYOR'S REMARKS
• PRINCIPAL'S REMARKS
• TEACHER'S REMARKS
• SCHOOL DATA



**REMARKS FOR MAYOR RICHARD M. DALEY
OSCAR MAYER SCHOOL EVENT WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1997**

Acknowledgments:

- President Clinton
- Rep. Rod Blagojevich
- Robert Blitstein, Principal, Oscar Mayer School
- Maggie Sullivan, Teacher, Oscar Mayer School
- Gery Chico, Chairman, Chicago Public School Reform Board
- Paul Vallas, CEO, Chicago Public Schools
- Cozette Buckney, Chief Education Officer, Chicago Public Schools
- Alderman Pat O'Connor
- Alderman Charles Bernardini

First of all, I want to thank Principal Blitstein for all of his hard work here at the Oscar Mayer School. This is just one of many examples of commitment and hard work that can be witnessed at Chicago Public Schools.

I want to thank President Clinton for coming to Chicago to talk about the single most important subject facing our nation — the future of our public schools.

Improving public education is the only way to solve the biggest problems facing our country. Education is the only way to cut down on gang membership, drug abuse and welfare dependency -- and the only way to ensure that we have a growing, healthy economy.

In Chicago, we have faced this reality and we are working together to turn our schools around.

We have been willing to look at ourselves in the mirror and admit what is wrong. We have set higher standards -- and we have put everyone on notice that those standards will go even higher.

Over the past two years, several important steps have been taken.

We ended the policy of social promotions.

Third, sixth, eighth and ninth grade children -- who do not perform at minimum levels -- are now required to go to summer school before being promoted.

We had about 90,000 students in mandatory summer school this year. And it made a difference. Across the board, reading and math scores improved significantly, with many months worth of improvement coming in less than six weeks.

Ending social promotions is one of the most important steps the Chicago Public Schools has taken. And next year, it will be expanded to include tenth grade students as well.

The school board also took other important steps to improve student performance.

Curricula at all city high schools was streamlined and upgraded. National standardized tests were emphasized.

A mandatory homework rule was passed. Now every student in the Chicago Public Schools has homework every day.

And the Chicago Public Schools also took a bold and needed step by putting schools on academic probation.

Probation shows our commitment to improving every school, starting with the weakest and offering them the needed assistance.

The Chicago Public Schools still have a long way to go. But everybody understands that the status quo is not good enough.

Higher standards are the answer, because we will leave no school and no child behind.

President Clinton, we are gratified by your commitment to public education, and we are very happy to welcome you back to Chicago.

Now I would like to introduce someone who is working day by day to help the students of Oscar Mayer Elementary.

Besides ^{being} ~~behind~~ an accomplished 6th grade math teacher, Maggie Sullivan is a mentor to other teachers at this school. She is a great example to all Chicago Public School teachers — and to all Chicagoans.

###

**Principal's Address
President Clinton's Visit to Oscar Mayer School
October 28, 1997**

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Schools & Regions

FACT SHEET

SCHOOL NAME:

Oscar F. Mayer Elementary School

UNIT:

5010

ADDRESS:

2250 North Clifton Avenue (2250 N-1132 W)

TELEPHONE:

534-5535

FAX:

534-5777

BOUNDARIES:

Begin at North Branch of Chicago River and Fullerton

East to Janssen, North to Altgeld

East to CM ST P&P RR, North to Wrightwood

East to Lincoln

Southeast to Halsted

South to Armitage

East to the Alley between Burling and Orchard

South to Willow, West to Bissell

North to Armitage, West to Seminary

South to Maud, Northwest to Racine

South to Cortland, West to the Chicago River

North to Starting Point

PRINCIPAL:

Mr. Robert M. Blitstein - *8 yrs @ Mayer*

Grade	Number of Students
K (all day)	53
1	83
2	82
3	101
4	81
5	89
6	90
7	90
8	86
Special Education	8
Total Students	763

RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS				
% Asian	% Black	% Hispanic	% Native American	% White
1.5	39.4	31.0	0.8	27.3

POVERTY LEVEL
% Low Income
71%

ATTENDANCE/ MOBILITY RATE	
Attendance Rate	Mobility Rate
93.4%	7.2%

1990 -1997 Iowa Test of Basic Skills Results (The percent of students scoring at or above national norms.)								
Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Reading	36.70	33.40	32.40	40.60	39.40	38.10	43.50	41.80
Math	28.50	26.20	30.60	38.40	40.00	40.50	42.00	40.40

IGAP GOALS			
IGAP Goals (Percentage)	3 rd Grade		
	Reading	Math	Writing
Did Not Meet	60	47	25
Met Goals	28	49	45
Exceeded Goals	12	4	30

IGAP GOALS			
IGAP Goals (Percentage)	4 th Grade		
	Science	Social Science	
Did Not Meet	23	32	
Met Goals	58	53	
Exceeded Goals	19	15	

IGAP GOALS			
IGAP Goals (Percentage)	6 th Grade		
	Math	Writing	Reading
Did Not Meet	24	3	49
Met Goals	75	77	42
Exceeded Goals	1	21	9

IGAP GOALS			
IGAP Goals (Percentage)	7 th Grade		
	Science	Social Science	
Did Not Meet	29	19	
Met Goals	55	59	
Exceeded Goals	16	22	

IGAP GOALS			
IGAP Goals (Percentage)	8 th Grade		
	Math	Writing	Reading
Did Not Meet	29	23	45
Met Goals	66	70	47
Exceeded Goals	5	7	8

Mayor Daley's Plan to Fix Chicago's

Schools

Can better management save failing inner-city public schools? An unprecedented experiment under way in Chicago may well answer that question. In May 1995 the Republican-controlled Illinois Legislature, turning back pleas for more financial assistance, instead gave Chicago's Democratic mayor, Richard M. Daley, sweeping managerial control over the city's schools, their unions and their \$3 billion budget.

The new law reorganized management along corporate lines. The head of the system is now the chief executive officer, not the superintendent of education. The independent school board gave way to the mayorally appointed Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees. The law authorized Mr. Daley to privatize any functions he chooses, and it gave the city far more control over school finances—both local tax revenues and state aid. The law also barred Chicago's teachers from striking until the end of 1996 and removed from their contract restrictive work rules governing such things as class sizes and schedules.

With Mr. Daley's new authority comes accountability: The law expires in 1999, giving the mayor a firm deadline for real improvement. His challenge is daunting, to say the least. In 1992 the Council of Great City Schools ranked Chicago lowest in student achievement among the country's 47 largest school districts, and near the bottom in attendance and graduation rates. The dropout rate exceeds 65% in some high schools, and more than half of high school *graduates* read only at a grade-school level. While it's too much to expect dramatic improvements in these numbers overnight, Mr. Daley can already point to

important accomplishments in changing the way the school system does business.

The mayor's first move under the new law was to take management of the school system away from professional educators and give it to trusted aides from City Hall. Today, only one of the top five school officials has an education degree.

When the new team arrived, it found a management nightmare. "We had no data when we came in," says Gerry Chico, the new board president. The old board hadn't kept track of such basics as whether employees were being paid accurately or on time, which vendors had been paid for what, or how many teaching jobs were va-

Manager's Journal

By Julia Vitullo-Martin

cant. The problems that were going unmeasured—and untended—were grave. Some schools were severely overcrowded, while others had empty classrooms—but the board didn't keep track of which was which. More than a quarter of Chicago's 553 schools are more than 100 years old, but no plan existed to repair them. Mr. Chico instituted monthly management reports, which he and his staff pore over. "We can't measure against the old regime," says Mr. Chico's senior assistant, Dion Smith, "but we can at least measure against ourselves—and do something about the problems we uncover."

The system's finances were a mess, too. In 1994 the old school board had projected a four-year deficit of \$1 billion. Mr. Daley's team abolished 1,700 staff posi-

tions (none of them classroom teachers) and devised enough other cost-cutting steps not only to wipe out the deficit but to give teachers a 4% raise. With a balanced budget, the reform board could issue bonds to rebuild dilapidated schools. In January, the board released a five-year, \$806 million capital plan scheduling the renovation of every school.

Mayor Daley dismissed the 17 unions in charge of school repairs, authorizing both the reform board and school principals to contract with outside firms. He ended up renewing the contract with the custodians' union, known as the Operating Engineers, but only after he "terrified them into compliance," as Fred Hess, a prominent local school reformer, puts it. "He would take their chief, Don McCue, to some school with the press in tow, and find all sorts of filth and decrepitude," Mr. Hess recalls. "In front of the cameras, Daley would say, 'Your people are doing unacceptable work. We won't tolerate this. We'll get rid of you.'" Instead, the union agreed to far greater accountability.

The results are clear at Woodson South, an elementary school in a desolate South Side neighborhood. Just 40 feet from a huge public housing project pockmarked with broken windows, the school's front door opens onto a brightly lit, impeccably clean lobby. Principal John F. Hawkins says reform made it easier to keep the

school clean, since "the engineer and his cleaning staff report to me." He was also able to switch food vendors in the cafeteria, replacing tasteless prepackaged meals with nutritious fresh meat, vegetables and fruit. All Woodson students qualify for subsidized breakfast and lunch. "They're getting two-thirds of their food here," says Mr. Hawkins. "The nutrition makes a difference to their energy and attention span."

Of course, Mr. Daley & Co. know that Chicagoans won't be satisfied with better cafeteria food, cleaner schools and better-maintained buildings. "They could give us a Malcolm Baldrige award today for straightening out the management," Mr.



Richard M. Daley

More...

Mayor Daley's Plan continued...

Chico says, "but people want the schools fixed—both sides, business and education." Mr. Daley and his team believe widespread failure has resulted largely from the schools' move away from basic skills. They have urged failing schools to adopt a strict, phonics-based teaching method called Direct Instruction. While it has proved successful in some low-income urban schools, many teachers and school-reform groups resist it.

Results of the state's achievement tests will be out at the end of the month, and school officials anticipate that they will be putting some schools on probation—a serious step that allows the central board's Accountability Office to send in a team that

effectively takes over the school, firing the principal and other staff if they deem it necessary. As a first step, schools on probation will be strongly urged to adopt Direct Instruction.

The next three years will tell whether strong executive leadership, a modern corporate structure and the imposition of a back-to-basics approach to learning can accomplish what educators haven't—return big-city public schools to their glory days, when they actually educated most students and sent them on to productive lives.

Ms. Vitullo-Martin edited "Breaking Away: The Future of Cities" (Twentieth Century Fund, 1996). A longer version of this article will appear in *The New Democrat*.

Chicago, Newark as models for D.C.?

Control board points to school reforms

By Susan Ferrechio
and John Mercurio
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

When the D.C. financial control board announces plans tomorrow to drastically overhaul the city's schools, it will embark on a mission already begun in two other large urban areas where mismanagement and academic failure once defined public education.

In a report condemning the District's 158-school system, the control board Tuesday outlined a rosier picture of public education in Chicago and in Newark, N.J., where radical city and state intervention, respectively, turned schol-

astic disaster areas into models for reform.

Both cities are in the second year of complete overhauls that included sacking the superintendent and replacing the elected school boards with appointed panels. That strategy is similar to plans the control board will unveil tomorrow for D.C. schools.

Congressional Republican leaders yesterday strongly endorsed the control board's plan, but the White House had little to say about it.

"We are not going to get into the middle of a dispute over tactics," said Lawrence Haas, spokesman for the Office of Management and

Budget. "Education is primarily a state and local concern. We're comfortable with the local parties taking the lead."

The five-member control board

was created by Congress 19 months ago and appointed by President Clinton to lead the District out of insolvency and mismanagement.

Tomorrow, the control board is expected to approve a plan to dismiss Superintendent Franklin L. Smith and reduce the city's elected 11-member school board to an advisory body. A nine-member board of trustees will take over, led by retired Army Lt. Gen. Julius W. Becton Jr., 72, who will serve as the system's chief executive officer.

It was not clear how the control board's plan will unfold or whether the changes will take effect imme-

diately. Mr. Smith said this week he was told by control board Chairman Andrew F. Brimmer that his firing is effective tomorrow.

While the Chicago system is vastly larger than the District's, and the Newark system is only about half the size, the control board's report compares the three.

"Currently the D.C. school system is where Chicago and Newark public schools were two or three years ago — managerially inept and educationally ineffective," the board said in the report, titled "Children in Crisis: A Report on the Failure of the D.C. Public Schools."

Reform in Chicago's system started in central administration in August 1995 and is working its way toward improving student

achievement and school performance, said Paul G. Vallas, the chief executive officer appointed by Mayor Richard M. Daley to overhaul the 413,000-student district.

Formerly Mr. Daley's budget director, Mr. Vallas teamed with the appointed, five-member reform board to dismantle old management, fire nearly 400 administrators and hire a team of 30 to reorganize a \$2.7 billion budget and repair relations with about 26,000 teachers.

"We came in with an army," said Mr. Vallas, 43. "We replaced the Cabinet, the senior positions, and many of the second- and third-tier positions. We went three levels deep because that's the only way you can change the culture."

After one year of houseclean-

ing, Mr. Vallas said, Chicago's new management team devised a plan to close a \$1.3 billion deficit, laid out a four-year financial plan and signed a four-year contract with teachers that includes annual 3 percent raises. The new managers also uncovered millions in waste and devised an \$806 million, five-year plan to repair crumbling schools.

In Newark, a four-year, state-initiated reform plan is headed by an appointed superintendent and a 15-member school board. But rather than get rid of central administrators, new leader Beverly L. Hall reorganized the system. She also earmarked an extra \$27 million in a \$550 million budget for direct instruction.

Last year, the Newark schools

more...

models for D.C.?

continued...

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spent nearly \$10,000 per student, the highest of any urban district in the nation. The District was second, spending \$7,700 for each of 78,500 students.

A team of consultants evaluated the principals of Newark's 82 schools and examined food services, school security and central administration. The new regime replaced a third of the principals and found money to repair and repaint schools.

"The mission is eminently doable," said Joseph Placide, spokesman for the Newark system. "When you come into a system that has suffered such neglect, it behooves the administrator to examine the terrain."

In Chicago, overhaul of central administration made it possible

for real educational reform, said Jackie Gallagher, spokeswoman for the Chicago Teachers Union.

Mr. Vallas said a no-nonsense educational reform plan is under way in each of Chicago's 557 public schools. Students in the third, sixth, eighth, ninth and 10th grades must attend summer school if their reading level does not pass minimum requirements.

Mr. Vallas said he met last summer with control board members and staff members to discuss the Chicago plan and how some initiatives there could be reproduced in the District.

"I wish them a lot of luck," Mr. Vallas said. "It's a tough challenge."

● *Researcher Brian Eleam contributed to this report.*

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**CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GENERAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS -- AUGUST 1995 TO PRESENT**

Background:

Mayor Daley has made a virtually unprecedented commitment to urban public education. He has stated repeatedly that nothing is more important for the long-term viability and livability of a city than the condition of its public schools. He welcomed state legislation in the spring of 1995 that gave him direct control over the school system. He responded to the challenge immediately by appointing a new Board of Trustees and asking some of the most valuable and talented members of his administration to lead the reform effort. The accomplishments of the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees and the new management team over the last year-and-a-half have demonstrated that Mayor Daley's administration is serious about making high-quality public education a reality in Chicago.

For the first time in many years, there is a great sense of hope about our school system's capacity and commitment to succeed. Every day is a challenge to principals, teachers, parents and students to do the hardest thing of all -- improve academic performance such that the Chicago Public Schools become the schools of choice for the city's children.

The following are a brief summary of accomplishments. A more detailed narrative of accomplishments is attached.

Administrative:

- Four-year balanced budget
- Improved bond rating
- Hundreds of millions of dollars in administrative savings
- Four-year labor contract
- Most significant capital improvement program in the country
- Privatization of food, custodial and property management services.

Academic:

- Academic probation managers assigned and corrective action plans in place at 109 probation schools
- Eliminated social promotions and required summer school for underachieving 3rd, 6th 8th, and 9th graders
- Mandatory homework policy implemented
- Improved attendance and increased enrollment, especially at the pre-school level math and science scores up at almost every grade level.

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CPS ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

School reform management team -- Mayor Daley took control of the public schools in July of 1995 and appointed a school reform management team made up of some of the most talented members of his administration, including his former chief of staff, Gery Chico, as president of the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees, and his former budget director, Paul Vallas, the new Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools.

Fiscal responsibility -- the Chicago Public Schools' (CPS) budget eliminated a four year, \$1.3 billion deficit and provided financial security and expanded educational services without increasing class size. In March of 1996, CPS received investment-grade credit status from three major bond rating agencies, paying the way for the financing of the system's \$806 million capital improvement program. The investment-grade status is the first for the school system since the late 1970's. In addition, CPS was able to issue direct securities for the first time in 20 years for the purchase of text books and computer equipment.

Labor peace and union cooperation -- between 1969 and 1988, there were nine school strikes; during Mayor Daley's tenure, the schools have opened eight years in a row without a strike. The current four-year contract with teachers provides for annual teacher pay raises. It has eliminated the annual Autumn speculation about whether the Chicago Public Schools would open on time.

Capital planning, capital improvements, and asset management -- the new management team has garnered financing for an \$806 million capital improvement program to build new schools and upgrade existing facilities. This represents the first long-term facility improvement effort in several years. New schools, additions, annexes, playground improvement and school/parks are all components of this long-range plan. Up to 23 new facilities will be finished by Spring of 1997.

School safety -- arrests on school property in 1995-96 were down 6% compared to 1994-95. All schools must consider implementing a school uniform policy -- 391 schools have done so, including 21 high schools. CPS is working with the Chicago Department of Transportation, and the Chicago Police Department on a pilot program that will develop safe routes for children walking to and from school.

Ongoing support for school reform and improved academic achievement -- the new Office of School and Community Relations managed a system-wide local school council election process that attracted 8,000 candidates in April 1996 to fill 5,400 seats. Enough candidates filed for office to allow contested elections in 95 percent of the schools. An aggressive get-out-the-vote campaign helped voter participation surpass the two previous elections.

Corporate and community support -- the School Partners program has helped establish 246 school-business partnerships and assisted in the development of school-to-work projects with corporations such as Amoco, Shell Oil Company, and United Parcel Service.

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Eliminating waste/increasing efficiency -- under the new school management team, contracts have been renegotiated to get fair prices, misplaced and unused supplies have been found and distributed, bloated departments have been streamlined, unnecessary jobs have been eliminated, and a number of services have been privatized, including food, custodial and property management services.

DRAFT**DRAFT****DRAFT****CPS ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Social Promotions Eliminated; Mandatory Summer School for Underachievers -- In March of 1996, the school board eliminated social promotions by adopting a new, tougher promotion policy. Underachieving third-, sixth-, and eighth-grade students are required to attend summer school before being promoted or graduating. In August of 1996, ninth-graders were added to the list of students affected by the policy, and tenth-grade students will be included starting in the 1997-98 academic year.

Expanded Summer School and After School Program -- Overall, about 101,000 students attended academic and after-school summer programs throughout Chicago in the summer of 1996 in cooperation with the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District. Increased enrollment is expected in the summer of 1997.

Academic Probation -- In September of 1996, the CPS placed 109 schools on academic probation (38 high schools and 71 elementary schools). Simultaneously, another 31 schools were placed on remediation, a less stringent corrective measure.

Schools were placed on probation if fewer than 15 percent of their students perform at grade level on ITBS or TAP reading tests. Support teams will assess problems in the schools and oversee the development of a plan with specific short-and long-term objectives to improve student performance.

School staff will be held accountable for implementing the plan, aided by external educational organizations specializing in helping schools reorganize.

Principals -- public and private, city and suburban -- with excellent track records will serve as Probation Managers overseeing the work of principals and their external partners.

Extended Day Program -- This semester, 40 schools began offering an innovative extended day program that keeps children after school for extra classroom work in academic basics as well as recreation activities, and provides them with dinner.

Outreach to Clergy and Community -- In October of 1996, the CPS reached out to a citywide contingency of interfaith clergy to help strengthen community ties and improve student achievement. The alliances with religious institutions will pave the way for a school partnership committee comprised of church and lay members from each parish as well as parents. The committee will work with school staff to develop and implement initiatives involving truancy, safety, tutoring/mentoring, pre-school and after-school programs and parental involvement.

High School Restructuring -- In December of 1996, the CPS released preliminary recommendations from its high schools steering committee on ways to strengthen the system's 77 high schools. The

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emphasis at high schools will return to core coursework. The high school day will be restructured to accommodate the switch.

New Hiring Standards for Principals -- In December of 1996, the CPS proposed implementing higher standards for the selection and retention of school principals. Proposed criteria require that candidates for principalships have five years of teaching experience, three years of administrative or supervisory experience, a master's degree, and a Type 75 State of Illinois Certificate. Additional training through the Chicago Principals and Administrators Academy and completion of a principal preparation course that emphasizes knowledge of Board rules and State School Codes are also required.

Scores Improve -- Math and science scores up at almost every grade level.

Attendance Up -- Improved attendance, and increased enrollment, especially at the pre-school level.

109 Chicago Schools Put on Academic Probation

By Caroline Hendrie

Chicago education officials lowered the boom on nearly one-fifth of the city's public schools last week, placing 71 elementary and 38 high schools on academic probation—including the school board president's alma mater.

In an unprecedented crackdown on schools with poor test scores, the district said it would thoroughly assess each school's shortcomings and help create detailed plans for improvement.

The 109 schools, the first in Chicago subject to such aggressive intervention, will be evaluated again in a year. If they fail to measure up, district officials have options ranging from firing staff members to shutting down schools.

"We are saying to failing schools, 'We will help you, but we insist that you do what it takes to earn the trust of the parents and students who expect you to provide a solid education,'" said Gery Chico, the president of the Chicago school board. Among the schools on the list is Thomas Kelly High School, where Mr. Chico graduated in 1974.

Scores on nationally normed standardized tests were a chief factor in determining which of the district's 557 schools made the probation list.

In all the schools placed on probation, at least 85 percent of the students tested below grade level in reading. In some cases, fewer than 5 percent of students in a school read at grade level.

Outside Audits Slated

Last week's action was the latest in a series of steps taken by Mr. Chico and Paul Vallas, the district's chief executive officer, to address chronically poor academic performance in the nation's third-largest school system.

Both men were put in charge of the system by Mayor Richard M. Daley in June 1995 after the state legislature gave the mayor four-year emergency powers over the 413,000-student district.

In each school placed on probation, the district will send in monitors to review management and instruction and recommend changes. Then a team led by an experienced principal will oversee the development and implementation of an improvement plan by the school staff and outside "partners," including universities and consultants.

Mr. Vallas said the team leaders would be drawn from both the ranks of the district's best principals and from public and private schools throughout the area.

Under state law, probation lasts one year but can be extended indefinitely.

In the coming months, the district plans to outline criteria schools must meet to get off probation, some of which will be tailored to the individual schools and some of which will apply systemwide. One standard already determined is that no school will be released from probation until at least 15 percent of its students read at grade level.

A big advantage of probation is that it makes it easier for the district to remove staff members deemed to be obstacles to progress, Mr. Vallas said. He said he was prepared to reorganize or close entire schools that fail to make the grade, but would consider that only as a last resort.

Besides placing schools on probation, district leaders announced they were putting three high schools and 21 elementary schools on a less stringent form of oversight known as remediation. Those schools joined six others already in remediation, which allows school employees greater autonomy than probation.

In an interview last week, Mr. Vallas said that many schools had improved in the past year, but that dramatic action was needed to spur more rapid change.

"We still have schools with extraordinarily low test scores, and we just have to move faster," he said. "We're at the base camp trying to climb Mount Everest."

Critics Question Approach

Some local school-reform advocates criticized the district for failing to warn schools about the criteria used for imposing probation. They also questioned whether the district would come through with the extensive assistance schools have been promised.

"We agree that any school with fewer than 15 percent of its students at or above the national average on standardized tests needs intensive help," said Joan Jeter Slay, the associate director of Designs for Change, a local reform group that is a persistent critic of the current school administration. "But the school

system leadership hasn't done their homework to prepare for their highly publicized probation program."

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109 Chicago Schools continued...

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The head of a group that represents local school councils—the parent-dominated governance teams set up at each school under a 1988 reform law—said she is advising schools to view probation as an opportunity. “The real question is, can the board provide the support or assistance that the schools need?” said Sheila Castillo, the director of the Chicago Association of Local School Councils.

G. Alfred Hess Jr., a professor at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., agreed that offering such support will prove a challenge. But he hailed last week’s action as an excellent first step.

“It sends a message for the first time in all the years I’ve been working in Chicago that this administration cares about how much kids learn,” said Mr. Hess, who is working with the district to improve its high schools. “That’s exactly the right message.”

Chicago Schools Try to Make the Grade

Administrators join forces with universities, education experts to aid troubled schools

By Ann Scott Tyson

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

CHICAGO

At Clemente High School on Chicago's West Side, afternoon dismissal is a scene of bottled-up chaos: Thousands of students throng down the central escalators of the nine-story school talking and laughing. Adult monitors shout at the slow-moving crowd to leave the grounds and avoid fights.

Academically, too, Clemente has its share of turmoil.

Earlier this month, Clemente was placed on academic probation along with 108 other Chicago public schools, nearly a fifth of the city's total. At each of the schools, at least 85 percent of students scored below national norms in reading tests. At Clemente, the figure was 92 percent.

The sweeping probation mandate is the most aggressive effort to improve academic achievement in the nation's third-largest school system since Mayor Richard Daley's corporate-style school board took charge 15 months ago.

Under state law, the board's demand for higher scores is backed up by a big stick. The board can fire principals, teachers, and other staff at schools placed on probation. And it can hold new elections for the schools' local councils, which control millions of dollars in discretionary funds.

But probation also comes with a carrot: a total of \$23 million in academic aid for the schools in the form of partnerships with universities and education experts. At each school, the partner's role is to design an individual plan to boost classroom learning. The plan is then overseen by a probation team composed of school staff, board-assigned managers, a school council representative, and the outside partner.

Just the beginning

Outside intervention has been in place at Clemente and a handful of other schools since early this year under orders from the board. Initial efforts have made some progress, with Illinois state

test scores creeping up this year in 75 percent of the schools assigned outside partners, officials say.

But experts say radical changes in teaching methods and content are needed to significantly raise the scores.

The curriculum at Chicago high schools "got lost somewhere about 10 or 20 years ago," says Barbara Radner, director of DePaul University's Center for Urban Education.

"As the student population has changed over the years, the high schools have not changed," says Phil Hansen, Chicago's director of school intervention.

Most important, today's students are more visually oriented and less skilled as readers than those of past generations, Mr. Hansen and other experts say.

The students lack a wide vocabulary and exposure to a broad variety of subjects, especially in the area of nonfiction.

"The kids can read if it's a story; they can't read if it's history. They can read sports news; they can't read science news," says Ms. Radner of DePaul, the outside partner for Clemente and

several other probation schools.

For decades, ill-equipped students have entered high school thanks to a policy known as "social promotion," which graduates students from grade to grade with their age peers despite poor academic performance.

Ordinary high schools such as Clemente have trouble attracting the most highly motivated elementary students, who opt instead to attend private or magnet schools.

As a result, attendance and dropout rates (67 percent and 50 percent at Clemente) are abysmal. Often, the faces in a class change dramatically from one session to the next, Hansen says.

More...

Chicago Schools continued...

Teachers, meanwhile, feel increasingly frustrated by the need to teach high school students reading and other basic skills. Facing teacher shortages and high turnover, some high schools have hired instructors who are either not certified for the subject they are teaching or not certified at all.

Many teachers, who do stay on use old-fashioned methods that rely too heavily on rote learning, resulting in an "overwhelming amount of time spent memorizing facts and dates," says Hansen.

At the same time, few teachers integrate analytical skills such as reading comprehension, writing, and organization with their teaching of subjects. Many simply teach one day at a time. "A lot of what the kids learn is like a whole bunch of dots, and they don't know how to connect the dots," says Radner.

Chicago's school board is encouraging schools under probation to use several approaches to tackle the problem of poor performance.

- **Bridge Program.** In the first step toward ending the practice of "social promotion," a new policy adopted last summer requires all eighth-grade students scoring below a cutoff level in reading or math to attend summer

school. If the student fails summer school, he or she must repeat the grade. The summer "bridge" program is expected to be mandatory for low-achieving sixth- and third-graders next summer.

- **Freshman Academies.** High schools are creating special academies to serve incoming freshmen who need intensive training in reading and math.

- **Schools Within Schools.** Some high schools are attempting to keep closer track of large student bodies by dividing them into smaller units. For example, Clemente, with more than 3,000 students, has adopted a "house" system. Each class is given a home base on one floor and a team of counselors, administrators, and teachers, which stays with the class until graduation.

- **Business Managers.** All schools placed on probation are eligible to hire business managers, who are being recruited from the ranks of retired Chicago executives. The practice is meant to free principals so that they can focus on academics.

- **Curriculum Revision and Teacher Training.** Outside experts are updating school curricula and training teachers to better integrate the instruction of basic skills such as reading, writing, and organizing with all subjects.

Simplifying

At Clemente, which Radner describes as "one of the most confused schools I have ever worked with," all teachers are now encouraged to follow a simple, month-by-month plan to incorporate such basic skills. In September, for example, students were asked to make outlines to develop organizing skills; find the main idea and details of a text to help develop their reading skills; and write a sentence at the end of each class about what they'd learned to foster writing skills.

"It's helpful," says Clemente sophomore Joseph Maldo, wearing the new, casual school "uniform" of a white T-shirt and jeans.

"The sentence stays in your journal and when you get stuck with your homework, you can read it."



JEAN M. FRANCYK
Chief of Staff to the Board

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD

MEMORANDUM

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

TO: Mike Cohen
Domestic Policy Council
Office of the President

FROM: Jean Franczyk *Jean Franczyk*
Chief of Staff to the Board

DATE: October 24, 1997

RE: CPS Background on Standards and Accountability

If you still have your packet from the President's earlier visit to Chicago, you will find dozens of clips on academic probation. Your packet contains information on the following:

- 1) CPS promotion policy -- Policy brochure is attached and relevant sections on the end of social promotions and mandatory summer school are marked.
- 2) Mandatory Summer School -- Attachments include summary data in "CPS Summer Bridge..."; press release on largest summer school enrollment ever; "Bridging the Gap," CPS description of post-mandatory summer school academic strategies. Note 8th graders who did not advance to high school either returned to their grammar schools or, if they were 15 or older, were sent to transition centers. CPS operates 9 transition centers for 1,300 children.
- 3) Probation -- see CPS Progress Highlights for basic numbers. Note that schools were placed on probation if 15 percent or fewer students read at national norms. To get off of probation, 20 percent or more of students must read at national norms. Criteria for probation and original press release attached.

Mike Cohen
October 24, 1997
Page Two

- 4) Reconstitution fact sheet - - CPS reconstituted seven high schools that suffered from decades of academic malaise. All school personnel -- from principals to janitors -- in reconstituted schools had to reapply for their jobs. Attached is description of criteria, original press release and the September reconstitution summary.
- 5) Zero Tolerance Policy - - CPS will not allow violent or seriously disruptive students to remain in the classroom. Relevant portion of the discipline code is attached.
- 6) After School Programs - - Last year, 41 low-performing schools offered after-school programs in reading, math and recreation. Dinner was included. This year, 145 schools offer the program, including the 3rd meal. Original press release describing the program is attached. See CPS Progress Highlights for current details.
- 7) Alternative Schools - - Fact sheet attached.
- 8) CPS is in the process of developing an assistance program for schools whose scores are slipping so we're not waiting until schools reach a probation level before stepping in.
- 9) CPS has adopted its own academic standards. Press release attached.
- 10) CPS Progress Highlights — relevant sections are highlighted.
- 11) Transcript of recent speech by Gery Chico.

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Attachments

**RAISING STANDARDS AND STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY:
KEYS TO IMPROVING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

DRAFT--October 28, 1997

POTUS quote

President Clinton visited Oscar Meyer(sp??) Elementary School in Chicago, where he met with parents, students and teachers to learn first hand of Chicago's school reform efforts.

President Clinton Praises Chicago School Reforms: More than a decade ago, the Chicago school system was singled out for having the schools that were "the worst in America". Today, noting significant increases in test scores over the past two years, President Clinton said that Chicago is now a school system on the move. Over the past two years, since the enactment of legislation placing the school system under the control of Mayor Daley, Chicago has installed a new management team that placed the school system on sound financial footing, invested in needed school renovations and repairs, and adopted tough discipline policies. The school system has raised academic standards and put in new programs to help students reach them, including a strengthened curriculum, expanded participation in preschool programs and kindergarten, outreach and training to help parents be their child's first teacher, and after-school programs that expand learning time and provide extra help to students who need it.

A Model for the Nation: Ending Social Promotions and Intervening in Failing Schools: President Clinton singled out for praise Chicago's tough accountability system, which holds both students and educators accountable for learning.

Chicago has put an end to the practice of social promotions, requiring instead that students meet academic standards at grades 3, 6, 8, and 9 before being promoted. Students who need it are given extra help to meet the standards, through extended day programs that keep schools open longer each day and provide tutoring, enrichment programs and other types of academic help. Students who don't pass the tests at these key grade levels are required to attend summer school. Nearly half (check) of those who attend summer school go on to meet the standards and are promoted to the next grade.

Chicago also holds schools to tough accountability standards, and takes decisive action where schools are failing. Schools with fewer than 15% of the students meeting national norms in reading are placed on probation. These schools are reviewed by an external team, which helps develop a corrective action plan that the school must follow. Schools on probation receive additional assistance and monitoring from an external team. If the test scores fail to improve or if the school fails to implement the corrective action plan, the school district can take addition

steps, including removing the principal and teaching staff or requiring them to recompetete for their positions, or, if necessary, closing the school.

Federal Support for Turning Around Failing Schools: President Clinton challenged other cities (local school districts) to follow Chicago's lead by taking decisive steps to turn around schools with persistently low performance. The President directed the U.S. Department of Education to produce and disseminate guidelines on effective approaches to turning around failing schools, based on the experience of Chicago and other cities such as San Francisco, New York and Philadelphia, as well as on lessons from business and from education research. He also directed the Education Department to develop a plan for helping local school districts use existing federal education programs and resources, such as Title 1, the Charter Schools Program, America Reads, and the 21st Century Schools program, to effectively improve or close down failing schools, and to provide the students from those schools with the extra help they need to catch up academically.

Standards and Accountability in Chicago Public Schools: Ending Social Promotions and Intervening in Failing Schools

As part of its comprehensive approach to school improvement, the Chicago Public Schools have developed and implemented a particularly strong approach to holding students and schools accountable for student achievement, based on a set of academic standards and measures tied to them.

Ending Social Promotions: Chicago's new promotion policy requires students at grades 3, 6, 8 and 9 to meet academic and attendance standards, and earn passing grades in reading and math in order to be promoted. Students who are not promoted are required to attend the Summer Bridge program, a 5-6 week highly structured summer school. Students are retested at the end of the summer program. Those meeting the standard are then promoted, while those who don't must repeat the previous grade.

In addition to summer programs, the Chicago Public Schools have extensive after school programs to provide students with extra help in preparation for meeting the standards. The programs vary from school to school, and include tutorial academies, social centers, extended learning time programs, and after school academics. Many schools use trained, volunteer tutors, drawn from the corporate community and college students majoring in education.

While this is a tough policy deserving the praise it has received, the academic standards that anchor it are not especially challenging. The standards are simply minimum scores students must earn on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, reported as grade level equivalents. For examples, in order to be promoted, 3rd graders must score at the 2.8 equivalent (second grade, eight month), a full year below grade level. By 8th grade, students must achieve at the 7.2 equivalent, more than a year and a half below grade level. Last year the Chicago Public Schools adopted new, more challenging, district-wide academic standards. Examinations geared to these standards are under development now.

In the past school year, between 68% and 78% of 3rd, 6th and 8th graders met promotion standards by June, and an additional 10% - 13% of the students met the standards after the summer program. Between 8% and 15% were retained in grade. The picture was significantly worse at the 9th grade level, where only 54% of the students met the standards initially, and only 67% by the end of the summer. Accordingly, nearly a third of the 9th graders were held back.

Note that the failure rates would be much higher if Chicago were to use the national tests in reading and math for promotion purposes. For example, nationwide, approximately 40% of the 4th graders are unable to read at the basic level of achievement on

NAEP, and only xx% read at the more demanding proficient level, the target set by NAEP. Given Chicago's demographics, we would expect even smaller percentages of students to initially meet the national standards. And, for these reasons, it is unlikely that Chicago or other cities that have signed up for the tests are likely to use them for "high stakes" promotional purposes.

Intervening in Failing Schools: Chicago also has a significant effort to intervene in persistently low performing schools. Schools with fewer than 15% of the students reading at national norms are placed on "probation", which means that a team of educators assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the school and designs a set of steps intended to improve the school. The schools is required to implement these corrective actions, and is monitored by an external team. If the school fails either to implement the improvement plan or to make significant progress in terms of student achievement, then the district may take additional steps, such as reconstitution, intervention or school closure. Under these more severe steps, the principal and school staff can be removed or required to reapply for their positions. In addition, the school receives additional assistance and monitoring from the central office.

Schools can be removed from the probation list if at least 20% of the student read at national norms.

In the 1996-97 school year, 109 schools (38 high schools and 71 elementary schools) were placed on probation. Of these, 9 were removed from probation because of improvements in student performance. In June, Superintendent Paul Vallas announced that seven high schools would be reconstituted.

These accountability initiatives, coupled with other management and financial reforms, and curricular and programmatic improvements, have been paying off. Test scores in Chicago Public schools, on the Iowa tests, state tests and the ACT tests have shown significant gains over the past two years.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Chicago, Illinois)

For Immediate Release

October 28, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
DURING ADDRESS ON EDUCATION

The Oscar Mayer School
Chicago, Illinois

9:34 A.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you, Evaline, and thank you, Mary. Thank you, Maggie Sullivan. Mr. Blitstein, thank you for welcoming me here.

I have been officially welcomed. (Laughter.) I have my Oscar Mayer Weiner here. (Applause.) When Hillary was teaching me about Chicago so long ago, we learned to sing the Oscar Mayer song. (Laughter.)

Congressman, Mayor, Mr. Chico, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Buckney, Alderman Bernardini (phonetic), Alderman O'Connor, Recorder White --I don't know if my friend John Stroger is here or not, but if he is, hello. I am delighted to be here today.

As all of you know, I'm sure, my wife had a wonderful day in Chicago yesterday and her whole family was here. And I was regaled with it last night, everything that happened. Chicago is a really special place, and the people who are tied to it have this almost psychic energy, I think, about what's going on.

For example, on the way in to Chicago, my brother-in-law told me, he said, I got good feelings about this; I even think the Bears are going to win. (Laughter and applause.) I swear he did. So there is something quite mystical about all this, but also something very wonderful. I thank you for letting me come here.

I wanted to be here today because this school is the embodiment of the effort that I have asked Americans to make to prepare our country for the 21st century, to make sure we have an America where every person who is responsible

enough to work for it can live the American Dream; where we're still strong enough to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity; and where we look across all of our diversity and come together as one America.

I know today a lot of Americans are focused on the stock market. It may be disappointing, but I think it is neither prudent nor appropriate for any President to comment on the hour-by-hour or the day-by-day movements of the market. I'd like to ask all of us to remember that our economy is as strong and vibrant today as it has been in a generation. We saw yesterday that our deficit has come down to \$22 billion from \$290 billion. That's the lowest since 1970. (Applause.)

With unemployment and inflation at their lowest levels in two decades, businesses and banks healthy and sound, new jobs being created every day, our economy is continuing to grow steady and strong. That's why we have to feel confident and continue our economic strategy. We've got to balance the budget, expand trade, and invest in the education of all our people. (Applause.)

Now, on that last score -- in spite of all the economic progress we're making, in spite of the fact that crime is down five years in a row, that we have the lowest percentage of people on welfare we've had since 1970 -- millions of people have left the roles -- on education, we know we've got a lot more to do to make sure all children receive the world-class education they deserve to thrive in the information economy of the 21st century. That's why I've put educational excellence and opportunity at the top of America's agenda, and that's why I've come to Oscar Meyer school -- to thank the Mayor, the principals, the teachers, the students, the parents, and the people of Chicago for leading this crusade.

Because of what you are doing, the city that works now has a school system on the move. Chicago has shown us that having high expectations for our children, setting high standards and holding students accountable for them, and above all, making sure we stay at it, systematically, school by school, child by child, Chicago has shown us that this works.

By abolishing the destructive practice of social promotion and giving all children the chance to learn what they need to know, Chicago is leading the way to an educated America, in which every 8-year-old can read independently, every 12-year-old can log onto the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college, every adult can keep on learning for a lifetime. That is the vision I want for every American community, and Chicago is leading the way. (Applause.)

Last summer, I signed into law the historic balanced budget act, which will help to bring us closer to these goals. It will open the doors to college for everyone who is willing to work for it, through more Pell Grants and work-study positions, better student loans, tax-free education IRAs, the HOPE Scholarship and other tax credits for all forms of education after high school. We're also well on our way to putting computers in all our classrooms by the year 2000 and hooking them up to the Internet.

But none of it will matter if our children don't master the basics. That's why I'm fighting to bring our America Reads program to every community in the country, getting an army of volunteers led by our AmeriCorps young people to go in and offer to tutor one on one all children who are having trouble reading. Today, we already have 800 colleges, tens of thousands of students who are moving into our schools and supporting our children in this way.

I'm also fighting to introduce more choice and competition into our public schools and to establish thousands of charter schools within the public school network so people where they need it can actually fashion schools designed to meet the special needs of special populations.

I want to support communities in making our schools places of learning and values, not violence and disorder. And I applaud what your principal said about the character education program here. We ought to have that in every school in the United States. And I think we have to do more to empower parents to take an active role in their children's education. I always love to come to a school where a parent and a student talk, and I was glad to see them both doing such a good job today. Yes, give them a hand, that's good. (Applause.)

But you can do all this and you still have to have high expectations, high standards, and some accountability, because people have to be working toward a goal and they have to know what the goal is. That's why I've worked so hard for the concept of academic standards in the basics that we say should apply to every child in America, and to establish voluntary tests to measure the students' performance, beginning with 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. This will give our parents and our teachers the assurance that their children have mastered the basics. This will let every employer know that a diploma means something -- a job applicant can read a manual,

tally a check, analyze and solve a problem, and become a dependable employee.

I want to thank the Mayor for his early support of national standards, and I thank the City of Chicago for joining with 14 other major American cities for pledging to make sure their students meet them. This is a truly ground-breaking development. If anyone had told any of us who had been working for 20 years in the area of school improvement 10 years ago that 15 of the biggest cities in America would be leading -- not bringing up the rear, but leading the fight for higher standards for our children, recognizing that our poorest children and the kids that grow up in the toughest neighborhoods are the ones who need the standards the most, no one would have believed it. This is an astonishing, positive development, and you should all be very proud of it. (Applause.)

I can remember a few years ago when the only news those of us who didn't live in Illinois got about the Chicago school system was the annual strike. (Laughter.) I can remember we used to see a picture of the Governor's daughter in his office, waiting for the strike to be over, hanging around with her dad. And I now see what has happened. A whole people -- led by a strong mayor and dedicated educators -- have rejected low test scores, high drop-out rates, students earning diplomas they couldn't read, and instead have demanded results from their principals, their teachers, their schools, and most importantly, the students -- letting them know they can't move on to the next grade unless they know what they're supposed to know from the grade they're finishing. You've strengthened curricula, renovated buildings, retrained teachers, expanded pre-school education, kept schools open longer in the summertime to give children who need it extra help.

I'd like to say here, for the rest of America that might be watching this today, something that you have taught us. Ending social promotion does not put children down. It gives us a chance to lift all children up. (Applause.) We are not punishing children by making sure they know what they need to know and that when they move from grade to grade, it means something. And we don't do anyone -- especially our poorest children in our toughest neighborhoods -- a favor by giving them a pass on high standards. All of our children can succeed, and they deserve a chance to do it -- even, if all else fails, repeating a grade.

You know, people used to say that asking a child to repeat a grade was too high a price to pay for learning because of

the damage to self-esteem. But we know that children develop in different ways at different times. And we know that while a year seems like an eternity to an 8-year-old child or a 16-year-old child, when you're 50, it seems like nothing. (Laughter and applause.)

I care a lot about the self-esteem of the American people. But I would ask you to think about the thousands of Americans who are sitting in GED classes today, struggling in literacy programs, standing in unemployment lines, who can tell you there is nothing more damaging to self-esteem than wanting a job and not being able to get one; wanting to get an improvement, a promotion, a raise, and not having the skills necessary to get it. And if we adults send our children the right messages now, their self-esteem will not be harmed by an expression of love and hope for their future that prevents that sort of problem for them later on. (Applause.)

I want what is happening in Chicago to happen all over America. I challenge every school district to adopt high standards, to abolish social promotion, to move aggressively to help all students make the grade through tutoring, and summer schools, and to hold schools accountable for results, giving them the tools and the leadership and the parental involvement to do the job.

Today, I am directing the Department of Education to share promising approaches to improving low-performing schools such as those that Chicago has developed with people all across America. And I'm directing the Department of Education to strengthen its own efforts to help districts use the Federal money that we have now to transform schools that aren't performing in the world-class learning centers.

There is nothing wrong with America that can't be fixed by what's right with America. I said that in my first inaugural, I see it again today. If you did it here, it can be done everywhere. If it's happened to one child, it can happen to every child. What is working in Chicago must blow like a wind of change into every city and every school in America. We owe it to our kids, and because you have done it, you've given us the courage and the conviction to believe we can do it for all of our children.

Thank you. Stay with it. God bless you. (Applause.)

END

9:45 A.M. CST